

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

ALONZO D. KNAPP



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OPEN FOR RESEARCH



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Statement of Donation

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INTERVIEWER: _____
Brit Allan Storey

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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

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Oral History Interviews
Alonzo D. Knapp

Storey: This is Brit Storey, senior historian with the Bureau of Reclamation interviewing Alonzo D. Knapp, Lon Knapp, on March 3, 2003, at his home in Boulder, Colorado. This is tape one.

I'd like to ask you where you were born, and raised, and educated, and how you ended up at the Bureau of Reclamation?

Early Life

Knapp: Okay. That's a rather lengthy question, but I'll do my best to—that covers many years. (Laugh) I was born in 1940 on an, near Corning, Iowa, in the southwest part of Iowa, on an old house on a river-bottom farm. Yes, I was born at home. This was not because it was trendy, or anything, it was because there was no hospital available. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And most people were born at home at that time. And, there were no complications, at least none that anyone has ever admitted to me. And I was, in many ways, growing up I was a stereotypic farm boy. My summer uniform, out of school, was a pair of old bib overalls cut off at the knee. I had all the traditional farm chores of getting the cows, and gathering the eggs, and things of that nature. (Pause; tape turned off.)

Storey: Go ahead.

Knapp: Okay. I continued—we had two different farms. My father was a tenant farmer. We never owned a farm. It was hard work, and it was primitive, and to use a trite old saying, "We were poor but didn't know it." We always had plenty to eat and it was a very supportive atmosphere. Until about the age of, about the age of thirteen, my father saw that he was never going to be successful on a farm, so he took a big plunge and bought a country store, which was a big country store. I mean, big in terms of the variety of materials, from feed and seed, to gas, and hardware, and groceries, and everything you would need. And we had that for ten years. And, it was a fairly successful operation, but it was a lot of hard work. Actually, probably, harder work than farming.

Education Experience

Backing up a little bit to my education, which was interesting to me anyway, I started school in the sixth grade. We had no kindergarten. I did my first spelling and

primitive reading at the age of six or seven, which is unusual these days. And, I went to the same school for, same building, for twelve years. And, I've have mixed emotions on that school. In many ways it was a very lightweight school, I thought, at the time. Like in high school, which was in the same building, in four years of high school I had only one choice to make as for classes. I took geometry rather than agriculture. Other than that I took every course they offered, as everyone did. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) I did fairly mediocre in high school, something that's troubled me in my entire life. I quickly determined how much was necessary to get by, and did that.

But, like I say, I considered it kind of a lightweight school. It was designed for people that were not going on to college, for whom this would be, probably be the last education they ever had. (Storey: Hmm.) That's why myself and several other people had to actually petition the school to offer a basic course in geometry, which they weren't going to offer. But again, looking back at it, it was maybe not great in breadth, but it was great in depth. The things that they did teach, taught us, we learned well, and there are some fairly successful people came out of that school.

I, this is probably off to the side, but I have little sympathy for some of the trials of schools these days. My school, our complete audio visual department was a movie projector, which worked about half the time. You know, the old kind that, in the midst of the film, would start clicking. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) We couldn't afford a record player. We didn't have one. The chemistry and physics lab was a metal wall locker around the side of the classroom. And, I'd say it was rather primitive, but we learned there, and some fairly good people, again, came out of that school.

I followed my older brother, whom I'll tell more about later, maybe. He was three years ahead of me in school. Did very well. He was the valedictorian of his class. Only nineteen people, but that's as good as he could do. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, from there, he and I went on to the next county to a junior college, Creston Junior College in Creston, Iowa, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) which was small school. The total enrollment for two years was around 120 to 130 people. And, but it had a very good reputation. You could transfer from that school to about anywhere in the nation. And, again, it was small, very friendly. My brother went on from there, to Iowa State, and at the end of four years, in total, he had a degree in aeronautical engineering. For myself, at the end of two years, I had done something worse than mediocre. (Laugh) It was, my parents, having great expectations for both my brother and I, were rather shocked at the end of my first semester when I brought home a snappy 1.5 grade average.

Storey: (Laugh) Out of?

Knapp: Out of a total of four.

Storey: Out of a four-point? Okay.

Not a Stellar Student

Knapp: Which was, 1.5 means half Cs and half Ds. (Storey: Uh huh.) I was not a stellar student. I lacked motivation, but I did like the freedom that college had after high school. And I discovered that—I discovered eight-ball pool. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And the thrill of a good bankshot did not, meant a lot more to me than calculus. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, after, I'll get back to this, but after two years there—actually I went back for an extra semester, after the two years, and I graduated, just to take a few courses that I liked. I had been in pre-engineering. I took some courses that I liked and raised my grade point slightly, which was of great benefit to me later.

I'll leave a gap here, but continuing on with the education, just leading strictly to the education, after about eight years out of school I saw the writing on the wall that I was not going to be totally successful in other jobs. I was happy and contented, but not successful, so I bit the bullet and applied to the University of Colorado, in economics. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, was accepted there to my somewhat shagrin, because I'm not sure I wanted to go to college, I just felt it was necessary. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And I wasn't really sure I could cut it, because I had known some people who tried college and couldn't cut it, and I wasn't sure if maybe I'm one of them. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

Well, after my first couple of semesters, I decided I could cut it okay. I even started thinking about graduate school. And I was accepted to graduate school, in economics. And, spent some time as a teaching assistant. And, in about 1971, at the age of thirty-one, I did graduate with a master's degree in economics. And that kind of sums up my education, but I can get back and fill in some of the gaps, if you care to hear them?

Storey: Well, let, since, let me ask a few questions. Where was this country store?

Working the Family Store

Knapp: Again, in southwest Iowa. It was, if you want to travel there it's no longer in existence, but it's (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) eight miles north and two miles east of

Prescott, Iowa. (Storey: Okay.) And, it was about ten miles from any town of any size. There were other—this is an era when there were a scattering of country stores around. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

And, we did a good business, but like I say it was a, it was hard work. People look upon a store like that, as people standing back of the counter and, collecting money. Actually, standing back of the counter and collecting money was the breaktime. Usually there was a truck outside full of hogfeed or chickenfeed to be unloaded, groceries to be unloaded, propane gas to be delivered, six tires to be fixed.

And it was a total family operation. If you were home, you were on duty at the store. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) No doubt about it. And, I learned everything I could. I have fixed a thousand tires in my life. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) My brother, even after he became a successful aeronautical engineer in California, would quite often come through on a business trip, and stop in Omaha and we'd pick him up, and he would be home for the weekend. If he was home for the weekend, he was on duty at the store. (Laugh) You didn't sit around watching television, we were on duty. There were things to do.

Storey: So it was also a gasoline station?

Knapp: Gasoline station.

Storey: A service station?

Knapp: Yeah. And my father, as a sideline, did some plumbing and electrical wiring jobs. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Like I say, it was the entire family. I can well picture my mother, with me helping, unloading a semi full of hog feed, of fifty pound bags, because the driver said it wasn't his job. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, like I say, there was no sitting around. If you wanted to take a break, it was when you had customers. And, it was the old kind of store where we had some chairs and benches for people to sit around, and it was a community social center also. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And after we sold it, after my father died, we sold it, it stayed in existence for another twenty-five years. And then it closed for good.

Storey: So, when you say this was a family business, how many in the family?

Knapp: It's my father, mother, my older brother, and myself.

Storey: So, four of you were running this by yourselves?

Knapp: Oh yes.

Storey: Really? And then when you guys went off to college?

Knapp: My father and mother ran it. And, it was, and we were open 6½ days a week.

Storey: Uh huh. Closed which half day?

Knapp: Sunday afternoon, supposedly. (Laugh) And we found the only way to be closed was to leave. When we first started, we were open three nights a week, but that was only so people could come by and, what we called at the time, visit. And we soon discovered that, having the store closed really meant very little, because if somebody wanted something they would come to our living quarters and knock on the door. (Storey: Uh huh.) And we would unlock it and go get what they wanted. It's not unusual in the middle of evening, or the middle of the night, for somebody to come and say, "I ran out gas down the road. Can I get a canful of gas? I hate to bother you, so I'll only get a dollar's worth." (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh. Huh.) It was a very educational experience.

Storey: Did you sell chains?

Knapp: Chains?

Storey: Chains.

Knapp: Like for automotive chains?

Storey: Oh, like logging chains.

Knapp: I'm sure we, not heavy chains, but I'm sure we had some chains. We had a full line of hardware.

Storey: The only reason I'm asking is I remember a store like this, where I grew up, where they went down and they pulled it out of the barrel and cut off whatever length you wanted.

Knapp: No, we did not have that. (Laugh) But we did sell, as a little sideline, bulk vinegar, which was a lot more hassle than it was ever worth. It came in a great big massive wooden barrel, (Storey: Uh huh.) with a wooden pump on the top. And, like I say, we might have made a dollar after you sold a barrel of it. (Storey: Yeah.) But people

wanted it, so you better have it. (Storey: Uh huh.)

We did have a neighbor, one time, who was doing some home canning with this bulk vinegar. One time he came in and said, "The last batch was a little light. The one I had before was stronger." And he was half accusing us of watering the vinegar. (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) Which my father did not take lightly, to be accused to (Storey: Yeah.) watering the vinegar. He told quite a few people about that. (Laugh) So, one time on a Sunday morning a car load of people from a nearby town showed up, in a pickup, with a big barrel full of water, and they gave it to us as just a sample of some more of the Knapp Vinegar. (Laugh) Anyway, there's a hundred stories there on that store.

Storey: Yeah. Tell me where you went to school.

Small Midwestern School

Knapp: Prescott, Iowa. A town of about, at that time, about 400 people. I say it was a small school, all twelve grades. In the high school there was a total of about, maybe, ninety people. There were twenty-one people in my high school class. A good school and it was kind of the community gathering point, as is typical of small town in the Midwest. When we had a basketball game, half the community showed up for that.

Storey: And, how did you get into school?

Knapp: You mean, as far as transportation?

Storey: Yeah.

Knapp: Had a school bus. We had like four routes out of the school. We lived on a dirt road. And only some people from the Midwest know what a dirt road is. It's also called a mud road. (Storey: Uh huh.) And, in good weather, the bus came right to our house, turned around there, and went back out. In bad weather, my father had a war-surplus jeep, and he would take my brother and I to school, and also stop and pick up several other people who lived on similar roads. I'm sure liability would prevent that these days.

Storey: Uh huh. Huh. What about school activities? Go head.

Knapp: (Snap) If I can back up a little bit, also just to answer the age-old question, yes I did walk to school a few times.

Storey: That's about ten miles?

Knapp: No. In this particular farm, or, I'm sorry I should clarify that, this particular farm was only about two miles from town.

Storey: Oh, your farm, originally?

Knapp: Right. The store was about ten miles. (Storey: Uh huh.) And that was almost universally on the bus.

Storey: Yeah. Speaking of the farm, was there any irrigation on it?

Family Farm

Knapp: No irrigation at all.

Storey: Did you have any problems with crops?

Knapp: No. Oh yeah, we always had problems with crops, but the rainfall in that part of Iowa was about thirty-four inches a year. So, if it came anywhere close to the right times, water was adequate. Quite often too much water, or drainage was more of a problem than a lack of water. But, there were some years when a lack of water was a problem. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, our particular part of the state, the terrain was really not that suited for irrigation, even if it had been generally available or customary.

Storey: Yeah. Hmm. Tell me about those eight lost years.

Eight Lost Years

Knapp: An interesting question, Brit. (Laugh) After junior college I decided that I was really not ready to go on for any further higher education. If I can make a few philosophical statements?

Storey: Sure.

Knapp: Those eight years are probably one of the most treasured of my life. I had various meaningless jobs, meaningless in terms of the big picture. But, I look back on those and I treasure them greatly because I worked at blue-collar type jobs. I worked at some bad jobs. I, almost no one knows this, but I worked for two years as an optician, grinding lenses to prescription, which is not as technical as one might think. (Storey:

Uhm-hmm.) It's more of an assembly-line type job. I worked as, well when my father died with the store, I moved back to Iowa and helped run the store for a year, until we could get it sold. I had two years in the Army.

Then after the Army, I had two years at working for the State of Colorado as an Engineering Technician, collecting water samples. And I look back at these jobs and I treasure the memories, because—and I feel a bit of rush of sympathy for the people who are very successful, and some colleagues and friends of mine did this, went through a college, maybe worked as a research assistant, and then went immediately into a very professional field.

I had this gap there, with these other jobs, which I consider my Reclamation career to be only one segment of my working life. Granted it was a significant segment, and a lengthy one, over thirty years, but I look back at some of the other jobs they had and they were, in many ways, of equal importance. I worked—I punched a time clock. I've gotten extremely dirty on jobs. I've been tired. I've been broke. I should emphasize that when I was doing this—this was nothing romantic about this. It was not, I was not out searching for America, or anything like that. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) I was doing it because I had to do something to pay the rent and buy a can of beans, and these were the jobs that were available. I had no qualifications. I did not have a college degree. I did not have significant work experience, other than back-breaking type work. I did have a work ethic, given to me by my parents, but, having a work ethic doesn't get you through the door on a job. You have to prove that.

Storey: How did you get to Colorado?

Settling in Colorado

Knapp: Through my brother actually. When he first graduated from college, his first job was in Santa Monica with McDonald Douglas Aircraft. And after several years there, he decided he wanted to try Colorado, and maybe some skiing. So, he got a job at Martin Marietta. Shortly thereafter, about the same time, we sold the store and my mother, all of a sudden, did not have a thing to do, so she decided to come to Colorado and spend the summer, in Evergreen, where my brother lived. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Not living with him, or anything, but she got a job as a cook, just for something to do. She liked it well enough that she bought a house in Evergreen. And, so about that time, I was in the Army, and I really had no other home to go to other than Colorado. What family I had left was in Colorado, and it was certainly a nice place to be. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, when I got out of the service I immediately went to Colorado. There was really nothing left for me in Iowa. Though

I did, and I still do, visit Iowa frequently. A lot of relatives and friends there.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. Who did you study with at C-U [University of Colorado]? Why did you like—how did you choose economics?

Need for a College Education

Knapp: Another good question. Okay, number one my first objective, the primary objective was to get a college degree. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Only people without a degree, at that time anyway, maybe it's changed. Only people without a degree really understand the ceiling you have and the jobs you can't even apply for without a degree. I was going to employment agencies, and things like this, and checking want ads. There were several jobs the people, my potential employers knew that I could handle but the qualifications required a college degree of some kind, and I'm not sure why. Maybe it was to show you had a little rigor, or stick-to-itiveness in your body to do this. But, I saw a real need to have a degree of some kind.

So that half answers the question of why I took economics. The other part was, I had always been just a little fascinated at the arcane nature of economics. Somebody on the T-V news can say, "The government is going to raise interest rates by a quarter of a percent, thereby slowing down the growth of the economy." I said, "How does that work?" (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) I didn't have any idea. So I thought, in searching around for a potential major, I thought, economics would not be bad. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So I, that's what I took.

Storey: And Colorado because it was just convenient?

Knapp: Yes.

Storey: So, let's see, you would have gone there about, when would it have been, maybe about . . .

Knapp: Fall of '60.

Storey: Fifty, sixty something?

Knapp: Fall of '68.

Storey: Sixty-eight?

Knapp: Until I got a master's degree in the winter of '71. I had two years left for an undergraduate degree.

Storey: Uh huh. And then you got an M-A in one?

Knapp: One and a half.

Storey: One and a half. Who did you--was there anybody in particular you liked working with?

College Mentors

Knapp: Oh yeah. One person I still stay in sort of contact with every few years is Chuck Howe. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) He was one of the Bureau's bigger critics. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But I've stayed in, I say, contact with him. He gave a little talk here a couple years ago, and I spent an hour or so with him. I, on occasion, run into him. Not that often. But, we still know each other by name. Of course, Kenneth Boulding who was probably, at one time, one of the better known people, at the university. He came to the university about the same time I did. I understand, I heard this, maybe a legend, that there was some controversy there, that he was paid \$10,000 per year more than any other professor on campus, (Storey: Hmm.) just to get him. And I, that might not be true, but I don't doubt it. A fascinating guy to work for, more of a philosopher than an economist. But, credentials, he really has them. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And I did take one class under Kenneth Boulding, so now I can truthfully say I studied under Boulding.¹

Storey: (Laugh) What were you particularly interested in? What'd you write your thesis on?

Knapp: I didn't have to write a thesis. They didn't encourage that for a master's degree. They highly encouraged it for a Ph.D. (Storey: Uh huh.) But, the Ph.D. had the emphasis in their program. As a substitute for that you had to take six extra hours, and take a horrible closed-book exam. Microeconomics, macroeconomics, statistics, and two fields of your choice. My two fields were labor, number one, which I've never touched since. And the second one is resource economics, (Storey: Uh huh.) which was primarily under Charles Howe.

Storey: Then you went out to get a job, huh? Or maybe you had a job all along?

1. Kenneth Boulding was a world-renown economist, who authored numerous studies and was nominated numerous times for Nobel prizes in both economics and peace.

Knapp: Well, I was a teaching assistant.

Storey: Uh huh.

Knapp: Which was invaluable, because I really don't think I could have gotten a master's degree without having been a teaching assistant. It required me to take a simple question, in economics, from a class, and be able to answer it in three different ways. (Laugh) And it, at the end of that, I pretty much understood it. At least on a basic principles level, I think, which was an advantage that I really had. And it was particularly fortunate for me that I did this.

Storey: Yeah. So, then, you went out to find a job did you?

Searching for a Job

Knapp: Oh yes. But then I—I started on a Ph.D., at about the time I got the master's degree. And, I, to be quite honest, I ran out of gas. (Storey: Uh huh.) I reached a point and said I can't do this anymore. So I quietly left school. I didn't even announce it to the department or anything. I just packed up my stuff and left. Then, for the first time in my life, I had qualifications, for a job. (Storey: Uh huh.) I had a master's degree. For the first time I was entering the job market with actual qualifications, and I applied for several jobs. And with qualifications I was hoping that they didn't all come through at once. (Storey: Uh huh.)

That fear was unnecessary. (Laugh) I was really out of work for about three or four months. Since I had no experience in any field I was applying for, economics, but primarily planning, at the state, city, or you know, local level, county. The jobs for somebody with no experience were minimal. And so it went on, one rejection notice after another. In the meantime, while doing everything else, I took the Federal Service Entrance Exam, and was told by somebody in the know on this, "Don't count on a federal job unless you're willing to move to Chicago or someplace like that. But, okay, you've got that out of the way. Now keep applying." (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

Hired by the Bureau of Reclamation

And lo' and behold one came through. This is probably getting ahead of the game a bit, but I got a call one day at home and said, "Would you like an interview, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) "with the Bureau of Reclamation?" "Sure." "Report to the Federal Center. See Mike May, in personnel, and he will take you down to introduce you to Sam Kennedy." (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Again, getting ahead of the game a bit, looking

at all the jobs I applied for, and some of the ones that I would have taken, I definitely would have taken, probably the Reclamation job was the best one out of the whole bunch. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Not everyone is that lucky.

Storey: Why would you say that? Why do you say that, I mean?

Knapp: Which part?

Storey: That it was the best job of all of them.

Knapp: Okay. At that particular time I was getting a bit desperate, not totally desperate. I was working as a night watchman, for something to do while I could also go interview during the day, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) or fill out other things. But some of the jobs I applied for, like Workmen's Compensation Counselor, and things like this, I know would have, now would have now been somewhat dead-end jobs. I don't want to disparage Workman's Compensation Counselors, but probably had a job in taxidermy came along, and paid enough, I would have taken it. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Looking back, in retrospect, probably the level of the responsibility, the level of contact, quality of the colleagues I've had in Reclamation, a bit of travel and things like that, it's, it was a good job. I don't think the others I applied for like, even A-D-P type work, I was computer literate at one time, would not have given me the latitude I had on my, the job that I eventually took. (Storey: Uh huh.) So, I was fortunate.

Storey: Tell me about your interview.

Knapp: You have to know Sam Kennedy a little bit.

Sam Kennedy

Storey: Tell me about him.

Knapp: Sam is very intelligent, took his job very seriously, was well respected, and he was also laid back a little bit, in appearance. In appearance, laid back . . .

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Storey: Slowly.

Knapp: He talked rather slowly, and somewhere through the middle of this interview, I was

thinking, “This job has already been filled. He’s going through the motions.” (Storey: Uh huh.) “He has no enthusiasm toward me or the interview.” Not knowing that this was just Sam’s nature and his way of dealing with things. I thought, “Really he’s, we’re going through the motion’s here. I can’t . . .” (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Until the very end of the interview—and actually, I think we were standing up and chatting a little bit, and something came up to where I had an agricultural background, which didn’t show up in the interview, or anywhere else in the paper. And, in the past, I had been agricultural, and this really keyed Sam’s interest. And he said, “Would you send me a letter describing your agricultural background?” (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And I did. I told him about my farm background, the store background, which was in many ways a farm supply store. I told him something about the cropping patterns, and agricultural practices in southwest Iowa. And I think this convinced Sam that I’d, and agriculture was very big to him, that I had some experience there and could talk the language. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So I got the offer.

Going back to, elaborating on an earlier question, I was asked once or twice, in this process, by the guy in personnel, or maybe by Sam, about “Did I interview with the I-R-S, Internal Revenue Service?” And I said, “No I didn’t.” Well, I come to find out later, I’m not sure how I found this out, that they had a couple of people who had been interviewed by the I-R-S, were interviewing for this job. It turns out the I-R-S had an opening for a GS-5 Examiner. I’m not sure what the title would be. But, on my application, with the Federal Service Entrance Exam I, they had asked “What’s the minimum salary you would accept?” and I put down a number. I’m not sure. I just picked something kind of at random. Well, it as a few dollars more than the beginning salary for a GS-5. So, I was not considered for the I-R-S job. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Because my salary requirements were too high. (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

Again, this is extremely fortunate, because had I interviewed with the I-R-S, had they offered me a job, at a GS-5, I would have snapped it up. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And right now, I would probably be retiring as a GS-11, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) with I-R-S. So, again, that’s just a stroke of luck, not through any aptitude on my part.

Storey: Yeah. Huh. Interesting. So tell me about how they made the job offer, and all of that.

Reclamation Job Offer

Knapp: I believe the actual offer came through a telephone call. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Followed up by a letter confirming my acceptance, and a starting date. I remember well that I started in the middle of a pay period, because I requested that. I had no

need to wait an extra week, (Storey: Yeah.) to start to work. But my letter, which is somewhere in my files, offered me the job. And I had to get a minor physical for that, too. I'm not sure if you still do or not. It was signed by Richard Spangler [spelling?], who was acting Assistant Director for Administrative Management. And when I saw that title I thought, what kind of a bureaucracy am I getting into, acting assistant director for administrative management. (Storey: Uh huh.) And I was a bit nervous about going into an office. This was a three-person office I was going into, and an office with real economists in it. (Storey: Uh huh.) I had never had a working job with real economists, (Laugh) and I was a bit apprehensive on this. (Laugh) As it turns out, ninety percent of the stuff I learned in school, and in graduate school, was not pertinent to the job. It was learned on the job. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) What a cost allocation is? What a farm budget is? Things of that nature.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. Is that what they put you to work at, right away?

Becoming a Reclamation Economist

Knapp: Right away? Yeah. One of my first professional jobs, as with several other people that I've talked to, that worked for Sam, was doing the interest-during-construction calculations for the Narrows Unit, in northeast Colorado.² (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Looking back on it, I know that Sam also gave me a few technical articles to review, and said, "Can you review this and tell me what it says, and so forth?" And I think, looking back on that, it wasn't that he wanted to know that much as it was kind of a test for me to see, "Could I read this and understand it, and summarize it?" (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) The question hasn't come up yet about working for Sam, and how that was? (Laugh)

Storey: Tell me. And who else you worked with?

Knapp: Ah. The third person in the office was Bill Eichenberry, who was a story unto himself. Do you care to hear it?

Storey: Sure. Absolutely.

Knapp: (Laugh) Bill was a unique individual, a guy about my age, who came from Wyoming. People that worked with Bill either liked him, or hated his guts. (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) He had absolutely no scruples about hurting anyone's feelings, or

2. The Narrows Unit of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program was never constructed. For more information, see Jedediah S. Rogers, "The Narrows Unit Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program," Denver: Bureau of Reclamation History Program, 2013, www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html.

anything. He would, and Bill kind of took me under his wing, as the new guy. So, we always got along just fine. Other people would come to his office and rant and rave. When he would review something, if he didn't like it, he would tell you in so many words why he didn't like it. I could go through about probably twenty-five Eichenberry stories. Those of us who knew him, could tell you stories.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. Tell us some of them.

Eichenberry Stories

Knapp: Oh, the ones that come to mind were, he was describing—well, let me back up a little bit on that.

Storey: Okay.

Knapp: He showed me around the office on my first couple of days there. Just walking around. “Here’s the supply room, and so forth. Here’s various things,” and he showed me the Xerox room. These were in the earlier days of Xeroxes, big machine. And he showed me where it was, and everything. And he says, if this one is busy there’s another one down the hall you can use, and he showed me where that one was. Okay. So, over the next week or two every so often I had to Xerox something and I, the main Xerox was busy so I’d walk down the hall to the other one, get in line maybe, and do my Xeroxing. And I come to discover the second Xerox did not belong to the Bureau of Reclamation. It belonged to the Bureau of Mines. (Laugh)

Storey: Oh. (Laugh)

Knapp: But, I was, I didn't know the difference. But, for Bill Eichenberry this also made no difference. For him it was just a, “There’s another Xerox. Use it.” (Storey: Uh huh.) He had that kind of personality. I won't bore you with a long—I'll tell you one more short thing. He eventually went to D-C, eventually worked in the Assistant Secretary's Office, became Associate Director of B-L-M [Bureau of Land Management] in Wyoming. But, while he was in Washington, he and Bob White, who was another Reclamation employee, a very very distinguished black gentleman in our Operations Office. Always well-spoken, well-dressed, one of these guys you just really want to try to impress. (Storey: Uh huh.) Well, one time Bill and Bob White were taking a lunchtime walk around the White House. Bill looked through the fence, and within reaching distance he saw a switch of some kind. And he says, I wonder what this switch does. So, he reached through the fence and switched it. (Laugh)

Storey: (Laugh) And?

Knapp: And policemen and park police and everybody came swarming down, and poor old Bob White panicked, and tried to run. (Laugh)

Storey: (Laugh) Oh my.

Knapp: Of course they caught him. They chewed both of them out, for a long time. (Laugh) Really. And finally they let them go. Now, knowing Bill Eichenberry the way I do, Bill went back to the office, sat down at his desk, and went back to work. This wouldn't bother him in the slightest. (Storey: Uh huh.) He was eventually fired. He told me later, the only thing he felt good about was he was fired personally by James Watt,³ from B-L-M. And one of the charges, I heard, I'm not, I cannot confirm this. I heard one of the charges was shooting eagles from a government plane, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) which is probably verboten.

Storey: Yeah.

Knapp: Anyway, getting back to the original question. The three-man office was Bill Eichenberry, Sam Kennedy, and myself. I was the new guy.

Storey: And where was the office?

Small Office in the Lower Missouri Region

Knapp: Okay. That's, this was in the Lower Missouri Region, which was located on the Federal Center in Denver, in Building 20. (Storey: Uh huh.) We were a regional office in the same way that Salt Lake City, or Billings was a regional office. We just happened to be located on the Federal Center, with responsibility for all of Nebraska, part of Wyoming, eastern Colorado, and about half of Kansas.

And, we were told early on that even though you're on the Federal Center, in close proximity to the Engineering and Research Center, you do not take advantage of that. If they have an all-Reclamation meeting there, we do not overwhelm the meeting just because it's a ten minute walk away. We send no more people than any other region, which is probably a good idea. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) It would have been pretty easy for ten people to show up from the Lower Missouri Region, and we were told, "That doesn't happen." (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

3. James Watt served as Secretary of the Interior under the administration of President Ronald Reagan, 1981-1983.

But anyway, back to your original question of working for Sam Kennedy, it was very rewarding and, again, very fortunate for me that I worked for Sam. Sam, hard to describe and I wouldn't say "strict", but thorough. Any work coming out of his office he wanted to make sure that it was a very good product. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Even if you needed more time, if that's what it was to get a good product, that's what you did.

Early on Sam drafted me to come to meetings with him, various, all the regional office meetings, or other people coming in from outlying offices, to sit in with him. And it became obvious that Sam Kennedy's word meant a lot in these meetings. When Sam spoke, which wasn't that often, he didn't, was not loquacious, but when he spoke, people listened. And, after a series of these meetings, where I was with Sam, I kind of subconsciously to the other people, got the idea that Sam and I were supervisor and employee, but also colleagues, and I was a protégée of Sam's. So, it wasn't that long, a matter of months maybe, before I could go to a meeting, without Sam, and when I spoke, people listened. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Because, subconsciously, they were thinking, I'm speaking, "This Knapp guy is speaking for Sam Kennedy. You better listen to him." (Laugh) And, talk about something being good for your career, this was it. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And it also, it helped me in reputation, and probably, to be honest, it helped my ego a bit too. (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And there's nothing wrong with feeding your ego a little bit. It kinds of spurs you on to greater things.

Storey: Yeah.

Knapp: Anyway, I ended up working for Sam for the better part of eight years. And, it was a very meaningful and very rewarding experience.

Storey: And what kinds of things were you doing?

Reviewing Project Office Activities

Knapp: A lot of review, because we had the, what were then the project offices in McCook, Grand Island, [Nebraska], Casper, [Wyoming], Pueblo, [Colorado] and also we had a Field Investigations Office right in the Planning Division in Denver, which was a separate office which did planning investigations for, that no other project office could handle, like in eastern Colorado, for example. Like the Narrows Unit, for example. No project office had the responsibility for that, so we had a little miniature project office located in the Planning Division. And we had in that, Larry Nelson was the chief, Branch Chief. Kent Shuyler, who was a longtime colleague of mine, a

personal friend, was the Chief Economist in this group, and he had two other economists under him. And, we had engineering and hydrology, and reports, as a little miniature office right in the Planning Division.

Again, we didn't do that much original work. And, my office was Sam Kennedy, and Bill Eichenberry. We did mostly the review. We did some original work. But, I was taught by Sam Kennedy, early on, that when you get a report to review, you don't just review the economics, you review the whole thing. That means you review, in this report, you review the hydrology, the social aspects, archeology, and history. You review the whole thing. Not that you have to be a technical expert on the other fields, but to make sure that the results of those analyses tie in well with the economics, and there's no disagreements there. And, that was, Sam pushed us pretty heavily. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, again, that was good for me.

We had every project that was in the planning phases, or under construction and not completed, and not into an operation and maintenance status. Every year we had to turn into Congress what was called a P-F-65. I'm not sure what the P-F stands for but it was a budget justification document, where you put together the current status of the cost allocation, all the pertinent data for the project, why the cost allocation changed, and all, so this could go to Congress and say, "Okay. We need 'X' hundred thousand dollars, or 'X' million dollars to continue on this project. Here's the status." (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) All of the P-F-65s came to our office for review. And, you had to go through and be able to explain this.

Storey: So, there were construction offices? Project offices?

Knapp: There were project offices, and there were construction offices. And, but it was kind of, take Pueblo for example. It was primarily a construction office, because the Fry-Ark Project was under construction, but also, it was a project office.⁴

Storey: Uhm-hmm. And you were viewing reports from those offices?

4. The Fryingpan-Arkansas Project is a multipurpose transmountain, transbasin water diversion and delivery project in Colorado. It makes possible an average annual diversion of 69,200 acre-feet of surplus water from the Fryingpan River and other tributaries of the Roaring Fork River, on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains, to the Arkansas River basin on the eastern slope.

Water diverted from the western slope, together with available water supplies in the Arkansas River basin, provides an average annual water supply of 80,400 acre-feet for both municipal/domestic use and the supplemental irrigation of 280,600 acres in the Arkansas Valley. For mor information see, Jedediah S. Rogers, "Fryingpan-Arkansas Project," Denver: Bureau of Reclamation History Program, 2006, www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html.

Fryingpan-Arkansas Project

Knapp: Yes. And, I know, when, annually when the P-F-65 budget justification document came up from Pueblo, and a three-ring binder, a big heavy document with all the background information, then one or two people from Pueblo had to come up later and sit down with Sam to go over this. And I, quite often, had to sit in on these meetings. I felt sorry for these people a little bit. I could tell that they dreaded this with a passion. (Laugh) To sit down there in Sam's office as Sam thumbed through this notebook and would say it like, "This power foregone cost for the Upper Mt. Elbert Unit, how did that—did you index that?" (Laugh) In a nice way. He didn't brow beat anybody. But, you had to be able to sit there and come up with the answers. (Storey: Uh huh.) Probably off the top of your head. I could tell they dreaded this. Again, to repeat myself, Sam did not jump all over you, or anything like that. He did not brow beat. But, he expected the answer. And, if you couldn't come up with the answer, it was nice, and say, "Well, okay, could you go back to the office and check that out and send me message with . . ." And if it turns out it was guesswork, or something like that, you were in trouble. (Laugh)

A lot of the work we did in those days. (Phone rings) That's the phone. I'll ignore it. But it might come on to a . . . (Pause; tape turned off.)

INTERVIEW RESUMES

Storey: No problem. Let's see. You were talking about Mr. Kennedy, and the reviews.

Knapp: Yeah, and I was also saying we, a part of the work we had to do, region wide was some farm budget analyses, because we had a fair number of agricultural economists, and—should I explain what farm budget analyses are?

Farm Budget Analysis

Storey: Please.

Knapp: As a part of Reclamation law, irrigators on our projects are only required to pay based on their ability to pay. Ability to pay could be a nebulous thing, and obviously controversial. A farm budget analysis is where somebody, or a small group of people, from Reclamation go out and probably visit the project area, or talk to people, and say, "What is the typical farm in this area? Not the average farm, but what would be a typical farm?" A typical farm might have eighty-five acres of gravity-fed irrigation for corn, you know, forty-three acres of alfalfa, a small cattle operation, whatever. A

typical farm. You had to try to get an agreement on that.

Then you go through and say, “Okay, what are the production costs on this typical farm?” And you go through everything, from a lot of secondary data from extension services, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, everything from fuel costs to fertilizer costs, to taxes. Everything you can think of in the way of costs for this. And then you go through and find out, “What is the income from this? Okay. On normalized yields of crops, we’re going to get, we’re going to plan on 125 bushels of corn per acre, and so forth. And, what are the prices on this?” What prices had been paid, maybe averaged or normalized over the last five years. And come up with the typical income from this. And through a lot of nuances of going through this, you come down with, “Okay, the average farmer, in this particular district, benefitting from the water, would get, could pay, you know, \$12.65 per acre foot, based on our farm budget analysis.”

And, I did a little bit of this, but I’ll have to say, quite frankly, not a lot. I was not an agricultural economist. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Sam Kennedy was. Sam would look through this with a fine-tooth comb, and say, “Well, these feeder cattle, I think we should feed them for another two weeks.” We’re talking about a hypothetical farm here. (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) And why? Well, he could come up with a reason why. (Laugh) And, needless to say, this was a bit controversial out in the project area, because the final number on this, the project people had to go out the irrigation district and say, “We have calculated that, when this project is in operation, you should pay \$12.65 per acre foot.” And everybody jumps up and says, “No. We can’t afford to pay that much.” Then they, as a part of the negotiation, they might say, “Well, let me see your numbers.” And they say, “Well, we looked at this and you’ve got the tractor here, the main tractor, we’ve got two tractors in this operation. The main tractor, you’ve go it in operation for eight years. Our tractors don’t last that long.” (Laugh) And everything like this. It gets very esoteric. (Laugh)

Storey: So, these would be reports, once again, sent in by a project office?

Knapp: Typically, yes.

Storey: And so, they have their own economist?

Knapp: Typically, yes.

Knapp: And so, your’s is an oversight function, then, in Mr. Kennedy’s office?

Knapp: Very much. Very much.

Storey: And how do you work out those kinds of issues? Did you guys then become involved at the project level, or did they then negotiate out? Or, how did that work?

Project Negotiations

Knapp: It was a negotiation process. You say, "Okay. You've got these cattle selling for so many dollars per hundred weight. That sounds a little low." Well, then you talk to the project office people and say, "Well, here's where we got the numbers. Here's what cattle have been selling for in Omaha. We talked to the Extension Agent, and he says that's a very typical price for them." And it gets down, like in any professional situation, you know, come up, you might have a disagreement to start with but, acting professionally, you'll come up with a settled-on number. I don't think there's any profession where there's never a disagreement. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) I'm sure in, say in, for example in the history field they will say, somebody say, "Here's is the cause and factor for a certain thing," and somebody else with equal qualifications will say, "No. I feel something totally different." But, in the end (Laugh) it comes down to some form of agreement.

Storey: Yeah. One of the issues, often, in federal agencies is you have these people out at the local level, who have different perspectives, and different ties, than the ones who are at the regional level and so on. Did you ever run into any of that?

Different Perspectives between Project and Regional Office

Knapp: Yes, on occasion. Yes. To be candid, in the project office you had to deal, almost on a day-to-day basis with the irrigation district, the irrigation district manager, and so forth, and you had to maintain a certain relationship with them. There's no doubt about it. So, quite often you would have to say, "Well," you wouldn't say it in these terms but you'd have to say, "You're being a little easy on them." (Laugh)

Storey: Uh huh.

Knapp: And, of course this, I say, "You're being easy on them." I want to emphasize the fact that I never once saw any area of graft or corruption on that. I don't think, it probably occurred somewhere beyond what I would ever know about, but no it was just the fact that when you, as a project economist if you go and have coffee with these guys in the morning, and they're talking about hard times, and say we really can't afford \$12.65, after a while it has to get to you a little bit, and you might not want to fight, fight them

that much. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But, we always tried to, in a certain way, play the bad guy role on this, in Denver. We could say, so the project economist had the option of saying, “Well, you might be right on that number, maybe you can’t afford it, but this is what Denver’s making us do. You have to live with it.” (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And I never felt bad about playing that role of, “Okay, this is what Denver insists on.”

Storey: Did you ever have a situation where it was way off?

Issues of Basin-Wide Study in Kansas

Knapp: Not way off. Oh. Yeah. I can’t come up with any concrete examples on that. One that comes to mind is a study that I was in charge of once. Not a particular project study, but a basin-wide study, in Kansas, where we had decreased inflows to Reclamation reservoirs. And they, the project users were not getting the water (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) that they should be getting. It was a really decreased outflow on that. And, as a part of my study, which was a lengthy study, I came down at the end and I said, “Well, yeah they’re not getting the water they’re supposed to get,” and it was a repayment-type contract, not based on per acre foot. It was a given amount that they were to pay. And, in my report, and my conclusions, I said, “Well. Yeah, they’re not getting the water, but they should pay anyway.” (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) “We don’t guarantee you water.” (Storey: Yeah.)

And, the project manager at Grand Island, at that time, at first didn’t notice this. But then, when he finally did notice this, that I had said, in my report, “They should pay anyway,” he got on the phone to me and really lambasted me. He said, “I’ve already told these people they shouldn’t have to pay.” (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) I said, “Well, sorry about that but that’s my findings. We agree that there is a decreased outflow from the reservoir, but they should pay anyway. We don’t have the latitude to really forgive them on this.” And he lambasted me some more. And we hung up the phone, and I thought to myself, “Whoever gets to the regional director first, will likely win on this.” (Laugh) I knew the regional director was not in the office. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So I quickly found out where he was, in what office he was, and I put together a semi-emergency call to him. I was second. (Laugh)

Storey: (Laugh) Uh huh.

Knapp: The project manager got him first.

Storey: This would have been Bob Coots [spelling?], maybe?

Knapp: It was.

Storey: Yeah. And so you lost?

Knapp: Not entirely. In the end we took my conclusion and buried it in the text of the document. It was not in the conclusions. The page or page and a half of conclusions were what most people read only. (Storey: Uh huh.) It was not in the conclusions, but it was in there. (Laugh) And somewhere nobody would probably ever notice. But I felt ethically I had—it was in there. If you cared to read it, it was in there. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And for Bob, he felt that, “Okay the people that will read this won’t see that, and we’ll continue on here working whatever we have to do, but it won’t jump out at them as a red flag.” (Laugh) So, in a sense, we both won.

Storey: Uh huh. So, you did farm budget analyses?

Knapp: Uhm-hmm.

Storey: And I’m hearing a basin analysis. What other kinds of things? This would be regional. What, you know, what characterizes regional work as opposed to say, project work, as opposed to Denver Office work? At that time?

Differentiating Project, Regional, Denver, Responsibilities

Knapp: There were a few things that kind of fell through the cracks, and didn’t really fall into the auspices of any project office . . .

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. MARCH 3, 2003.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. MARCH 3, 2003.

Storey: Tape two of an interview by Brit Storey with Alonzo Knapp on March 10, 2003.

You were talking about the differences and so on.

Knapp: Yeah. There were some things, like I say, that fell through the cracks, didn’t belong to any project office. And, to be honest, maybe some of the stuff in, it was decided at more management levels, and I was definitely not management level, that, maybe geographically, should fall into a project office territory, but it was decided the Denver Office would do it. I’m thinking, somewhat I remember a couple of small project loan applications, that the Denver Office had responsibility for either doing or, in many cases, reviewing, but doing. I can think of just a few examples of this, that

our, that Sam Kennedy's office had responsibility for.

I talked earlier about the farm budget analyses. I remember I worked heavily with Bill Eichenberry on a particular farm budget study, on the Trinidad Project in southern Colorado.⁵ And, of course I had never touched a farm budget before. I was new. I found out later that Bill never had either, but he never admitted it. (Laugh) Anyway, I saved that somewhere. I think I probably just finally discarded it. It was really, by current analyses and techniques and computerization and so forth, it's extremely primitive. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Anyway I've probably lost track of the question here at this point.

Storey: Well, we were talking about the difference between a regional responsibility, a project responsibility, Denver Office, but, you've raised the issue of computers. Did you have computers then? (Knapp: Oh . . .) Did you work with them, I mean?

Utilizing Computer Technology

Knapp: Well, when I started out, my first day on the job I had a desktop calculator, which was electric. I started out with a Marchant, and then I graduated to a Fridan. Now these were the things with these massive buttons on the front, all over, controls all over the front. They were heavy.

Storey: Ten rows of buttons?

Knapp: Yeah, and ten deep and everything. It was, and they would multiply and divide. They would add and subtract, but that was a little awkward on them. Of course that was as far it went, was multiplying and dividing. And they went kerchunk kerchunk kerchunk kerchunk, as they were dividing. They divided by subtracting. (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) And, I recall that one of my first days on the job—I had never worked one of these things before. And I was practicing with it, and I started to divide something, and it wouldn't stop. (Laugh) And I, it just kept kerchunking. And finally, I crawled under the table, next to my desk, and unplugged it. I later discovered that what I was doing was dividing by zero. (Laugh)

Storey: Oh.

Knapp: Which you can't do. It would divide by zero forever. (Storey: Uh huh.) But, to answer the question, yes, we started out with, I had the big Fridan calculator, and then

5. The Trinidad Project is a flood control project constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with an irrigation component managed by the Bureau of Reclamation.

I had a separate adding machine, a little ten-key adding machine. Which, if you had to do just addition or subtraction, that was much better.

Shortly thereafter we got, I'm not sure of the term here, but we had a main computer over in Building 67, on the Federal Center. We had a little satellite terminal in our building, in Building 20. I say a satellite, it's hard to describe. It's a little thing, with a keyboard and a printer and so forth, and maybe a couple other pertinent things on it. And you could, through the right formula, dial a number with the phone it had on it and tie in by phone to the main computer, and thereby get the full main computer's memory and capacity for doing calculations. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Which, by today's standards were minimal, almost nothing. I remember the printer on there, printed at ten baud, which is about as fast as you can write. (Laugh) And, I wrote a few programs for it, like to compute the internal rate of return, and compute I-D-C [spelling?], or a few things. And, I stored these on paper tape, one of which I still maintain. I have around here somewhere. It's a little yellow tape in a roll, about a half-inch wide, with the little holes punched in it. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

And to run this program you start and get online with this, or whatever we called it in those days, and feed the tape into this little tape reader. And it would read the program and store it. Now you got the program in there. Then it would, you put in your input data and it would run it, very slowly. (Storey: Uh huh.) But, these were the beginning days of use of computer. Virtually everything we did, I say I had these little programs, but virtually everything we did was done by hand. Cost allocation, farm budgets, repayment analyses, everything was done by hand, and quite often in long spreadsheets, done in pencil. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

I can, I probably sound like an old fossil or reprobate here, but some of these things, in my opinion, that we had to do by hand, gave you a feeling for the process that I don't think you get off the computer. For example, on the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project there was a, annually we had to do a new repayment analysis. And this was on a spreadsheet. The thing was taped together, about five feet long, with little columns in it. Revenue from various sources, from homestake, and from water, M&I water sales and irrigation water sales, and power, and various things. And contrasting that with cost to be repaid for irrigation for municipal and industrial, and for power. A lengthy spreadsheet. And, it took forever to put one of these together. And then the question would come up, let's say, "What if we increased the price we got for M&I [municipal and industrial] water by fifty cents per acre foot, what would that do?" Well, you go back and redo the whole thing. (Storey: Uh huh.)

I think now, after twenty-five years,—I've not touched one of those in twenty-five

years. I think I could sit down here and put together a fairly good facsimile of that entire repayment schedule, just because I stared at it so long. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And sometimes, you would get an emergency question, “What if we increased the irrigation, operation and maintenance costs by twenty-five cents per acre foot, what would that do to power repayment?” And sometimes in an emergency you would have to look at it and say, “I understand this. I have a feel for it. Therefore this would change this number by this amount. This would change that by this amount. Therefore, the power assistance required by irrigation would increase by ‘X’ dollars per acre foot.” And, you know, that’s approximate. But you had to have a heck of a feeling for the whole thing, to do that. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Same thing on cost allocations. I won’t get into what cost allocation is, but it allocates . . .

Storey: Oh, but I’m going to ask you eventually. (Laughter)

Cost Allocations

Knapp: Okay. It’s all done by computer now. (Storey: Uh huh.) You put in a few pertinent factors in there and then the machine cranks out the result. We did the whole thing by hand. (Storey: Uh huh.) And, again, it folds in eight by twelve, or so. And, again, the questions would come up. “Okay, included in the cost allocation are things like various kinds of costs, various kinds of benefits for each function. Well, what if we lowered the flood control benefits by ten percent? What would that do to the M&I cost allocation?” And you could have your choice, depending on the time, you could sit down and redo the whole thing, or if somebody’s in a meeting, waiting for the answer, you could give it your best shot. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But, again, it took a feel for how this thing worked, and what it looked like, to be able to do that.

Storey: So, cost allocation is the percentage of repayment, from various sources?

Knapp: In the end result, yes. Here’s how much the irrigators will have to pay. Here’s how much M&I will have to pay, fish and wildlife, and so forth. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) It’s an entire, long process to get to that answer.

Storey: And some of the things, of course, are not repaid?

Knapp: Some of the things like flood control I understand in recent years,—I’ve been out of this business of cost allocation for some time. I understand some parts of flood control are now partially reimbursable, but flood control was not reimbursable. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Municipal/industrial is reimbursable, with interest. Power was reimbursable, with interest. Irrigation was reimbursable, but without interest. And,

but I have been in the business long enough to know little bits of trivia on these things. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Like, no where in law does it say that irrigation is repaid without interest.

Storey: It's just the practice that's been handed down?

Knapp: No. To start with all we had was irrigation on these projects. (Storey: Uh huh.) And the only rules of the game were the cost were to be repaid, the construction costs. (Storey: Yeah.) Later, when other functions came along, like power, M&I and so forth, municipal and industrial, came along it was specified that it would be repaid with interest. Irrigation was never mentioned. So, by the fact that it was not included (Storey: Uh huh.) no one ever mentioned interest on irrigation. And I think, probably, if you try to charge interest, and took it to a court of law on this, if we tried to charge interest, we'd probably lose.

Storey: Why is that?

Reclamation has No Authority to Charge Interest on Irrigation

Knapp: We don't have authority to charge interest.

Storey: Doesn't anywhere say, "You will charge interest on irrigation repayment."

Knapp: It does not say that. The only language in law, is that "You will repay the construction cost." As I'm sure you're aware that initially that was in ten years. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Later it got expanded to twenty and thirty years, but it was "Repay the construction costs." (Storey: Uhm-hmm. Hmm.) But I have been around long enough to know some little bits of trivia like that.

Storey: Yeah, that's interesting, actually.

Knapp: Which brings something to mind that's maybe off the subject. But, since we're talking trivia, I discovered in looking through the law books here, some years back, that initially in the Reclamation Act of 1902 there was language in there that said, "No Mongolian labor will be used in the construction of these projects."

Storey: That was very standard?

Knapp: Uhm-hmm. And that was not removed until, I think, the '50s.

- Storey: Uh huh. Yeah, there were Exclusion Acts to prevent Japanese and Chinese (Knapp: Right) labor from coming in, because they felt it unfairly competed with American labor.
- Knapp: Which is probably true. (Laugh)
- Storey: Well, they, you know, they work for low wages.
- Knapp: Yeah.
- Storey: And so on. So.
- Knapp: And they were industrious.
- Storey: Yeah. That was, that was part of the legal code for a long time . . .
- Knapp: Was it? Okay.
- Storey: . . . for the United States.
- Knapp: I have seen it in a couple of old contracts.
- Storey: Yeah. Yeah. It's in all of the old ones, I think.
- Knapp: Yeah. Uhm-hmm.
- Storey: It's one of those standard clauses they stick in.
- Knapp: Yeah.
- Storey: Tell me some more interesting things.
- Knapp: (Laugh) Oh, let's see. You want to stay on the technical side here?
- Storey: Well, let's talk about that for a little while. You're going to get a new job pretty soon I expect? Your eight years will be over.
- Knapp: Oh.
- Storey: In, with Mr. Kennedy, and you'll move on to something else?

Kansas State Water Plan Studies

Knapp: Yeah. Okay. That's a good question. I worked on the Kansas State Water Plan studies, which was a lengthy study for the state of Kansas, doing, trying to project the state of Kansas economy and the status of water in the state of Kansas in the future. I'm not sure how good a job we did. The Planning Team Leader for that was Fred Krauss, K-R-A-U-S-S. And, I was kind of, became kind of the assistant team leader and we had this same mix of disciplines in there, geology, hydrology, fish and wildlife, and so forth.

And, in the end, this was a horrendous study, but in the end I ended up writing a long computer program in Fortran, that would take input numbers on demands and supply and project by region in Kansas the state water supply. And, particularly, the status of groundwater. Surface water was fairly well known, but, you know, at this time, we're talking twenty to twenty-five years ago. There was some active concern about the depletion of groundwater, in the Ogallala Formation and so forth. And, the program I wrote, probably, I'm not sure how accurate it was, would compute depletions to the point that groundwater pumping was no longer really feasible. And I came to the conclusion that some regions in western Kansas, at a certain point in time, I couldn't quote you any numbers, would have to give up on groundwater. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) This was a fairly controversial little study.

But, the point I was going to make was I started giving a few little talks on this. Fred Krauss sort of turned it over to me, since I had written the program and could talk about it. (Storey: Uh huh.) And I kind of enjoyed, probably my ego, standing up in front of a group with something I thought I understood, and talking about it. And I enjoyed working with the different disciplines on this. So, over time I started working more and more as a planning project leader. I worked on that. I worked on the Solomon River basin studies, the Republican River basin studies, the Kansas State Water Plan Studies, and, probably most significant to me, the Coal Creek Water Studies here in Colorado. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

Planning Project Leader

But, I was spending more and more of my time being a planning project leader, than I was as an economist. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, which I rather enjoyed. There had some down aspects to it, but I rather enjoyed it. And, came a time when we had, at the time we had, let's see, two full-time project leaders, in the Planning Division. They had no staff, they were just project leaders. And, to get staffed you went around to their particular branch and asked, say, the Hydrology Branch Chief, "I

need a hydrologist for my study. Who have you got?” Well, you might negotiate a little bit, but it’s really up to the branch chief to say, “Okay, you can take so and so. He’ll be your hydrologist on the team.” Okay, the hydrologist might be working two other studies at the same time. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But, the branch chief maintains supervisory authority, but the leader, project leader, had the authority, not much authority, but could use this person for the hydrology aspects of the particular study. Like I say, we had two full-time project leaders, at the time. One of them left to go to the E&R [Engineering and Research] Center. That was Fred Krauss. And, we advertised competitively for a replacement, which I eventually got. I was a GS-13, which for the first time in my career, I broke into what they call the senior part.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. When was that?

Knapp: This would have been circa 1980, ‘81. And, I found myself with several studies and a job that, it turns out, I didn’t care for that much. (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) You had zero authority. You were looked upon as something of a nuisance. And, if a particular person, an archeologist or somebody wanted to please somebody, it didn’t do any good to please the project leader, you pleased your supervisor. (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) And sometimes the studies were nebulas, as to what you’re trying to do (Laugh) I didn’t find it particularly satisfying. Except for one, if you care to hear about it?

Storey: Sure. I want to hear about them all, actually.

Coal Creek Water Studies

Knapp: Okay, well, back me up anytime or I can—the Coal Creek Water studies, which I mentioned. This was a hold over from our Front Range Unit investigations in Colorado. We were asked, this is back in the ‘70s sometime, to do a study. The Bureau of Reclamation was asked to do a study of potential water supplies for the Front Range of Colorado. North, starting just north of Denver, really up to the state line of Wyoming, to do—this is a pretty big question. And, we did. I say “we” did, I was only partially involved in this.

We did a pretty substantial study on water supplies, on water needs, for starting with a bit of Boulder, Loveland, Longmont, Ft. Collins, Greeley, Estes Park. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, at the end, we did not have any real support for the Bureau of Reclamation to continue on this. We had actually, to our detriment, had identified potential storage sites, in the foothills. You can imagine, in circa 1978 or so, or ‘79, the idea of the Bureau of Reclamation coming in and—it came out in the Boulder paper

one day, with a map of the storage sites we were looking at. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) We were not popular. (Laugh) And the whole study kind of folded, with the exception of the very southern tip of it, the Coal Creek basin.

The Coal Creek basin consisted of little tiny community of Superior, communities of Louisville, Lafayette, and Erie, who were seeing some problems with their future water supply. So, they asked the Bureau to continue to see if they could, if we could help them. And, I was given the job as project leader on that, which I found a good experience. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) We had, as a sponsor, the Coal Creek Water User's Association, which was made up of representatives of these communities. And, they met at least once a month, in the evening, either in Lafayette or Louisville. And, they kept meeting for a time when the Bureau was rather dormant on this. But, they had to show diligence in keeping going. And, their idea was to come up with a water supply for these communities for the future.

And, I remember the first meeting I showed up at, I was the only visitor, and I showed up and kind of sat in the audience, being a bit shy. I didn't want to impose myself on these four or five guys because they had the communities represented, and their attorney, and a consultant there. And they went through all the motions of the meeting, and all this, and various items of business. And finally one of them said, "We have to find out who this other visitor is." (Laugh) So I introduced and identified myself and they said, "Come right up here to the dias." (Laugh)

Well, I started working on it with some diligence. And I say, a very good experience. I had a very good team, on this. We looked at all kinds of alternatives, from expanding some existing storage and some existing reservoirs, like Baseline Reservoir here in Boulder, other reservoirs out on the plains. We looked at groundwater. And, groundwater, it turns out was not feasible. We looked at things like expansion of Gross Reservoir belonging to the Denver Water Board, up in the mountains. Denver Water Board was not cooperative on this. They didn't have any immediate need to see any expansion into Gross Reservoir, which we would require. And, we looked at a high, thin-arch dam of our own up in the foothills in South Boulder Creek.

What we eventually—I'm probably getting ahead of myself here, but what we eventually keyed in on was a new dam and reservoir, on the plains, upstream from Superior, on Coal Creek. You know, Highway 93, it would be east of Highway 93, an 11,000 acre foot reservoir. And, we did a lot of studies on that. I found it good because it was probably the only time in my career that I could, been in charge of a product, a project between my home and the office. (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

So, then I had geologists out there drilling holes and things, and I could always stop by in the morning, on the way to the office. And, we did a lot of work on that. And, did some good work.

Enjoyed Working with Local Communities

And I especially enjoyed working with the communities, City Managers of Louisville, and Lafayette. And Erie was kind of in and out a bit. Superior was such a small community that they were on wells and septic tanks, maybe six or seven hundred people. And, they participated but they were just, it was kind of beyond them, on this. But, Louisville and Lafayette had some very good city managers, and very active. Leon Wurl rings a bell. Leon Wurl I'm sure—he was formally a City Manager of Aspen. Ended his career with the City Manager of Erie, and he died a few years ago. But, a very, they paid him probably twenty percent more than any other city manager of equal size, because he was good. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

And we would have our meeting, probably in like the Louisville City Council Chambers, then we would adjourn across the street to have a beer. And somebody in the Boulder paper caught one time that “The mayors, or city managers of these communities were having secret meetings at a local beer joint.” (Laugh) (Storey: Yeah.) And, shortly thereafter, maybe the same day, they had a meeting, and we adjourned across the street to kind of a back room in the bar, and people would stop by routinely, stick their head in and say, “This one of those secret meetings?” (Laugh) They didn't care. (Storey: Uh huh.) Like I say we've, after a lot of work, there's many a story there. We zeroed in on an 11,000 acre foot reservoir, brand new, upstream from Superior. And this is at a time when dams and reservoirs are not well thought of in the U.S.

A little incident that I'll mention to give kudos to myself and show how immodest I really am. I got invited one day to come up and give a luncheon talk to Plan Boulder County, which was a fairly strong environmentalist group in Boulder County. They had regular meetings, in the University Club. And I was to be a luncheon speaker. So I went up there and had lunch, and they had some business to attend to first. They were very concerned about a hiking trail up South Boulder Canyon, about any environmental impacts of this hiking trail. I'm sitting there in the audience thinking, “They're concerned about a hiking trail and I'm going to tell them we're looking at a high, thin-arch dam.” (Laugh) Even though we're throwing that one out. (Storey: Uh huh.)

So, when I got the time to talk I told them how we were doing our studies. We

did botanical studies. We did endangered species, endangered botanical studies. We did deep drilling for geology, and all the alternatives we looked at, including the high thin-arch dam. And I said, “And we eventually settled on this one reservoir out on the plains,” and I emphasized that we found no endangered vegetation. We found no endangered species there. We found a couple little historical sites, which are thoroughly documented, nothing of real significance that we knew about. And, where the immodesty comes in is they kept me for about an extra half hour asking questions. Like one question I still remember is, “Well when you start condemning land . . .” I said, “Look, we only condemn land as a last resort. We try to acquire it first.” (Storey: Uh huh.)

But at the end, their conclusion was, “We have no problem with it.” What I learned from this was, these groups like this, even when they’re your potential opposition, and very strong opposition, if you go talk to them, some of the opposition disappears. We could tell them why we were doing the study, the need for it, the alternatives we looked at, and what we come up with was the best alternative, and why it was the best alternative. And once you communicate that well, some of the opposition just fades away. I don’t think at that time, and probably still not, Reclamation had ever discovered that. (Laugh)

Storey: Hmm. Reclamation was doing this because the cities wanted it?

Knapp: Yes.

Storey: Were they cost sharing or anything?

Knapp: Not at that point, no. But, no, we were doing it all our self, but there was no construction yet, it was all just planning.

Storey: Uh huh. Did we have to have any approvals for planning? How, you know, how did you get (Knapp: Yes.) the go-ahead?

Knapp: This was a feasibility-level study, and it was a, and it was, we had authority through the aforementioned Front Range Unit Study, which was also a feasibility-level study. Feasibility-level studies are required by, I think by Public Law 89-72, to have congressional approval for feasibility-level studies. Lesser level, appraisal-level, reconnaissance-level, just required you have the money. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) It doesn’t require Congress to approve the study itself. We had approval for the Front Range Unit Study, by Congress, and this was a piece of that. So, we had authority.

Storey: And, was anything ever built?

Knapp: No. When it came down to the end, all the communities said the same thing, “We can’t afford it.” It was going to be like, \$70 million, \$70-some million, apportioned out to each of the communities. And even like the little town of Superior said, “You know, our contribution would be like, you know, several million dollars a year. This is our total budget . . .”

END SIDE 1, TAPE 2. MARCH 3, 2003.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. MARCH 3, 2003.

Knapp: Anyway, like I say, the city, the community of Louisville said, “We can’t afford anything like that.” And even Louisville and Lafayette said, “We can’t afford that.” And Erie said, “Forget it. We can’t afford it.” So, my end conclusion was, in our Concluding Report was, “The project has not been found economically infeasible. It’s not been found financially infeasible. It’s been found financially unacceptable.” (Laugh) And we let it go at that. I did do some, what we call post-audit interviews with some of the city managers and so forth, that I worked with just so—Reclamation, I think, has a bad habit of doing this, when something fold likes that, we just drop it like a hot rock. I went back and talked to them a little bit (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) to say I appreciated their help on this, and everything, and, “If there’s anything else we can do for you, let us know.” (Laugh) Which they appreciated. (Storey: Uh huh.) Something I might get into more later is the, looking back I’m not sure that people are generally aware of what happened to the city of Erie.

Storey: Go ahead and talk about it.

Water Needs for Growing Communities

Knapp: It is now, I’m just making a broad guess, there’s a population of 15 to 20,000 people. Louisville and Lafayette have grown so much that they have actively talked about growth controls. I think they might have some. The city of Erie is very concerned that it’s grown so much in the last five years that they’re being strapped for cash for infrastructure. So, all of these communities have grown like a son of a gun. (Storey: Yeah.) And, right now, this reservoir, in my opinion, would be very feasible. (Laugh)

Storey: Uh huh. And does anyone even remember it?

Knapp: I do. I’ve saved some documentation on it.

Storey: Yeah. I know that. But what about the people at the cities?

Knapp: No. No one know about it.

Storey: Yeah.

Knapp: They're all new. I approached, I won't name any names, somebody in Reclamation here a couple of years ago and I said, "It would be interesting to go back and do a study on this to see what we did wrong. And we did something wrong. These communities, they're strapped for water, but they're getting water, through a population, that I have not checked on, this could be twice what we projected. And, the bottom line might be, however, they're getting the water, maybe we overlooked the best alternative." (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Maybe they're using the best alternative, and we overlooked it.

And, again, we did a lot of studies on things, a lot of hydrology studies, a lot of studies on water rights in the area, which I'm sure some of these communities would like to see. My thought toward doing a little analysis of this whole study, more or less got turned down. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But I'm retired now. And, in answer to your question, no, I don't think anybody in engineering or anywhere in those communities know that a study was done on this. We actually had, for the, we had a, virtually, I think it was a feasibility-level study of the dam design, done by Harza [Engineering Company] of Chicago, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) which is no lightweight. And that cost a lot of money too, for them to do it. I have that feasibility study. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

But, this goes into some other things I'll talk about later, about some of the things that—no one knows what Reclamation has done, and we're not advertising it. It's like we're keeping quiet about it. (Storey: Uh huh.) We had a person on that, the bigger Front Range study, actually came up with a concept—and I think the guy that did this was an engineering technician, come up with a concept which would never be built but it was an interesting concept, of a water manifold like from Longmont to Fort Collins, which could be tapped into by communities along the way.

Storey: What's a water manifold?

Knapp: Just a, picture a big tube just going along the ground (Storey: Uh huh.) full of water, which from various sources goes in there. So instead of a community tapping into a little reservoir somewhere, all the water goes into the manifold, and communities tap into the manifold. So it's there.

Storey: So the manifold becomes the storage?

Knapp: The storage and the means of transport also. (Storey: Yeah.) Some of the storage would come from the reservoirs that feed it, but all the water in the Front Range would kind of belong to everybody, in a sense, the same. (Storey: Hmm.) Something like that would never be built. I don't think you'd get the necessary cooperation from the communities. But, it's just an indicator of the level of good innovative thought that went into some of these.

Determining Water Supply for the Coal Creek Project

In backing up, for the Coal Creek Project, we determined that the water supply necessary would come from South Boulder Creek, which is totally appropriated. Being totally appropriated, we would have to buy water, or acquire water, from farmers, which is not unusual. Of course, when you acquire water from agricultural use, you don't necessarily get the full amount. You get the consumptive use. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) We did a long study on various bits and pieces of water that might become available, and what is the consumptive use and what water supply could we get, from South Boulder Creek? And I'm sure some of those numbers would still be useful somewhere. They're hidden away.

Storey: I'm a little confused about why Boulder Creek would be the focus of a Coal Creek basin study?

Knapp: Ah. Good question. Coal Creek, itself, has a very minuscule water supply. It comes from Coal Creek Canyon, up off Highway 93. That's where it originates. It goes across west of Rocky Flats, and then it crosses Highway 93. There is an old, what we always call a cement plant, though it's not a cement plant.

Storey: Right there on the edge of the mesa?

Knapp: Right.

Storey: Or the edge of the terrace?

Knapp: Yeah. Right down north of that, down to the bottom of the hill is Coal Creek. It's kind of a little wooded area. Minuscule water supply. It hardly counts for anything. The water is in South Boulder Creek. (Storey: Uh huh.) There is a community ditch which originates, the diversion is in Eldorado Springs, right up in the mouth of the canyon. Community Ditch, that's the ditch that some people say runs uphill, because

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- you look at it as you're climbing up the mesa, say going south, you look over on the side you can kind of see it trailing down the side of the hill, and it looks like it goes uphill. (Storey: Uh huh.) It doesn't really. It's an illusion. (Storey: Yeah.) But, Community Ditch goes out as far as, I think, Brighton.
- Storey: Really?
- Knapp: Uh huh. But it goes over Davidson Mesa, that's the mesa you were talking about. Davidson? No. That's not, excuse me, not Davidson Mesa. That's, back, that's wrong. It's—I don't know the name of it but it goes up to Marshall, up at the top of the hill, and it would be very easy to tap into for Coal Creek, or Coal Creek Reservoir. So, our thought was to capture, by acquiring the appropriate amount of agricultural water, put it in Community Ditch, and transport it up into a diversion into Coal Creek Reservoir.
- Storey: Hmm. So, South Boulder is the creek coming out of the Eldorado Canyon?
- Knapp: Yes.
- Storey: Rather than the, Boulder Creek is the one that flows through Boulder?
- Knapp: Through Boulder. Right.
- Storey: Yeah. Okay.
- Knapp: And, see, Gross Reservoir is on South Boulder Creek. That's, it belongs to the Water Board of Denver.
- Storey: That's the one that's high up above Eldorado Springs?
- Knapp: Right.
- Storey: I think you can see that from the train, maybe?
- Knapp: I think you can.
- Storey: The train tracks.

Marshall Landfill

- Knapp: One of the problems we hit on the Coal Creek Reservoir was the Marshall Landfill. Major landfill uphill from Coal Creek Reservoir. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Major landfill. Legend had it that there were two barrels of P-C-Bs [polychlorinated biphenyls] buried in there somewhere. (Laugh) And all kinds of stuff that, I had a big drilling program going up there, to sample. First of all to sample water. Secondly, to get the ground water gradient to find out if water from that hill would actually go down into Coal Creek Reservoir. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Very frustrating because every hole we drilled I knew less. (Laugh)
- Storey: Instead of more?
- Knapp: Instead of more I knew less, because this, “Okay, if these two are accurate than this one should be. No, it goes the other way.”
- Storey: Yeah. Huh. What did you find, in terms of water purity?
- Knapp: Not much. A failure we had of one of the first groups we had in there to do some drilling, for water, were drilling some fairly deep holes, and they—well, let me back up just a little bit there. One of the—there was a little article in the paper about some concern that there was some water from the Marshall Landfill going over north just a few feet almost, into Community Ditch, and this would be contaminating Community Ditch, and we’re not sure what’s in this landfill water. (Storey: Yeah.) That’s separate from us, at the time anyway, but that was another thing. So, we had this drilling crew come in to do some drilling for water quality, and as a part of the drilling they needed some water for drilling. And, I don’t know drilling techniques that well. I’m not that kind of person. So, they, for water for the drilling purposes they just went over to Community Ditch and got some water, which was already contaminated. (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) So I don’t think any samples we ever got out of that would ever stand up to the light of day (Storey: Yeah. Huh.) We intentionally poured in contaminated water in this hole. (Laugh)
- Storey: Oh my. The things you run into. Did you know that at the time?
- Knapp: I found out about it later.
- Storey: Yeah.
- Knapp: To answer the question about what did we find out about water quality? Nothing conclusive that, a couple of the holes had a strong sulfide smell to them. But, I don’t recall any conclusions on this. Except, looking back, one of the city fathers asked me

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- one time, he said, “If you build this project, would you move the landfill?” And I said, “Well, we’re not planning on that.” Looking back that might have been the cheap alternative.
- Storey: Uh huh. Hmm. Did we use Reclamation drill crews?
- Knapp: I, partially we did. I think a couple of them were contracts. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Of course we had to do other drilling for, you know, fill material for the dam, and things like that. We did a lot of work up there.
- Storey: And when you say, Coal Creek Reservoir, that’s your preferred one up above Superior?
- Knapp: Right. Yes.
- Storey: Hmm. Well, it does make you wonder where the water’s coming from now, for all of that development out there.
- Knapp: It certainly does. It certainly does. If you’ve ever driven down the Boulder Turnpike, US 36, it’s a, just amazing to look at hillside after hillside full of houses. (Storey: Yeah.) And they’re getting water somewhere.
- Storey: Denver seems to be providing a lot. I don’t know whether Denver’s doing that area, but . . .
- Knapp: I don’t know, when I, at one point in this study I got contacted by Broomfield, who, Broomfield was in a little water crisis, and they wanted to be involved in it. As it turns out, they had been in the very early days, even before I came on board. And I went, this was getting to the concluding days of our study, and I went up and had a meeting with Broomfield, city engineer. I’m not sure who all was there, and I said, “No, you can’t get in the study.” I said, “We’ve already sized this and done everything, with the communities that have stood up for it for the last several years.” (Storey: Uh huh.) And, “It’s too late for you to come in. Broomfield would overwhelm the study.” And they were, I wouldn’t say nasty to me, but they didn’t like me very well.
- Storey: Yeah. Well, I can imagine.
- Knapp: An interesting sidelight, here, is that the people I worked with, on the study, and had several beers with, Leon Wurl [spelling?], I said, the City Manager of Louisville has a
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wildlife refuge named after him. Bob Burger, was the mayor of Lafayette, now has the Bob Burger Recreation Center named after him. Howard Berry, who was the president of the association, has the Howard Berry Treatment Facility named after him. These are all the people that had some respect. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) It turns out I have nothing named after me. (Laugh)

Storey: That you know of?

Knapp: Well.

Storey: (Laugh) Tell me about some of the other studies you did. You mentioned Solomon River, for instance.

Solomon River Studies

Knapp: Yes. Solomon River, in the state of Kansas, Kirwin-Webster, Webster Reservoir, Cedar Bluff Reservoir, or Wakonda Lake, actually, all in the state of Kansas, all on the Solomon River and tributaries there.⁶ And I'm not—I've lost track of some of my geography there. The problem was that they were not getting the outflow of water from the reservoir, that they were designed for, as I mentioned this earlier. They were designed, I'm not sure when they, back in the '40s and '50s. Solomon River, I think Glen Elder was just slightly later. But, and of course Glen Elder had no irrigation function, so our primary focus was on Kirwin and Webster. And, what's happening here that we were supposed to deliver so many acre feet of water and no one was getting it. That was the crux of the study. We looked at several factors there. Three factors, actually. Number one was increased conservation practices upstream of the reservoirs, by meaning terraces, farm ponds, all the stuff that what is now the Natural Resources Conservation Service does. At that time, the Soil Conservation Service. And these are all great, good things that they do. But, they decrease inflow into the stream. (Laugh)

Storey: Because it slows the water down (Knapp: Right.) and gives it a tendency to soak in.

Knapp: Yeah. And it was, decreases the surface water runoff, (Storey: Uh huh.) which they're designed to do, and it's a great thing. Another thing was increased groundwater

6. The Kirwin Unit of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program is located along the North Fork of the Solomon River in the State of Kansas. The unit features include a multiple-purpose dam and reservoir and a canal, lateral, and drainage system used to serve 11,435 irrigable acres. For more information, see Wyndham E. Whynot, "Kirwin and Webster Projects: Solomon Division, Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program," Denver: Bureau of Reclamation History Program, 1996, www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html.

pumping upstream from these reservoirs. Groundwater was getting to be a big thing, and there was increased groundwater pumping. The third thing, which was the thing that the local people and the state, to some extent, keyed in on was precipitation changes. All the local people said, "It doesn't rain like it used to." And, we'd say, "Well, I think it does." And they said, "No. We don't have those two or three day little gully washers we used to have. We don't have those anymore." (Storey: Uh huh.)

So, we contracted with Kansas State [University], to do a study on precipitation in that basin. And, the end result of, paraphrasing, the end result of their study was that, "Yeah there are changes in precipitation. There are constantly changes in precipitation. They fluctuate over time, but overall it's about the same as it always has been. There's fluctuations but you've, fluctuations but nothing long-term steady." And it turns out, and our, and again I'm guessing. This has been twenty-five years ago. But, the end result of our study was about fifty percent of the reduced inflow and the reduced outflow was due to conservation practices, and about at least fifty percent due to groundwater pumping, which was approved by the state. (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

State didn't like this conclusion. (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) And, no one liked this conclusion, because we're talking about the reduced inflow stemming from two good things. One is the conservation practices. The other is the groundwater pumping, which is a good thing on it's own. It's providing water to irrigators, and that's a good thing. But the two of them together caused the reservoir to not operate in the way it was designed to operate. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, this then, there is all of this—end of our study.

Eventually Kansas kind of came around in its own way, not because of our study or anything. They came around, and through David Pope, an engineer who came into our office while I was on the study, kept a firm grasp on groundwater. They had some groundwater management areas. I'm talking off the top of my head here a bit. I know they didn't give groundwater the carte blanche that it once had. (Storey: Uh huh.) The reservoirs, the writing was on the wall. It's probably never going to have the inflow that it was designed for, or the outflow. For the most part (beeping sound) they're going to be using a, reservoirs for fish and wildlife, and recreation. (Snapping noise) Maybe somehow flow through irrigation, but a general change in use. Recognizing the writing on the wall, which is a very valid use. They're a goodly population out there, and these reservoirs are in demand for recreation, and fish and wildlife. "Okay, let's use it."

Storey: Uhm-hmm. Were these groundwater users upstream in Nebraska?

Knapp: I was just talking about the Solomon River Study, which was almost entirely, I believe, entirely in Kansas.

Storey: Oh. Okay.

Knapp: We did a similar study . . .

Storey: Oh, it's the Republican River I'm thinking of.

Knapp: Republican River, yeah. Simultaneously, almost a very similar study, on the Republican. (Storey: Uh huh.) Which really has three parts, a little bit in Colorado, Kansas, and some in Nebraska. Almost, a goodly part in Nebraska, a little bit in Kansas. (Storey: Uhm-hmm. Hmm.) A very similar study.

Storey: Why don't we talk about that next time?

Knapp: Sure.

Storey: It's been two hours, now.

Knapp: Okay.

Storey: Since we started. Let me ask you whether you're willing for researchers to use the information on these tapes?

Knapp: Yes I am.

Storey: And the resulting transcripts?

Knapp: Yes I am.

Storey: Great. Thank you. I appreciate it.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. MARCH 3, 2003.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 1. MARCH 26, 2003.

Storey: This is Brit Storey, senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Alonzo D. Knapp, Lon Knapp, on March 26, 2003, at his home in Boulder, Colorado.

Lon, why don't I ask you first if there's anything you thought about that we should have talked about last time in more detail?

Military Experience

Knapp: Yes, as a matter of fact Brit, there are a few things that I thought about briefly after our last talk. Just to, the matter, I think I mentioned, but just to expand a little bit, just with a few sentences. My military experience, which was brief, it was like two years. I was a draftee. Not many draftees left anymore. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) It's a concept that's long forgotten, but I did serve two years in the U.S. Army, and I, looking back, over time, I would have to say it was one of the more important two years I've had. I wouldn't say enjoyable, or anything like that, but important, just the idea of changing identity from that of a civilian to a soldier in the U.S. Army.

Though I never saw combat, and I'll give a salute to those who did, but it was still a transition. I served on Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for about a year or so, and then I transferred to island of Okinawa in the Pacific. And I say it was a very interesting experience. Some people who have served in the military, in later years, kind of kiss it off and say, "Ah. I never left being a civilian." Well, I don't believe that's entirely true. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) When you get up in the morning in a barracks full of people, and report to the first formation in uniform, you are in the Army, or whatever form of the military you are in. And it sticks with you for a while, that identity.

Just briefly, as a side on that, one of the few little small organizations I'm a member of, other than the American Legion, is the Koza Society. That's K-O-Z-A, which started out—I was a founding member. There are three of us. We're having a business lunch about ten years ago and discovered that of the three of us, one, Tom Bellinger, was a former naval officer in the early '70s; Darrell Ewing, who was former Marine, early '60s; and myself, U.S. Army, mid-'60s, we had all served on the Island of Okinawa, we had all spent time in the little village of Koza, on Okinawa. Thereby, we formed the Koza Society, which we've met regularly ever since then (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) for, I guess, some remembrances, and some mutual support, and advice. And again, I think it is largely the veteran status that made it gel together.

Anyway, I could go on for a long time on the military experience. I did write some memoirs on it, which are about ninety pages long. I won't get into that. That's long enough.

Storey: What did you do in the military?

Explosive Ordinance Disposal Squad

Knapp: I was almost entirely paperwork, except on the island of Okinawa, I was assigned to a

E O D [Explosive Ordinance Disposal] Squad, which was bomb disposal. Again, I had paperwork, but the paperwork was soon ignored. All calls for bomb disposal took two people, and I was fairly quickly assigned or designated to be the second person on bomb disposal calls. And, on the island of Okinawa, since World War II, there are thousands and thousands of unexploded ammo all over. We had an average of probably over seventy calls a month (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) for howitzer shells, bazooka rounds, bombs, anything. Very interesting experience. At the end of that I was given, in a non-ceremonial manner, a pair of the bomb disposal little emblems for the uniform. I think they thought I may be qualified.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. Tell me more about what that entailed.

Knapp: Which part, Brit?

Storey: The bomb disposal part, and then we'll go back to the paperwork.

Knapp: Okay. Well, I say the, taking the paperwork first, it was, I'm not sure what I was supposed to do, because it was soon forgotten. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) We didn't have that much in the way of correspondence, or anything like that, or even daily paperwork and I can't really even recall what it was. The bomb disposal work consisted of, when somebody found something, which was obviously a piece of ordinance of some kind—some of it was brand new, had fallen off a truck or something. But, for the most part, it was World War II stuff. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) A construction worker, or just somebody hiking through the jungle had found a piece of ordinance, and everyone was under strict instructions, if you found something, anybody in the military or civilian for that matter, found something, you were, "Don't touch it. Note where it is. Call the authorities." And then one of our people would come out, with maybe me as a second person, to look it all over and do the right thing with it.

Every piece of ordinance shell, bomb, whatever, had a, what was called a Rendering Safe Procedure. And these were highly trained people to get in and maybe render it inactive in some way. All the rendering safe procedures were classified. (beeping) But they were very tricky. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Sometimes there might be a 500-pound bomb with a fuse that didn't work, for some reason. It's been sitting there for many many years. And a person working at it did not know what was holding that fuse back. It could be just a very small shred of metal holding it back. And, maybe it was totally safe. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) These people got \$100 month extra for doing this. (Laugh)

Storey: Which in those days was a bit of money?

Knapp: Well, not a lot, really. (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) More than now, but yes. (Storey: Yeah.) Even in those days not many people would do it for \$100 a month extra.

Storey: Yeah. So, how did you get stuck with this? Did you get the extra \$100?

Knapp: No I didn't I was not bomb disposal qualified. All the people in, were qualified, actually had to sign up for second tour. They were all more or less career-type people. (Storey: Uh huh.) The way I got into it was I had heard rumors at one time that the bomb disposal people were an especially tight-knit group. You know, and I had the opportunity to more or less choose a job, forming a new unit. I chose the Bomb Disposal Group.

And, it was true, that they were a special tight-knit group. They, a small E-O-D Units all over the world. They have, for the most part, knew each other. They would exchange Christmas cards. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, everything was on a first-name basis. We kind of forgot rank, except for the captain in charge, who, as I said in my memoirs, "He maintained military courtesy, not because he demanded it, because he earned it." (Storey: Uhm-hmm. Hmm.) And we were in the Army.

Storey: Were you doing this defusing?

Knapp: No. I would maybe be looking over their shoulder or something, but no, I was not qualified to do the defusing. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) For example, one time we had a training exercise where the scenario was that a nuclear weapon had rolled off a truck, and we were the nuclear weapons neutralizing group for the island. And, this, again the scenario was that it rolled off the truck, and something was leaking, and it might go off or something like that. And, as a part of the training exercise we were called upon to go in and do the right thing with it. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) I was part of the group, and my particular station for this exercise was behind a strip of masking tape, about a hundred feet from the nuclear weapon. And it was a real nuclear weapon. (Laugh) So, being a hundred feet away I'm sure I was relatively safe.

Storey: (Laugh) Yeah. Okinawa is Japanese, I believe?

Stationed in Okinawa

Knapp: Yes. At the time I was there, it was under U.S. military control. In 1972 it reverted to Japanese control, but it was Japanese historically. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And

Chinese, a bit, historically also.

Storey: You see any of those cultures while you were there?

Knapp: Yes I did. I, looking back on it, I should have done more. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But, I still collect material on Okinawa. I have several Okinawan history books, things like that. (Storey: Yeah.) And I, since our squad dealt with Okinawan civilians quite often, it was decided that we should have some language training. So, for some time, we spent every morning at the local language school learning Japanese.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. Did you ever have to use it?

Knapp: Very little on the job. I used it after duty hours quite a bit.

Storey: Uh huh. Was there anything else?

Knapp: No, that's, I'd like to say that—to repeat myself, little experiences like that, there were two years of them. It was a very important two years of my life. There were more experiences there. And I feel just a slight rush of sympathy for people who fought to avoid the draft, and avoid those experiences. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) You could stay home and work at the drugstore, or at the feed store, or something like that for two years. Well, and again, I did not have combat. I did not get killed, or maimed, or have to do that to anyone, so maybe I was lucky. In retrospect I'm very glad I had the experience.

Storey: Yeah. Let's see. You mentioned that you worked for the state of Colorado doing something with water. Could you tell me more about that?

Working for the Colorado Department of Health

Knapp: Yes. That was my first job out of the military. I came to Colorado and I was looking around for a job. I was not highly qualified for anything, not having a college degree. But I did find a job with the Colorado Department of Health, and the Water Pollution Control Division, as an engineering technician. And, it turns out to be, I guess I've been very lucky in many ways in my life. It turned out to be a very good job. The pay was horrible, as an engineering technician. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But the job entailed a good bit of travel, on my own, traveling alone.

And, the main part of the job was traveling around the state of Colorado collecting water samples. Water comes in many forms. It comes, there are lake samples, stream

samples, there are municipal effluent, sewage effluent samples, industrial effluent samples. Many things, but for the most part I was gone three to four days a week. I was single at the time. I had no dependents. And I would be traveling somewhere around the state of Colorado. I was on pre-approved schedule. I wasn't entirely on my own, naturally, but I've, it was just a good experience. I would like maybe spend a week in the San Juan Mountains in southwest Colorado, and maybe a week or so in the Arkansas Valley in southern Colorado.

In the entire state, there were two of us, two engineering technicians. We both covered the entire state. We didn't divide it up. And, being single and, somewhat footloose, and feeling my oats, because ex-military and everything, it was just a good experience. I stayed in a lot of cheap motels. This was in mid to late '60s. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, in two years, I never spent more than \$5 for a motel room. (Laugh) Quite often it was \$2. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And we, it was kind of an art to find out where you, one could stay in a given town. Like in Glenwood Springs, everyone stayed at the Rest Well Motel, which has a special deal for Health Department employees, cost them \$3 a night. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

We knew these all over the state. And, quite often, the bathroom facilities were down the hall, which was not a big deal, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) as long as they were clean. Quite often they were family run places, in a downtown, in a place like Rea, Colorado, or something, and they were clean, neat. If you wanted to watch TV, you went down to the lobby. And they had an ambiance and a friendliness that, quite often, doesn't exist in the \$100-a-room, a-night rooms that I've stayed in latter in my career. (Laugh) (Storey: Hmm.) But I saw a lot of the state of Colorado, that I've never seen since. And it kind of got me started just a bit on the water issues. This was water quality. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

During the end of my tenure there, I took a short course for Colorado-Wide Sewage Plant Operators, and at the end of this short course I took an exam to become a Certified Sewage Plant Operator, even though I had never worked in one. And I passed. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, for the rest of my career, in water, the only certificate I ever had on my wall was my Certified Sewage Plant Operator certificate.

Storey: (Laugh) Did you ever do that?

Knapp: Never did it. But by god I was qualified.

Storey: Uhm-hmm.

Knapp: That ended when I, after a couple of years, even though I loved the job, and it was very interesting, I could see very little future in it. And for years I had put off going back to college. I had two years under my belt, and I knew I needed to finish, but every year I told myself, "I should finish." and every year I never quite got around to it even though I said I was going to. Finally, the division secretary in my office at Colorado Department of Health told me one day, he says, "When do you stop kidding yourself? You're never going back to college." (Laugh) That hurt. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, I enrolled in the University of Colorado. (Laugh)

Storey: Uhm-hmm. And, quit working for Colorado?

Knapp: I resigned.

Storey: Did you ever learn any of the results of the analyses from the water samples you did?

Water Sample Results

Knapp: Oh yes. When I was in the office one, maybe two, days a week one of my jobs was putting together some forms to mail back to given cities, or so forth, the results of their tests. And, this was in the early days of water quality control. The very early days. It was not fine-tuned. It was not unusual to have a small community somewhere who just did not flat have any treatment. (Storey: Uh huh.) Or, if they had some treatment it was so neglected that it amounted to nothing. And what we were doing was not so much regulation of that, what we were doing was building a baseline of data as where the pollution is coming from.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. Remember any particular sources of pollution?

Knapp: Mostly municipalities. Some industry, even though a lot of the industry such as in Denver, Colorado, goes through the municipal system. Other areas, like C-F&I in Pueblo, it was Colorado Fuel & Iron, at one time had their own effluent going out to the Arkansas River, which I sampled fairly regularly. The absolute worst, the absolute worst samples to take were from rendering plants, where they processed dead animals. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But, quite often, an old tumbled down brick building on the outside of town somewhere was a rendering plant, and their wastewater went out into a ditch, that went down to the local stream. Those I didn't like, but I collected the samples. You get a bit hardened.

Storey: (Laugh) How many, how many station were—would they be considered stations?

Sampling Stations

Knapp: Every municipality was in its own way, a station. Then for streams themselves, streams and rivers, I think we had like seventy-some in the state, which we tried to sample, one of the two of us, at least once a month. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And they were scattered all over the state. And especially, and every where that a river left the state. That was for Colorado's protection. So, we had an ongoing database of water that went to New Mexico, to Nebraska, and so forth. (Storey: Uh huh.)

We had one station which was on the San Juan River, on the Four Corners area. Only about, maybe a quarter of a mile from the actual Four Corners Monument. The water, the San Juan River, went from the state of Colorado, into New Mexico, and made a circuitous route, and then for some reason came back across the corner for only a quarter to a half mile (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) in the state. We had a sampling station there. I think it was so, if New Mexico got up in arms about the San Juan River, we had samples of what water they were giving us. (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) Meaningless though it was. There was no habitation along that river.

Storey: Yeah. How do you, how did you collect samples?

Knapp: With a bucket, and a case of bottles.

Storey: How big were the bottles?

Knapp: Depending on the type of sample, a liter or two liters, I believe.

Storey: So, you know, not a little vial of water. This was a big, a fairly large quantity of water?

Knapp: Right. Because they, we would get those back to the lab. Part of the job was to time yourself to get to a given city, where you could get the samples back to Colorado, or the Department of Health, overnight. It might be on a bus out of Monte Vista, out in the San Luis Valley. It might be on a Frontier plane out of Cortez. But we knew where these places were. The objective was to get there. If you knew that the bus left from Lamar at four o'clock, you better be in Lamar by four o'clock to get the samples on the bus. (Storey: Uhm-hmm. Hmm.) Little bit of logistic challenge there.

Storey: That was every day? Or weekly? Or . . . ?

Knapp: Everyday we tried to get that day's samples on the bus, or the plane, or whatever.

Storey: Uh huh. And were these glass bottles?

Knapp: No, they were plastic?

Storey: Plastic bottles?

Knapp: Uhm-hmm.

Storey: So they wouldn't break if (Knapp: Right.) handled roughly, huh?

Knapp: And sometimes you had to ice them down a little bit, if the weather was warm. Go find a place where you could buy a bag of ice. (Storey: Uh huh.) A good bit of logistics here.

Storey: And you had to label them. How did you label them?

Knapp: Just with numbers. We had another sheet with the description of the sample, the time, the date, and so forth.

Storey: Uh huh. So, you'd be back in Denver how often?

Knapp: Typically, I would , typically leave on Monday, be back in Denver on Thursday or Friday. And typically, my only contact with the office was to call somebody and tell them, "Okay, I got a case of samples coming in on Rio Grande Freightways tomorrow morning." No contact with my boss at all, or anybody. I was on my own.

Storey: Uh huh. How did you make those calls? Did you have a credit card? How did that work?

Knapp: No. Oh I'm really sorry you brought up that question Brit. (Laugh) Because now I can't remember. I'd have to think about that a while. I remember doing it from my, the hotel or motel. But sometimes I had to go to the lobby. It might have been collect. (Storey: Uh huh.) That's a good question. I wish I could answer it.

Storey: Oh. You know. I like to trace the way technologies have changed on us.

Knapp: We did have a credit card. Let me back up a little bit. I'm probably going longer on this job than I should.

Storey: No.

Knapp: But it was an interesting . . . for the first few months I drove my own car on this, and got eight cents a mile. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Then the state sprung for two small Dodge vans for its two technicians. We loved those vans. They were primitive by today's standards, just a metal shell on the back. Mine was a three-speed-on-the-column. There was a heater but no air conditioning. No radio, of course. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, on our own time, and on our own money, for that matter, we'd built a small laboratory in the back. We had to take some, a few tests on stream samples. Put together a little table with a small sink, and we did temp, tests on temperature, p-h, and dissolved oxygen. That's the ones that come to mind. Life was not bad sitting beside a stream in the San Juans when you got the sample out of the river, and go back to your van, and sit down in the little chair back there with your lab table, and do a few tests, and write down the results, and look around the woods for a while, then get back in and drive to the next one.

Storey: How many samples would you typically do in a day?

Knapp: Typically about eight for each of us, because that was, really we could do more, but that's all the laboratory could handle. (Storey: Uh huh.) It took them probably more time to do the testing than it did for us to get them.

Storey: Do you ever remember any stories about collecting samples, that are interesting?

Knapp: (Laugh) Oh yeah. I've written a memoir on that too.

Sampling Tribulations

Storey: Talk about it a little, if you would.

Knapp: One time I recall up in the upper area of Vail Pass, in the middle of winter, I had to get a sample of whatever stream that is that goes through Vail, is it Gore Creek or, I'm not sure. I can't remember.

Storey: I don't remember.

Knapp: Anyway I stopped. It was very snowy. It was not actively snowing at the time, but it had been. Got the van off the highway. Put on my snow shoes, which I hated to do. They were very bad snow shoes, provided by the state. And went over this river bank down, way down river bank, steep. I more or less skied down on the snow shoes, with my bucket and sample bottle. Got to the bottom, cold, snowy, there was some-ice didn't totally cover the creek so I got a sample. Then I started to get back

out of there. (Laugh) And I had trouble. (Storey: Uh huh.) The snow shoes didn't work. It was too steep. And I tried several times, and I was getting colder and colder, and I could see the van way up on this bank, and I kept trying to climb up out of there, through heavy snow, and was getting colder, and I wasn't sure I was going to make it. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

Finally I had my snow shoes and the sample bucket and sample tied onto the rope, which, on the bucket. That tied to my wrist, and I just threw myself in the snow and started swimming, and I made it to the top, (Storey: Uh huh.) covered with snow. And I just, was bodily swimming through it. I got in the back of the van and for the next half hour I just violently shook, getting myself rid of the hypothermia. (Storey: Uh huh.) But I thought I was going to face death down there. Most of the adventures had to do with weather, but when you're young, and in fairly good shape, weather can be a hassle but you have the need to do it anyway. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

One time I was in the Four Corners area and a blizzard came in. I put chains on the van and—I wouldn't have this same attitude nowadays, but in those days I thought, "Well, this is my job. I do it." So, I went out into the blizzard and I got about three quarters of the day done. I ended up in Alamosa, and I thought, "I can't go any further. Because I, it's a white-out." And I stopped in Alamosa. I was supposed to go on to Pagosa Springs, and I called the office and told them in a very apologetic manner that "I'm stopping for the night." And I felt bad about that. (Storey: Uh huh.) Nowadays I would have stopped much sooner. I probably wouldn't have started out at all. (Laugh) But, when you're young and have a strong work ethic, and everything, you do those things. (Storey: Yeah.)

"More Pleasant Experiences than Bad"

But, overall, there were more pleasant experiences than bad experiences. And, like I say, the pay was horrible. Again, this was in the mid to late '60s, but I got, my starting pay was \$386 month. After deductions and everything it was around \$300 month to take-home. I had a hundred dollar a month apartment rental. A hundred dollar a month car payment. This left me a hundred dollars for everything else. That's food, private gasoline, clothing, entertainment, sure. A hundred dollars a month is not much.

Storey: No.

Knapp: Even in those days it wasn't much. So I had to travel, because the travel, I started at \$12 a day, total expenses from the state. That did increase to \$14 a day to cover

-
- everything. That's room, board, everything. And, at that rate, if I could save \$2, and put it in my pocket, that meant a lot to me. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) It meant, in many ways, survival. (Storey: Yeah. Hmm.) But I could see that there was no future here. I hadn't finished college. I couldn't even go to school nights, because I was gone all the time. And there was no doubt about it. I had to do something. (Storey: Yeah.) So I did.
- Storey: Well, you quit. Now, how did you support yourself in school? I don't remember whether we talked about that.
- Knapp: For the first semester, I really wasn't sure if I could cut it in school or not. I had heard so many stories about people who couldn't do it, I wasn't sure if I could work. So I cashed in my state retirement, which I think was a massive \$700 and something, and I got the G-I Bill. Which, contrary to what people believe of the G-I Bill, like in post World War II, did not cover all expenses. I got a \$130 a month, in a check from the government, which certainly did not cover all expenses. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So I, for the first semester I had my retirement, cashed in, and \$130 a month, which was adequate. And after that I decided I could cut this okay, and I got a job as a night security watchman, which I did for the next year and a half or so.
- Storey: Yeah, we talked about that. And then you got an assistantship?
- Knapp: Right.
- Storey: Yeah. Okay. Anything else that you had thought of that you wanted to talk about?
- Knapp: Only, going back to Reclamation, we never really got into very little of my Reclamation, I think, in the last time. My Reclamation experience.
- Storey: Yeah. We just barely got started on Reclamation.

Closing the Lower Missouri Region

- Knapp: You did ask a fair number of questions about the Lower Missouri Regional Office, about the kind of work I did, and what we did in the office, my responsibilities and so forth. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) I think we covered that fairly well. The important thing there was in 1985. I had been there like thirteen years, I had advanced to be the Chief Regional Economist for the Lower Missouri Region, and the word came down—we had rumors of it a day or so in advance, but, the word came down that the Lower Missouri Regional Office was closing. We were going to be not around in six

months. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Which is a pretty devastating little announcement. The people out in the regional, then project offices, and area offices, and so forth, would still be there, fine, but the regional office was going to be combined with the Billings, Montana Regional Office. Within six months we would no longer be there. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And this is, like I say, rather devastating. An interesting sidelight here is, people were not panicked, but everyone was concerned, “What am I going to do for a job?” And so forth. A colleague of mine, who had been around longer than me . . .

END SIDE 1, TAPE 1. MARCH 26, 2003.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. MARCH 26, 2003.

Storey: About a colleague.

Knapp: A colleague who had been around, and said something very wise, he says, “Well, I’ve been through this before with Reclamation.” He says, “Take it from me, the Bureau of Reclamation will take care of you. They will take care of you.” And it turns out he was right. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) We had, I think, 220 people in the regional office. And immediately some people started, rightfully so, started looking around for another job, other agencies, and so forth, and found other jobs. Some people retired. Some, a few people went to private industry. But, in the end, everyone, I believe, I’m sure of this, everyone in the regional office was offered a job, somewhere. You might have to move, but you were offered a job. Which, is not bad. (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

I, myself, was offered the job of the Chief Regional Economist in Billings, Montana, at my same grade, probably a little more responsibility, a bigger area. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, which was a, I didn’t want to move to Billings, but I can’t denigrate the offer. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) If I move to Billings I keep my same salary, same grade, and everything. I didn’t particularly want to move to Billings, but I knew that I had to be employed, and if I stayed employed, and that’s where the job was, that’s where I’d be. Like I say, at the end everyone was offered a job of some kind. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) A few at a lesser grade, but I think there was a salary retention with that. Of course, moving expenses were paid, if you had to move.

Acreage Limitation Specialist

But since I didn’t really want to move to Billings I saw an opening at the Engineering and Research Center, right on the Federal Center, for an Acreage Limitation Specialist, at my grade level, which I knew a little bit about. So, I applied

for it and it was in, like I say, in the Division of Water and Land Technical Services, Acreage Limitation Branch. Interesting thing there is that while waiting for this to be processed, or maybe be okayed, or whatever, for a selection to be made, I counted up and I had talked to sixteen people, about my application. Fifteen of the sixteen said, "Are you sure you want to do that?" (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) They were warning me, "You don't want to do that." (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) One person said, "Oh that's a great job. You'll love it." (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But fifteen said, "Why do you want to do that?" But, I did it.

Storey: Now, let's see. You would have been Branch Chief when you were the head of the Regional Economic Office?

Knapp: Yes I was.

Storey: What kind of grade was that in those days?

Knapp: I was a thirteen, GS-13.

Storey: So, then a Division Chief would be?

Knapp: A fourteen, in the regional office.

Storey: And you were working for a division?

Knapp: I was working for the Division of Planning. (Storey: Uh huh.) My immediate supervisor was the Regional Planning Chief.

Storey: But, when you went over to acreage limitation, you weren't heading the office?

Knapp: I was not heading the office, no.

Storey: But you got to retain your thirteen?

Knapp: Well, as I'm sure a lot of people are aware that, depending on the office you're in, what the general grade levels were. In a regional office a Branch Chief is a thirteen. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) In a project office, a Branch Chief is probably a twelve. In the E&R [Engineering and Research] Center, on the Federal Center, typically a Branch Chief is a fourteen. And the senior, regular staff people, such as I was, just regular staff, non-supervisory, was thirteen. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And that's the way the world operates.

Storey: So, they did offer the job to you?

Knapp: They offered me the job. I took it.

Storey: Was there any competition for the job, or do you know?

Knapp: I don't know. I don't know.

Storey: Who was this—who chose? Who selected you?

Knapp: Well, I'm sure the immediate selecting official was Phillip Doe. (Storey: Uh huh.) And he was my boss for like 2½ years.

Storey: He was the Branch Chief?

Acreage Limitation part of the Water and Land Technical Services Division

Knapp: He was the Branch Chief, Acreage Limitation. The Division Chief, Water and Land Technical Services, was Joe Miller.

Storey: So, what did you get yourself into that everybody was warning you against?

Knapp: I don't want to get into personalities too much, Brit, but it was Phil Doe and Joe Miller, who ran their own show. Phil Doe was an experience to work for. Before I say too much about Phil, I should say that I really admired the guy. He was very intelligent, very well read, had a good sense of humor, hard working, and was a trial to work for. We had a close-knit group there, in Acreage Limitation. Some people came and went. Some couldn't hack it. Some of the core members of that group were myself, Sandie Simons, Dot Aho, Richard Rizzi, Gary Anderson. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And we've always had a little feeling of comradeship, though we weathered the storm. (Laugh) This was a, I'd have to say a heady time in Reclamation experience, which is not been well documented. I might have to do it myself. Acreage limitation—should I explain what acreage limitation is?

Storey: Please.

Acreage limitation in Reclamation Law

Knapp: Acreage limitation is a body of law and regulations and/or policy statements which limit the amount of land that individual farmers or individual entities, the amount of

land on which they can receive Reclamation water. And, that's in one sentence, and simplifies it by about ninety-eight percent. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) It's much more complex than that. And, it's been around since 1902. In the 1902 Act which set up the Reclamation Fund, and things like that, and started the Reclamation Program, it was stated in the law in 1902 that no farmer can get his water of more than 160 acres, very clean. I won't get into a detailed history of how that worked, but again that was 1902. By the mid 1970s we still had the same law on the books, 160 acres of owned land could receive Reclamation water.

So, many things have changed. The size of farms have changed. The concept of leasing land outside of your ownership had never been mentioned, and we knew in the West there were massive operations of people who owned maybe 160 acres, and leased from their neighbors, or absentee owners, another 3000. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, many other things have changed like that. In consequence, in 1982 Congress passed, and President Reagan signed, Reclamation Reform Act of 1982,⁷ which took a fresh look at all of the acreage limitation. It's a complex law. Some people have called it Byzantine. (Laugh) And it's, as an example, I worked with the law for about five years before I felt competent to get in front of a group and answer any questions. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) It's that complex, and many things in there about what happens if you're a foreign owner, if you involuntarily acquire the land, got it in an estate. I could go on forever about all the little glitches.

Implementing the 1982 Reclamation Reform Act

And Reclamation was being criticized heavily for not correct, not having the correct enforcement of that law, even though it was in the early stages of it. Again, the law was passed in '82. I came into it full blast in 1985. Our main function, at that time, in the Acreage Limitation Branch was getting prepared for a major rule making, for Rules and Regulations, to be completed by April of 1987.

Again, Phil Doe was in charge.⁸ Phil had some strong feelings about the program, and to be quite honest, I agreed with Phil, and almost everybody on the staff agreed with Phil. He wanted to close some loopholes, and he was absolutely right. These

7. In 1982 Congress passed the Reclamation Reform Act (RRA), which raised the minimum acreage allowed to receive project water from 160 acres to 960 acres, removed the residency requirement, and placed a limit on the leasing of lands receiving government water. The RRA recognized that agriculture had become more mechanized and industrialized and that 160 acres was too small for successful farming in the modern world.

8. Phil Doe participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See Phillip Doe, *Oral History Interview*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, in Denver, Colorado, edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2013, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

loopholes should be closed. We have some clever people out there that can look at the law, we have some of the best, West's best water lawyers up, we were up against them. And they could spot a loophole. And we were, we needed rules and regulations to close those. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) This is what we were doing, primarily. This is in late '85, '86. And, we ran a tight ship, and a pretty powerful ship there, that when questions came in on this, they didn't come in, we would spot loopholes and we would put together policy memos saying, "Here's what you're going to do." Very unpopular, amongst the water using West and, to be candid, amongst our regional offices and area offices, and project offices, throughout Reclamation. We were not that popular. But, we were doing the right thing.

Making RRA Rules and Regulations

Getting ready for these rules and regulations, and the rule making, in the fall of 1986 we set up a series of workshop and formal hearings throughout the West. To show you the level of intensity on this, we had fourteen workshops and fourteen formal hearings, throughout the West, plus one in Washington D.C., in a one-month time. Which is, the typical logistics there were, we had our own small air force of a couple of Bureau planes, and we would have a workshop in one city, say Phoenix, in the evening, answering questions, rather informal. Sometimes they went into the wee hours. The next morning we had Phil, probably the commissioner, somebody from the Solicitor's Office, in front of a dais with the American flags and a recorder, and we had a formal hearing, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) which we would not answer questions, but would take concerns.

Storey: And the commissioner would have been at that time?

Knapp: Dale Duvall.⁹ And, after the hearing was over, we probably had our bags packed, grabbed them from your room, head to the airport, get on the plane and go to Yuma. That night, another workshop. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Anyway, fourteen of these throughout the West, plus one in D.C. in a month's time, which was very tiring. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, I say that a good part of the nature of the workshops and the hearing were loopholes we were trying to close. And many interests in the West did not like our attempts to do this, at all. And they did not like Phil Doe. And, as a shadow of that, they did not like his entire staff. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) In the end,

9. C. Dale Duvall was Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation under the Reagan administration, 1985-1989, and participated Reclamation's oral history program. See C. Dale Duvall, *Oral History Interview*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interview conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, January 26, 1993, in Washington, D.C., edited by Brit Allan Storey, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

after we had completed all this, and had some other meetings, and meetings with Congress, and so forth, in the end of the ten loopholes we tried to close, we lost completely. (Laugh) Completely. (Laugh) We were overturned.

Storey: What kind of loopholes?

Loopholes in Acreage Limitation Law

Knapp: The primary one, I could come up with several, the primary one was “When is an arrangement a lease versus when is it a mere operating agreement?” There’s some subtle differences there. A lease is where somebody pays you so much per acre, and, or you pay someone. Say, “I own some land. I want to lease your land.” (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) I pay you so much per acre, and I go in and farm it. I grow cotton, whatever, alfalfa, and I take all the risks and everything, and that, that’s a lease. On the other hand, you might be an absentee owner. And you know exactly what you want to do. There you want to grow alfalfa. And you hire me to operate your land, maybe give me so much per acre to operate it, go out there and do all the operations. That’s an operating agreement. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

And, there are many shades in between those two. (Laugh) And, to be quite frank, many of these interests in the West tried to get around this by saying, “Their lease is not a lease, it’s an operating agreement.” And our job was to ferret some of this out. We were, we tried the hard line to say that “If you were out there farming the land, you, as a part owner here, are farming land next door, it’s a lease.” Or you have to prove definitely that it’s not a lease, or something. Well, we got overturned on that, and say well, “You know, you can go softer than that.” And we said, “If it seems to be an operating agreement, it probably is.” If the person is not taking any risk, it’s an operating agreement.

Storey: That person who’s running the land?

Knapp: Yeah. How’s that again?

Storey: The person who was op—doing the work on the land? If they were weren’t taking risks?

Operating Agreements

Knapp: Then it’s not a lease. (Storey: Uh huh.) This is just one example. There are so many permutations on this of shielded ownership, things like one entity owns another entity,

which owns a third entity, which owns, (Laugh) which actually runs the land. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And you have to go back and trace through this one entity after another to find out the real father entity, and see what their entitlement is. That's especially in ownerships. And we had a major hassle, at one time. This was later in the game, about foreign ownership. If you could trace through one entity after another entity trying to find out who the real owner finally is, and it turns out it's a Swiss corporation, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) then you're into a whole new ball game. (Laugh)

Storey: Because?

Knapp: Well, it's questionable in the law, if the subsidies, and I'll use the term 'subsidy', that we're providing can go to a foreigner. (Storey: Okay.) That's not a part of the mission of the Reclamation program is to help out foreigners, (Storey: Uh huh.) non-resident aliens.

Storey: Tell me some of the other loopholes.

Trust Arrangements

Knapp: Oh boy. (Laugh) I'd have to think about that Brit. Let me, oh, foreign ownerships. Trusts. If you put—trusts become very complicated. If you, for example if you decide you're going to put your land in trust to your children, you have to designate a trustee, which may be a local bank or something like that, a banker. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And this local banker has a dozen different people for whom he is the trustee of their land. Okay, does that trustee, does he fall under the ownership limitations? Is he actually running the farms? In many cases the trustee is.

What about revocable trusts? There are—we all became lawyers on this. A revocable trust is one where the trustor, you who had had the land for many years, decide you're going to put it in trust to your children, and you put it into a revocable trust where you, it goes to your children but in the language of the trust, you can revoke it at any time. We finally decided a revocable trust doesn't count. You haven't released that land. You can take it back at anytime. You haven't divested yourself of that land. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

If you get me talking on this I could talk forever, because there are so many little glitches in this. See the law was passed in '82. I didn't really leave the program, it was in my purview until about two years ago. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, up until then, and I'm sure continuing now, questions still come in. That's from '82 until two thou—that's twenty years, and the questions have not all been answered.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. Why don't we talk a little more about this? It's interesting to get down the complexity of the subject.

Knapp: Oh, okay. Rather than the complexity of Reclamation law, I think it would be more interesting to get into how Reclamation handled this.

Reclamation's Handling of Acreage Limitation

Storey: Uhm-hmm. Okay.

Knapp: Again, this was a heady time in Reclamation history. Reclamation Reform Act Acreage Limitation, for a relatively small group, was getting a lot of publicity. The whole concept of subsidization and tightening up these things was making editorials, like in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, *L-A Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*. We were getting editorials in there. It was getting to be a big issue. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And we, we were getting these extensive letters from Congress signed by three or four congressmen, from both sides of the issue. "Lighten up. This is not your job. Your job is to follow the letter of the law and not the intent." We were trying to say, "What is the intent of Congress in this?" (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Even though Congress can sometimes be a bit sloppy in their legal language, but we tried to follow the intent of Congress.

On one side some congressmen and other groups were saying, "Your job is not to determine the intent. Your job is to follow the letter of the law." On the other side of the question we were getting other groups, some environmental groups, which had good arguments. Natural Resources Defense Fund was a big player, saying, you know, "If you don't tighten this up, you're not following what Congress wanted you to do." (Laugh) Where do you go? (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Again, the western water interests, at the end of the rule making process, the interest coalesced. They got together and really overturned everything we were trying to do. Dale Duvall bless his heart, a great guy. He more or less got overthrown on this.

Storey: By whom?

Commissioner Duvall Hamstrung by Acreage Limitation

Knapp: Western water interests, the legal interests, western water organizations. Dale, I had a lot of respect for Dale. He, I felt sorry for the guy because acreage limitation was so overtaking him that—and he was being criticized, and he couldn't give a talk in the West anywhere, and as commissioner he was in demand to give talks. He couldn't

give a talk but what, within a very short period of time, through his own doing, he would get into acreage limitation. It was taking him over. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And people, he was getting criticized for this. “We wanted to hear about your Rehabilitation and Betterment Program. What are you plans for that?” Things like that. But he would go into acreage limitation. (Storey: Hmm.)

And, it was becoming the little key part of the Reclamation program, for those of us, whose names I’ve already told you. And, Dale handled it very well. I say, he got overturned. I’m not sure who gave him the real marching orders on this, but I recall at one time Dale made one of his rather infrequent trips to the Denver Federal Center in Building 67, where we were located, and he made it clear before he came that he was going to, had several little business meetings he wanted to handle. The only people he wanted to talk to, and he wanted to come to their individual desks, were the acreage limitation people. And he came around to each of us individually, at our desk, shake hands, and—I say this was a heady time. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And . . .

Storey: What did he want to talk about?

Knapp: He didn’t want to talk about anything. He just wanted to acknowledge you. We had been such a close part of his program, and he had depended on us. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) I have to say, I was probably marginal myself, at best, but some of these people were some very good people. Very good people. And, Phil Doe was a good person. I mean, technically excellent. Very, I’ll say, very very sharp guy. Unfortunately, I say, I don’t want to get into personalities here, but Phil’s downfall was the way he went about it. It was not that his objectives were wrong at all, it was the way he went about it. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) There are some powerful people out there.

“There are some powerful people out there”

To show you how things worked on this, shortly after we got overturned on the rules, within a matter of days, the N-W-R-A, the Natural, National Water Resources Association decided to hold a special meeting in Reno, Nevada, to go over the new rules and how they would work. It was the rules that, in many ways, they might have written. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But, I’m not sure about that. (Laugh) But they wanted a special meeting to go over the rules and how they worked.

Storey: Well where did these rules come from? You said they, that the ones that you had developed were overturned.

Knapp: Yes.

Storey: Within the office?

Knapp: Uhm-hmm.

Storey: So, where did these new rules come from?

Knapp: Well, good question Brit. (Laugh) I can't say we can go off the record here, but they were largely written by Dave Houston. Dave Houston was the Regional Director in Mid Pacific Region.¹⁰ (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And a few of his colleagues. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Dave was an extremely intelligent individual. I'm not sure if you ever worked with him or know much about him?

Storey: I interviewed him once.

Knapp: Yeah. Extremely intelligent. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, I'm sure some of this was in conjunction with Dale Duvall and said, "Okay, now, if this is, we were going on this, how should the rules read?" (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Well, we had some concern in the office about who would, from the Acreage Limitation Branch, should be present maybe to help out in this particular little session of the N-W-R-A. And Phil had some ideas about two or three people that should be there.

As it happened, one afternoon that we were all in Phil's office having a branch meeting and the phone rang, and it was Dale Duvall, and Phil put him on the speaker. I'm not sure what else we talked about, but we came up with the N-W-R-A meeting in Reno, and Dale, the commissioner, said, "Oh yes. For the Reno meeting, Phil, I would like your entire staff to be there in Reno for this, except you Phil. You stay in Denver." (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) (Laugh) Well, so we did. The entire staff got on a plane on Sunday afternoon and flew to Reno, met with the commissioner. He wanted his private caucus with the group, and for some reason I was the designated spokesman for the group. I'm not sure why. He had several questions for us. He said, "I don't want an answer now. Get together amongst yourselves." I forget, several questions. Only two stick in my mind. Number one is, "Can you work with the new rules?" And number two, "What should Phil Doe's role be?" (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And we got back to him the next day, and I talked to him and I said, "Yes we can work with the rules. We're professionals. We can work with it. That's the rules, we can do it. And number two, on the role of Phil Doe that's not our call.

10. David G. Houston was regional director of Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region in Sacramento, California from 1983-1989.

That's your call, Dave, Dale." (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) He agreed. Like I say, I have documentation on a lot of this, which I should write up sometime.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. So then what happened?

"Acreage Limitation Branch went into limbo"

Knapp: The Acreage Limitation Branch went into limbo. We had become a non entity.

Storey: From very high profile to non entity?

Knapp: We got zero questions from the field on how to handle situations, because you didn't have to talk to Denver anymore. (Storey: Uh huh.) So, we went into, we were doing other odds and ends. Like—I'm not sure what all we did do to pass the time. (Laugh) But we weren't getting questions from the field. We weren't sitting down writing policy. And, it was just nothing.

Then we came to the '88 reorganization. Major reorganization of the Bureau, largely focused on moving people from the Washington Office to Denver, and decentralizing, though we would maintain a core of people in the Washington Office, a lot of it came to Denver. At the same time there was a major reorganization of the Denver Office. This, again, was in '88. As a part of that, everyone in the Denver Office—I'm not sure everyone. I don't know the whole office, but most of us got a letter saying, "Okay, in the new organization, here is your position." My position was essentially the same, Acreage Limitation Specialist. Same grade level, and everything. Phil Doe's assignment was as Hazardous Materials Coordinator, in the Denver Office. Totally away from acreage limitation. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

Acreage Limitation Branch Disappeared

Most of the rest of the staff, most of them, maintained the acreage limitation title. And as a part of the reorganization Acreage Limitation Branch disappeared. In place of that was the Lands Branch. Lands Branch included the acreage limitation function, also had the Chief Realty Officer, the Chief Appraiser, and some land management activities. And the head of that organization, the Lands Branch, was open and vacant, open for competition. So I, along with a number of other people, applied for it. And, it came down to, like the top three or four of which, one of which was me, one of which was Phil Doe. And, in the end, I was selected.

Storey: Which division would this have been?

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. MARCH 26, 2003.
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. MARCH 26, 2003.

Storey: This is tape two of an interview by Brit Storey with Lon Knapp, on March 26, 2003.

You were talking about the reorganization in 1988.

1988 Reorganization

Knapp: Yeah, the new organization division called for the Analysis Contracts and Lands Division, which had sociology, economics, and the Lands Branch. We were kind of an entity unto ourselves, there. But, the Branch Chief, who was a great guy was Jim Wiley, who—excuse me the Division Chief was Jim Wiley, who knew nothing about acreage limitation. He said, “I know enough to be dangerous. I don’t want to know.” So, he left me pretty much to myself.

Storey: And which organization was this in?

Knapp: It was in Assistant Commissioner Resources Management.

Storey: Okay. ACRM.

Knapp: Headed up by Terry Lynott.¹¹ (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And so, again, I was the Chief of the Lands Branch, and it took about six months to really get this going again. After I finally developed amongst the Bureau-wide an attitude that, you know, “If you have a problem on something you can go to Denver and maybe get an answer on it.” We had gotten rid of the stance of demanding and posturing on things, and, “This is what you will do and what you won’t do.” We, over time, developed more of an assistance mode. And it was well received. It took some time before they said, “Well, you know, you got a problem, you can go to Denver and they will come up with the alternatives and say here’s what we seem to think we have to do.”

One of the problems we had on this was that it took a long time to really understand the technical aspects of acreage limitation. And a good bit of the Bureau hierarchy out in the field didn’t like it, didn’t understand it, which is kind of frightening to somebody when you have a high profile program that you don’t

11. Terry Lynott served as Reclamation’s Assistant Commissioner–Resource Management in 1988 and participated in Reclamation’s oral history program. See Terry P. Lynott, *Oral History Interviews*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation oral history interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, in Lakewood, Colorado, edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2012, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

understand. And also, it called for some regulatory measures that they didn't like. (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) So, it was, the whole program was not that popular.

Reclamation Reform Act Task Force

One of the things that happened about the same time as the reorganization, was Jim Ziglar¹², who was the Assistant Secretary at the time in Washington, formed the Acreage Limitation—excuse me, the Reclamation Reform Act Task Force, which had a member at assistant regional director level, a member from each region, and a representative from the Solicitor's Office, a rather high-level representative from the Solicitor's Office. The group was chaired by Terry Lynott, who was my boss the time, and later became a very good friend of mine. And, I was the chief staff person for the Acreage Limitation, or Reclamation Reform Act Task Force. Which, we met, I think for the better part of two years, almost monthly somewhere in the West. And we each had an agenda. Questions would come up, and we'd hash it over and try to come to a consensus on this, in a motel room or a conference room somewhere in Phoenix or Sacramento, or Billings, or somewhere. We operated on a consensus mode, that when we finished the meeting, come to a decision, everybody agreed to it. Then we would go back and implement that.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. Now, who did you say put this, pulled this together?

Knapp: Jim Ziglar.

Storey: Oh, the Assistant Secretary?

Knapp: Assistant Secretary.

Storey: Okay.

Knapp: Yeah.

Storey: Happens to be a water lawyer too?

Knapp: Oh yes. (Laugh) I worked with Jim fairly well there.

Storey: Was he involved, directly?

12. James W. Ziglar was Assistant Secretary for Water and Science under the administration of George H. W. Bush, 1989-1993.

Knapp: Only in the establishment of it, but I'm sure, in many ways, to be, I think Jim was running the Bureau quite a bit.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. This was under Dale Duvall?

Knapp: Yes.

Storey: In the early years of the reorganization?

Knapp: Yes. As an aside, I saw Jim a few times after he left the government, at conferences and things. And some years passed before I saw him again. He was escorting the president down the aisle at the House of Representatives, as the Sergeant at Arms of the Senate. (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Interesting history there.

Storey: Yeah. Then I think he became the head of I-N-S [Immigration and Naturalization Service]?

Knapp: Yes he did. He did. I think he still is.

Storey: No, he left.

Knapp: Did he?

Storey: A few months ago I think,

“RRA Task Force is a very interesting time”

Knapp: Oh did he? Okay. Anyway, the R-R-A Task Force is a very interesting time. Terry Lynott did a superb job of chairing that, keeping it in order, and keeping it going. And which, and each of the members of this task force, when it come up with a decision had the job of going back to their region and explaining the decision. (Laugh) And Jim Ziglar told them all to take it very seriously. He says, “If you're not up on that R-R-A, get up on it right now.” (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And they did. I say this was an assistant regional director from each region. Over time we became a fairly close-knit group. (Storey: Uh huh.) Spent a lot of time together.

Storey: Who would have been the people on that group?

Knapp: Oh. Well, it didn't change that much, surprisingly, over time. Let's see. Let me start

with Pacific Northwest [Region] was Ken Pedde,¹³ who is still around. (Storey: Yup.) Mid Pacific [Region] was Neil Shield, who has since retired some years ago. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Lower Colorado was, this is going to be embarrassing, Brown. Assistant regional director—I had his first name? That’s embarrassing. I can’t think of his first name. He’s a big guy, and really a nice guy. He was later replaced by Walt Fite¹⁴ temporarily. And then, on a more permanent basis, with Bob Johnson.¹⁵ (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Upper Colorado [Region] was Ed Fowler [spelling?], Assistant Regional Director. Actually, Ed was Assistant Regional Director for Administration. So he had almost zero contact, contact with some operational matters like the R-R-A. Give Ed a lot credit. He did his homework, and became very knowledgeable on it. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Let’s see. The old Southwest Region was only there for a very short time. They didn’t even have an Assistant Regional Director. Jerry Wright was the Planning Chief. I think he was, in the initial stages, was the representative. That only lasted a very short time.

Storey: That’s Amarillo?

Knapp: Amarillo. And Billings, and what was then the Great Plains Region, started out with Roger Patterson,¹⁶ who was Assistant R-D [Regional Director] there. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Until Roger moved on to be R-D, Regional Director.

Storey: In M-P [Mid Pacific]. Well, up there first.

13. Ken Pedde participated in Reclamation’s oral history program. See Kenneth Pedde, *Oral History Interview*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation in Boise, Idaho, edited by Brit Allan Storey, formatted and desktop published by Andrew H. Gahan, 2013, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

14. Walt Fite participated in Reclamation’s oral history program. See Walter Fite, *Oral History Interview*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, Boise, Idaho in 1994, edited by Brit Allan Storey, formatted and desk-top published by Andrew H. Gahan, 2014, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

15. Robert W. Johnson served as regional director for Reclamation’s Lower Colorado Region, 1995-2006, and went to become Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation 2006-2009. Mr. Johnson also participated in Reclamation’s oral history program, see Robert (Bob) W. Johnson, *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 2008, in Boulder City, Nevada, and Washington, D.C., edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2012, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

16. Roger Patterson served as regional director of Reclamation’s Upper Missouri Region, 1988-1991 and Mid-Pacific regional director, 1991-1999. Mr. Patterson also 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.

Knapp: Up there first. (Storey: Yeah.) But as soon as he became the regional director I knew he'd, he knew he didn't have time to be on that task force. So it was taken over by his assistant who was Neil Stessman.¹⁷ (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, then I say, in Denver we had Terry Lynott and—a fairly close-knit group. We worked well together. When we, in recent years, when I was still working, when we would have a manager's conference, one of these guys would show up. We, it was like old home week, whoever you met, we spent a lot of time together.

Storey: What kinds of issues were being talked about?

RRA Task Force Issues

Knapp: Everything I've talked about before. Even things like full-cost billing, when we send out bills. I didn't get into the concept of full-cost. Under certain circumstances you are charged, you might have an entitlement to some land either to farm or to own, but only if you pay the full cost of it. We calculated the full cost, as opposed to the contract rate. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And as I say, I'm just giving you an example here of, we spent days going over, "When do you mail out the full-cost billings? Is it at the start of the irrigation year, after you have evidence of how much land was farmed, or what . . . ?" And every region had their own, through their finance office, had their own little billing procedures, and we had to fine tune those so everyone was the same. (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

I think every known example there was, oh, I'm just trying to—bear in mind I'm dredging up things from ten to fifteen years ago here. (Laugh) (Storey: Yeah.) An ongoing hassle we had was with the European Wine Growers, out of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Which, we had contracted with the city of Albuquerque for some municipal water. Of course, municipal water doesn't have any acreage limitation confutation with it. But, Albuquerque didn't need all the water at the time, so they subcontracted water to a vineyard, a consortium that operated a vineyard. And, the question was, "Does acreage limitation apply to that?" (Storey: Hmm.) Because, by contract it's municipal water. (Laugh)

Storey: Yeah. Was it over nine hundred and, what was it, sixty acres?

17. Neil Stessman served as regional director of Reclamation's Upper Missouri Region, 1991-1998 and participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See Neil J. Stessman, *Oral History Interview*, 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 Billings, Montana, edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2009, www.usbr.gov/oralhist.html.

Knapp: Right. Where, in that case, it might have been a lesser threshold because of other nuances in the law that—but the main question was, “Does acreage limitation apply?” (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) We went back and forth on that. (Laugh) Month after month. That was always an issue on the agenda.

Storey: What was finally decided? Or was it?

Knapp: I think the wine growers went bankrupt. (Laugh)

Storey: Oh.

Knapp: I think, but I’m not sure about that. (Laugh)

Storey: Uh huh.

Knapp: The problem was that when they had negotiated the contract that they stated in the contract that Reclamation Law, including acreage limitation, will apply. And they just overlooked that. It was in the contract. (Storey: Uh huh.) What might have happened here is they might have gone back with the consent of the region, and renegotiated the contract to get that language out. (Laugh) (Storey: Hmm.) It was, it’s the kind of example where it’s not a big deal. There’s not a lot of money involved. It’s not even a big issue. It’s a matter of consistency. Can you take this and say, “Okay. Forget it. Acreage limitation does not apply.”? If you do that, and go on paper and say that, does this tie in with other policies throughout the West? You have to be consistent West wide. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And if you say, “Well, if it goes through a municipality, it doesn’t apply. Acreage limitation doesn’t apply.” I can guarantee you it won’t be very long until the Central Valley of California, a lot of agricultural users will be getting their water through a municipality. (Laugh) That’s the way it works. (Laugh)

Storey: Was acreage limitation an issue? I mean, were they bumping up against acreage limitation limits?

Knapp: Well, off the top of my head, and I say it was fifteen years ago, I can’t be sure, but that’s not quite so important as the general issue, “Does it apply? Do they fill out the proper entitlement forms every year?” By filling out the forms . . .

Storey: Oh. I see.

Knapp: Then they are admitting that it applies.

Storey: That it's, that acreage limitation applies?

Knapp: Yeah. So, whether it would have a direct impact on them or not is not really so much of an issue as the fact, "Does it apply or not?"

Storey: Whether or not they have to go through certain sets of procedures?

Knapp: Right.

Storey: Okay. What other kinds of things?

RRA Paperwork Issues

Knapp: (Laugh) The task force? Ah . . . somewhere in my files I have a short list of the issues that we went through. Off the top of my head I'm, we have all the standard issues. The operatorships versus the (Storey: Yeah.) leasing, foreign ownership, how to calculate full costs even though it's somewhat stated in the law. Another thing in the law was Corp of Engineers' projects are exempt from acreage limitation. I'm not sure. It's been too long, Brit. I'd have to—in some cases you have Corp of Engineer projects, where Reclamation runs the irrigation service out of that project and operates it. And I'm not sure exactly how that works right now. So I won't, I won't commit myself.

Storey: Oh. Okay. Let's talk about the issues of getting all this paperwork in place, and functioning properly. You were involved throughout that, I guess?

Knapp: Which paperwork are we talking about?

Storey: Oh, filling out the forms for how many acres, and who owns it, and who's operating it, and whatever it is?

Knapp: This was a constant hassle. By law, everyone who, those who are subject to the law—there's ways you can not be subject. If you're subject to the law, as a prerequisite to receiving Reclamation water, you have to fill out a specified form which kind of describes your entitlement, who you are, what your entitlement is, and maybe even a description of your land. Every individual farmer or entity has to fill out this form. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Then the irrigation district, or whatever kind of district it is, that we contract with, and we typically do not contract with individuals even though there are exceptions to that. We more typically contract with irrigation districts. The district has to put together a summary form, which summarizes all the

land owners in their district, and have that available or turn it into us. I'm not sure. It has to be at least available to us.

This was a major sticking point with the farmers and irrigation users in the West, having to fill out these forms. They detested it. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And we came under, we had to take the viewpoint by the, according to the letter of the law, it said, "As a prerequisite to receiving the water, you have to fill out a form stating what your entitlement is." And, even the districts didn't like this that much. They would say, "We've operated, by word of honor here for decades and decades," and quite often very legitimately so, and they did a god job. But, we always counted on the, historically, counted on the district to be the one to more or less enforce the rather primitive acreage limitation laws. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

Enforcing RRA Paperwork Requirement

They knew that an ownership entitlement of 160 acres is the limit. That was, by the way, increased early on to 320 for a husband and wife. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But we let the district kind of manage that. Now, we came under a whole new ball game. A whole new ball game. And, the complaints we got were sizable. We took the viewpoint that if you got water, and had not filled out the form, when you got the water, every bit of water you got was an illegal conversion of a federal asset. You shouldn't have gotten water, and you got it. You illegally converted a federal asset.

We can't get the water back, because it's already been used. So, we can't recover the federal asset that was illegally obtained. However, the law does stipulate what is the full cost to the government of this water. Therefore, water that was delivered, and taken, without a form on file we had the right to charge full cost for, which in some cases could be sizable, in some cases minor. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) I believe late in the game, some years later, and we got that overturned in court. Somebody overturned us on that. But that was the rule of the game for a long time.

And, we had situations throughout the West where a district manager, of course, hated this law, and maybe just never got around to even distributing the forms to be filled out. (Laugh) And of course the poor individual farmers out there thought they were doing everything right. They showed up at the district office, paid their annual fees and everything, and thought they were in good shape. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) We had, let's see, one district, I won't give the name of the district, where we'd thought we'd discovered how the forms had not been filled out and,--I should have refreshed my memory on this before I started talking about it. But, we finally offered and agreement with the district manager on this, that if you can get all the water users to

sign a notarized affidavit that they did have, even though this is, I think they lost the files or something like that. They lost the forms. They said they lost the forms. Get the individual land owners to fill out an affidavit saying that they had a form on file when they received the water, we'd let it go.

So, they had their district meeting and they came back to us with a counterproposal. How about if we sign an affidavit that says we're not over our entitlement. (Laugh) And I think what happened was the individuals out there were a little afraid to sign a legal affidavit to something that probably wasn't true. (Storey: Yeah.) I'm not sure whatever happened in the end on that.

Storey: Hmm. Do we have a lot of people who are over the acreage limitation?

Questions of Legality

Knapp: I like that question. What exactly do you mean by over? Legally or illegally over?

Storey: Well, tell me.

Knapp: There's many many ways you can be over it and be totally legal. (Storey: Uh huh.) You have the land you own, and your lease land. In broad terms, for individuals, 960 acres. Say you own 960 acres, you can legally go lease, and farm, and get water on another 2000 acres. What you do is you have to pay full cost on that land that you leased over here in initial entitlement.

Storey: Uh huh. Were there a lot of people doing that?

Knapp: Yeah, a fair number. And it's fine. It's no problem. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) This was a problem I had early on with—I worked fairly closely with Dennis Underwood,¹⁸ and Dennis, we were coming up against some congressional hearings and things, and every so often Dennis would ask me about, "Oh how many people do we have in excess of their entitlement?" I'd say, "Well, we've got these." I gave him some examples of this.

And what he was getting at was the number of people who are getting water

18. Dennis Underwood served as Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation under the administration of President George H. W. Bush, 1989-1993 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 conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, from 1995 to 1998, in Los Angeles and Ontario, California, edited by Brit Allan Storey, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

illegally over their entitlement. And, I said, “None that we know of, because if we knew about it, we wouldn’t allow it.” (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) We’ve never had a situation where Joe “X” out there was getting water on 2000 acres of owned land when he was only entitled to 960, and we just said, “Shucks, that’s illegal,” and let it go. We never–If we found that, it got stopped. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, I explained this to Dennis several times. He was one of the more intelligent people that I worked with. And, he said he understood. I said that one time, and about two days later we were in a meeting back in Washington, about acreage limitation and entitlements, and Dennis turned to me and said, “Well, how many people do we have over entitlement?” (Laugh) I said, “None Dennis.” (Laugh) But there are many other ways you can be in excess of your entitlement and be totally legal. For instance, if your district has paid out their repayment obligation. If their repayment obligation to the U.S. has been paid out, acreage limitation and full-cost pricing does not apply.

Acreage Limitation Does Not Apply if Project Repayment is Paid Out

Storey: Oh really?

Knapp: That’s right.

Storey: So, it doesn’t apply on S-R-P [Salt River Project], for instance.

Knapp: No. Hasn’t, I don’t think it ever has. (Laugh)

Storey: I didn’t realize you could–so at that point then they could have unlimited acreage?

Knapp: We don’t care.

Storey: At subsidized rates?

Knapp: That’s right. Whatever the contract rate calls for. That’s, of course, that’s more or less between them and the district. (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) The district’s obligation to us has been paid out, and we do, I think we still do, we did in my purview anyway, we, when a district supposedly had paid out or was about to pay out they sent all the materials on this to the Denver Office, and to my staff. We would go over this to see whether we agreed or not, that they were paid out.

Storey: How many are actually paid out? Do you have any sense of that?

Knapp: Oh, overall, Westwide, I’m going to give you a broad taste. A third to a half. That’s,

I say that. If it goes on record somebody will come around and contradict me, but that gives you an idea. (Storey: Yeah.) Of course, you know, we had a lot of contracts that were let back in the teens, but there were additional contracts after that, and we do look at all contracts.

Storey: Uh huh. So they have to be totally paid up?

Knapp: Uhm-hmm. Yes. And, I say, "Yes." I'm sure there are some exceptions I'm overlooking, maybe on a particular delivery system or something like that.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. What's the, do you any idea what the largest acreage that's farmed under Reclamation? Or when you were doing this?

Legal, but "it doesn't look good"

Knapp: I'm going to draw a blank now. A big trust operation in California, Boswell, which made nationwide news several times. I don't want to get into that because I'll be wrong on some of the details. Boswell is one of the bigger, bigger agricultural operations in the West. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And they disposed of a lot of land to individuals, but it was all farmed as one big operation. And, the Boswells, like I said are, they're not dumb people at all. They are very intelligent. They hire some very good law firms. They operate a large, a large operation totally legally.

It's one of these examples of totally legal, probably fully compliant with the letter of the law, maybe even the intent of the law, but to many people it doesn't look good. (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And not looking good is not an adequate reason to go in and try to change something. It's not looking good. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) We had a lot of that. "It doesn't look good."

Phil Doe on *Sixty Minutes*

As a sidelight on that, something I should have mentioned back more in context, was at the time of the reorganization, after we lost on all the rules, we did hit some good nationwide publicity. Phil Doe made it to *Sixty Minutes*, on Sunday evening, with Ed Bradley, a full rundown on western water through the Bureau of Reclamation. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Interviews with Phil, and told about how anybody could get as much water as they wanted. (Laugh) And, we spent, in my office, we spent a considerable amount of time after that answering letters to irate T-V watchers, (Laugh) who watched this and were outraged. And had I watched it, I would have been outraged too.

So, they wrote their congressman, and wrote Secretary of the Interior, whoever. Saying, "This is horrible." (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) "Why aren't you doing something about it?" Of course, as the government works, these letters filtered down through the process, down to my office to answer. (Laugh) I'll give Phil credit and I'll give *Sixty Minutes* credit on this. I watched it, and I watched it several times, and I still have a copy of it. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) There is nothing in there that was wrong. Everything in the entire broadcast was correct. But, as quite often happens in news shows of this type, half the facts are left out. (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Everything was going . . .

Storey: The ones that aren't convenient, you mean?

Knapp: The one's that don't back up the argument at hand. (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) But what was said was accurate. It needed filled in, but if it were filled in, it wouldn't have made *Sixty Minutes*. That's the way the world operates.

Storey: Yeah. Hmm.

Knapp: Anyway I . . . can I give you another anecdote?

Storey: Sure. Please.

Acreage Limitation Reports to Congress

Knapp: Some of these things I'm probably going to write up myself, but I'll take advantage of this opportunity. As a part of a particular law that was passed, I think about 1987 or '88, Reclamation was called upon to write an annual report to Congress on the status of our program, Acreage Limitation. It was questionable if we had to do it. I say it's questionable, I can't recall the language, whether we had to do three of them or it was continuing one every year. We put together one, and two, and we were kind of setting up for a major effort on the third annual report to Congress.

I happened to be in Washington and Dennis Underwood was commissioner. I've always loved this anecdote by the way you can tell that I'm talking. I happened to be there and Dennis caught me in the hall and invited me into his office. And I went into his office and he pointed to the couch and said, "Have a seat." "Okay," I said. "Can I get you a soft drink? Cup of coffee? Or anything?" (Laugh) I said, "No, I'm fine. Thank you." I mean it's not everyday that you get this offer from the commissioner, sit on his couch and "I'll get you a cup of coffee." (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) And he sat, came and sat down on the couch with me, and he turned to me and he said, "The

third annual report to Congress,” he said this very clearly, “The third annual report to Congress is critical to the future of this agency. If this is not a good report, if this report isn’t complete and near perfect, we are dead. Reclamation is gone.” (Laugh)

Storey: Oh he did, huh?

Knapp: He said that to me. And he says, “They are waiting for it on the Hill.”

END SIDE 1, TAPE 2. MARCH 26, 2003.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. MARCH 26, 2003.

Storey: Like to find . . . ?

Knapp: “They’d like to find something that we’re not totally candid on, something we’re covering up, some evidence that we’re not administering this particular program. And this particular program is being looked upon as a microcosim of the entire agency, and how we operate.” He said, “They’re waiting for it. Some people like George Miller, Representative from California. His chief of staff, Dan Beard,”¹⁹ (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) “are waiting for this.” He says, “It has to be a good report.” (Laugh) I said, “I think I understand what you’re saying Dennis.” (Laugh) So, I, in later years told Dennis this story. I reminded him of this, and he said, his response was, “You mean I put that kind of burden on you and I didn’t even offer you a regular drink?” (Laugh)

Storey: How did that change what you did? Anyway? Anything?

Knapp: Oh, it would be nice to say that “No. I was going to put out a good report anyway.” But, when you get that kind of a push, you double your efforts. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) I did a very clever thing, two clever things. Number one, first thing I did was call my boss Terry Lynott, head of the task force, and told him what was going on, just so he would be aware. And the next call I made was to Richard Rizzi, on my staff. (Storey: Hmm.) And I gave Richard the full responsibility for the logistics of putting this thing together.

Richard is a true individual. And I said, “First of all Richard I want a time line,

19. Dan Beard left his position in Congress to become Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation under the administration of President Bill Clinton, 1993-1995, and participated in Reclamation’s oral history program. See Daniel P. Beard, *Oral History Interview*, 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.

chapter by chapter, how things are done, how they go out, how they come back.” “Fine. No problem.” And, he did. As I told Dennis Underwood, later, in just a casual conversation much, many years later, I said, “Richard took this seriously enough that on a certain date, chapter two goes out in draft form. Comments are due back at a certain date. And prior to that chapter three goes out in draft form. A full complete time line.” (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) I said, “You know Dennis, at one time Richard was not going to accept your comments on the report because they were late.” (Laugh)

Storey: Oh? And what’d Dennis say to that?

Knapp: He laughed heartily at that. He thought that was—and that is Richard Rizzi. He said, “We expected the comments back by the fourteenth. It’s now the seventeenth. They’re not here. We’re not going to accept them.” (Laugh) I said, “Richard, I think we’ll accept the commissioner’s comments.” (Laugh) Richard did a superb job on this. Richard wasn’t the only one, but he handled the mechanics. (Storey: Uh huh.)

In the end I’ll say, very immodestly, that the report went out, in the meantime Bill McDonald²⁰ came on board, and Bill got totally familiar with that. He was calling me at home on weekends. He’d say, “On page thirty-two of such and such . . .” But in the end, we got the word back from, well, from Tom Jensen [spelling?], who was [Senator] Bill Bradley’s chief council.²¹ I worked with Tom quite a bit, on this, and he was a critic of the Bureau. And of course, I worked with Dan Beard, who was an extreme critic of the Bureau. The word came back from both sources, both the Senate and the House side, “This is the best report we’ve seen from Reclamation in years.” And the word also came down that, “This kind of assures that Reclamation will be around for a while.” (Laugh) This was, I say it’s very immodest, but it was very good to hear, and I’m sure Dennis Underwood loved to hear that. (Storey: Uh huh.)

Heady Time for Reclamation

But, again, to repeat myself again, that in many ways the Acreage Limitation Program was a microcosm of the entire agency. It was being looked at very heavily, with the idea from Dan Beard, and he said it, I’m not sure publically, at least

20. J. William McDonald served as Reclamation’s Assistant Commissioner Resource Management, 1990-1994 and Pacific Northwest regional director, 1998-2010. Mr. McDonald also participated in Reclamation’s oral history program. See J. William McDonald, *Oral History Interview*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, from 1993 to 2011, in Denver, Colorado, edited by Brit Allan Storey, further edited and desktop published by Andrew H. Gahan, 2014, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

21. U.S. Senator Bill Bradley represented the state of New Jersey, 1979-1997

privately, “If Reclamation cannot handle this program of controlling subsidies and who gets them, we don’t need this agency.” (Storey: Hmm.)

For myself, personally, it was a very heady time because I was the spokesman for the program. I’d say it was good for the ego, to be quite honest. I had ready access to the commissioner. I could walk into his office. I got briefings for everybody from the assistant secretary to chief of staff, to the secretary, up to the secretary himself, who was [Manuel] Lujan at the time, wanted a briefing.²²

My first briefing to Lujan, it was interesting. We had some new legislation pending and he wanted to know the impact of it. So, I prepared pretty heavily for that. It was a shirt-sleeve type meeting, and I started out by saying, “Well, we have, I have twenty-seven different impacts of this legislation, but I’ve got them divided up into like four or five broad categories, which I can go over.” And his response, Manuel Lujan, his response was, “No. I want all twenty-seven.” (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) “Okay.” Take a deep breath. (Laugh) Which was not the manager that he was purported to be, that he wanted the detail. (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) Luckily I had notes. (Storey: Yeah. Hmm.)

But, again it was good for the ego, and I could, to wheel and deal with these people, and I was up on the Hill regularly. I was dealing with Dan Beard, having, being a bit naive maybe, but I had absolutely zero thought that Dan Beard, I was talking to the future Commissioner of Reclamation. (Storey: Uh huh.) That never entered my mind in the slightest.

Storey: Did anybody go with you when you went up on the Hill?

Meetings on the Hill

Knapp: At times, but quite often it was myself. What happened here was, when this was a very contentious program, I went to Terry Lynott, and maybe above that, and I said, “We got a problem here that if Dan Beard, or somebody like Dan, has a question on the program, how a particular section works on something, and he wants to know, he only has one person to call. He calls Phil Doe.” And that’s when Phil was no longer in the program. (Storey: Uh huh.) I said, “That’s the only person he knows to call. We need to have someone else for him to call.” (Laugh)

And it got up to Dennis Underwood, who agreed. And he called me and he said,

22. Manuel Lujan served as Secretary of the Interior under the administration of President George H. W. Bush, 1989-1993.

“Okay. Do what you have to do.” But his only stipulation was, “If you talk to one side, talk to the other.” He says, “We get criticized, our critics of the Bureau, we talk to them and work with them, we have supporters also, like [U.S. Senator] James McClure of Idaho and a few people like that. We have supporters. The complaints come in, but we don’t go talk to them. We only talk to the critics.” He says, “If you talk to one side, talk to the other.” (Laugh) Okay. So every time I went up on the Hill, if I talked to Dan Beard, I would go, maybe down the hall or around the corner, and talk to somebody who was a supporter. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Which worked out fairly well.

Storey: How would those contacts with the Hill be initiated? Did you initiate them? Were they initiated from the Hill? Or were they initiated in our Washington Office?

Knapp: Typically, if they were initiated in our Washington Office, that wasn’t typical, but if it happened, and somebody from that Washington Office would want to be involved. They wouldn’t want this dumb guy from Denver handling it all by himself. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) To start out with, I initiated them. I said to Dan or somebody, “I would, I’ll be in Washington next week. I want to talk to you about what you would like to see on such and such.” And I said—I took the tack—let me back up. I took the tack of, they were looking at new legislation and I said, “Our best bet is if you tell me what you want, what you’re trying to accomplish, and we can write it to accomplish that. We might not agree with it. We might oppose the legislation, but if it passes, we’ll have something we can work with. It won’t be nebulas. We can write it so the language will allow us to do what you want done.”

And, Dan appreciated that. But, to answer your question, sometimes I would initiate these talks, I would want to—and sometimes, after a while, it worked. But when Dan Beard had a question on something, he had my phone number, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) which is what we were after. (Storey: Yeah.) So, sometimes I didn’t even tell the Washington Office I was up there. Maybe I should have, but I had a good working arrangement, I didn’t want to screw it up. (Laugh)

Storey: Any other stories about Dale Duvall or Dennis Underwood?

Dale Duvall and Dennis Underwood

Knapp: Oh, I could talk a lot about both of them but—I told you how Dale Duvall was totally entrapped by the Reclamation Reform Act and acreage limitation. It was eating him alive. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, not too long, a short time, and I’m not sure how long, after Dennis Underwood became commissioner, I was back in Washington with

Terry Lynott and I recall well that Dennis called Terry and I into his office. I sat down and he says, Dennis said, "I've got to be careful or the Reclamation Reform Act is going to take me over." (Laugh) "I don't want that to happen." And I said, "Yeah, it happened to your predecessor." (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And he said, "I don't want that to happen. So, I want you and Terry, particularly Terry. He was the chairman of the task force. I want you to take the responsibility of this program and take the heat on some things, and answer it before it gets to me, just because I don't want to, that to be my only job." (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Which was a good way of looking at it. (Storey: Yeah.) And he was absolutely right. It could just take him over. (Storey: Hmm.) Again, Brit, I, one of my objectives in the foreseeable future to write up a little thing on this. I think there's a lot that happened in there that should be recorded.

Storey: Well, let's see. Dennis went out, and then we got a new commissioner. Did that change anything in your office?

Knapp: That was Dan Beard, wasn't it?

Storey: Yes it was.

Dan Beard

Knapp: For a while I was concerned. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But I had a working relationship with Dan, but I was concerned about the program. I was concerned about who he might bring in (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) to help run the program. What I had overlooked, and I should be smart enough to know, was that Dan knows politics also. And, as politics, he had to make some cuts that maybe is against his really inner soul, (Laugh) but he had to do. They were maybe not the right thing, according to some people, but just things he had to do.

And, we had, and so he made some cuts, some of which were very unpopular with Phil Doe, sitting over outside. "Why is Dan doing that?" "Well, Dan had to." I say he had to, but it was politically expedient thing to do. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Not that detrimental. Some of the hardline things that we had taken up in my office, on forms requirements, and full-cost pricing, and things like that, Dan decided early on, he says, "That's overly burdensome." (Laugh) When he was a critic, that's exactly what he wanted. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But, where you stand depends on where you sit. What is the old saying on that? (Storey: Yeah.) But he didn't make a bad call or anything, it was just a bit more relaxed and a bit looser than what we had done in protecting ourselves from Dan Beard for some time. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But, we, it

worked out fine.

Storey: Did he change?

Knapp: Did he change?

Storey: Yeah. While he was Commissioner. He as Commissioner, what, about 2, 2½, 3 years?

Knapp: I couldn't really answer that because I saw him in the early days of his commissioner, commissionership, or whatever the word is. I saw him in the early days. In the latter days I didn't see him that much so. It's after he came in, made statements, and got things working the way he wanted to, I kind of lost track of him. In the latter days I didn't really talk to him that much.

Storey: Why did that change?

Acreage Limitation Program Settled Down

Knapp: The Acreage Limitation Program, which was my prime controversial responsibility, we were operating it, when he came in, essentially the way he wanted it when he was on the Hill. And then, when he relaxed the program slightly, we did that, and "Okay. That program is okay." (Laugh) "We'll go onto other things, like the Hoover Visitor Center and things like that." (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.)

The—maybe I should mention here a particular—what's the term? You're educated. A paradox or dichotomy? Something, it's when you take a controversial program and run it. And, I'll say again immodestly, when it's being run in a "nice manner," so it's really—it disappears a bit. All of a sudden, the Reclamation Reform Act and the Acreage Limitation Program, even though issues were still coming up, like I mentioned before, is being run in a non-controversial manner, and it goes a bit on the back burner, even though there's still a fair workload. It's not reaching the headlines.

I told this to a big group a few years ago, water users and Reclamation people in Reno a few years ago. I said, "Here's the dichotomy. It's a controversial program and people are saying, 'Who cares about acreage limitation it's not an issue?'" I said, "It's not an issue, because it's being well run. It's being well run by the people in this room. You people are running a good program here. It's being handled well, so it disappears." So here's the dichotomy. It's not, you run it well so people say, "Why are you necessary?"

Storey: Yeah, it fades into the background.

Knapp: Yeah. And a good example of that is when John Keyes, existing commissioner,²³ a fine man, gave his first talk to the Denver Office and he, and mostly he said, in a humorous manner, he says, “I was rather surprised to come back to Reclamation and find out that the R-R-A, the Reclamation Reform Act is still there. I thought it disappeared a long time ago.” (Laugh) And he got a big chuckle out of the audience. And one of my staff came around later and was upset by that. I said, “No. Take it as a compliment. It is a compliment. He thought it disappeared, because it’s not in his face.” (Laugh) “It’s being run well.” (Laugh) “Because of you it’s being run well.” (Storey: Yeah.) “Take it as a compliment.” (Laugh)

Storey: So, of course we had a reorganization after the ‘88 reorganization?

Effects of the 1993 Reorganization

Knapp: We had many. (Laugh)

Storey: Yeah. Did you then have added responsibilities or anything?

Knapp: Well, yeah for a time, over a year, I was an Acting Division Chief, Analysis Contracts and Lands, which was a very interesting and a rewarding experience. I had like three or four branches and innumerable sections. It was a good experience. I liked it. I don’t know what more to say about that. It was just a—I think I did a good job. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And we had innumerable little organizations after that, or reorganizations. At one time I had the Chief Realty Officer, the Chief Appraiser, the Federal—what is Ed Friedman’s [spelling?] title? The Federal . . .

Storey: Preservation Officer.

Knapp: Federal Preservation Officer, and the Senior Historian on my staff, (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) for a short time, which I liked. (Laugh) That only lasted for a matter of months or a year, maybe. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Yeah. I didn’t document this, and I should have, about the various reorganizations and how they worked out but, in the

23. John W. Keys served as Pacific Northwest regional director, 1986-1998, and went on to become Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, 2001-2006. Mr. Keys also participated in Reclamation’s oral history program, see John W. Keys, III, *Oral History Interview*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, from 1994 to 2006, in Denver, Colorado; Boise, Idaho; Washington, D.C.; and Moab, Utah, edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2007, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

end, under, it was Dan Beard's reduction in force plus reorganization I ended up with the Reclamation Reform Act, Contracts and Repayment, Miscellaneous Revenues, and Economic Policy (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) on my staff. About sixteen people. And it was a good staff, very good staff.

And, there's another dichotomy. When you delegate a lot, which I did. I had good people to delegate to. Good people like Jerri Beak [spelling?], Richard Rizzi, Larry Schluntz, and so, good people. You delegate to them. Let them do it. Don't stand in their way. Well, again, you can sort of disappear as a manager. What does Lon Knapp do anyway? (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) (Laugh) "Well, he delegates." But I had good people to delegate to. (Storey: Yeah.)

Miscellaneous Revenues

I mentioned the Miscellaneous Revenues. I should bring that into the fold a bit. This I got circa 1989. We've always had miscellaneous revenues in the Bureau. Revenues outside of our power contracts, outside of our water contracts, water from rights of use on our lands, gravel permits, oil and gas permits, all kinds of uses, and we've never had a good handle on what to do with those revenues, how to handle them. Every so often the issue would come up. Finally, Dale Duvall got into some political hassle on that, which I will give you details of, but he said, "We've got to get this straight. What do we do with these?"

So, I was put in charge of the task force to look at this. And, we found that, number one, we found that our miscellaneous revenues amount to in the neighborhood of \$400 million a year. (Laugh) We stopped calling them miscellaneous. (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) To the point we could just darn near fund the Bureau off these miscellaneous revenues. (Storey: Yeah.) And I, at the instructions of the Assistant Secretary, and so forth, I put together a permanent work group to work with the miscellaneous revenues, what we just, then just called revenues. And I had to hire the people for it and put that together. And it's still in existence, some twelve, thirteen years later. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And we do have a better grasp on that.

It's been controversial. People would say, "Well, who cares? It's always worked in the past." We got hit pretty hard with the I-G [Inspector General] audit. We invited the I-G, Inspector General, in to look at this, to help us, and they found such a mess that they really were sorry that we had asked them. They wanted to do it themselves. We had them in a help mode, and they wanted to be in investigative mode. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) But I think we're on the right track on that. I had that in

my purview for, oh, ten years or so. That's where I—to head up the new section for this, I hired somebody from outside the Bureau, that I didn't even know, Jerri Beak [spelling?], Jerolyn Beak, from Minerals Management Service. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) I hired her to run this, and she did a superb job. She got it set up and running. I've always kind of liked that program, even though it's never been a popular program, because it just calls upon people to do stuff they've never had to do before.

Storey: Yeah. The—what did we do with that \$400 million?

Miscellaneous Revenue Distribution

Knapp: It depends on the source of the revenues. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Some of it goes directly to the Reclamation Fund. A little bit of it goes directly to the U.S. Treasury. A lot of it goes to what we call a tail-end credit to a repayment obligation. The district, contracting district, gets credit for this but not on their annual payment. They get credit slopped off the end payment. So, in the end they get credit for it, but not initially. In some cases, there is a front-end credit for it where they can take that money and use it help their annual payment, but I say it's, it all depends on the source of the revenues.

Storey: Hmm. Now, I think it was the minerals leasing, big chunk of money involved there?

Knapp: Oil and gas, which is called minerals. Yeah. Oil and gas off withdrawn lands is the biggest chunk.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. But we also get revenues from the, what, the Mineral Leasing Act? Or something?

Knapp: That one, that's what governs the oil and gas.

Storey: Yeah.

Knapp: Minerals Act of 1920, I believe it is.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. Hmm.

Knapp: That says—the little fear I had there—there's a couple of anecdotes on that, too. A little fear I had there is we discovered early on that from oil and gas revenues on withdrawn lands, and I won't get into what withdrawn lands mean, but half of that money was to go to the state of origin. Forty percent of it to the Reclamation Fund, and ten percent

to U.S. Treasury. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) When I saw that fifty percent to go to the state, my gut feeling was, have we been doing this? (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Or do we owe these states “X” million dollars? Turns out we have been doing it.

Storey: Oh good.

Knapp: (Laugh) Yeah. Doing it right. But, early on, early early in the process I got a notice from the commissioner, to all regions, saying we had a solicitor’s opinion based on how this was to be done. He sent out a note to all the regions saying, “Collect all the information on oil and gas revenues and send it to Denver. What revenues you’ve got for the last several years, or whatever.” And, I got these notices from the regions, or phone calls saying, “We can’t do that.” One reason said, “It would take us eighteen months to put that data together.” And I got about three responses all of which were inconsistent, and things.

This is before I formed the section. Richard Rizzi was helping me on this. Richard finally said, “Let me see what I can do.” Since the regions say it’s going to take us eighteen months, or we can’t do it at all, or whatever. Richard said, “Let me see what I can do.” So I said, “Have at it Richard.” And, in about a week and a half, he had the data for the entire Bureau. He went across the street to the Minerals Management Service. (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) They had the data. (Laugh)

Storey: And did you then send a memo to the regions saying, “I just want to save you eighteen months of labor. Here’s the data.” (Laugh)

Knapp: I don’t think so. That would, it’s a fun thing to think about, but no, I don’t think I did that. (Laugh) I think I probably told the commissioner and let him do what he wants.

Storey: Yeah. Well, of course now those things are not all in the same office? Tell me about what’s going on?

Contracts and Repayment

Knapp: Oh. Contracts and Repayment got moved out of my office here. It was working very well. We finally had a good relationship with the regions, but it got moved out into a separate office several years ago. Economic Policy, which was primarily a one-man operation, with Larry Schluntz, who was kind of a senior economist with the Bureau, a lot of experience. I don’t—Larry retired a couple years ago, and there was, we always talked about replacing him and I’m not sure whatever happened on that. I don’t think he was replaced. I’m not sure where that function is now. (Storey: Uhm-

hmm.) Acreage Limitation is still there, under my old, my replacement in that office. Let's see, the Revenues I think come in with the Contracts and Repayment now. I'm sorry to be vague on this, but I've kind of lost track a little bit on the shuffle.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. Hmm. What else should we talk about?

Knapp: Oh. We could talk a little bit—I don't want to whine or talk about any personalities, but is the Bureau the same now as it was?

Storey: Tell me.

Knapp: No it's not. (Laugh) Anything else you want to know?

Storey: What's going on?

Changes within Reclamation

Knapp: No, I think some of the personality at the Bureau has changed. I told you about the old Lower Missouri Region, my regional office. There was a real feeling of family and camaraderie there. (Storey: Uh huh.) To the point that it's been closed now for some eighteen years or so. They still have quarterly lunches, very well attended lunches of the Lower Missouri Regional Office alumni. (Storey: Yeah.) Which are very well attended eighteen years later. Which says something about the feeling there. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.)

I'll make one statement that, probably will negate everything I've said and people will say, "Well, why did I listen to them." At one time, fifteen to twenty years ago the Bureau was very very mission-oriented. The mission of Reclamation, right or wrong, the mission of Reclamation. (Storey: Uh huh.) People felt very proud of that, and it was a good family feeling to Reclamation. I think nowadays a bit of that has been lost. I think it's more personality driven, about who's in what job, who is going to get the next job, a lit bit more personality than overall mission.

I know when, what I would call the 'olden days,' when a relatively senior-level job came open everyone had their favorites as to who should get that job. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Even though we're not a selecting official. We all had favorites. But when the end came, the selection was made, almost universally everyone said, "Good choice. Good choice. That was a good person for it. Even though I would have selected Peter, Joe, or somebody, that's a good choice." That was the olden days. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) I don't think that occurs that much anymore.

Storey: What's going on then?

Reclamation's More Personality Driven Now

Knapp: I think it's more personality driven. It's harsh to say who knows who, and who is friends, and things like that, and that's probably overstating it quite a bit. But, years of experience, best person for the job, and all that, the things that used to be the criteria for the selection, I don't think weigh in as heavily.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. What does weigh in?

Knapp: Who's a colleague? Who do you know?

Storey: Uhm-hmm. You don't think that happened before?

Knapp: It probably did, but it was not as evident. (Storey: Uh huh.) I'm sure that always happens.

Storey: Yeah. What was his name? Dennis Schroeder?²⁴

Knapp: In Phoenix.

Storey: In Phoenix, at the Phoenix Area Office, said that one of the reasons he was leaving was because he couldn't hire the best people for the jobs any longer.

Knapp: Well, and Dennis was a superb manager. (Storey: Hmm.) Yeah. I didn't, I was just trying to think, did I ever have anyone that I was told to hire? I don't think so. But I was, the last two years or so of my career, I was really out of the hiring mode. I was no longer a supervisor. So.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. MARCH 26, 2003.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 3. MARCH 26, 2003.

Storey: Tape three of an interview by Brit Storey with Lon Knapp on March 26, 2003.

No Longer a Manager

24. Dennis Schroeder participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See Dennis Schroeder, *Oral History Interviews*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, Phoenix, Arizona in 1996 and 1997, edited and desk-top published by Andrew H. Gahan, 2013, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

Knapp: Well, your question was, “Why was I no longer a supervisor?” (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) My answer is, I don’t really know. I think I had a pretty good organization there. One of my philosophies on the organization was I didn’t take problems to the front office. If I had a problem, which I didn’t have that many of, I tried to handle it myself. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And I, we put out a lot of work over time. And I think good work, and there was some controversial areas. Like I say, for a time, I had Contracts and Repayment, Acreage Limitation, Revenues, and so forth. And, again, my immodesty shows, but it was well run and it was operating well. I think there’s probably two things that happened here. Number one, it might have been time to have some other people going on their way up. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) And, maybe it was time for them to start on their move up. I think there was a little bit, and I’m not sure about that, a little bit of they wanted to reward me a little bit, with a non-supervisory position.

Storey: Yeah. And, what were you doing then?

Knapp: I don’t know. (Laugh)

Storey: (Laugh) You don’t know?

Knapp: Well, I was given a couple of rather nebulous assignments on putting together some work papers on the future of the Bureau of Reclamation. (Storey: Uh huh.) What we should be doing in the future, what we should be looking out for, what changes in socioeconomic things that were occurring that might change, that the Bureau should be aware of. And, for a time, it was interesting. But I got the idea that maybe not a lot of people were really interested in this and I’m not sure where it would go. It was interesting work.

Storey: What kinds of conclusions did you arrive at?

Socioeconomic Change Studies

Knapp: Not a lot. (Laugh) I looked for socioeconomic changes through the census materials. And, we were trying to find out things like the changing structure, like Hispanic population changes, Asian-American-Hispanic population changes, would they cause a change in demand for the Bureau services? (Storey: Uh huh.) I couldn’t really find any. Of course, there’s the other things about changes from agricultural land to suburbia, hobby farms, and things like that, which are, we all know about. It’s changing. The traditional farm of, you know, 300 acres or so, a family farm, is rapidly being taken over by the suburbs and by hobby farms. Suburbs and farms of

two or three acres.

Storey: If you even call them farms? Raise a little alfalfa for the horses kind of thing?

Knapp: Yeah. And so, open question, should the Bureau be providing water to them or not? Well, if there's a demand for it, maybe we should. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Another question is, we've never got a good answer on this is, should they get an agricultural water rate? (Laugh)

Storey: As opposed to?

Knapp: A municipal rate. (Storey: Uh huh. Hmm.) Agricultural rate is lesser, typically.

Storey: So, did you turn in reports, or were these oral presentations? Or what?

Knapp: We turned in a couple of draft reports. I'm not sure they were final. They were interim. We were never sure about what the actual end result was to be. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) It was kind of interesting, but it wasn't like somebody was sitting around looking at the calendar saying, "When is the next report going to be in?" (Laugh) And like I said, I think, in my opinion, some of it was a reward for me to take me out of the supervisory position, which was looked upon as something I should be glad to get out of, and that's not true. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) I found if you don't have any supervisory problems, being a supervisor is a really good job. And I enjoyed being a supervisor, as long as I didn't have a problem.

Storey: Uhm-hmm. What kinds of problems did you run into over the years?

General Personnel Issues as a Supervisor

Knapp: I, not that many. Not that many. One person comes to mind, and I won't mention any names here, or even gender, who didn't really like the kind of operational work we did. This one person would have been very good, very good in a back office somewhere doing a cookbook-type thing, where it didn't require any thought. (Storey: Uhm-hmm.) Would have been very good, and did not like the kind of work we did which required some thought and maybe some analysis and further thought. And, didn't like the work. And when someone doesn't like the work they don't work that hard. (Laugh) And it becomes obvious to those around them. (Storey: Yeah.) And, that's when you, being a supervisor, causes you to grit your teeth, when somebody comes to you and says, "Why am I having to work so much and this other person's sitting over there on the phone all day?" You know. (Laugh) (Storey: Uhm-

- hmm.)
- Storey: Hmm. Hum. What else should we talk about?
- Knapp: Oh, I don't know. I think we've, I'm sure I'll come up with many things that I wish I'd mentioned to you, and other things that I would say to myself, "Why did I ever bring that up? I've got it on record now."
- Storey: Uhm-hmm. Well, you know, we can always do another interview if you think of things you want to talk about.
- Knapp: Okay. I'll keep that in mind and I would appreciate that.
- Storey: Good.
- Knapp: I just have, a temporary conclusion, temporary, maybe I'll take more later. But, I worked with some world-class people. Very good. (Storey: Hmm.) And, I don't know every other agency or other entity that I could have worked for, but I have no regrets of working for Reclamation for my career.
- Storey: Good. A lot of people either really love it or really hate it.
- Knapp: If you really hate it, why did you stick around?
- Storey: Yeah, well, that's always been my issue too.
- Knapp: I've had periods of dissatisfaction, but I'm sure that happens everywhere.
- Storey: Yeah. Well, let me ask whether you're willing for historians and other researchers to use the information on these tapes?
- Knapp: Yes I am.
- Storey: Great. Thank you.

END SIDE 1, TAPE 3. MARCH 26, 2003.
END OF INTERVIEWS.