ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

MELVIN R. MARTIN

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STATUS OF INTERVIEWS:
OPEN FOR RESEARCH

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Statement of Donation

STATEMENT OF DONATION
OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW OF
Melvin R MARTIN

1. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms, conditions, and restrictions set forth in this instrument, I, Melvin R. Martin, (hereinafter referred to as "the Donor"), of Auburn, California, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter referred to as "the National Archives), acting for and on behalf of the United States of America, all of my rights and title to, and interest in the information and responses (hereinafter referred to as "the Donated Materials") provided during the interview conducted on May 26, 1994, at my home in Auburn, California, and prepared for deposit with the National Archives and Records Administration in the following format: cassette tape recordings and transcript. This donation includes, but is not limited to, all copyright interests I now possess in the Donated Materials.

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Martin

INTERVIEWER: Brit Allan Storey
Brit Allan Storey

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Editorial Conventions

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, The Bureau of Reclamation created 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 Interview
Melvin R. Martin

Storey: This is tape one of an interview by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian in the Bureau of Reclamation, with Mel Martin, a former employee of the Bureau of Reclamation, at his home in the Auburn Ravine Terrace in Auburn, California, on May 26, 1994, at about three o'clock in the afternoon.

Mr. Martin, I was wondering if you would tell me where you were born and raised and educated and how you finally arrived at the Bureau of Reclamation to work.

Early Life

Martin: I was born in Bakersfield, California. My father was a Southern Pacific [Railroad] clerk. We moved to Oakland and then to McCloud in Siskiyou County [California]. I finished high school, went all through high school in McCloud, and graduated in 1930. I went that semester to the University of California at Berkeley. I went to school a year–a half a year, pardon me, and stayed out a year to work so I could get through school.

I took a test. I had an appointment for Annapolis [U.S. Naval Academy], which I didn't quite make. So I continued my education at Berkeley. I worked summers, and some of the times that I took off for a semester or a year at a lumber town, lumber camp, I worked on survey crews.

Married when I was a junior at Berkeley. My wife stayed in McCloud while I went down to finish my education. I finished my residence at Berkeley in 1936. I went to work for the Division of Highways then on a survey crew, and I completed my thesis while I was working. The papers say, I think, 1937 I graduated. Actually, I had studied transportation, or majored in transportation, in college, university, so the Division of Highways was always pretty good. But I guess I worked two years for them.

Going to Work for Reclamation

Then in '39 I left the Division of Highways and went to work for the Bureau of Reclamation as a junior engineer in the C-C-C [Civilian Conservation Corps], clearing part of the Shasta Reservoir. Ralph Lowrey [phonetic] was the Construction Engineer there at the time.

So from there, when the three-Cs folded up, I think in July of '41 I started on Keswick Dam,[1] and I was part of a survey crew running railroad grades for relocation the S-P [Southern Pacific Railroad] around just a small portion there. Then later I checked forms on the dam.

There was a shutdown at Keswick on a strike, so I spent some time checking forms at the top of the Shasta Dam. That was through in May of '44. I went to Friant Dam and canals.[2] The dam was practically finished, and the canals were just starting, Friant-Kern Canal and the Contra Costa Canal. I was in the office on quantities and right-of-way, and that's where I met Mike Harrison [phonetic], there at Friant.

1. A feature of the Central Valley Project, Shasta/Trinity Division, Keswick Dam is located 9 miles downstream of Shasta Dam. The dam creates an 23,000 acre foot afterbay for uneven releases from project powerplants. For more information, see Eric A. Stene, "Shasta Division, Central Valley Project," Denver: Bureau of Reclamation History Program, 1996, www.usbr.gov/projects/pdf.php?id=107.

2. Completed in 1942, Friant Dam is the main feature of the Friant Division, Central Valley Project, to transport surplus water from northern California to southern areas within the California's Central Valley. Other division facilities include Friant-Kern Canal and the Madera Canal. For more information, see Robert Autobee, "Friant Division, Central Valley Project," Denver: Bureau of Reclamation History Program, 1994, www.usbr.gov/projects/pdf.php?id=103.

Storey: When you say quantities, this was to pay on the contract?

Estimating Section, Friant Dam

Martin: Yes, when Estimating Section got information from the field and we'd compute how many yards, how many tons, how many whatever the unit of pay was for a particular contract. There'd be contracts that there'd be maybe fifty or sixty items. Some were lump sum. Some were by the unit. They were paid a monthly estimate. When the job was finally completed, why, the final estimate was made, the final cost, anyway. There were change orders and extra work orders, things of that sort. If the contractor would hit some unexpected earth or rock, they always ended up getting a lot more than the bid in the contract, at least in my experience they did.

Storey: How did you verify those change orders, or did you?

Martin: They were worked up in our office and in the Office of the Chief Engineer in Denver. Most of them were worked up in Denver. We would send preliminaries, but for the findings there'd be maybe geologists involved and some of the

inspectors involved. The office would be involved. But most of the orders were changes and came from the Chief Engineer in Denver, unless it were a contract that was done by the Regional Office in Sacramento, then the Sacramento Regional Engineer would take care of those.

Storey: How did they go out and verify that the material wasn't what was anticipated, or did they?

Martin: They did. If the preliminaries said or the specifications said it was going to be such and such, they might go in, in the middle of it, and hit a big rock or something or a shelf, that was unexpected, so there was generally an adjustment made. Changed conditions. Sometimes they would get extra time added to their contract for unusual weather and things like that.

Storey: Were there inspectors out on the construction work?

Martin: Oh, yes.

Storey: And so they would be the ones who would verify, yes, indeed there is a change in the material or whatever?

Martin: Yes. The inspectors had a Field Engineer over them, and the breakdown was and they worked for the Field Engineers. On the Friant-Kern Canal, it was 160 miles long in length, and that was divided into four or five divisions, and there was a Field Engineer in charge of each division. However, the Field Engineer in the first region might leapfrog and do the field engineering for the Third or Fourth Region when it came under contract.

Storey: And is that what you were doing when you were out there on the Friant-Kern?

Friant-Kern Canal, Friant Division

Martin: I was figuring quantities mostly and sending in design data to the Chief Engineer on cross-drainage, how to get water under the canal or into the canal. Road relocations, county highway and county road that had to be relocated, we would work on those relocations. It was about quantities, relocations, estimates. We would make estimates for work before it was done. I mean, we were planning it. All this went into making the specifications. Most of the work I worked on, as I say, was specifications we prepared in the Chief Engineer's Office.

They would send inspectors out, too, or men to see how things were going at times.

Storey: Where was this exactly? Where were you working?

Martin: On the Friant-Kern Canal, I was at Friant. When they built the dam, they built a government camp. By the time I got there, they'd taken over an old dorm and the Canal Office was in there. I remember we had janitors hired, and we had cuspidors. The janitors, I thought of them having to clean them damn cuspidors out every night. We had government houses there in the so-called camp, so the rent was pretty cheap. It was a good life, a good place to raise a family in a little town like Friant.

Storey: What kind of family did you have at that point?

Martin: I had two boys and a girl. Of course, they're all grown now. One's in Livermore, teaches physics. Legally blind but he's getting by. He's got one more year to go to retirement. A son in Sacramento who works for Beaches and Parks for the state of California. A married daughter in Salt Lake City. I think I have eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Storey: What was the town of Friant like?

Member of the School Board at Friant

Martin: Well, it was like, "What are you doing here?" I was on the school board. How I got there, I don't know. But it was a small town, and this contractor came in to build the dam. One of the requirements of those specifications were that they build a school. It was a temporary school, supposedly. It lasted for, gosh, ten or fifteen years, I forget what. But when I was on the school board, we were trying to get a bond issued so we could build a new school, and the consensus of a few of the townspeople were, "If you guys up on Snob Hill pay something, why, then maybe we can support it."

But in those days, I don't think the government repaid in kind as much as they do or did later, so it was rough on the school districts, particularly if they were poor. We had an assessed valuation, I think, of $330,000. And there was a high school about twenty miles from us that had half a million dollars per pupil. They were in the Southern California Edison area where they paid taxes on their dams and so on. So, anyway, in Friant they wished we could have furnished more money to the school district.

Storey: So Reclamation built or they had the contractor build the school, but it was a very temporary structure?

Martin: Yes.

Storey: Was it just the high school or–

Martin: No, this was the grammar school. I'm sorry.

Storey: It was one through six or–

Martin: One through eight. And it was two teachers and a principal that taught. It wasn't big, but there was always about a hundred people, a hundred students, I think. And it had outhouses. When I was on the board, we finally got a toilet/lavatory, and a septic tank. So that helped. But it was a good place.

Storey: In Friant, there were townspeople? Was this an established town when Reclamation came in?

Office Responsibilities at Friant

Martin: Yes.

Storey: And then there were Reclamation people and contractor people?

Martin: Yes.

Storey: Must have put a strain on the local utilities and everything.

Martin: Well, I think it did. Of course, the stores liked it. The contractor generally lived–they might commute quite a ways. Fresno was the closest big town, Madera. And some of our Bureau people commuted from Fresno.

Storey: Do you have any idea how many Bureau of Reclamation people there were in that office?

Martin: Well, in my particular office there was Estimate Section, been about eight or ten, Right-of-Way was about five. We had a materials fellow, two or three in there. About twenty, I think, it might be. My memory doesn't serve me too well.

Storey: That's the whole office or just your part of the office?

Martin: Just the engineering part. Then in another building there was the Construction Engineer, Assistant Construction Engineer, typing pool, and there was a gentleman that worked–three of them worked on change orders. That was his specialty.

Storey: Who was your immediate supervisor?

Martin: In Friant it was–oh, you got me on that one.

Storey: Okay. Well, we can move on to something else.

Martin: It will come back to me.

Storey: Do you remember what he was like to work for?

Martin: Well, he graduated from M-I-T. [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], so he–his wife was [unclear], and he was very, very precise at what he did.

We had to hire some draftsmen in the office in Fresno and given an intelligence test for mechanical ability, and one of our draftsmen went in and taught some drafting. There was a very good girls' softball team, and we could go in and watch the Fresno Rockets play. There was a Bernie Amoral [phonetic] was third base, and she could really go into the umpires like a man and give them hell. Well, she was one. Lou Kramer was the boss. So he told me, "She's going to be disrupting everything." And she was one of the best ones we ever had. Never saw her do anything. She went back one weekend or something to the national championship. But she was quiet.

Lou Kramer's son was a little smart guy, and we had an older fellow, a draftsman, that had a son that was a little retarded. I think Rocky Kramer made the statement, "You know, if you had twice as many brains, you'd still be a half-wit." Well, the big guy clobbered the little guy. So Lou came in the next morning and just jumped all over [unclear], the big boy's father, and he went on [unclear]. [unclear] said, "We'll talk about it tonight." Bernie turned around to me and said, "If that son of a bitch ever talked to me like that, I'd climb his frame." She just got red and walked out. That's the only time I ever saw her temper flare.

Storey: It would have been unusual in those days to have a woman in your office, wouldn't it, as a draftsman?

Martin: We had two, Bernie and an older gal. They started out in the forties.

Storey: I guess they got around their concern about her being too aggressive or something?

Martin: Well, it was just between the boss and me as to her aggressiveness, because she was good. But that was my reaction. She's going to disrupt

everything, her temper. The only one she disrupted eventually was–

Storey: Was the boss.

Martin: The boss, yeah. That's the one that went to M-I-T.

Specialized in Transportation at Berkeley

Storey: What did you specialize in, in engineering, at Berkeley?

Martin: Transportation, road construction locations. So I ended up in Reclamation because that's where the work was. The Division of Highways in the state of California looked like there was going to be a lull, layoff. So I had written to a congressman, Harry Englebright [phonetic], about working on Shasta Dam, and he'd written and said, well, I'd have to apply to Ralph Lowrey at Shasta Dam. So it just so happened a week after I had to take leave to try to stretch the state job out, I got this offer by the Bureau of Reclamation. So I went right into it.

Reclamation CCC Camps at Shasta Dam

The C-C-Cs, there was two camps there, BR-84 and BR-85, Bureau of Reclamation

camps. I think there was 150, maybe, in each company.[3] And the Army ran them. They took care of their board and room, and we worked them. They were very good workers, I thought, when I [unclear]. But I thought that was one of the basis. There was kind of a corps war when they started out, because here's all these young fellows that had been in the Civilian Conservation Corps and knew how to live Army life, [unclear] and so on. In the C-C-Cs they learned to run equipment, tractors, graders, because we also built roads to get into wherever we were going to clear.

Storey: When you say you specialized in transportation, is that civil engineering?

Martin: Yes.

Storey: So you were a civil engineer.

3. Camps BR-84 and BR-85, known as Camp Redding, were located on the McCloud River about 17 miles north of Redding, California. Both camps were assigned to the Kennett Division of the Central Valley Project to clear the Shasta Dam reservoir site and prepare for the construction camp at Toyon. For more information, see Christine E. Pfaff, *The Bureau of Reclamation's Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy: 1933-1942* (Denver, Colorado: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, 2010), A-359-A-362.

Civil Engineer

Martin: Yes. Yeah, I have a B.S. in civil engineering. We had to take some of the courses. We didn't take too much. I think I had one course in irrigation, none in sanitation. It was all [unclear] and design. We all had structure design.

Storey: Did you also get an M-S.?

Martin: No.

Storey: So you had to write a thesis for your B-S.

Martin: Yes.

Storey: And it took you a period of about–what was it, seven years?

Martin: Yes.

Storey: You mentioned that you would be in and then you'd go out and work and go back and so on. Was all of it in the lumber camp?

Living in McCloud

Martin: In the lumber camp or grocery store. McCloud was a company town. They owned everything. In fact, before cars were used much, the

company expected to get back eighty cents out of every dollar that they put out. They owned everything in town: houses, theater, store, bank. Anyway, I worked in the store, maybe a year off and on. Eighty dollars a month.

My wife and another gal were the first clerks the store had hired, women clerks. So I guess today they'd call it harassment, but they got teased a lot. (laughter)

Storey: McCloud is where your family was living?

Martin: They lived there until '31 or '32 and my dad went to work elsewhere. He had been auditor of the railroad there. When he got out of that, why, he started working and finally became an auditor to the Port of Equalization for the state of California. So they left there in '32. My wife's folks stayed there until they died. She had a sister there for a long time.

So I was fortunate that things happened, because that was during the Depression. You've heard stories of that. If any one of the kids from McCloud that were going to college came home to McCloud in the summer, there'd be some work for them, maybe. I remember one time I went to work in the planning mill. A fellow

came by a day later and saw me at this tailing off planer.

"What are you doing there?"

"Well, that's where you put me."

"You're not supposed to work here. This is for married men."

So he took me to another place. Married men would work two or three days. The single guys would work one or two. And in the store we had to keep track of how much a person was spending.

END SIDE 1, TAPE 1. MAY 26, 1994.
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. MAY 26, 1994.

Martin: As I say, I think I was pretty fortunate.

Storey: You were taking care of the books in the store and keeping records?

Martin: No, I was a clerk. At those times, the clerks went to the shelves and got the cans, whatever, for the customers. Being a company store, why, most of them had a charge account, so we'd write the charge up and send it through a tube, a

pneumatic tube, up to the cashier's office. My wife worked there.

Storey: You mentioned when they got to a certain amount of charges. Then what happened?

Martin: Well, they couldn't charge anymore. There was enough. Some of them had five or six children. Of course, they would be allowed more. I think that was twofold. There was no welfare in McCloud. The company, they called her Mother McCloud.

Storey: Oh, they did? Was it McCloud Lumber Company?

Martin: McCloud River Lumber Company, yeah.

Storey: How's McCloud spelled?

Martin: M-c-C-L-O-U-D. It's at the foot of Mount Shasta.

Storey: So you were raised in the area of Shasta Dam?

Martin: Well, north of there. Shasta Dam is near Redding. I guess McCloud might be seventy miles, maybe not that far, north. It's close to the McCloud River, which runs into the Pit [River]

which runs into the Sacramento [River]. There's the McCloud arm of the Shasta Reservoir.

Storey: I forgot to ask you when you were born.

Martin: 1912. November 22nd.

Storey: What were you doing specifically at Shasta in '39 when you were working with the C-C-C clearing Shasta?

Clearing Shasta Reservoir Site

Martin: Running property lines and contour lines. Shasta was to be cleared between certain elevations. Elevation 1072 was the high and 818 was the low. As they bought property, we would run contours, first on the property lines to make sure we were on the right property, and then the clearing crews would come in. They would clear between those elevations that we had staked. Of course, it ended up the C-C-Cs couldn't do it all, because it was large, very large project, so they had contractors come in and do it. But most of it.

I was working in the estimates there at Shasta. We had a fellow by the name of Rufus Thaxton [phonetic] that was very hard of hearing. He'd walk around the office with his

earplug out, and we'd say anything we wanted and he never heard it. Red Wixon [phonetic] came in one day, and he wanted $5,000 more, I think it was, on his estimate. He was just red in the face. He was cussing at Rufus. Finally got through. He says, "What did you say? I didn't hear a word you said. Would you repeat it?" By that time the fellow had cooled down a little bit and listened. I remember that. (laughter)

Storey: Played around with his little–

Martin: His hearing aid, yeah. It was one, remember, that–

Storey: The little box that you wore down in your pocket or that clipped to your shirt or something. Well, when the contractors would come in and clear, what would they do?

Martin: Then we'd generally pile it and burn it.

Storey: So there wasn't any timber in there that would be commercially–

Martin: There was, but no one wanted it. I took several people out and showed them some areas that they could log, but they would have had to build roads into it, and I guess they thought that the

amount–there was a lot of marketable timber there.

Storey: But it wasn't marketed?

Martin: It wasn't marketed.

Storey: So they would cut it down and then burn it? All the big trees?

Martin: Uh-huh.

Storey: What about the brush and things?

Martin: Well, it went first, of course. Everything was burned. They had bulldozers and generally the civilian operator with the C-C-Cs. They'd get them started and then they'd come by and shake them up a little bit, much like you do wood in the fireplace. You'd get a complete burn. Bury the stumps many times. The brush, of course, was a lot of manzanita that burned very fast, a [unclear] bush, we called it, [unclear]. As a matter of fact, a pipe company came one time, sent a representative, to look at the manzanita. They were thinking about making pipe rolls out of that. But it burned too hot. Nothing ever came of it.

Storey: Why would you need to clear?

Martin: Have you ever been boating on a lake?

Storey: I have.

Martin: We had a Lake Almanor that wasn't cleared. There were several accidents.

Storey: So it's basically for safety purposes?

Martin: I think so. And all the rotting vegetation, too, I would suspect.

Storey: That would affect the water quality or something?

Martin: Yes. But I'm not sure of that. I left just about when the environmentalists were taking over.

Storey: Did you do anything else at the C-C-C camp?

Martin: No. Well, the enrollees, the Forest Service would come and want our crews, because they were adept with saws and axes and so on. So one or two of our crews were always gone during the summer. Our first superintendent, a man by the name of Byron Ike [phonetic] and the Forest Service came and wanted somebody, "Nope, I'm not going to give you any more. You're using too many of our men." It ended up

they called, I think, it was still Ralph Lowrey. Yes, they could have the men. But they were good crews.

Construction Office at Shasta

Storey: Ralph Lowrey was the Construction Engineer?

Martin: Yeah. He was later Chief Engineer in Denver.

Storey: What was he like?

Martin: Well, I didn't see too much of him. I think he was a good man. But, you know, there's hierarchies, I think, as you go through working.

Storey: And so you didn't really have much time with him.

Martin: Not any personal time with him. There was a man there, Grant Bloodgood. He was Lowrey's Field Engineer. He [Bloodgood] became the Chief Engineer also.[4] I remember he was quite a baseball fan. Wherever Bloodgood was, there was a baseball team. Of course, we needed some men on surveys for the Bureau, so I selected, I think, six or eight that they said they might have jobs for, and he interviewed them.

4. Grant Bloodgood was Bureau of Reclamation Chief Engineer from 1958 to 1963.

He said, "You know, you've got to work eight hours. Not like in the C-C-Cs." Yeah, they understood that. He said, "Now, do any of you play baseball?" Every one of them got picked up that played baseball, so baseball continued there. That was at Toyon, we called it, the government camp at Shasta.

Storey: So you were living in the government camp at Shasta?

Toyon, Government Camp at Shasta

Martin: Yes.

Storey: What was it like?

Martin: Again, we liked it. The houses were better than we later had in Friant. They were duplexes, some three-bedroom. And I think Lowrey and Bloodgood, you know, the bosses, had maybe a three-bedroom house, I think. They were better houses.

Storey: So the housing accommodations were allotted on some hierarchical system?

Martin: I think so, and depending on your children, how many children you had. They only made so

many of them. Later, in Friant, why, some of those that had more children got larger bedrooms, although it might be just my remembrance that it was some kind of a hierarchy.

Storey: Did you live in more than one place while you were at Shasta?

Martin: Well, when we first went to the C-C-C camp, we lived a little while in Redding, in an apartment. Then on a cabin, a two-room summer cabin, on the McCloud River. We had an outhouse up the hill. We pumped water with a hand pump out of the McCloud River. It had a good kitchen. The trail up to the outhouse was steep, a bank on it. I put a water tank–the water boilers we used to have, twenty-five gallon maybe.

Storey: On the stove?

Martin: No, we put it up on the hill, and then the sun would warm it during the day and we could have a shower when we got home from work. So I was using solar early.

Storey: Did that work year around?

Martin: No. No.

Storey: The cabin doesn't sound like it was built by the government.

Martin: No, this was a private home. Then I moved. Then we moved into a private home that had an orchard that was on the McCloud River, had a two-burner kerosene stove. Then we moved up the hill. There was a big summer home up at the top of the hill, and we had our own generator system there for lights. That was private. So until Red Bluff, I guess, and Shasta and Friant we had government housing, and then all the rest of them was private.

Storey: What was the government housing like at Shasta?

Government Housing

Martin: It was, I thought you'd ask me that. It was good, I think.

Storey: How many bedrooms in your–you had a duplex, did you?

Martin: Duplex, yeah. I think we had two bedrooms. Then there were some three-bedroom.

Storey: How was it maintained? Who maintained it?

Martin: You maintained your own lawn, but then they had a maintenance crew that took care of the utilities, water, to my recollection. I remember I was mowing the lawn on December 7, 1941, when the Japs hit Pearl Harbor.

We did most of our shopping when we were in Toyon at stores in Redding. It was fifteen miles, maybe.

Storey: Did the government housing have electricity?

Martin: Yes.

Storey: Did it have an indoor bathroom?

Martin: Yes.

Storey: Was it your first indoor bathroom?

Martin: Well, when I worked for the state, we had all indoor bathrooms. But with the Bureau, the C-C-Cs, one, two–it was only two outdoor.

Storey: So Reclamation painted it, for instance, repaired anything that needed repair?

Martin: In the house, yes. In fact, I remember in Friant we had, I don't know, every third year or so they painted with oil paints. They had a fire in one of

them. You can imagine how the oil would take off. It was not wallboard. It was more of a paperboard they were made out of. So they were flammable. That was in Friant. They were better in Toyon than Shasta.

Storey: What did you do for social activities at Toyon?

Social Activities at Toyon

Martin: They had bridge clubs, dances. My wife and I, our very best friends lived in Redding, so we were with them a lot. But there were activities put on by the groups there. The ladies had their teas.

Storey: Were these Reclamation employees?

Martin: Those were all Reclamation employees.

Storey: So there would be different groups of Reclamation employees that would get together doing things. Did you, for instance, have a recreation hall or anything like that?

Martin: Yeah. That's where we had our parties and so on. No gym. It was a social gathering place.

Storey: What kind of parties?

Martin: Oh, dances, bridge parties, as I said, teas.

Storey: Say you got together to play bridge, how many folks would be there?

Martin: Oh, there could be, I guess, six or eight tables, as I recall.

Storey: Did you and your wife always play partners?

Martin: No. Generally when we played, why, we'd rotate. You'd move progressive, move and change partners.

Storey: Did you play contract bridge?

Martin: Yes. No duplicative [phonetic].

Storey: No duplicative, huh?

Martin: I still don't play duplicate.

Storey: What other kinds of activities? Potlucks? Picnics?

Martin: Well, the baseball that I mentioned that Bloodgood liked.

Storey: Were there competing teams?

Martin: Yes, from around the area.

Storey: Was this Bloodgood the person who was at Milk River, by chance, before?

Martin: I don't know. To my knowledge, he came up from Arizona. He went in the service, and when he came out of the service, I remember when I was in Friant, someone brought him in from Fresno, and he looked at the project. They were going to place him someplace. He ended up in the Chief Engineer's Office and later became Chief Engineer. But he could have been on the Milk River.

Storey: But you don't remember?

Martin: I don't.

Storey: How was the baseball set up? Were there several Reclamation teams that played against one another?

Martin: No. As I recall, they were just local, local teams, Reclamation and some companies.

Storey: So they had sort of an intermural league or something?

Martin: That's it, yeah. In those days, they had a lot of town teams, too, but I don't think the Bureau played them. I don't know for sure.

Storey: Did you ever play baseball?

Martin: When I was a kid.

Storey: But not while you were at Reclamation?

Martin: No.

Storey: But you went out and watched?

Martin: Occasionally. Baseball was never my thing then.

Storey: Did you do anything like golf?

Martin: I did until I was eighteen. My aunt beat me, so I quit. (laughter)

Storey: Were there gardens at Toyon?

Martin: Yes. Like a little city. It was a good place.

Storey: Were they individual gardens or was it a communal garden?

Martin: Individual, as I remember.

Storey: How did folks socialize?

Martin: Well, as I said, the parties and talking over the fence.

Storey: Was this a small enough community that everybody knew everybody else?

Martin: For the most part, yes. We weren't, maybe, too social. We didn't know too many. But we had friends in Redding that we'd known all our lives. We tended to go there for social.

Storey: Does that mean you had a car?

Martin: Oh, yeah.

Storey: It was a car that you bought as a Reclamation employee or what?

Martin: Well, we always had a car ever since I worked. One of them we paid $34.31 a month for.

Storey: Which one would that have been, do you remember?

Martin: Probably a '36 Plymouth.

Storey: So transportation was never a problem for you?

Martin: No. No. When we worked for the Division of Highways, we had a car, an old Studebaker. Then we graduated to Plymouths and Pontiacs and Buicks.

Storey: Anything ever happen at the office? Did you have practical jokers? Did you have somebody who wouldn't tolerate practical jokes, anything like that?

Office Staffs

Martin: Not that I remember. The only one thing in Friant I remember that was kind of funny, this Lou Kramer that I spoke of that's from M-I-T, he came into the drafting room, he says, "Hey, there's some good jobs going on in Arizona and Utar."

Storey: Utar?

Martin: Utar. "Maybe you ought to apply for those, some of you."

Marion Clark, I remember he said, "Lou, that isn't Utar. It's Utah. U-T-A-H."

"That's what I said, Utar. U-T-A-H." He said the H as an R.

Storey: Had some sort of an eastern accent.

Martin: Yeah.

Storey: Wasn't it sort of unusual to have an easterner on the staff?

Martin: Oh, I don't know. By the time they all mixed, I remember one of the very good men at Los Banos was from the East. He'd been in forestry. And then there was a lot of people from Kansas that started working as natives in the Dakotas. And we had them from–"y'all," from the South.

My kids then, after we got through Friant, they all graduated from the high school in Red Bluff. It was on the Corning Canal.

Storey: What project would that be?

Buying a House in Red Bluff

Martin: It was part of the Central Valley Project. It was the Corning Canal and Tehama-Colusa Canal. That was a good town. My wife talked me into buying a house there, us buying a house. We'd always rented up to that time. And she did a good job, because it helped. It always bothered me that Reclamation moved so much. You

couldn't sell what you owned. But it worked out all right.

Storey: When you moved from Shasta to Friant, for instance, did Reclamation pay you any moving expenses?

Martin: Yes, up to a point. I mean, a certain limit. I forget how many pounds.

Storey: So it was for the moving van basically?

Martin: Yes. Yeah, I think maybe we got one day P-D or something. It wasn't very–depending on the distance.

Storey: What's P-D?

Martin: Per diem.

Living in Friant

Storey: When you moved from the company town at Shasta to the company town at Friant, did you notice anything different about Friant? Were there things not there that you'd been used to? Were there new things?

Martin: Well, there are new things. Your orchard's a short distance away. You're right in not quite

the heart of the San Joaquin Valley, but there was peaches, all kinds of fruits near there. So our diet improved, I think, as we went down there, and cheaper because you could get–[Tape recorder turned off]

Storey: You've already mentioned that the housing wasn't as good at Friant, but did your social life change, for instance, in Friant from the way it was at Shasta?

Martin: Well, we started square dancing at Friant. We had a clubhouse there, community hall.

Storey: Was there a large group of square dancers?

Martin: We'd have two or three squares. We learned there and then we'd go to Fresno. There was about eight or ten of us right there in camp that square danced, maybe twelve, because we had two and three squares.

Storey: Do you remember your supervisor's name at Friant?

Martin: Well, the one I mentioned was Lou.

Storey: Was Lou Kramer. Oh, I'm sorry. I'm confusing it with Shasta. How long were you at Friant?

Martin: From, I think it was, '41 to–

Storey: I think maybe '44?

Martin: '44. Moved to Friant in '44 and moved to Red Bluff in '52. Yeah, that's right.

Storey: You said you were checking forms at both Friant and at Shasta.

Martin: No, not Friant. Keswick.

Storey: Oh, at Keswick. I'm sorry. And then at Friant Dam.

Martin: No, I had nothing to do–

Storey: At Shasta Dam.

Martin: At Shasta Dam.

Storey: And Keswick Dam.

Martin: Keswick.

Storey: What specifically was that?

Martin: Well, it–

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. MAY 26, 1994.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. MAY 26, 1994.

Storey: This is tape two of an interview by Brit Allan Storey with Mel Martin on May 26, 1994.

. . . constructed in five-feet, sometimes ten-foot lifts?

Checking Dam Forms

Martin: Yes. There were certain things that went in there–pipe, drain pipes, electrical equipment, see that all that material was in, and then see that the form lined up, there wouldn't be a big bulge in it. Then before that block would be checked, why, we'd set points, survey points in there so that when they raised the form, they'd have something to set by. We had big–oh, several miles up to Sacramento we had great big targets for the A line, B line, whatever, line we were set up on. We could look far ahead and get a foresight. That way it was quite uniform.

Storey: This was with surveying equipment?

Martin: Yes. We used a level and a regular transit. Actually, today they can do the work with two men with these home station theodolites. I think we used eight or ten.

Storey: And those targets helped you actually place the forms?

Martin: Keep on line, yeah.

Storey: For constructing the dam.

Martin: Yeah. We'd set the points so that they could raise their forms.

Storey: That was part of checking the forms?

Martin: I would say, yes.

Storey: Okay. Good.

Martin: We had grout pipes that would come up, and they'd have to be at a certain angle. You'd come up into a grouting alley or a tunnel, drop tunnel, and grout from that, as I recall. It could be after the dam was done, of course.

Storey: This was to fill in between the lifts?

Martin: Mostly the ground.

Storey: Underneath.

Martin: Underneath it.

Storey: And on the sides. Were you in the office all of the time that you were at Friant?

Working Contracts at Friant

Martin: Yes.

Storey: Working on the contract–

Martin: Friant.

Storey: –verification?

Martin: Friant Kern Canal and some on the Madera Canal.

Storey: And the Contra Costa?

Martin: No. That was handled out of Tracy. There was a Barney Bellport, another one that was Chief Engineer eventually.

Storey: And Regional Director.

Martin: And Regional Director, yeah.

Storey: Why did you decide to leave Friant in 1952?

Transferring to Red Bluff

Martin: Because there wasn't any more work there. I just went where there was work. I mean, we got transferred. Well, actually, which one did you ask? How did I get to Friant?

Storey: No. Why did you decide to leave Friant?

Martin: Oh, well, the work was done. A man by the name of Durant [phonetic] was our Construction Engineer at the time. He took over the job, planning and construction on the Corning Canal, Tehama Colusa Canal. He brought me up as–called me Chief of Engineering Division. He didn't call me Office Engineer. So, anyway, that's what we did there, located canals–Tehama Colusa, Corning.[5]

Storey: And would that have been construction supervision also out of there?

5. Mr. Martin is referring to features of the Sacramento Canals Unit, Sacramento River Division of the Central Valley Project. The unit consists of the Red Bluff Diversion Dam, Corning Pumping Plant, Tehama-Colusa Canal, and Corning Canal. The unit provides irrigation water to farmers in Tehama, Glenn, and Sacramento counties. For more information, see Eric A. Stene, "Sacramento River Division, Central Valley Project," Denver: Bureau of Reclamation History Program, 1994, www.usbr.gov/projects/pdf.php?id=105.

Martin: There was some, yeah. Well, the Madera Canal was. So, yeah, I had supervised competition.

Storey: This was at Red Bluff?

Martin: This was at Red Bluff.

Storey: What was this man like? You were working directly under him, is that right?

Martin: Yes.

Storey: So this was a promotion for you to move there?

Martin: Yes. Durant was a man that never talked very much. You didn't know what he was thinking. I remember one of the fellows, Cy English [phonetic], that worked for me. He was English, this Cy English. He said, "Durant's the only man since my headmaster at school in England that could get me all rattled." I mean, he could ask questions and really put you on the spot. This Durant went on. He went to India on dam sites, I guess the Aswan Dam. The Bureau had a lot of lend lease, I guess you want to call it, with other countries to look at water projects and possibilities. Durant was one of them. India, I think.

Storey: Was he hard to work for? Easy to work for?

Martin: Yeah. A lot of people didn't like him, but we'd known him for a long time. Particularly when we went up there, there was a crew that thought they were going to have all this. A certain guy was going to be Construction Engineer, and here comes this Durant, heading them up.

Storey: And they brought you in.

Martin: And they brought me in. So there was some of them that didn't think that was right.

Storey: And you were laying out canals?

Martin: Yes.

Storey: Is Red Bluff a dam?

Sacramento River Canals Unit

Martin: There's a diversion dam there, and there's a pumping plant, take water right out of the Sacramento River and they pump it. I forget how many feet. Then it runs by gravity down to Corning, south of Corning. The Tehama Colusa, we just did the first few miles of that just on location, and later on it was constructed, but

after we had moved. I moved, I guess, to Los Banos by then.

Storey: Where did you live when you were working on the Corning Canal?

Martin: In the city of Red Bluff.

Storey: Is this where you bought your home?

Martin: That's the first home we bought, yeah. We had been living in a rented place, two-story, $85 a month. I didn't think you could beat that. But we weren't getting an equity in anything.

Storey: You had rented a home, a house?

Martin: Yeah.

Storey: What was your first house like?

Martin: Well, that one, that first house, that was really nice, as I say, two stories. A master bedroom downstairs and one whole side with drawers and closets, that really we thought was wonderful. And there was three bedrooms upstairs, and the boys and the daughter had that. One bathroom upstairs. We had one down. And when the sister would get in the bathroom and started

primping, why, Carl and Dave would get out on the porch and go around and look in the window. She'd taken too long. So, "Ma! Get them out of here!" But they all went through high school in Red Bluff.

Storey: You were there until when?

Martin: When did I say? '61?

Storey: I think you went in 1952.

Martin: Yeah. In '61 we went to Los Banos, April 30, 1961.

Storey: So at that point, let's see, you had been over twenty years in Reclamation.

Martin: Yeah. I still had another fourteen to go.

Storey: You were the head of a division, right?

Head of the Office Engineering Division at Los Banos

Martin: Office Engineering Division.

Storey: What did that mean?

Martin: Well, you have fellows doing right-of-way and planning, supervision of contracts, and that's

about it. More to it than that, of course. But there were about fifty fellows in the engineering office there at Los Banos.

Storey: So did you have the field inspectors in your division?

Martin: No.

Storey: That's another–

Martin: That's another–it's under Field Engineer. Just what came into the office.

Storey: So this was design and planning mostly?

Martin: Design, planning, and figuring quantities again for the contract.

Storey: For the purposes of the contracts.

Martin: Yeah.

Storey: Do you happen to remember your grade while you were there?

Martin: I ended up a thirteen, GS-13.

Storey: That would have been in '73 when you retired?

Martin: Yeah. I got one raise, a GS-12 in Red Bluff.

Storey: So you had a house for nine years in Red Bluff. And then you moved to Los Banos?

Martin: Yeah. Not nine years, because we rented for a while in Red Bluff.

Storey: Oh, you did?

Martin: Yeah. And we bought a house in Los Banos, one of the last two that were available. Our office manager–I can't think of his–anyway, he lined up a couple of houses in a tract for the last, and we went together and bought side by side.

Storey: This was in Los Banos?

Reclamation Construction Office at Los Banos

Martin: In Los Banos. Our first office there was in a veterinarian's office. We had an office in the kennels and we had an office downtown in a old garage we'd taken over. We had an office in another building. One day at noon I didn't go home. Some woman came in there with a dog and said, "You've got to do something with this dog. She's just not doing right." Take the stitches out, I think it was. We were in the vet's building. As far as she was concerned, we were

all vets in there. But as I understand it, the lawyer there in Los Banos rented this particular building for a dollar a year.

Storey: To Reclamation?

Martin: To Reclamation, because they wanted Reclamation to come there. This was on, we called it, San Luis Canal and the state called it California Aqueduct. But in the meantime, an office was built and rented to Reclamation that was adequate size, and it happened to be half a block from where Dave Reman [phonetic] and I lived. In fact, it was so close, I looked out my window and one day I saw my wife ironing. I called her up and, "Hey, put a little more starch in that collar." I was pretty fortunate. I didn't have to drive much in any of the places that I worked.

Storey: Why did you decide to leave Red Bluff and go to Los Banos?

Martin: There again, job. They were picking a group. There's a man by the name of Buckholtz [phonetic] who came out from the Midwest, and I think–no, I think Jendron [phonetic] kind of picked out his crew for him, and I happened to be the Office Engineer.

Storey: So you went from an Office Engineer at Red Bluff to being an Office Engineer at Los Banos?

Martin: Yeah.

Storey: Was that a promotion?

Martin: Yeah. Well, I went as a twelve and I finally got a thirteen.

Storey: At Los Banos.

Martin: Yeah.

Storey: And the major thing you were doing was the San Luis Canal or the California Aqueduct?

Martin: Well–

Storey: Whatever you want to call it.

San Luis Project

Martin: Whatever you want to call it, yeah. There at the San Luis Project, we had a forebay dam, a forebay pumping plant, and the San Luis Dam and Reservoir.[6] It was a pump storage unit.

6. The San Luis Unit is joint-use project of the Central Valley Project and the California State Water Plan. Unit facilities consist of (continued...)

They would pump water in there when the electricity was low cost and let it out and generate power when it was needed. Then it would go into another canal. We had a pumping plant eighteen miles down. It was more or less of a reservoir for eighteen miles from this forebay. And then they pumped it, I forget how many feet, ninety feet, maybe, and then gravity down to Kettleman Hills and then the state took over, did the construction of Kettleman City south, the canal and pumping plants.

The arrangement between the state and the Bureau, at that time I think the state paid 55 percent of the cost of the canal and whatever they needed for their water transportation that we, the Bureau, constructed. The Bureau paid 45 percent. The state had to run a parallel canal to the Delta Mendota Canal to get their water basically from the Feather River down south. So

6. (...continued)
O'Neil Dam and Forebay, San Luis Dam and Reservoir, San Luis Pumping-Generating Plant, Dos Amigos Pumping Plant, Los Banos and Little Panoche reservoirs, and San Luis Canal. The unit provides about 1.25 million acre feet of supplemental irrigation water to 600,000 acres in western portions of Fresno, King, and Merced counties. For more information, see Robert Autobee, "San Luis Unit, West San Joaquin Division, Central Valley Project," Denver: Bureau of Reclamation History Program, www.usbr.gov/projects/pdf.php?id=109.

that was the arrangement made. The Bureau had the construction people at the time, so that made it work out fine.

Storey: Where did the water in San Luis Dam come from?

Martin: It comes from Shasta and–John probably told you some of this. If I can find it. This is the Central Valley Project.

Storey: This is the San Luis–

Martin: No. San Luis–

Storey: Unit report, right?

Martin: Down here, yeah. This is San Luis from here, down to here, and then the state took over.

Storey: From the dam down, that's basically Los Banos South?

Martin: Yes. Definitely.

Storey: And then the water that went into the dam came from where?

Martin: Came from, well, Shasta down the Sacramento River through the Delta, and there's a pumping

plant at the Delta near Tracy that pumped federal water, call it, into the Delta Mendota Canal.

Storey: And then the Delta Mendota carried it into the San Luis?

Martin: Yeah. We pumped from the Delta Mendota Canal into the San Luis.

Storey: And then we generated electricity there?

Martin: No. No, there was a forebay. Pardon me, I'm getting ahead of myself. It went into the forebay. Both state and federal waters were in the forebay. And then you'd pump it into the San Luis Reservoir.

Storey: From the forebay.

Martin: From the forebay and then release it.

Storey: Into the forebay again.

Martin: Into the forebay and then down to a pumping plant, raised ninety feet, I think. Maybe not that much.

Storey: To put it into a canal?

Martin: Put it into the San Luis Canal or the California Aqueduct.

Storey: And which part of this project was it that you were working on when you were the Office Engineer there?

Martin: Well, a hundred miles of canal and the dam.

Working on the San Luis Canal

Storey: The San Luis Canal?

Martin: Yeah.

Storey: And the dam itself was under construction then?

Martin: Yeah. But there again, some of the areas had different division chiefs. There was another canal, Coalinga Canal. So the construction was carried on by field engineers. They had a crew that would send estimates up to my office and we'd process it for payment.

Storey: That was back in the days when the Chief of Engineers was still a pretty important person in Reclamation.

Martin: You bet. You bet.

Storey: How did your office relate to the Chief of Engineers? Do you know?

Project Relations with Chief of Engineer's Office

Martin: Well, in canals, we'd locate the canal. There was, I'd call it, a sponsor or someone back in the Chief Engineer's Office that was head of canals, and he'd have someone working for him that would work directly with us, and we consulted with him a lot, and he would come out and look at our job. So we were back there two or three times a year, particularly when the specifications came out, which for a certain construction, reach of a canal, some of us would generally go back to Denver to help review the specifications and find out if we could find anything wrong or make any comments we wanted.

Storey: Did you ever find anything wrong with specs?

Martin: Oh, sure, but I can't tell you which. Not as much as the contractor did.

Storey: Why was that?

Martin: Well, I think maybe the Bureau was always too fast on them. I remember we had a division engineer on the Friant-Kern Canal that was hired

by Peter Keywit [phonetic], and his job was to start going through specs and find out whether the one who issued the specs were at fault or whether he thought they were at fault. Just maybe they paid them more, I don't know.

Storey: Did you stay at Los Banos until you retired in '73?

Martin: Yes.

Storey: So that was a long-term construction project.

Last Job with Reclamation

Martin: Yes. It was finished, though, and then there was a distribution system being built out of Fresno for a lot of the irrigation districts. John probably talked to you about the water contracts. So there was a few little jobs that we did there that were still at the dam, about five of us, and I could have transferred into Fresno. I didn't want to do so, and I retired after thirty-four years, I guess.

Storey: It was '73. It would have been maybe thirty-six.

Martin: Yeah. I got credit for sick leave. I forget just how it was. I know I had about–oh, I guess we got paid for the sick leave, and I had probably

ninety days coming. So that was it. And then our annual leave, we extended our time on the sick leaves. So that made mine come up to thirty-four years.

Storey: Did you ever actually do design work or write specs out of the Office Engineer's Office?

Martin: No.

Storey: So it was more administering the specs that came in from Denver, is that right?

Martin: That would be, yes.

Storey: How would you characterize the work that you did day to day?

Routine Work Day

Martin: Well, some days it was design data that we gathered together to go to the Chief Engineer. Other days or same day some of us would be working on contracts, figuring quantities, as I talked about before, and the Right-of-Way Division would be working up plats to purchase right-of-way. We would, in planning, our planning there, we'd decide why the right-of-way should be–whether we're going to have waste

banks there, or what we were going to do with the waste material, you know, where you had too much excavation. The canal was designed for a certain height, the banks. There were certain width banks. Sometimes if you're going through a deep cut, you'd have to haul that waste material someplace and have a right-of-way t put it in. Where it was more or less cut and balance and fill, why, you would have a smaller right-of-way.

Storey: What does it mean to gather design data? How did you do that?

Martin: Well, for instance, drainage, we'd determine how much of an area was being drained for a certain culvert or drainage inlet and apply factors to runoff, considering a certain maximum rain that you might get, trying to figure things for a fifty- or a hundred-year flood. We had troubles in the San Luis. We built retention dams to hold this flood water. There's a culvert underneath that didn't have an outlet to it, because if it had an outlet to it, why, it would have to go all the way to the San Joaquin River and go through million dollar farms. So there's a chance that was taken there. Denver generally approved all those and designed those particular structures. But we gathered the–you know, the drainage area, how much the drainage area was going to be.

Storey: So that wasn't done by the Field Engineer, that was done by the Office Engineer?

Martin: Yeah.

Storey: How did you break the area of responsibility between the Field Engineers and the Office Engineer?

Office Responsibilities

Martin: Well, I should back up on that. The Field Engineer many times had survey crews that did that, but the survey material would come into the design data. We'd take it from there.

Storey: And then you would forward–

Martin: We didn't have any survey crews.

Storey: When you're talking about rights-of-way, who had the final decision about how much right-of-way? Was that in the office there?

Martin: Yes.

Storey: It didn't go to Denver or somewhere else?

Martin: No, the right-of-way went to actual purchase, which was out of Sacramento. This is where–

Storey: In the Regional Office.

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BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. MAY 26, 1994.

Storey: So the right-of-way was actually done out of Sacramento.

Martin: The purchase, yeah. The purchase of it.

Storey: Did they review the decisions about what should be purchased as right-of-way also?

Martin: Well, sometimes it was cheaper to, say, instead of just cutting a parcel in two, it would be cheaper to buy the corner that might be left. Sometimes it's cheaper to buy land than to build a bridge for a farmer. So they got into the evaluation considerably, and they took care of all the suits–and there were many.

Storey: Did you ever get involved in any of that kind of thing, the lawsuits or anything?

Lawsuit Experience

Martin: Well, just for, I guess I should say, technical information. But after I got up here, I was called to make a deposition on one of these drainage problems we had. They did finally have a big flood. When I was down there, they had a problem with one of these outlets. The Department of Water Resources was running the canal then, and they tried to make me say that I told them to open those gates and let that water down. The reason I didn't want them open because the drainage went through an air base, naval air base. So even ten, fifteen years after it's done, why, these big companies have the wherewithal to keep on getting money, I guess.

But it was a dangerous situation, I mean, having to leave drainage like that. It's cheaper to pay damages sometimes, I think, than to buy everything out.

Storey: But those decisions were sort of made in the field, made in Sacramento, a combination?

Martin: Yeah. And Denver.

Storey: And Denver.

Martin: Yeah. Anything that was designed was Denver, and as far as getting right-of-way for an outlet,

that decision was made in Sacramento and Denver. And it's just a risk factor there, as I saw it.

Storey: Did you enjoy your career?

Working for Reclamation, Career Perspective

Martin: Oh, I think so. Yeah, I did.

Storey: You were what? A five different places? Shasta, Keswick, Friant, Red Bluff and Los Banos.

Martin: Yeah. All within the state. All within the Central Valley Project. I saw people come and leave and go to another state, come back. We liked it. Our kids only went to school in two places, Friant and Red Bluff. Well, my older son went a year or two to Clovis High School out of Friant. But, yes, we had a fine life. Fine. After we retired, why, we celebrated our fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1985. My wife died in '85. But we had a good life. There's some wonderful people that we worked with and worked for. I think it was good.

Storey: What was the most satisfying thing about working for Reclamation for you?

Martin: Well, in a way the fact that I was able to continue. I started out when jobs were hard to get, and the fact that they've been good to me, I thought. There was always generally some of the same people that you've known from one project on the next one that you went to. So I think as an engineer, you gather that most of the decisions were made in Denver, and they were good to work with. Gunner Sorsky [phonetic]. I just thought of that one.

Storey: Where was he?

Martin: He was the Canals Division in Denver.

Storey: He had a lot to do with one of your projects?

Martin: Yeah. He kind of sponsored, I guess you'd call it, the San Luis Canal. Then he had someone who took care of drainage inlets and they kind of broke it up back there, I think, into little divisions.

Storey: Well, believe it or not, it's been two hours almost. I'd like to ask you now if it's all right for Reclamation researchers and outside researchers to use these tapes and any resulting transcripts for research?

Martin: I don't think I said anything. No, it's okay.

Storey: It's all right then?

Martin: Yes.

Storey: Well, I appreciate it. Thank you.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. MAY 26, 1994.
END OF INTERVIEW.