

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

JAMES (JIM) C. MAXON



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**STATEMENT OF DONATION
OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW OF
JAMES C. MAXON**

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, James C. Maxon, (hereinafter referred to as "the Donor"), of Cañon City, Colorado, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the Bureau of Reclamation and 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 January 29, 2004, at my home in Cañon City, and prepared for deposit with the National Archives and Records Administration in the following format: cassette tapes and transcripts. This donation includes, but is not limited to, all copyright interests I now possess in the Donated Materials.
2.
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Date: January 29, 2004

Signed: 
James C. Maxon

INTERVIEWER: _____

Brit Allan Storey

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

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Archivist of the United States

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.

The senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation developed and directs the oral history program. Questions, comments, and suggestions may be addressed to the senior historian.

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For additional information about Reclamation's
history program see:

www.usbr.gov/history

**Oral History Interview
James C. Maxon**

Storey: This is tape one of an interview by Brit Storey with James C. Maxon, Jim Maxon, at his home in Canyon City, Colorado on January the 29th, 2004. We will begin at about ten thirty in the morning, and we will do a couple of tapes, and then we will do a couple of tapes in the afternoon. This is tape one.

Okay, Mr. Maxon would you tell me where you were born, and raised, and educated and how you ended up at Reclamation, please?

Maxon: Hopefully it will not be too long (laugh)¹ a story.

1. 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
(continued...)

Storey: Oh. I like long stories.

**Born in Alamosa, Colorado, in December of 1935
and the Family Moved Around Following His
Dad’s Work as an Electrician During World War II**

Maxon: (Laughter) Okay. Born in the San Luis Valley, in Alamosa, and at that point my folks were living in La Jara. This is December 1935, and during World War II my parents moved around quite a bit. My dad was an electrician and followed a lot of the construction jobs related to the war effort. And . . . Could we (tape paused)

1. (...continued)

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.

Storey: You were talking about your dad and the war.

**Moved to Denver in 1945 Where He Attended
South High School**

Maxon: Yeah. War. So we moved around a great deal and we finally ended up in Denver in 1945, and that's essentially then where I grew up.

**Briefly Attended the United States Military
Academy at West Point Then Attended the
University of Denver Where, in 1958, He Took a
Degree in Archaeology and Anthropology**

I went to South High School in Denver, and, after a very very short stint at the military academy at West Point, I came back and went to school at D-U [University of Denver], and got a degree in anthropology/archaeology.

**Joined the National Park Service in 1958 as a
Ranger Archaeologist at Aztec Ruins National
Monument in New Mexico**

My first job with the government, which really launched my federal career, was as a Ranger Archaeologist at Aztec Ruins National Monument in Aztec, New Mexico.

Worked for the National Park Service for

Seventeen Years at Aztec, Bandelier National Monument, and Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Started there, and then worked for the Park Service for seventeen years at Aztec, and then over at Bandelier National Monument, and finally at Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

At Lake Mead He Served as a Naturalist

And, by that time, when I went to Lake Mead, I was actually, the title there was Naturalist, which was interesting. And, during the, this is during the mid- and late-1960s, and at that point the environmental movement was gaining power, and the Park Service was getting interested in that, so I did quite a bit of environmental education at Lake Mead.

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

And, then with the, help me with the dates here, in 1966, '65, Historic Preservation Act?

Storey: '66.

Maxon: '66. Yeah. How soon we forget. (Laughter)
And the, of course, Bureau of Reclamation was at that point just starting on one of its big

Bureau of Reclamation History Program

projects, the Central Arizona Project, and being the good practical engineering effort and trying to obey the letter and the spirit of the law they determined that they *needed* a full-time archaeologist to look into complying with all the regulations. And, at that point, I can't recall—well, let me back up a little bit.

Early Archaeological Compliance Was Done Through the National Park Service

The compliance for the first several years was done through the National Park Service, through the, and through the Departmental Consulting Archaeologist, and they provided advice and guidance to Reclamation on some of the, some of the projects.

As CAP Geared up for Construction, Reclamation Began to Build an Environmental Staff in the Regional Office in Boulder City

Anyway, in the middle or early 1970s, and you'll have to check me on dates, when C-A-P [Central Arizona Project] was *really* beginning to get underway the Boulder City Regional Office geared up a entire environmental staff, and there went from nobody to five or six full-time environmental people, naturalists and so on, to oversee the work on C-A-P, writing the

environmental impact statements and so on.

Reclamation Hired Ward Weakly in the Denver Office to Coordinate Section 106 compliance with the Park Service

“Ward Weakly . . . realized that we needed an archaeologist specifically for the project. And so the job was advertised, . . . and I applied . . . I was hired by Reclamation at the Regional Office . . .”

At that time Reclamation hired Ward Weakly as the first archaeologist in Denver, and it was his job to sort of oversee and coordinate, again with the Park Service, on compliance. And, I think after about one visit by *Ward* coming down to Boulder City and looking at the vastness of what was going on with C-A-P he realized that we needed an archaeologist specifically for the project. And so the job was advertised, and I was working for the Park Service at Lake Mead at that point in ‘76, and I applied for the job cause it was sort of time for me to look at a change in careers.

Reclamation Didn’t Understand the Work Load Involved in Environmental Statements, Section 106 Compliance, and Other Activities and Soon Began to Hire Staff in the CAP Office

And, interestingly enough, when I was hired by Reclamation at the Regional Office there, nobody really *again* totally appreciated the amount of work that was necessary, so my position description was part-time, I was part-time Naturalist, half-time Naturalist and half-time Archaeologist. And, I spent much of the first year working on environmental statements, and for some reason, because I had a little bit of a naturalist background working for the Park Service, I did some of the endangered species compliance. And, along with some of the other people, sort of formulated a consultation procedure that was sort of modeled after the cultural resources so that we could get through the consultation with the endangered species. So I was half and haw for little over a year. (Storey: Um huh.) And as stuff can, got more and more busy of course then we eventually put on an archaeological staff, and an environmental staff in Phoenix.

Reclamation Did Cultural Resources Work During Construction of Hoover Dam

But, I'm getting ahead a little bit here, and I would like to go back. I'm sure you've already documented this many ways, but Reclamation's work in terms of cultural resources goes clear back to certainly when Hoover Dam was

formed. I don't know very much about the funding but there was work done by the museum in San Diego. Southwest Museum, does that sound right?²

Storey: San Diego?

Mark Harrington Did Archaeology Work at Hoover Dam

Maxon: And I could, (Storey: Hmm.) Harrington, Mark Harrington, was the archaeologist who did work, along with help from the C-C-Cs [Civilian Conservation Corp]. There was actually what we called a post-day salvage archaeological excavation done before Lake Mead rose. So, there was some really very very early what we now call cultural resource work in conjunction with Hoover Dam. And I always thought that was fascinating. And, let's stop here just for a sec . . . (tape paused)

Storey: Boulder City, right?

Maxon: Um hmm.

Storey: And these folks who were doing—no we were talking about Hoover.

2. The Southwest Museum is in Los Angeles.

Maxon: Hoover. Yeah.

Storey: Did you ever read the reports or look at them or anything?

Harrington's Reports Were Typical of 1930s Archaeological Reports

Maxon: Yeah. They were typical of archaeological reports in the 1930s. We would say they were not as detailed, but nevertheless some good work was done, and what Harrington did there sort of defined peripheral Pueblo development, sort of thing that had not been known very well. And, there are still, one site, a pretty good sized little Pueblo site that he dug and has been restored. That's called, hmm, Pueblo Grande I believe. I think it's part of a state park system up along (Storey: Uh huh.) the north shore of Lake Mead. (Storey: Yeah.) Yeah. So. So, the work that Ward Weakly started was not the first by any means.

"When Ward started . . . he was working with the Park Service. . . . doing the actual cultural resource work and doing much of the oversight through the Western Archaeological Center, and the particular person that we worked with was Garland Gordon. 'Gar' Gordon . . ."

When Ward started, as I mentioned, he was working with the Park Service. The Park Service was *really* doing the actual cultural resource work and doing much of the oversight through the Western Archaeological Center, and the particular person that we worked with was Garland Gordon. ‘Gar’ Gordon was the archaeologist.

“ . . . one of the main reasons that Reclamation decided they needed their own archaeologist was that it was becoming apparent that, not just Gar but the whole Park Service, had more than they could really handle, and [were] not as responsive. . . . [as Reclamation needed them to be]”

And, I think one of the main reasons that Reclamation decided they needed their own archaeologist was that it was becoming apparent that, not just Gar but the whole Park Service, had more than they could really handle, and not as responsive. And, again, I’m getting into stuff that you know about.

Storey: No, keep going.

Maxon: Yeah. But, that you’re probably aware of. And, I had a nice working relationship with Gar, and the Park Service, but gradually as we developed our own staff and a little understanding about

what we were doing, we sort of weaned ourselves from the Park Service doing the cultural resource stuff.

And, I don't know where we should go now. Whether you want to talk about . . .

Storey: Well, what kinds of issues came up while you were in the Region there?

Maxon: In Boulder City?

Storey: Yeah.

“ . . . we were just in the early throes of trying to understand the compliance operations . . . ” and there was more than CAP going on.

Maxon: When I started there, as I say, we were just in the early throes of trying to understand the compliance operations (laugh) and everything. We had a, not only C-A-P but we had other places where work was going on.

Work in Las Vegas Wash Was Ongoing

There was work going on right in our backyard at Las Vegas Wash, the possibility of doing some check dams and water control. There Las Vegas Wash flows out of the old original wells

that were in Las Vegas and flows into what is now Lake Mead, into the Boulder Basin.

“ . . . we . . . did a number of surveys with UNLV . . . archaeologists . . . that was my really first actual work at managing an archaeological contract . . . ”

So, we had some work there, and did a number of surveys with UNLV [University of Nevada–Las Vegas], the archaeologists there, and that was my really first actual work at managing an archaeological contract and that sort of thing.

There Also Was Ongoing Work down at Yuma

We also had ongoing work down at Yuma. There were always compliant issues down there because we, of course they had a lot of historic structures related with Reclamation’s very early work there in the Yuma area.

Work with Arizona and Nevada State Historic Preservation Officers and Their Staff

And, for the first year or two it seems like we were constantly in trouble with the Arizona State Historic Preservation people because we would do (laugh) some sort of dumb things. You know, we’d want to move a building or

something. So, I spent quite a bit of time down in Yuma, and got to know the Arizona S-H-P-O [State Historical Preservation Office] people quite well. (laugh) And, finally developed a pretty good working relationship with everybody there, which was beneficial as we really began to get into the C-A-P thing. We always had a *very very* nice working relationship with the SHPO people in Arizona, and that, that was pretty good.

There were many many small cleanup jobs along the Colorado River that came up, and they were, once *I* figured out what to do it worked pretty easily. We didn't have a whole lot of problem. And, again, worked with Nevada and Arizona. I also worked okay with Nevada historic preservation folks well too.

Storey: They were sort of distant though?

Maxon: I'm sorry?

Storey: They were sort of *distant* though?

“ . . . my time in Boulder City was taken up ninety percent . . . probably with C-A-P. . . . even though we employed a whole staff there . . . ”

Maxon: Yes. Right. Yeah, and did not have as much

contact. But, as *really* my time in Boulder City was taken up ninety percent, I guess, probably with C-A-P. And even though we employed a whole staff there, including several archaeologists on C-A-P, I still spent quite a bit of, most of my time in Boulder City as we began to get into that (Storey: Um hmm.) working, working there.

“ . . . there was a . . . young, very enthusiastic staff that was employed in Phoenix for the C-A-P project, including the archaeologists, of course, Tom Lincoln, Gene Rogge . . . ”

I was quite impressed, there was a totally a young, very enthusiastic staff that was employed in Phoenix for the C-A-P project, including the archaeologists, of course, Tom Lincoln, Gene Rogge, and other people who were very dedicated and had a lot of, I say, a lot of energy and enthusiasm. And were also able to work very well with the S-H-P-O's office there, and then with the many contractors.

“ . . . we sort of found new *ground* there with, first of all, with the magnitude of some of the contracts we had . . . very very creative and innovative ways of . . . complying with the . . . law . . . and did . . . some very important archaeological and anthropological research. . . . ”

And, I think we sort of found new *ground* there with, first of all, with the magnitude of some of the contracts we had, and with some very very creative and innovative ways of not only complying with the spirit of the law but the letter of the law, and did really some very important archaeological and anthropological research. So, that turned out to be pretty good.

Reclamation Also Funded Earlier Research for the Glen Canyon Dam Project

One more aside, I'm glad I don't have to edit the tape, but it occurred to me that we were talking about earlier compliance and work by Reclamation. Of course, the whole Glen Canyon Project, when Glen Canyon Dam was done, was a *massive* undertaking, and again Reclamation helped fund that and let that work be done even before some of the specific laws that we work under now were done. So, it was another project before my time. I never was involved in it, but [I] was always quite amazed and impressed. So. Reclamation has a long history of doing good cultural resource work, much to its credit. (Storey: Um hmm.)

“ . . . I was very proud always to have worked for Reclamation. I appreciate my time there. . . . ”

I don't want to be too maudlin, but I was very proud always to have worked for Reclamation. I appreciate my time there. And, let's stop for a minute, here. (tape paused)

Storey: What next?

“ . . . for a year or so Ward and I were the two archaeologists in Reclamation. . . . ”

Maxon: Okay. What, where did we go from there? Time went very very quickly in Boulder City, and I should mention that after Ward was hired and he suggested we needed somebody for C-A-P, and that was my position, so for a year or so Ward and I were the two archaeologists in Reclamation.

Development of Reclamation Policies and Procedures

And Ward very quickly realized that we needed to establish some in-agency policies for handling these things. And, I appreciated that he called on me quite a bit, and we had a chance to work together on just sort of developing some of the internal policies and procedures, and so on.

“ . . . as the administrators at Reclamation began to realize that the cultural resource program . . . didn’t have to rely on the Park Service . . . Regional Archaeologists were . . . hired in each of the regions. . . .”

And, over the next several years, I think, as the administrators at Reclamation began to realize that the cultural resource program would certainly work within the agency and that they didn’t have to rely on the Park Service or other outside government agencies, Regional Archaeologists were, over a period of several years, were hired in each of the regions. So, in 1980 or so I think we had a Regional Archaeologist in each office, and gradually then the staff was built up there a little bit too.

Ward Weakly Died in 1985 and Jim Maxon Became Reclamation’s Federal Preservation Officer

Sadly, of course, Ward died in 1985, and he had the program *well* in hand at that point. And, I was fortunate enough to replace Ward and come into the Denver Office. That was, for me, a fun five years—hectic sometimes, but a good five years. And, sort of a nice way to end up my government career.

I have very very good memories of that time in Denver. As you well know, we had a pretty nice environmental office there, with good people. And, again, interest and enthusiasm in our Cultural Resource Office. We built and ended up with a staff of, I can't remember now, but several people doing a variety of stuff. (Storey: Yeah.) That's, of course, when you and I got, we of course have had dealings before through all of the compliance stuff. Then, when you elected to come on board, and that was good times. We made, again, good strides in policy and developing an overall program. I'm just as curious now. I wish I were interviewing you a little bit now; because I will be interested to know what's all transpired since I left. And, I was just thinking, before you got here, I retired almost, well, thirteen years ago. So, a lot of changes.

Storey: Golly. Has it been that long?

Retired in 1990 at the Age of Fifty-five

Maxon: Yeah. (laugh) Yeah. I hate to say it. Yeah. I decided that I'd had enough fun with the government, so when I turned fifty-five it was time. And, I had, under the old Civil Service thing, plan, I had thirty-two years of government

service. And actually I didn't retire *immediately* when I could have. I actually worked an extra pay period to (laugh) get through the end of the year, in 1990, I guess. (Storey: Uh huh.) Again, hard to imagine it's been that long, Brit. (laugh)

Storey: Yeah.

Maxon: Yeah.

Storey: It is.

Maxon: Yeah.

Storey: You didn't do archaeological things when you were at the Park Service?

Did a Little Archaeological Work at That National Park Service, but Mostly Worked as an Interpreter

Maxon: Well, I, I did a little bit. I was hired at Aztec. The title was Ranger Archaeologist, which was fun. And, for all of my Park Service career I wore a uniform and really gradually ended up more in the branch of the Park Service that is called Interpretation. And, even though I was in the 193 series, which was Archaeologist, I never did a great deal of research or actual digging with the Park Service. I spent most of my time as an interpreter.

At Aztec, as I said, I wore a uniform, and because it was such a tiny staff, I think there were three or four of us full-time that wore uniforms, one did whatever was necessary to be a Ranger, or what.

Moved to Bandelier National Monument after Three Years at Aztec Ruins National Monument

And, the same over at, after three years at Aztec I went to Bandelier. And, again, a small staff there. There were seven or eight of us that were full-time uniformed employees. And so I was just as apt to go out on a hunting patrol as do archaeology.

Dug One Small Site at Bandelier and Did Some Surveys and Documentation

I did do a little bit of digging there at, dug one little site up on the mesa overlooking Frijoles Canyon. Interesting, it was earlier than the big ruins down in the canyon. And, I did some continuing surveys and documentation in the canyon, and that sort of thing, but much of my time was really devoted to doing what everybody else did in uniform, particularly at Bandelier.

“ . . . I was never really a full-time dirt

archaeologist. . . .”

That, it was a good experience, but I was never really a full-time dirt archaeologist.

“When I was at Aztec I had the opportunity to dig a small site down in Chaco Canyon. . . .”

When I was at Aztec I had the opportunity to dig a small site down in Chaco Canyon. They were beginning to have some erosion problems down there in some of the side canyons and somebody decided there were a couple of old sites there that could be endangered so the archaeologist at Chaco and I did some work on those. Fun, it was fun to work in Chaco Canyon.

“. . . we . . . lived in some of the houses that the Wetherills had built in Chaco Canyon before it became a national monument. . . .”

I should point out that we did that in the fall, I think, of 1960-61, and actually lived in some of the houses that the Wetherills had built in Chaco Canyon before it became a national monument. Unfortunately I think those buildings are gone now, but they were historic buildings. (Storey: Uh huh.)

". . . Navajo crews . . . [did] stabilization work on the ruins. . . . These guys . . . [lived] right outside, on the reservation there. And, every morning, we're talking November now, it was cold. They would walk in, maybe eight or ten miles, into the Canyon, dig all day, and then walk home at night. . . ."

And had Navajo crews that were employed on a part-time basis to do stabilization work on the ruins. Of course the big sites at Chaco required ongoing stabilization and repair. And so they had crews that were trained to do that, and so they also were, in my case, my excavation crew, which was interesting. I was only twenty-three, twenty-four, I guess, at the time, and I was very much aware that they knew more about the excavation than I did, but, it was a fun experience. These guys were all living, not in the monument but right outside, on the reservation there. And, every morning, we're talking November now, it was cold. They would walk in, maybe eight or ten miles, into the Canyon, dig all day, and then walk home at night.

Storey: Oh golly.

Maxon: Which was (laugh) amazing. Yeah. Wonderful. Wonderful bunch of people. So that, that was

really pretty much the digging that I did.

Storey: Now, was the work at Aztec and Bandelier seasonal in any way?

Extra seasonal employees came on in the summer at Aztec and Bandelier

Maxon: It was, the parks of course were open year round but, but there were always extra people put on during the summertime when you had a bigger visitation. So, we always hired extra uniformed people for doing tours. At Bandelier, fire guards, and extra rangers for patrol, and so on. So, it was very much seasonal and, again, the what most of the little archaeological research that I did, minor things, were summer, except that *one* thing. I'm not sure how we ended up doing the work in the fall at Chaco, because we finished digging with snow on the ground. (Storey: Uh huh.) Yeah. Anyway.

In 1965 Spent Nine Months Doing Masters Degree Work at the University of Wisconsin in Madison

When I, well, at Bandelier, for whatever reason, decided I probably needed some more schooling and was able to con Park Service into a nine months leave of absence in 1965, the winter of 1965-66, and went back to Madison to

get a, do my class work for a masters.

“ . . . I did my thesis on some sites in the Bandelier area that had been dug many years ago by a local archaeological society. . . . [including] a summary of the whole archaeology of the Pajarito Plateau . . . ”

Then that following summer when I got back to Bandelier, I did my thesis on some sites in the Bandelier area that had been dug many years ago by a local archaeological society. But, and they had deposited all of the stuff at the museum in New Mexico, all the material, the notes, but had never done anything with it. (Storey: Uh huh.) So, sort of a typical . . .

Storey: They dug up the good stuff?

Maxon: They dug up the good stuff and, but then just sort of left it all. And so, I went back and went through the stuff and processed it and reconstructed what they had done and wrote up the reports, and then used that as a basis for a little bit of a summary of the whole archaeology of the Pajarito Plateau, sort of separated out some things that nobody had put down. So, *that* was the *major* archaeology that I did at Bandelier, I guess, (Storey: Uh huh.) was cleaning up the stuff.

Storey: Well how did you come to move from Aztec to Bandelier?

The Move from Aztec to Bandelier National Monument

Maxon: How did we do that? Aztec, of course, is a small area. There it's essentially one gigantic archaeological site, one big, well, complex of ruins, which are outliers of Chaco Canyon. And, after three, three and a half years there I guess I felt like I had done what I could there, and it was time to move on.

“ . . . during that time it was sort of, how one played the career game in the Park Service was to move when you had an opportunity. . . . ”

And that, during that time it was sort of, how one played the career game in the Park Service was to move when you had an opportunity. And, there was, an opening came up at Bandelier, and it seemed like a great place to go. So, I was fortunate enough to get the job there. And, it was a good move.

Spent Six Years at Bandelier

We were at Bandelier about six years, I guess, and it was, again, a good career move and also a

much larger area with many many resources. And, again, a very good geologic story at Bandelier, so it was a challenge to learn about it and do the work there.

Hired as a Naturalist at Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Again, after I got my masters in archaeology it seemed like it was probably time to, again, to move on. And, for whatever dumb reason, the job came up at Lake Mead, and it was a promotion, and so we went there. And, I was hired there with the understanding that, you know, I was hired as a Naturalist. There might be a little bit of archaeology there. And, it turned out there was.

“I did again some surveys and dug some small sites at Lake Mead . . .”

I did again some surveys and dug some small sites (Storey: Uh huh.) at Lake Mead even though that was not my title. But, Lake Mead turned out to be an interesting area too, not only the recreation, of course, was why the area was established, but it was a chance to learn about the desert and the archaeology along the Colorado River, which was totally different than anything I'd ever worked with. And, the natural

history was fun there.

END SIDE 1, TAPE 1. JANUARY 29, 2004.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. JANUARY 29, 2004.

Taught at UNLV

During my time there at Lake Mead, and I worked, again, from about, goodness, I'm going to have to think here, '76, almost ten years for the Park Service, or ten years more or less, at Lake Mead. I got involved doing some Continuing Ed courses over at UNLV. I got lashed up with Bill Fiero who is a geologist and professor there, and we co-taught a number of courses on the natural history and the history and archaeology of the desert there. And, that was fun to do.

I'm truly a historian at heart. I, like I say I made a living as an archaeologist, but history's always been my really, I think, real interest, and could never—well, when I got out of school with a B.A. in '58 there didn't seem to be too many history jobs available. And, the Park Service was how I got into actually doing archaeology.

Storey: You did some writing while you were in Las Vegas, I guess?

Maxon: I'm sorry?

Storey: You did some writing?

Did a Booklet on Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Maxon: Yeah. I did a little writing, of some guidebooks and things for the Park Service. And, there was a series of books put out by K. C. Dendoovan called *The Story Behind Us, The Scenery*. And, he wrote these for all of the National Parks that he could. And, through my work for UNLV we got acquainted, and so I got to write the Lake Mead guidebook, which, or the Lake Mead story, *Behind the Scenery*,³ which was notable because it's, I think, the only thing I've ever gotten paid for that I wrote. (Laughter) So, that that was good.

Storey: I think it's still in print?

Maxon: Yes. I believe it is. I was involved on a couple of revisions, and it's, I haven't seen a recent copy but that's a fun series, and they still sell. And, yeah, and it was fun to . . .

Storey: Well how did the, you were, were you there at

3. James C. Maxon, *Lake Mead and Hoover Dam: The Story behind the Scenery*, (KC Publications, June 3, 1980).

the Park headquarters in Boulder City? Or . . . ?

**“ . . . I was the Lake Mohave District Naturalist. . .
.”**

Maxon: Um hmm. Yeah. Worked in the headquarters there. When I initially went there in the fall of '67 there were three naturalists, a Chief Naturalist and then, we called a District Naturalist. One for the Lake Mead area, from Boulder City *upriver*, and then the Lake Mohave Naturalist, which was Boulder City down along the Colorado down to Davis Dam. And ~~that was~~, I was the Lake Mohave District Naturalist (Storey: Uh huh.). (Laugh) So that was my area, but basically we worked out of the office there.

“ . . . went there at a good time because the Park Service there, at Lake Mead, was just beginning to develop their interpretive program. . . . ”

And, again went there at a good time because the Park Service there, at Lake Mead, was just beginning to develop their interpretive program. And so, for the first year, so we all three of us were involved in writing little guidebooks, and putting together slide programs for each of the district or the various ranger stations and marinas along the, pardon me, the river. And,

that was fun. We spent a lot of time out in boats taking slides for much of the time. And, and I ended up sort of being the aerial photographer. Lake Mead had its own airplane, at the time, in addition to its navy. And so, I spent a lot of time bouncing around in little Cessnas taking slides and construction pictures and so on. (Storey: Um hmm.) So that was a fun thing.

Wrote a Weekly Column on Safe Boating for the *Las Vegas Sun*

One of the most *interesting* things I did when I was working at Lake Mead was I wrote a weekly *Safe Boating* column for the *Las Vegas Sun*, for about three years. And, 800 words a week.

“ . . . I guess what was fascinating about it was that I think I was the only person in the headquarters who didn’t own a boat. . . . ”

And, I guess what was fascinating about it was that I think I was the only person in the headquarters who didn’t own a boat. (Laugh) But, still had a, you know, I was out on the water anyway in the company boats a little bit. (Storey: Yeah.) But that was, that was fun. So the Lake Mead thing turned out to be a fun assignment because I got to do a little

archaeology, and a little history, and a little bit of natural history, and a little bit of writing, and teaching. And, yeah.

Storey: Of course this is a little bit different than a place like Bandelier or Aztec? It's a recreation area, as opposed to an archaeological park?

Maxon: Right.

Storey: But it was also another Bureau's property?
(Laugh)

“ . . . Lake Mead was the first national recreation area . . . ”

Maxon: Yeah. See, this is the fascinating thing. That whole concept is just absolutely interesting. Lake Mead was the first national recreation area, and as I say it was, the boundaries were all established by the original withdrawal that Reclamation had for constructing Hoover Dam and the reaches of Lake Mead. And then the same with Davis Dam and Lake Mohave. So, you had, yeah, you had this fascinating dual administration of the area, and for the most part it worked pretty good. I was always impressed that everybody got along pretty well. (Storey: Uh huh.) Yeah, so here, right in the middle of the recreation area we have Hoover Dam, and

who incidently had their own interpretive program and own visitor service program, and of course still do. It worked very, very well for the most part, particularly at the field level. You know, out at the ranger station and so on I think everybody got along pretty well.

“ . . . it was innovative for the Park Service. It was a new concept for them to think that one could set aside an area where people could just go play. . . .”

Yeah, but a fascinating concept that that land was all withdrawn for Reclamation purposes many many years before anybody thought of the idea of a recreation area. And, it was, of course, it was innovative for the Park Service. It was a new concept for them to think that one could set aside an area where people could just go play. And yet, Lake Mead encompasses such magnificent desert scenery, and the natural history story there at Lake Mead is just absolutely amazing. It's truly a multi-resource area. People have much more freedom as visitors in the recreation area, and yet they still get to enjoy the beautiful scenery, and, much of it pristine, and fascinating history there.

Of course, ~~there was~~ the Indian occupation goes back to early man, along the river there,

and, a wonderful total pioneer gold rush story there (Storey: Um hmm.) that parallels our history here in Colorado, and early mining, and much much evidence of that as you go around. So, (Storey: Yeah.) fascinating area.

Storey: How did the interaction between the two bureaus work?

Maxon: You're thinking just how did they function together?

Storey: Yeah.

Maxon: Okay.

Storey: And what were the issues that came up?

Maxon: The issues that would come up . . .

Storey: How did they deal with them? How much did personality play in it all?

Interaction Between the National Park Service and the Bureau of Reclamation

Maxon: (Laugh) Uh huh. Oh, I think, Brit, with any bureaucracy the issues always come down to personalities and who can work with who, and who can work *within* the regs, and sometimes

outside the regs, to make things work. It was my impression that things worked pretty good. It was fun for me to start out with the Park Service and have *that* point of view working with Reclamation and the stuff that went on at the dam and so on, and then pretty soon sort of be on the other side of the fence. And, it was my impression at, again, at the field level, the staff between Reclamation and the Park Service, again at the lower levels, got along just fine. I was never aware of *really big* issues. There, of course, there was always an interplay between Reclamation's mandate to manage, say, lake levels for example, which were seasonally fluctuated a great deal. (Storey: Uh huh.) And, that of course influenced how the Park Service administered, and how visitors could launch their boats or not, or so on. And these fluctuations on both, even the big lake, on Lake Mead, fluctuated dramatically over a seasonal cycle. So, at one point the launch ramps would be totally flooded, and then a few months later you couldn't hardly get your boat into the water. And, these were issues, and yet I think it was just understood that these were how things were going to work, you know, and you're not going to change those too much. Reclamation, the best that I could see, totally respected the recreational use of the area and the lakes. And never, I don't, never saw any real problem there.

There were problems with, Reclamation had, I think, when they would like to modify a road or something like, or change a road, or access or so on. But again, it always seemed to me that, just at the local level, it worked out pretty well, and it struck me that most of the everyday stuff was worked out with[out] ever having to go to beyond, say, the Regional Directors. It was nice, of course, to have a regional Reclamation staff right there. And, they were literally five or six blocks away from the Park Service Headquarters. So, you could go and talk.

I honestly don't know how that works in some of the other areas where Reclamation and Park Service have joint reservoirs. I'm not sure that they always work as well as, at least, what I perceived was going on at Lake Mead. Again, now, I'm talking fifteen years ago, and twenty, and twenty-five years ago when I was there. (Storey: Yeah.) I don't know what's going on now. I have lost track, for example, of the work that was done at Hoover Dam with the new visitor facilities and modifications there. And, I'm sure that you've been involved in some of that. Yeah. So . . .

Storey: You were there late '60s, early '70s right?

Maxon: Yeah. Uh huh.

Storey: That would have been thirty years, more or less?

Maxon: Yeah. More than that.

Storey: After the creation of the recreation area?

Maxon: Exactly, yeah. What, 1935-36?

Storey: About, well, you know, the dam was dedicated in '35 (Maxon: Five.) and really finished in '36.

Maxon: Six. And I think that's when the recreation area was established. (Storey: Yeah.) Uh huh.

Storey: Did you sense, in any way, that this was sort of a stepchild program? Maybe that isn't quite the way to put it. That it was a program that did, you know, it really wasn't what the Park Service did?

Lake Mead National Recreation Area Wasn't Mainstream National Park Service

Maxon: Oh. absolutely. Lake Mead had, they were always thrilled when somebody would accept a transfer into Lake Mead, (Laugh), you know, of the Park Service staff, and there was sort of a feeling about Lake Mead, if you were in the Park Service, as that "This is not a real park," and "You may not want to go there, you know,

because you're going to be dealing with stuff that's altogether different." And, it had a reputation of problems with visitors. There were all of the stories about the wild parties, and the folks that came out from Las Vegas to raise hell, and everything. And, yeah, I'm glad you pointed that out, because certainly when I went there in '67, '68, even though the recreation area had been around for thirty years at that point, there were a *lot* of people in the Park Service who couldn't really understand why the Park Service got stuck with administering an area like that.

“ . . . a lot of people accepted a move to Lake Mead, I think, with great trepidation. And, particularly the rangers, the folks who dealt with law enforcement . . . ”

And, a lot of people accepted a move to Lake Mead, I think, with great trepidation. And, particularly the rangers, the folks who dealt with law enforcement, in fact were going from situations where, you know, they were in a national park, maybe their main law enforcement job was to have somebody pick up some litter along the trail or something that they'd thrown down, to where, you know, fights broke out and there were things where rangers regularly carried sidearms, which they didn't at

that time in most of the parks. I think they do now, but certainly they found themselves being suburban policemen. (Laugh) You know, at Lake Mead. (Storey: Uh huh.) And so there was always that view. And, of course I heard all sorts of war stories and horror stories about what I would be subjected to if I went to Lake Mead. And, most of them, of course, didn't (Laugh) didn't work that way. But, it turned out to be a pretty good experience.

**“It was not pure like Rocky Mountain, or
Yellowstone. . .”**

Yeah, I still don't know, at this point, how most Park Service people would feel about going to Lake Mead, but at the time I went there it was not one of the real desirable assignments. It was not pure like Rocky Mountain, or Yellowstone or someplace.

Storey: Or Teton? Or something?

**“It was not quite an exile, but it was not a
desirable thing. . . .”**

Maxon: Yeah. Right. Or Teton, or yeah, some of the good areas. Yeah. It was not quite an exile, but it was not a desirable thing. And, I look back on it, and I'm not sure why we decided to go except

that it was a promotion and it was a chance to sort of expand the career. And, it turned out to be a good thing. Yeah.

Storey: Did you live in Boulder City?

Lived in Boulder City, Then a Small Community Oriented to Reclamation, Hoover Dam, and the Recreation Area

Maxon: We lived in Boulder City, and that was also an interesting experiment because Boulder City was a company town. It was built specifically for the people who were working and building Hoover Dam, and was just beginning to become a more open town, and just the very very beginnings of a bedroom community for Las Vegas, when we were there. When we moved there I think the population was about 5,400, and virtually everybody in town, if they didn't work for services, either worked for Reclamation, or Park Service, or the power companies. And this is another aspect that we haven't mentioned.

The Electric Companies at Hoover Dam Were Another Major Player in Boulder City

There was a third player in Hoover Dam, which was Pacific Gas and Electric, and what's

the other major company, who really managed and did the distribution of the power which comes out of Hoover Dam. We always think about Hoover Dam as being this massive flood control thing, but again one of its most important aspects is the power that it generates. And, so there was a big contingent of people in Boulder City who worked for the power companies. Virtually everybody in town worked for one of those agencies. (Storey: Uh huh.) It was . . .

Storey: Los Angeles Power and Light? Is that right?⁴

Maxon: Yeah. Right. Yeah.

Storey: Something like that?

Maxon: Something like that. Right.

Storey: I've been trying to remember.

Maxon: (Laugh) Yeah. Yeah, isn't that funny, you know, it was hard to come up with that. Anyway, yeah. So you knew, everybody you knew probably had something to do with Lake Mead or Hoover Dam, or the power there. It

4. Two primary companies which took power from the Hoover Powerplant were Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and Southern California Edison.

was a fascinating community to live in.

“Everybody had a full-time job. There was no *poverty*. There were no incredibly *rich* people. It was a very very level sort of a thing, and in many ways sort of a tiny little world all unto itself. . . .”

Everybody had pretty much—there was no particular class distinction in there. Everybody had a full-time job. There was no *poverty*. There were no incredibly *rich* people. It was a very very level sort of a thing, and in many ways sort of a tiny little world all unto itself. A lot of the people who lived there had, well, okay, a lot of the people who lived there had come to work on the dam in the ‘30s and were, when we got there thirty years later, were beginning to retire, and continued to live there. And a lot of them out of the Midwest, and so it was sort of like a typical Midwest town transplanted into the desert, and because there was abundant *power* and *water* everybody landscaped and built houses as if they were living in Iowa.

“. . . it was a very homogenous community in terms of values and the way people lived . . .”

And, so it was a very homogenous community in terms of values and the way people lived, what they thought, and so on. Emphasis on the

kids getting a good education, going on to college. Real, across-the-board, typical I guess of say post World War II middle class values were pretty much the norm there. (Storey: Uh huh.)

Boulder City property values were, at that time, ran about ten to fifteen, twenty percent higher than Las Vegas because it was considered sort of a desirable place. Eventually the ordinance was passed which controlled growth in Boulder City. I have no idea what's going on, but it limited how many houses could be built every year, and so on. So, there was a little feeling of elitism, and yet it was still a little middle class town.

“ . . . a nice place to raise our family . . . ”

It turned out to be a nice place to raise our family there. Even though we, I say we worked for the Park Service and everything, we really felt ourselves totally a part of the community there, which by virtue of living in town and not living out at say one of the ranger stations as long as possible, so we got very much involved in social activities, and the church, and everything. Eventually bought a couple of houses, and really felt a part of this little community, which was good and bad.

The bad thing was that it was such a tiny little world that we worried about our kids as they grew up and got ready to go to college that they, all they knew was Boulder City and they, you know, there's a much more of a world beyond that little community. (Storey: Uh huh.)

The last time that I was back in Boulder City, this is right before I stopped working, so it's been thirteen to fourteen years ago, after being gone for five or six years, I felt like I was going back into a time warp. Everything was just the same as I had left it five or six years before, including the same people working in the credit union. And, it was like, "Oh hi, Jim." (Laugh) You know, like you'd never left. (Storey: Uh huh.) Like everything just sort of stays still. Now I don't know what's going on now. It would be interesting to go back and see, with the tremendous growth of the Las Vegas area, whether Boulder City has still *kept* its own little, in a cocoon (Storey: Yeah.) like it always had or not.

Storey: Talk more about raising your family there, if you would.

"The good things about it was we were around people who had similar values, and the town was totally safe . . ."

Maxon: The good things about it was we were around people who had similar values, and the town was totally safe, if that's the word. Nobody every thought about locking one's doors in the house when you left, or taking your keys out of the car when you went downtown. It was very comfortable that way. Good schools. Good school system. I think that was demanded. Excellent high school. The kids, I think, had a very very good school experience. They had, again, friends who did pretty much the same thing that, everybody did much the same thing. We never particularly worried about the kids getting into any trouble. For one thing, in a small community like that, a kid can't get into trouble and get away with it very much because everybody knows everybody, you know. (Storey: Uh huh.) So, it was a very very comfortable place to raise kids. As I say, a very very safe, not only physically but just in general. Again, the disadvantages were that the kids didn't know kids who were poor or extremely rich, or so on. It was a, I say, a very very leveling place. But, overall okay and I think the kids—I talk with my kids who now are in their forties about this, and I think they felt like it was a good place to grow up. They, we were right, of course, in the middle of the desert. The boys, particularly, had friends who they would go off

and camp overnight in the desert, and we were very comfortable with that because they were confident in doing things like that.

Storey: Did you have to live in one of the old houses?

Housing in Boulder City in 1967

Maxon: We actually didn't. At that point there were still a *lot*, when we moved there in '67, a lot of the old company houses. They were always, people talked about the six-company houses, which were built by the Six Companies who did the construction work there. There were a lot of what would have been the bigger houses that were still very much intact and were kept up very very well. And, the upper end of town, close to Reclamation Headquarters, there were quite a few of those houses. They were in very very good shape. And, then there was another block of houses built in the forties, again by the electrical companies. I don't think Reclamation built any after that point, but there were a lot of those houses that dated from the forties, which were very typical forties bungalows, not unlike the house we're in right now. (Storey: Um hmm.) Very comfortable. We lived in, the first house that we bought was a little house pretty much near the center of town, that was built I believe in 1942, and it was obviously part of a

little tract of houses that were all pretty much alike. Wood-frame, stucco construction.

Storey: I was just wondering what the quality of the work was, and (Laugh) stuff. But if you didn't live in them, I . . . ?

Maxon: Yeah. I, the ones that survived were pretty nice. I think there were a lot of houses, particularly the really small ones, that were probably real shacks, and they were razed, and they were pretty much gone. There was a old section of town that I have seen on the maps, like the Sanborn maps and so on, that were not there even when we got there.

Storey: So, by the time you got there Reclamation no longer owned the homes?

Maxon: I don't think there were any Reclamation-owned homes at that point. Yeah. They were pretty much out of the business. The power company still owned some houses for their employees. (Storey: Yeah.) A few. Not too many.

Storey: How about the *sense* of Reclamation in the town?

Reclamation in Boulder City

Maxon: Oh, very very strong. And, starting with the physical presence of Reclamation. You've been there. Boulder City sets on the crest of a hill and at the top of the crest is the great big Reclamation Headquarters building, and everything flows down the hill, and all of the streets were aligned to all headed (Laugh) . . .

Storey: Headed at the building, huh?

Maxon: Headed to the building. All roads led to Reclamation. So, the physical presence was very very strong, and then there were other, some annex buildings that were scattered around through town. So, you never escaped that physical presence, and a lot of the businesses, the names alluded to Hoover Dam or Lake Mead, or something. So, *that* presence was very very strong, and it didn't matter where you lived in town there was a very good chance that your neighbor, if they didn't work for Reclamation, they had worked for Reclamation. They were retired (Storey: Um hmm.) from Reclamation. Even at that very early time there was a beginnings of a little bit of a retirement community, and a lot of the people, when they retired, just never left. They were totally settled in there. (Storey: Yeah.)

National Park Service in Boulder City

So, a very very strong, I would say, much stronger than the Park Service sense. Well, first of all just in sheer numbers, the Park Service Headquarters, I suppose, including the maintenance shops and everything there might have been seventy-, eighty employees at the time *I* was there, as opposed to, you know, 1,000 or 1,500 Reclamation employees (Storey: Uh huh.) in town at any one time. Right. So, yeah, just almost everybody you knew had—well, they were all there for the most part because of the dam, and because of Reclamation one way or another. And, most of them probably worked directly (Laugh) (Storey: Yeah.) had direct contacts.

“ . . . the old company town which was pretty much *run* by Reclamation, you know, even the law enforcement, everything during the construction, that part was gone but the sense was still they’re very much there. . . .”

Yeah. So, even though the, you know, the old company town which was pretty much *run* by Reclamation, you know, even the law enforcement, everything during the construction, that part was gone but the sense was still they’re very much there. And I, it would be fascinating now to see how that’s changed because a lot of

the retired folks now, twenty-, thirty years later, wouldn't still be alive. So, there would, (Storey: Uh huh.) interesting to see who has come in [to] replace there. I assume that the numbers, in terms of staff for both Reclamation and Park Service, haven't changed appreciably in say the fifteen years that I've been here. It probably hasn't grown.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. JANUARY 29, 2004.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. JANUARY 29, 2004.

Storey: This is tape two of an interview by Brit Storey, with James C. Maxon, on January 29, 2004.

So, did you have any sense that Reclamation was still involved in town government? Running the town?

Never Had the Sense Reclamation Was Deeply Involved in Boulder City Government

Maxon: Not to any great extent, at that point. No. Not a lot. But, on the other hand I was never deeply involved in the town government. I never had occasion to go to, say, to a council meeting or anything like that. (Storey: Uh huh.) (Ringing phone) (Tape paused)

Storey: About Boulder City.

- Maxon: Boulder City. Reclamation's presence there.
- Storey: Did you, were there during the 50th Anniversary of Hoover, by chance?
- Maxon: No. No. I didn't, I haven't been back to Boulder City since I stopped working.
- Storey: That would have been in '85.
- Maxon: Oh. Yeah. I was, okay. Yeah. For the 50th in Boulder, yeah.
- Storey: Did you, I mean, did you go to the ceremony?
- Maxon: I don't recall.
- Storey: I guess it was at the high school stadium.
- Maxon: Okay. It would have to have been there. I must have. I can't think that I wouldn't have been, but obviously it didn't make a real (laugh) . . .
- Storey: Didn't make much of an impression (laugh) I guess?
- Maxon: Much an impression. Oh shoot. It was about—when did they spill, use the spillways? It was about at that period of time.

Storey: Probably the water year of '83.⁵

High Water Years of 1983 and 1984

Maxon: Okay, it was '83. Yeah, when they had a lot of water. And, what, that was fun.

Storey: So, what kind of issues did that raise for the Park Service and its management?

Maxon: Well, people were very concerned about what it was going to do to the fishery. (Storey: Um hmm.) And, there was a great deal of consternation and I think after they stopped spilling, it all just sort of died down and I don't think anyone was terribly concerned.

Storey: It didn't bother your facilities or anything?

Maxon: No. I, everything was built so that, you know, the marinas and everything were all floating and the boat ramps were all designed for fluctuating water levels. And, it was the only time since most of those facilities were built, of course, that the lake was ever full. And, so there were minor consternation and I'm sure, you know, people were upset because some things probably got flooded that nobody ever thought they would

5. The Colorado River had high water years in both 1983 and 1984.

ever happen. People didn't contemplate the lake ever filling, (Laugh) (Storey: Um hmm.) and so there were, as I remember, people, you know, being a little upset, and the environmental folks, not locally but outside, saw problems and everything. But, I don't think there were any lasting effects that I can see. (Storey: Hmm.) Yeah.

Storey: Did you happen to go down and see the spillways?

Took Pictures During the High Water

Maxon: Um hmm. Yeah. Pretty impressive. I even went down a couple of times at night and took some pictures, because they, Reclamation was very good about lighting up the face of the dam and the spillways (Storey: Uh huh.) and everything when they were running.

“... as the lake was filling, there was a great deal of concern . . . as to whether they could raise the big gates, you know, because they hadn't been raised in thirty years. . . .”

It was pretty interesting because, as the lake was filling, there was a great deal of concern [in] on Reclamation as to whether they could raise the big gates . . . because they hadn't been raised in

thirty years. (Storey: Uh huh.) Since the original filling of the lake, you know, they had been pulled down. And, I can remember a great deal of discussion, “Well, do you think these things will actually work (Laughter) after that period of time?”

Storey: Would that have been discussion at Reclamation, or discussion (Maxon: That was . . .) somewhere else?

Maxon: That would have been basically at Reclamation. And, yeah. And, again, I was still at the Park Service at that point, but, no I wasn't either. I was with Reclamation. I'm getting ahead of myself.

“ . . . the Regional Office . . . and Hoover Dam, were totally separate entities and functioned pretty much . . . independently. The folks at Hoover Dam . . . my impression is that they had their own kingdom . . . ”

Working for Reclamation was interesting because I worked in the Regional Office, and the Regional Office was, and Hoover Dam, were totally separate entities and ~~pretty much,~~ functioned pretty much independently. The folks at Hoover Dam it was always my impression is that they had their own kingdom

and, you know, they pretty much functioned independently (Laugh) from the rest of the region, which (Storey: Uh huh.) was interesting. But I do remember people talking about (Storey: Yeah.) the dams.

“ . . . the last five or six feet of the water storage at the dam . . . were . . . some plywood extensions on the top of the gates . . . this wonderful big concrete thing and the last few feet are plywood . . . which was a tremendous volume of water, in terms of the lake. But, not a lot of pressure . . . ”

And then, the funny thing is that they, what the last five or six feet of the water storage at the dam, there were ways of putting just some plywood extensions on the top of the gates, (Laugh) you know (Storey: Um hmm.) and after you got up to this, you know, this wonderful big concrete thing and the last few feet are plywood, (Laugh) you know. It, (Storey: Yeah.) to get the final four or five feet of storage, of course, which was a tremendous volume of water, in terms of the lake. (Storey: Yeah.) But, not a lot of pressure (Storey: Um hmm.) or anything there.

Storey: You mentioned the fishery, and particularly *your* segment of the recreation area, I guess the fishery's quite important down there?

Shift in Recreation in Lake Mead National Recreation Area from Fishing Toward Boating, Water Skiing, and Camping

Maxon: Very. Yeah. It is, particularly when the recreation was started, and the recreation was started, and when the fishing was probably a relatively more important form of recreation than what happened by the time I got there, the boating and so on. So, there was a gradual shift. By the time I was there, I think most people saw the recreation as in the forms of boating and water skiing, and camping, and so on. But certainly, the first few years as the lake was filling people came there, if they came to recreate, they came to fish probably. And, this brings in another element too, now.

Other Government Agencies Involved in the Recreation Area and Lake Mead

There are two other agencies that I can think of involved (Storey: Um hmm.) in the administration. One was the Arizona and Nevada game and fish departments, who administered the fishing, (Storey: Um hmm.) and the Coast Guard, which actually, because the Colorado River was considered, at least that part or it, a navigable river, the Coast Guard had people stationed there. And I hadn't even

thought about that.

Law Enforcement at Lake Mead

The whole administration or the *legal* administration of Lake Mead is, again, was not like a national park where the U.S. Government had total jurisdictions in terms of law enforcement, and everything. Not so at Lake Mead.

“ . . . all of the rangers . . . law enforcement, were all deputized . . . within the respective states and counties. . . .”

They had only proprietary jurisdiction, and as a matter of fact all of the rangers people, who were really associated with law enforcement, were all deputized as within the respective states and counties. They were deputies for Clark County, or whatever. (Storey: Hmm.) So, for the most part the laws that they, misdemeanors and so on, were always dealt with under the local county and state laws rather than federal laws. Interesting.

Storey: Now. You were a Naturalist, right?

Maxon: Uh huh.

Storey: So, what role did the Park Service and Reclamation have in fisheries management?

Fisheries Management at Lake Mead and the National Recreation Area

Maxon: Reclamation's was only indirect in that they controlled water levels and flows. And, again the Park Service, because of this proprietary jurisdiction, didn't have a direct management of the fisheries, or, I'm trying to think if there was any hunting. There must have been some small game hunting allowed in the area. It was really handled by the state game and fish agencies. (Storey: Um hmm.) So, they were another player that I didn't think of earlier that became a part of it.

Storey: So, they stocked, did they?

Maxon: There was, I'm trying to think if there was any stocking. *Well, yes*, as a matter of fact. Okay. Let's add one more agency in. There's a U.S. ~~Fish and Game~~, or Fish and Wildlife [Service] Hatchery at Willow Beach, below Hoover Dam. So, yeah. So there was some stocking of Lake Mohave from ~~the fish, or from, what do I want to say~~, Fish and Wildlife. (Storey: Yeah.) So, there's another agency added into the mix (Laughter) there. But, I'm trying to think

whether Arizona or Nevada actively stocked the upper, the upper lake, Lake Mead, and the various branches. I don't recall that they did. The main game fish were bass, of course, and well somebody had obviously stocked. There were coho salmon that were introduced into the upper lake and were really one of the prime game fish. So, they would have been stocked. Now, who did that, my guess is it would have been Nevada, because the Overton arm of Lake Mead was all in Nevada (Storey: Um hmm.) and that's where some of the best fishing was.

Yeah. So we had, had relationships with the fish and game. As a matter of fact I occasionally was a guest on one of the local Las Vegas TV stations. One of the fish and game guys there had a weekly program, and I would occasionally go on, be on the program with him for something going on at Lake Mead. (Storey: Yeah.) Yeah. So they were involved.

“ . . . Lake Mead is a fascinating experiment in getting a whole bunch of agencies to function together. . . . ”

And this, Lake Mead is a fascinating experiment in getting a whole bunch of agencies to function together. (Laughter) (Storey: Um hmm.) Uh huh. And, I'm glad you brought that up. It

hadn't occurred to me, and I'd totally forgotten about the fish hatchery down at (Laugh) Willow Beach.

Storey: How did it come about that you moved from the Park Service to Reclamation?

Moving from the National Park Service to Reclamation

Maxon: Well, at that time, and my guess is still pretty much the same, in order to pursue a career with the Park Service you have to be willing to move about every three or four years, and that was just the philosophy for the Park Service, particularly the uniformed staff and so on, that people needed to, for their career advancement and improvement and so on, needed to be moved around. There was a great deal of pressure to move every little bit. And, we had been with the Park Service [at Lake Mead] there about six or seven years, so we were *way out* of the end of, out at the end that we just knew that it could happen at any time. We were totally happy in Boulder City. Our kids were all growing up and in school, and I was also interested in getting back into doing archaeology. And, by that time I knew a lot of people in Reclamation. I liked what Reclamation was doing, and so when the job came up it just seemed to be a natural.

Phil Sharp Was Reclamation's Environmental Officer

I knew the Environmental Officer there through church, actually, and admired and respected him, and knew that he'd be a good person. This was Phil Sharp, a good person to work for. (Storey: Um hmm.) So, I jumped at the chance when the job came open to do that.

Storey: You applied?

Maxon: Applied. Yeah.

Storey: And were accepted?

Wayne Deason

Maxon: And accepted, yeah, which was good. And, that was a fun time. Phil Sharp was the Environmental Officer. I don't recall the exact titles, but Wayne Deason⁶ was on the staff, and two or three other people who were sort of hand-picked by Phil. And, it was a, again, a very enthusiastic, very dedicated group, and so I looked forward to becoming a part of it, and was glad I got to. It was a real tight little (Storey:

6. Wayne Deason contributed to Reclamation's oral history program and also discussed Phil Sharp.

Yeah.) little group who functioned well together.

Storey: Wayne Deason just retired to Tucson.

Maxon: Oh did he? Well, very good. (Storey: Yeah.) I was thinking about him the other day. And, Phil retired a number of years ago, and I understand he has a vineyard out in California.

Storey: Oh really?

Maxon: So, he's in the wine business. Yeah. And, some of the other folks I've lost track of.

Storey: Hmm. Do you know where in California?

Maxon: Not off hand, and I don't know the name of his vineyard, or just really any of the details. (Storey: Hmm.) But, that would be a fun thing to check out. He'd be a good person to talk with. He would have a great deal of insight into how Reclamation dealt with the environmental laws, which of course we, Reclamation was getting hammered a little bit, but I think, well I think they look pretty good now.

Storey: Yeah. Of course you went over there a few years after National Historic Preservation Act? (Maxon: Right.) A few years after NEPA?

“ . . . Reclamation was just, at that point, weaning itself from the Park Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service, and other people who had been sort of doing this compliance for them, or leading them through it. . . .”

Maxon: Right. And, yeah. So, those things were, I say, Reclamation was just, at that point, weaning itself from the Park Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service, and other people who had been sort of doing this compliance for them, or leading them through it. Yes. I would very definitely recommend, if you can, somebody will know where Phil is. (Storey: Hmm.) Wayne would, I'm sure. Have you interviewed him?

Storey: Oh yeah.

Maxon: Yeah. So. Yeah. They would both have wonderful insights into things. I'm sure you've already got Wayne's comments.

Storey: So, you went over because of C-A-P? Is that correct?

“ . . . Ward was hired to do C-A-P, and very quickly realized that needed somebody closer and on the ground and somebody doing that full-time because Ward had responsibility for all of

Reclamation . . . after I was aboard for a few months and began to understand the magnitude then I started pushing for a full-time archaeologist in Phoenix . . .”

Maxon: That was why my position was created, yeah. Uh huh. Yeah, specifically. I say, Ward was hired to do C-A-P, and very quickly realized that needed somebody closer and on the ground and somebody doing that full-time because Ward had responsibility for all of Reclamation at that (Storey: Yeah.) point, even though he was hired, again, primarily because of, C-A-P was the catalyst for his job. And, I think after I was aboard for a few months and began to understand the magnitude then I started pushing for a full-time archaeologist in Phoenix, in the office there. (Storey: Huh.) That’s how we sort of expanded. (Storey: Yeah.)

“Gene Rogge was the first archaeologist in Phoenix . . .”

Gene Rogge was the first archaeologist in Phoenix, and really helped develop the program. And, Tom Lincoln can, if he hasn’t already, could give you a great deal of insight into how all that went together. And, if you haven’t talked to Gene, he’d be a good person to make contact (Storey: Uh huh.) with. And I, I have

lost contact with him, but certainly Tom will know where, what he's (Storey: Yeah.) up to now. (Tape paused)

Storey: We're just getting you to Reclamation, as I recall. And, I was wonder . . . , did you have any personal contacts with Phil Sharp or anything like that that helped you move into that job? Or how did that work?

Phil Sharp

Maxon: (Laugh) Probably did. I knew Phil through the little community church that we went to, so he knew me, and I guess probably knew how I got along with people and that. So, I'm sure that didn't hurt. (Laugh) (Storey: Oh but. . .) I also didn't have to pay any, pay any moving expenses or any (laugh) thing.

Storey: But, did you work with him before?

Maxon: No. Never had worked with Phil, but just knew him on sort of a social basis, but I was very impressed with (Storey: Um hmm.) Phil's management ability and people ability.

Storey: And you say he's running a winery?

Maxon: And he's running a winery now, last I know.

That's been several years ago.

Storey: What fun.

Maxon: Yeah. He was from the south and had this wonderful southern drawl, and the kind of thing that he could just catch anybody off guard. (Laughter) The name Sharp was, to me, totally the kind of person he was. (Storey: Uh huh.) He was just a very very effective administrator, and got the ear of the Regional Director, and I think probably explained how he could keep Reclamation out of trouble in compliance with all the environmental laws.

Storey: Who was the Regional Director?

Maxon: Oh, this is, I'm trying to come up with a name. I can picture the guy.

Storey: Let's see. Hallenbeck?

Maxon: Before Hallenbeck.. Oh heck, what the—we're talking now '75, '76. So, that'll give you a place to look him up. (Storey: Hmm.) I can't . . .⁷

7. Regional Directors in Boulder City during Jim Maxon's tenure at Reclamation there included: Manuel Lopez, Jr. (1975-1979), Eugene Hinds (1979-1981), Nelson W. Plummer (1981-1985), and possibly Edward Hallenbeck (1986-1991).

Storey: Well, I think my list's over in the briefcase
(Maxon: Okay.). (Laugh)

Maxon: Yeah. I can't, it's funny. It was a totally
difference in backgrounds. Phil coming out of
the south, going to a mainline protestant church
and being sort of active and, with a real
pragmatic scientific view. And, the Regional
Director was Mormon, and with the typical
world view of an engineer, and I think they got
along beautifully.

Storey: That would not have been Arleigh West?

Maxon: No.

Storey: That was after Arleigh left I think?

Maxon: Yeah. That was after. Isn't that funny. I can't
give you a name now. I'm sorry.

Storey: Anyway.

Maxon: Um hmm.

Storey: I'm drawing blank, too.

**“The Environmental Office was up on the second
floor of the big Reclamation Headquarters
building. . . . and it was sort of our own little**

kingdom up there. . . .”

Maxon: Yeah. I am too. But, they got along very well. The Environmental Office was up on the second floor of the big Reclamation Headquarters building.

Storey: (Sneeze) Excuse me.

Maxon: And, it had one part of the wing up there and it was sort of our own little kingdom up there. And, every Friday afternoon Phil would call up a staff meeting, and even the guys that were out in the field, everybody would come in and we'd meet about three thirty, and a couple bottles of wine would be opened and we would discuss things over a chablis. (Laugh)

Storey: Really?

Maxon: Really. Yeah. I probably, I don't think this will get anybody into trouble because that was twenty years ago. (Laugh)

Storey: Yeah. Yeah.

Maxon: Uh huh. Yeah. Interesting. Yeah, but he, he ran a, had a ~~very~~, staff that everybody got along and were, [as] I say, very enthusiastic.

Storey: How did Reclamation strike you when you first got there?

Reclamation Surprised Him Because He Found the Engineers Practical and Flexible

Maxon: It was, I had mixed feeling, or I mean mixed impressions. The feelings were all pretty positive. The Park Service, for all of its, everything that it does and it stands for, and the preservation, and all the good environmental things there's a very stodgy organization, pretty regimented. And, I expected, I guess, something entirely different going into an engineering outfit. I expected it to be very rigid and I found that it really wasn't, that engineers are pretty practical and probably more flexible, certainly in terms of policy, than the Park Service was.

Reclamation Recognized It Had to Deal with the Environmental Restrictions in Order to Move Projects Forward

And, as I say because they were practical, even though they maybe didn't understand or even totally approve of all of the environmental restrictions and so on, they realized that they had to be done and they had to be done right if they were going to do their mission. So, even though I think they always, didn't always understand we

environmental types, they certainly supported us because we were doing a part of the mission that needed to be done. So. So, there was a good feeling.

Liked the Fact Reclamation, Unlike the National Park Service, Did Not Have a Policy of Moving Staff Around

The other thing that *I* appreciated, I think I alluded to earlier, that the Park Service had at that time, probably still does, a policy of *moving* its employees around quite a bit to different assignments. Reclamation didn't have that. And, if you were doing your job and everything was going [well] there, you could spend your whole career, if you wanted to, in a particular job as long as you did it properly.

Storey: You could be a homesteader?

Maxon: You could be a homesteader. (Laugh) Right. And, after moving around, what little we did, and always under the threat that at any given time, six weeks from that time, you could be someplace else, it was nice to know that we could stay, stay there if we so chose. So. (Storey: Yeah.) That, that was comfortable.

Storey: See, I have a different impression of

Reclamation, that it had a growing period where it was sort of moving into understanding. Okay? That, it was going to have to comply with all these new things that had come around the bend.

Maxon: You got, you were involved with them before I was, then, during a learning period.

Storey: Yeah. That's what I wondered.

Maxon: Uh huh.

Storey: Okay.

Some Folks at Reclamation Did Resist Implementing the New Environmental Requirements

Maxon: Yeah. Uh huh. Yeah, I think that. And, there were still people who resisted the work, particularly when I first got there in '76. People kept saying, "Well can't we, do we really have to do this?" You know, "Who's going to . . .?"

Storey: "Who's going to know?"

Maxon: "Who's going to know?" Right. And these were particularly some of the older engineers who had been working for probably twenty-five

years with the Bureau, or something, and they were not totally convinced.

“ . . . I think because C-A-P particularly was so big and was under quite a bit of scrutiny, for a lot of reasons, environmental, and social, and so on, that the people who were really doing C-A-P bought into what needed to be done. . . . ”

But, I think because C-A-P particularly was so big and was under quite a bit of scrutiny, for a lot of reasons, environmental, and social, and so on, that the people who were really doing C-A-P bought into what needed to be done. (Storey: Uh huh.) Yeah.

Storey: Since you've raised the issue of C-A-P, ~~It~~ let me splinter off before we start talking about it.

Maxon: Yeah.

Storey: Seems to me that a bureau like Reclamation has two kinds of things going on. They tend to have the ongoing projects, the older projects if you wish, which they're doing O & M [Operations and Maintenance] on, basically?

Maxon: Right.

Storey: And for which the budgets are fairly low?

Maxon: Um hmm.

Storey: And, they also tended, I think in those days at least, to have big new *construction* projects (Maxon: Right.) going on? Did you see a difference between those *kinds* of projects and the way they reacted to the environmental compliance?

Contrasting Reclamation and National Park Service in Terms of Budgets

Maxon: Yes. Very much. I'll talk about that, but this brings in another factor I want to get out before I forget it, of the contrast between Reclamation and the Park Service.

“ . . . Park Service . . . has . . . *never* had enough money . . . Reclamation where money was *never* a particular issue, at least in the amounts that we as environmentalists were spending, we just simply spent what we believed we needed to spend . . . ”

Park Service who has always been a bailing-wire outfit *never* had enough money, and I was used to writing a justification to buy a dozen rolls of photographic film, with the Park Service. And, we'd have to decide, could we really afford to do that. And, coming into Reclamation where money was *never* a

particular issue, at least in the amounts that we as environmentalists were spending, we just simply spent what we believed we needed to spend, (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) which was a interesting thing. That would tie into the way that the projects were done.

“ . . . the only places where I ever really probably had some disagreements, and had to push and shove a little bit in terms of compliance, were on some of the established projects. . . .”

Yeah, the only places where I ever really probably had some disagreements, and had to push and shove a little bit in terms of compliance, were on some of the established projects. And, I alluded to some of the things that went on down at Yuma, where we had a lot of historic structures and things (Storey: Yeah.) down there. And, where the ownership was so strong that Reclamation, “This is our stuff, and we’ll do what we want with it.” And that that was some of the few places where I ever really had to, like I say, push or shove or give a little bit, because those folks were, just couldn’t quite buy into all of these new environmental glitches in the road. (Storey: Um hmm.)

“ . . . pretty well fixed budgets with the existing programs because they were O & M operations for

the most part. . . . a little different mentality there [than in the construction program] . . .”

And, and again, a lot of that, again, were budgets, pretty well fixed budgets with the existing programs because they were O & M operations for the most part. Yeah. So. There was a little different mentality there I think. (Storey: Uh huh.)

Contrasts in Staff at Reclamation and the National Park Service

The other thing, I keep going back to the contrast with the Park Service and Reclamation, I guess one of the first things that struck me about Reclamation was the, what I saw, truly professionalism and competence of the people that I had contact with, competence in their area of expertise. Whatever, you know, whatever kind of an engineer it was, they really, from my standpoint, *knew* what they were doing, and knew what to do, and were *extremely* good at planning, and things seemed to work right. Something that I *didn't* see in the Park Service. It struck me that the Peter Principle was rampant in the Park Service (Storey: Really?) and *less so* in Reclamation. Yeah. I was always impressed with Reclamation, with, good at what it does, what its mission is. (Storey: Um hmm.) And, I

really couldn't say that for the Park Service. So, interesting comparison.

“I can't ever think of any case really where anybody just wasted . . . money unnecessarily, but it was always nice to know that if you *needed* a piece of equipment or something that you were not going to get hassled . . .”

Going back to the, yeah, the big bucks funding with Reclamation on the new projects, then again my experience of course in Boulder City was virtually all with C-A-P, there was lots of money to spend there. I can't ever think of any case really where anybody just wasted, or you know, spent money unnecessarily, but it was always nice to know that if you *needed* a piece of equipment or something that you were not going to get hassled to . . .

END SIDE 1, TAPE 2. JANUARY 29, 2004.

SIDE 2, TAPE 2 UNRECORDED.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 3. JANUARY 29, 2004.

Storey: This is tape three of an interview by Brit Storey with James C. Maxon, on January the 29th, 2004.

Storey: You have trouble buying or renting what you needed?

“ . . . this was the thing that was so much nicer about working for Reclamation than Park Service; because there was never enough money in the Park Service to do even what you thought was basic things. . . .”

Maxon: Yeah, this was the thing that was so much nicer about working for Reclamation than Park Service; because there was never enough money in the Park Service to do even what you thought was basic things. And, I can remember, starting to work with Phil Sharp and some of our very early times of going in, and he was explaining a little bit in how the office was set up in terms of who did what and so on. And, I asked him about the budget and I got this sort of blank look. And, he said, “We have the money; whatever it is.” (Laughter) It was something that didn’t particularly worry him or trouble him. And, I, that struck me (Laugh) right away.

Storey: That was a very new experience, huh?

Maxon: Yeah. It was a new experience. Right. As I say, I never was *aware* that money was wasted or stuff, or unnecessary things were bought, or unnecessary travel, or anything. But, it was very comforting to know that if you *needed* to do something that you probably could, in terms of the budget. (Storey: Uh huh.) So. (Storey:

Hmm.) So there was a . . .

Storey: I had that same sensation when I came from the Advisory Council.

Maxon: I can imagine you did, because you probably didn't have any money there either.

Storey: Well, very little, you know. (Maxon: Um hmm.) You couldn't have a new bookcase.

Maxon: Yeah. Okay.

Storey: And, the convenience of walking downstairs to the printing shop and having things bound, and (Laugh) having them printed.

Maxon: Yeah. Just say, "Print this." Right. Yeah. Again, that was a thing that was interesting. It reminds me of Reclamation, in the Regional Office in Boulder City maintained a very nice photo lab, and they did the photo processing for the Park Service, even though we had our own little photo lab we oftentimes would take stuff over there. And, again it was a hassle to get a money order for a few dollars to go get some 4 x 5 sheet film developed or something. And, at Reclamation, whatever you needed to have done you just took down there and there was no question there. (Storey: Yeah.) Yeah.

Anything.

Storey: Yeah that was, that was a great change for me too. (Maxon: Um hmm.) A very *nice* one. (Laugh)

Maxon: Yes. A nice one. Yeah, just having the day, just being able to deal with the day to day operation and not stew about it, yeah, was nice. (Storey: Yeah.) I remember (Laugh) at Lake Mead, it was of course hot there in the summer time, and when I got there none of the cars were air conditioned. And, so every year we'd have to buy cool cushions to put on the seats, and you'd always have to write up a justification for buying (Laugh) a half a dozen cool cushions.

Storey: What's a cool cushion?

Maxon: Oh, it's the little wire thing with fiber over the top of it and it raises you up off the seat about an inch. You have a little air circulation.

Storey: Oh. The sort of loosely knit fabric over . . .

Maxon: Yes, over wire.

Storey: Over sort of springs.

Maxon: Springy things.

Storey: Some very loose springs?

Maxon: Yeah. Right. And, one doesn't see those now because all cars have air conditioning. But, that was still common.

Storey: I remember those. (Laugh)

Maxon: Yeah. In 1967, when I got there. (Laugh) And, you know, they'd last a season and they all wear out, and so every year you would have to write up a justification why you needed it. (Laugh) Oh gee. So. Yeah, interesting contrast.

Storey: Where were they on C-A-P when you arrived?

CAP Construction Was Just Beginning When He Came to Reclamation in 1976

Maxon: Just at the very early stages. Basically, in the planning. Virtually no construction had been done in '67.

**“They were just getting plans together and . . .
had to go through all the environmental
processes before a lot of the stuff could get done.
. . .”**

They were just getting plans together and obviously they had to go through all the

environmental processes before a lot of the stuff could get done.

Storey: '67 or '76?

Maxon: I'm sorry, '76. Right.

Storey: Okay.

Maxon: Yes. Uh huh. I'm not sure when it was authorized.

Storey: 1968. But of course it had been studied since before World War I, or II. (Maxon: Yeah.) Before World War II.

Maxon: Right. So. Yeah, it was not a new thing. So, there was not a whole lot of construction completed at . . .

Storey: Were there, had there been environmental statements, for instance?

Environmental Statement Work

Maxon: ~~They were, we were,~~ Well that was, again, one of the reasons that I was hired there was to help write environmental statements. Some of the, like the overall, sort of the over-arching statement I think had been done, and we were

beginning to fill in bits and pieces, in some cases only an environmental assessment, but then writing specific statements for specific parts of the project.

Storey: Uh huh. Well, I remember reviewing statements back in that period.

Maxon: And, a lot of them probably weren't, were pretty, probably not as good as the ones that were (Laugh) written later.

Storey: Well, yeah. I never reviewed, you know, I did the northern ~~United~~, West. (Maxon: Okay.) Rather than the southern West.

Maxon: Okay. So.

Storey: But, it was a fairly standard response, something to the effect, "We've reviewed this in accordance with such and such," (Maxon: Um hmm.) "and we don't find that there's enough information here to determine, (Maxon: Um hmm.) whether or not you're doing a good job." (Laugh)

Maxon: Determine whether there's an effect. Right. Yeah. Determine. Well, that was I think one of the reasons why Phil Sharp and his crew were put on in '76, to begin to get stuff straightened

out to where you could get a statement *by* (Laugh) somebody, if that makes sense. (Storey: Uh huh.) Yeah. I, it was my impression that a lot of the stuff was pretty cursory, and as I say we were going back and filling in gaps. And, then certainly, and rightly so, the Advisory Council I'm sure, was hammering (Storey: Well.) most of the stuff at that point, which it probably needed to be.

Storey: Take me through your memory of what it was about, *filling* in these gaps.

Maxon: Okay. (Laugh) I wish I could think about some specific things. This would be a, for example, doing a statement for a particular reach of canal, (Storey: Um hmm.) okay, construction. And, I'm trying to think about some of the, I'm having trouble bringing up a specific one. But, uhm . . .

Storey: Well, what was the process you went through.

Evolution of CRM Work at Reclamation

Maxon: Okay. Early on, what had happened is that, we'll say that with the cultural resources, we would contact the Park Service and say, "We're building, we're proposing this stretch of canal, and it goes through this thing," and their

response would be, “You need, first of all, a Class III survey, and an overall thing.” And, Reclamation I think was trying to get by with, you know, a windshield survey of the, of this, and then somebody would call them on it. “Well, you need to go and, you know, look at some of this stuff more carefully.” And, so at the point that *I* got involved we were beginning to let a real honest-to-goodness intensive survey contract. “Okay, you need somebody out there to *walk* this *whole* alignment and record *everything*.” You know.

Storey: And test it, or whatever?

Maxon: Yeah. And then do whatever else was necessary. We were, at that point, trying to—well, there was a term that Ward and I used that, “Maybe if we test this enough we will test it out of existence, and there won’t be any effect.” (Laugh) (Storey: Um hmm.) And, that had been going on, and I think the realization was that, “Well, this isn’t going to, this is not the spirit of the law, you know. If we take out the whole ruin then there’s no longer an effect when we (laugh) (Storey: Um hmm.) build the thing.” And, obviously the Council and SHPO had been calling Reclamation on that. And, so at the time *I* got there we were beginning to let contracts to go and do, do it the way we probably would

now, do a survey, and do some preliminary testing, and then say, “Yes, this is the effect.” Or, (Storey: Um hmm.) not, or can we wiggle the canal, or whatever. So, I ~~was~~ [worked] right at that transition where Reclamation was really starting, trying to clean up their act a little bit.

Storey: And there was a lot of *tension*, (Maxon: Um hmm.) about where it was appropriate to do which (Maxon: Um hmm.) *level* of survey?

Maxon: Yes. And, my guess is people still probably haggle over that, which they probably should. (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) You know, where it is—one of the, I think probably the best thing we did to deal with some of that was to get the on-site archaeological staff down at Phoenix. And, I will have to give a great deal of credit to Gene Rogge for working with, initially, the SHPO and the contractors, which were in that case were largely A-S-U [Arizona State University] and U of A [University of Arizona], and usually it was the university institutions who had, could field survey crews and so on. And to negotiate with them to say, “Okay. What’s important? You know, if we have all of these resources and if we can show that there are duplications and we can get information, maybe we don’t need to excavate this thing. But, what if we go a half a mile off the right of way and we have some

important site that will give us more information, can we demonstrate this as a way of mitigating it and come out with better information?” And, there was a lot of that kind of trade off went on, with C-A-P. And, I think overall that was probably, scientifically, probably a better way to do it. We probably learned more doing that than had we just simply dug up and analyzed every pot sherd that was in the right of way. (Storey: Um hmm.) So I think, again, I have to say Gene Rogge was a master of that. First of all, he was a good archaeologist and had a good understanding of, you know, what the resources were down there, down in that part, have a pretty good way to do that. And, as we gradually built up the trust of the institutions who did the work, this got better.

“ . . . Reclamation was in just as much trouble early on with the educational institutions as they were with the Advisory Council, or anybody . . . ”

I would have to say that Reclamation was in just as much trouble early on with the educational institutions as they were with the Advisory Council, or anybody, because I think these people saw that, those were their resources. You know, their *areas* of (Storey: Um hmm.) research. “This is where we, these are our sites, in our backyard.” So they had a

really a vested interest and they were as much interested in doing good research and archaeology as they were in complying with the legislation. So I, I think there was a real turn around in those few years from, “Can we just sort of look out the windshield, and I don’t see anything,” you know. (Storey: Um hmm.) Uh huh, to realizing that (sigh) how do you say it?

“ . . . in so many ways . . . it’s easier to go ahead and do something right to start with than to try to avoid it. You know, you use less energy and resources just going ahead and doing the work . . . ”

It’s in so many ways, in life it’s easier to go ahead and do something right to start with than to try to avoid it. You know, you use less energy and resources just going ahead and doing the work than you do trying to skirt around it. So, there was that period of learning with Reclamation, (Storey: Yeah.) and with the administrators.

Storey: There was sort of a transition, though, when you first came. If I’m recalling correctly, they hired Ward thinking *he* was going to solve the C-A-P problem?

Maxon: Exactly.

Storey: And Ward realized he couldn't solve it?

Maxon: Couldn't, yeah, he couldn't do it.

Storey: So the Region had to do something? (Maxon: Um hmm.) And then the Region realized—tell me about all (Maxon: Yeah.) of this.

Maxon: Yeah. That, really, that cycle went very very quickly. Before Ward was hired the, I guess realistic, officially he would have been the departmental consulting archaeologist was handling the work, and of course that translated practically to the people in the Park Service, who were doing the work for the Department of Interior. They were handling the compliance and recommending to Reclamation, “Okay, one you need to survey this, and, then you need to do this consultation, and so on.”

“ . . . one of the main reasons that Ward was hired is that Reclamation had outgrown the capabilities of the Park Service . . . ”

And, I think one of the main reasons that Ward was hired is that Reclamation had outgrown the capabilities of the Park Service, because the Park Service was doing this for other agencies as well. And, you would know better than that, BIA [Bureau of Indian Affairs], and I'm not

sure, probably BLM [Bureau of Land Management] initially. And, any land management, you know, work that was done for Interior, Park Service was doing it.

“ . . . they just flat couldn’t handle the volume of work that we had. . . .”

And, they just flat couldn’t handle the volume of work that we had. And, I think that was one of the reasons that probably drove Reclamation to hiring Ward to start with, is that they needed to get on with (Laugh) (Storey: Yeah.) C-A-P.

River Basin Salvage Funding for the National Park Service

Storey: Did you have any sense of the fact, under that old River Basin Salvage Act, (Maxon: Um hmm.) they were defunded too? (Maxon: Um hmm.) Sometimes they would get money transferred, (Maxon: Um hmm.) but you know, they were seen by the other bureaus as a funding source?

Maxon: Okay. Uh huh.

Storey: And, I think when I first came they were sort of struggling to get *out* of that.

Maxon: Out of that.

Storey: They were beginning to *understand* the dimensions of the issue that they were involved in. (Maxon: Okay.) Do you have any insights into that?

Maxon: No. I don't, because I never really understood how the River Basin projects were funded, never really knew very much about it. You, I think, have more insight than I do (Storey: Hmm.) into that.

“ . . . my understanding and awareness was that Reclamation finally realized it needed to, if it was going to do C-A-P or anything else, had to not rely on the Park Service. And, of course the Preservation Act gave the authority to spend the 1% of project cost . . . ”

But, yeah, my understanding and awareness was that Reclamation finally realized it needed to, if it was going to do C-A-P or anything else, had to not rely on the Park Service. (Storey: Yeah.) And, of course the Preservation Act gave the authority to spend the 1% of project cost (Storey: Yeah.) on that. So, I think Reclamation probably being as practical, just decided, “Well, if we have this we just well spend it on ourselves rather than giving it to a sister agency

which isn't going to get the work done for us.”

Storey: Did you ever sense that Reclamation was concerned about, umm, whether the Park Service was representing its interests?

Maxon: I think there was always that underlying thing, is that the Park Service could care less whether we built any of our projects, and in many cases would prefer that we didn't. (Laugh) Yeah. I think there was, it was certainly *my* impression. I can remember the first few months that I started working. I, with some other agencies, I can remember going to a dog-and-pony show that the Park Service put on down in Phoenix to explain to all of the unwashed agencies how to do these things. Damn, I wish, names now. Who was the consulting archaeologist at that time? This is before, right before Bennie Keel. Who was right before Bennie?

Storey: Oh, it was . . .? (sigh) What was his name? It was the man that they sent off to get a PhD, and he didn't get it. (Maxon: Um hmm.) I can't think of his name.

“ . . . Gar Gordon . . . was not an energetic type and . . . just sort of, this file comes up and it goes off to the side, you know, and maybe it'll resurface again in a few weeks. And, I think that

kind of thing was just absolutely maddening to Reclamation. . . .”

Maxon: I can't come up with the name. Anyway, and, yeah that's a very good point. From things that he said, and had been working even with Gar Gordon, who was out of the Western office. Gar was not an energetic type and I often felt like, you know, well Gar has just sort of, this file comes up and it goes off to the side, you know, and maybe it'll resurface again in a few weeks. (Laugh) And, I think that kind of thing was just absolutely maddening to Reclamation. Uh huh. (Storey: Yeah.) That, um-hmm.

Storey: They're very oriented to getting, you know, to meeting deadlines.

Reclamation Met Deadlines If at All Possible

Maxon: Yes. And, again, that was always so impressive to me is that they, for the most part, if there was a deadline they'd probably meet it if possible. So, I think all of those factors probably contributed to deciding that they needed their own . . . Reclamation needed its own cultural resource (Storey: Um hmm.) person or staff.

Storey: So, did the C-A-P folks become—you mentioned that you and Ward were the first two (Maxon:

Um hmm.) archaeologists?

Maxon: Right.

Storey: Did they then become the next group? Or . . . ?

Maxon: I'm thinking yes. I think so, because at that point C-A-P was really the main project, I think, that Reclamation was doing, really. And, pretty much the last really big construction project. I can't think of anything else anywhere near that magnitude that was going on in Reclamation at that time. So, yeah, Ward very quickly said, "Okay, the Region needs an archaeologist." Because, he was running around trying to, I think, put out fires all over Reclamation. And, so that's when I was picked up. And, again, even, and I say even the regional people didn't quite understand it because I was hired to archeology half-time, as I mentioned before.

“ . . . I had a little learning curve. . . . I understood archaeology, but I didn't know the compliance process *at all*. . . . ”

And, it, I had a little learning curve. I came out of the Park Service and I understood archaeology, but I didn't know the compliance process *at all*. (Storey: Um hmm.) So, it took me a little while to get up to speed.

Storey: That was *very* typical in that period.

Quickly Determined CRM Staff Was Necessary in Phoenix

Maxon: Yeah, you know, I can remember reading through the, whatchamacallit, 106 (Laugh) regulations many times to try to get this fixed in my mind, you know, (Storey: Yeah.) who you contact first and what. And, so it took me a little while to get into that, and then to make the contacts with, initially Arizona, and Nevada to take care of some stuff in Nevada. But, to get into that loop, and as soon as I was there, then I'm thinking, "We got to have somebody in Phoenix," because that's, that was where the C-A-P decisions were really being made. It was in the Boulder City Region, but the real decisions and administrative, everything was working in Phoenix.

“. . . the people doing the project have a great deal of authority in terms of not only doing the day to day management but also a great deal in how the policy is shaped for that particular project. . . .”

And, that's another interesting thing to me about Reclamation is that the people doing the project have a great deal of authority in terms of not only doing the day to day management but

also a great deal in how the policy is shaped for that particular project. (Storey: Um hmm.) It was very difficult for me, in Boulder City, to work with the people in Phoenix. So. They already, at that point, had established an Environmental Office in Phoenix, so they, so it was very easy then to suggest that, “Let’s attach an archaeologist down there.”

And, so I believe that Gene Rogge was probably the third archaeologist,⁸ and you’d have to check me on that. I don’t think that any other regions put on people before then.

Storey: Um hmm. And then of course, once he was there, the same process happened again?

Maxon: Yeah. It happened again. (Laugh) Because, by the time he got up to speed there was more and more going on, and he was up to his eyeballs, and beginning this, what I would consider the first real archaeology that was done was really what the contracts that Gene set up. And, all of a sudden we have several million or multi-

8. Tom Lincoln, Reclamation’s Federal Preservation Officer in 2013 and another early Reclamation cultural resources management (CRM) hire, recalls that Tom Cartilage in the Lower Missouri Region in Denver was the third hire. Subsequent Reclamation hires included Gene Rogge and others such as Steve Ireland, Bobby Ferguson, Linda Ward Williams, and Terry Zontek.

million dollar archaeological (Storey: Um
hmm.) contracts going on down there. And, so.

Storey: Interesting.

Tom Lincoln, Kathy Pedrick, and John Czaplicki

Maxon: And he was able to put on Tom Lincoln, and
Kathy Pedrick, and a couple of other people.

Storey: Yeah. John Czaplicki.

Maxon: Yeah. John Czaplicki. And, people like John
were particularly good because he came out of
the university background so he sort of
understood the academic beurocracy, and was
very helpful that way. (Storey: Uh huh.) Kathy
Pedrick had a background out of BLM, so she
had a background out of another land managing
agency, which was very useful. So, it turned out
to be a good team. Yeah. (Storey: Hmm.)
Efficient. So.

So, you're really right, there was that
transition to where Reclamation was being
pulled along kicking and screaming to sort of
comply. (Storey: Um hmm.) ~~And, I,~~ To where
they finally got to the point to where they were
doing a pretty good job. Yeah.

Storey: It just struck me, what about travel? Did that change when you went from the Park Service to Reclamation?

Travel in Reclamation and the National Park Service

Maxon: Yeah. I was in a job in the Park Service where I personally didn't travel. I was assigned to a park, a field area, and there wasn't anyplace that I *needed* to go, except in the park. So. (Storey: Uh huh.) Yeah.

Storey: They didn't sent you to training or anything?

Maxon: I do have to say that I did get to go to some nice training with the Park Service. At the time that I got to Lake Mead the Park Service had set up their Interpretive Training Center in Harper's Ferry, and I got to go to the first full interpreter's class there, and then subsequently went back to two or three more specific classes. And, again, I'm trying to think of the name of the director of that. Ray, somebody, was very much on the ball and ran a, really a good program at Harper's Ferry for a number of years, had good staff, and really very valuable classes. So. (Storey: Um hmm.) So, that was a good thing. Actually, the person who got that started was Russ Grader [spelling?], an old Park

Service Interpreter who had been around at Rocky Mountain and a number of places. And, he sort of did the initial set up of the training school there. (Storey: Yeah.) And then subsequently retired and moved to Boulder City, and I got to know him on a personal basis after he had come to Boulder City.

Storey: Hmm. That's quite a change, isn't it?

Maxon: Yes. (Laugh) He, how did he end up in Boulder City? He obviously had worked, probably, at Lake Mead at some point or another. (Storey: Uh huh.) So I traveled occasionally for a class like that, and also in those early '70s, as the Park Service was buying into the big environmental education movement, I did a little bit of traveling representing the Park Service at some courses, and I was President of the Nevada Environmental Education, whatever it was, Association for a year or two. And so, traveled up to Reno occasionally, (Storey: Uh huh.) but not to any great extent. And, again, Park Service, there was, particularly at the field level, never any travel budget. So, it was always a hassle to get enough money to buy a plane ticket or a per diem, or something.

Storey: You mentioned earlier that Ward consulted you

about development of policy and procedures.
How did that work?

Development of Policy and Procedures for Reclamation's CRM Program

Maxon: Well, it was one of those things that, gees, for the first couple of months we probably spent an hour a day on the telephone, you know, commiserating and trying to, both of us try to figure out the bureaucracy of Reclamation. And, Ward came in not understanding the compliance procedures much better than I did. He did by the time I got on board, because he'd been around a little bit. So he, you now, could speak the 106 language (Laugh) (Storey: Yeah.) and everything.

Storey: Speak 106, huh?

Setting up Regional Inspections

Maxon: Yeah, right. And, we did that, and from there then I think we would, we just talked a lot about, "Okay, how are we going to make this work in Reclamation?" And, so, we just spent some time on, or we spent a lot of time just very informally talking about, "How can we make this work?" And, we set up the regional inspections, and I think that was, hard to say

Bureau of Reclamation History Program

whose idea it was, but we sort of came up with that together, you know, and getting all of the environmental people, or the cultural resources people together once a year. That kind of thing was largely just a result of our discussions early on. (Storey: Um hmm.) And I guess most of the, I'm not sure how much we ever really documented the procedures within Reclamation, but I guess it was sort of an in-service training as each of the archaeologists was hired. And it would be hard to say whether one or the other of us came up with an idea but it was one of those things where, if you talk enough, suddenly the idea is there. (Storey: Yeah.)

Ward Weakly Spent a Good Deal of Time Working on CAP

Also, Ward came down quite a bit, again, C-A-P was his main concern, and so he came down to Boulder City on a pretty regular basis. And, a lot of the procedures were oftentimes, I think, developed at my house over a bottle of whiskey and (Laugh) a late night talking. Ward was a very accomplished piano player. I'm not sure that many people knew that. At the time that he was coming down, we had a piano in the house and he would come down, and my kids are both musicians, and I am, and so there would be long evenings of music interspersed

with a little bit of business talk.

Storey: With talking?

Maxon: Yeah. And . . .

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Storey: Ward was?

Maxon: Ward was an absolutely charming human being, and my whole family would look forward to the time when, it was almost like Uncle Ward was going to come down. The kids were in early high school, and my daughter was young, and look forward to him coming down and having dinner, and him playing the piano, and we all doing music. And, yeah. And so that was good, good time.

Storey: How did, how did the regions interact with Denver and Washington, and so on? In your experience?

Interactions Between Offices in Reclamation

Maxon: In my experience. It was my experience that each of these entities in Reclamation *really* functioned pretty much on their own. It always

struck me that the office, the C-A-P office in Phoenix, probably had as much dealing directly with Denver as it did with Boulder City. And, it was pretty much its own kingdom. And, I didn't see a lot of interaction. And, again even with the small project offices were very independent. Yuma functioned pretty much by itself. (Storey: Um hmm.) Our office at Needles[, California,] ~~was~~, didn't, at least from my perception, have a great deal to do with the Regional Office. And certainly Hoover Dam was very independent. (Laugh) (Storey: Um hmm.) You know, they were the showcase for Reclamation, and knew it, and were proud of it, and had a great sense of pride on the whole project.

Storey: Was there any tension between these offices?

Maxon: I don't know if it was so much tension, it was just it struck me it was more that just everybody sort of operated independently. I was probably not at a level high enough to ever know what kind of tensions. Obviously stuff had to have gone on. (Storey: Uh huh.) But, I was never particularly aware of it. And, certainly, when I got to Denver I realized the Denver seemed to function pretty well without Washington. (Laugh) And, that Washington (Storey: Um hmm.) was just that annex there, you know, back East. At least that was my impression, and

I don't know how that would seem now, but that was the view that I sort of got, at least from the people in the Denver Office that the power really resided in Denver.

Storey: So, I'm not quite understanding what you did when you were in the Region. Did you do [Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act] compliance? Did you . . . ?

Working in the Region in Boulder City

Maxon: Pretty much compliance, yes. That strikes me, but that was pretty much what I did. As I alluded, the first year I was there I did pretty much literally right down, down, split down the time to where I think we even kept time sheets for a while, to find out what I was doing.

Half of the time doing, working and writing on environmental statements. I did an *awful* lot of writing, and just compiling stuff, and just putting it down. (Storey: Um hmm.) Not, and not for archaeology, but just sometimes it was very general stuff. I had just enough background in ecology to be dangerous. And, so I could write, you know, I wrote general ecological statements of, you know, pictures and then did quite a bit of writing on endangered species. And so, half my time was really writing

that first year or two.

“ . . . I would say probably eight-five or ninety percent of my time was spent on C-A-P and the other ten percent on various little ongoing projects within the region. . . . ”

And, then the rest of the time as I got more into the cultural resource stuff I would say probably eight-five or ninety percent of my time was spent on C-A-P and the other ten percent on various little ongoing projects within the region. And, it might be letting a little survey contract for a realignment of a road or something. And, going through the compliance procedure with S-H-P-O or whatever. And, you're right, *compliance* really was my primary job.

“ . . . once I got to Reclamation, I don't think I did any real archaeology. Oh, occasionally I would maybe do a Class III survey . . . ”

I, personally, once I got to Reclamation, I don't think I did any real archaeology. Oh, occasionally I would maybe do a Class III survey, a really quickie, but at one point Reclamation was proposing to build a 1000 kV line between the Dalles in Oregon and Boulder City. A way of getting Northwest power down into the Southwest. (Storey: Um hmm.) And, I

did a helicopter survey, you know, just to get a general thing. I did some things like that, and then from there I would write up something and say, "Okay this we need, you know, a Class II or Class I survey." Just, but, just doing some really broad overview type things like that. (Storey: Um hmm.) Did that kind of work when we were, Reclamation was looking to build a dam at Zuni. I don't know whether you would have gotten involved with the Advisory Council [on Historic Preservation] on that. That didn't go very far. I went over and did, again, preliminary stuff and then enough that I could write up a contract for somebody to come in and do some work.

And I'll have to, a little sidelight on that is we did let a survey contract, a Class II survey, to Jim Fitting and his principle investigator was Susan Collins. (Laugh) That's how I first met Sue. (Storey: Um hmm.) She did that.

But, most of it was simply writing compliance documents and writing what needed to be sent off to the S-H-P-O, or to the folks at the Advisory Council, was really what I spent most of my time doing in the Region. And, after I got to Denver, it's hard to say (Laugh) what I did there. Obviously it was, didn't do any particular compliance unless something had

broken down with one of the S-H-P-Os, or the Council, then I would may[be] go and consult with the regional people (Storey: Um hmm.) as sort of a back up or whatever. (Storey: Yeah.) Um hmm.

Storey: Well, why did you move to Denver? How did that come about?

Move to Denver to Take Ward's Job

Maxon: Okay. Well, I came to take over Ward's job. Yeah. I, again, I was, when Ward died I applied for the job and was selected.

Storey: Nobody came down and said, "Gee, we'd like you to come up here?"

Maxon: *No!* I always, I guess in my own mind, thought—well, first of all I never expected Ward to die. You know, he was younger than I was and everything, but I always thought, "Well, I'm sort of, I've been around second longest I might be sort of, you know, second in line." But, I never thought that I was a shoo-in. And, my guess is that all of the regional archaeologists probably applied, plus people outside the agency did too. I never did know what the, you know, what the list looked like, or what the final (Storey: Um hmm.) cut was on that, but . . .

Storey: And who hired you?

Maxon: I'm sorry?

Storey: Who hired you?

Maxon: George Wallen.

Storey: George?

Maxon: Yeah. George was the running the show at the time and Ward was working for George. That was how that set up. I . . . it was interesting. Ward, when he was still around, probably wouldn't have approved of me having the job because he really felt that the job should be, go to a P-h-D in archaeology, for one thing. And, although I think he would have approved of my policies and everything, (Storey: Um hmm.) but— and there were, you know, a couple of the regional archaeologists had P-h-Ds at the time. And, after I was hired, oh a year, 18 months into the job, one of them, I can't even remember which one, confided in me that among themselves they were a little disappointed when they found out that I got the job because they were afraid I would sell the farm, you know, and wouldn't stand up. And somebody said, "You know, I didn't have any idea how persuasive you can be, you know, when you need it."

(Laugh) Which was sort of a nice compliment. But I don't know who it, who, you know, it was sort of like the primaries, who was really in the running at that (Storey: Yeah.) time.

Storey: That was sort of an exciting time at Reclamation?

Maxon: Well, it really was because, you know, C-A-P was still going full blast, and down to the point where construction was going on, and had all the big archaeological contracts going, and we contracted to get sort of a summary of all of the work put together, you know, an overview of the archeological findings and so on. Again, that was something that Gene Rogge pulled off. Yeah, that was a good time. I, certainly for cultural resources, and I think for Reclamation in general, and it was at that point that the history program that we were beginning to, as you well know, (Storey: Um hmm.) say, "Okay. It's time to document our own history, for one thing." And, because the cultural resources, archaeology had always had sort of dominated that even though there was obviously other aspects, you know. Well, I'm not sure what to say. But anyway, it was a time when not only we cultural resources types were beginning to think we really need to think in terms of history, but when I think that there was an awareness of

the agency as it maybe was maturing and probably realizing they were pretty well peaking out on construction, (Storey: Um hmm.) you know. Yeah. So it was a good time.

Storey: Now, what kind of reorganization was going on at that time? Do you recall any of that?

Reclamation Was Reassessing its Missions and Roles When He Moved into Ward's Job in Denver

Maxon: Hmm. I'm just trying to think. It strikes me that during that period of time with the changing of commissioners there was a lot of looking at policies, and also, again, which way is Reclamation going to do?

There was this realization that, "Gee, we've fulfilled, you know, we have reclaimed the arid lands west of the 100th meridian, now what are we going to do?"

Reclamation Was Looking at Doing Consulting and Design and Construction for Other Bureaus in the Federal Government

And, it was a time of expansion, when we were beginning to look at consulting for things like, you know, the Three Gorges Project, and we should maybe begin to look at more into

power generation, and exploring wind turbines, and you know, alternate power sources. And, we had dabbled a little bit, at that point, in desalinization projects down in Arizona. And, Reclamation was thinking, “Okay, maybe we can be a construction agency for the whole federal government,” you know, “Who can do this better than we can?” (Storey: Um hmm.) And, the idea that, you know, “Let us, let us design your project and help you build it.”

Involvement in Superfund Work with the Environmental Protection Agency

So, it was sort of a branching out time, or a transition time, and that affected even clear down to the level that you and I were operating, because we certainly would have had our own roles in whichever way we went. Little things, Ed Friedman, if you recall, became our Superfund man, you know, because we were providing some compliance and so on with EPA [Environmental Protection Agency], and I found that pretty interesting. Then again, the pragmatic, the practicality of the whole engineering spirit of Reclamation to say is, “Okay, we’ve done this mission. We still have all this expertise. Now, what can we do with it?” And, I really believe that it was more than just bureaucratic, you know, self-preservation,

you know. But, “We have to keep the organization going.” But, I think really, thinking, “Okay we can, we still have things to contribute.” (Storey: Um hmm.) Again, throughout my career with Reclamation I was always aware of the sense ~~that~~ of the people working at Reclamation that they’re really doing something important. It was not just maintaining the bureaucracy—that Reclamation was doing important things, and I always appreciated that. And, certainly one could argue, you know, about well whether this particular project or that project should have been built, or what were the effects, but every project at the time that it was conceived and built seemed to have a good purpose. And, I always appreciated that. So, that’s a long rambling answer to—yeah, there were exciting things going on in 1986 when I got to Denver.

Storey: Oh, not rambling at all. (Maxon: Um hmm.) I liked that.

Maxon: (Laugh) Yeah. Well, anyway. And I’m trying to think, when did you switch over?

Storey: I came in ‘88.

Maxon: Eighty-eight. Okay. So that was right at that time when we were, yeah, beginning to look at

branching out, and we were getting into things besides just traditional Reclamation projects, or at least looking at those things. And, again, the awareness, of I'm not sure who, that we needed to look at Reclamation's history, you know. And, you certainly engendered that when you got on board, you know.

Storey: (Laugh) I tried.

Maxon: Yeah. You did. Yeah, and have brought that about. I'd be interested now, since I've been out of the loop for thirteen years, to know where Reclamation sees itself going now, but, you know. What direction?

Storey: And, let's see, what kind of staff have you hired then?

The CRM Staff Grew Quickly in the Time He Was in Denver

Maxon: When I got to Denver I *was* the Cultural Resource staff, (Storey: Um hmm.) and I was just a member of George Wallen's environmental crew. I can't even remember what we called ourselves, that whole office at that point. (Storey: Yeah.) And, I think I was amazed that we built a little empire very quickly in that three or four years. I can't even

remember how many people we had at peak.

Storey: Well, let's see. There would have been Steve Ireland.

Maxon: Steve Ireland.

Storey: Ed Friedman. Myself.

Maxon: Yourself. Joan Middleton. Chris Pfaff.

Storey: Well, she came later. Yeah.

Maxon: Later. Yeah.

Storey: Roy Wingate before her.⁹

Maxon: Okay. There's seven I think. So, yeah. It all came about very quickly. (Laugh)

Storey: What were, what was the idea of building up staff like that?

Maxon: You know, (Laugh) I look back on it, and I'm sure I had very logical reasons at the time, or not me but me along with support by George. I think Steve was the first person that we picked up, and that was largely because the Amarillo Office was winding down a little bit and Steve

9. Rolla Queen was another hire into the CRM staff in Denver.

was going to be out of a job, and I think we justified the fact that it would be nice to have an assistant there. And, Steve was very good because he was the consummate bureaucrat, in addition to being a pretty good archaeologist, and was good at looking at policies and things. And, also we got some money to where we could do some independent contracting, independent of the regions. That was one of the reasons why we put on some of the other people. We did some projects, well like the Superfund stuff that Ed did, and some other projects. There were sort of a closing down of some of the regional archaeology functions, or the staffs, and the regions were at that point shrinking a little bit. C-A-P continued to go, but Amarillo basically shut down their cultural stuff, and so we continued to handle their stuff but out of the Denver Office. And, I think it's sort of typical of all bureaucracies that you go through cycles. You centralize functions for a while, and then you decentralize functions, and the functions go out to the field offices (Storey: Um hmm.) again. And, we were at a time when it seemed more logical to centralize things.

Storey: Yeah. There was a lot of that, I think, people being moved in from the Regions.

Maxon: Yes. As I recall the whole E & R Center

[Engineering and Research] was *growing* at that point. And, I'm not sure that one could ever understand those other than just in the broad context of, "This is how bureaucracies function." (Laugh) (Storey: Um hmm.) They expand and contract. (Storey: Yeah.) And, it could be . . . probably much of that had to do with this idea of this changing role of Reclamation, that Reclamation was going to be the government construction agency, and that we could best do that by having, you know, beefing up the E & R Center. I think that was probably ~~would be~~ the overall logic, which certainly went far beyond anything that I thought about (Storey: Um hmm.) at the time. (Storey: Hmm.) Yeah. So. And, I don't know.

Belle Fourche Project

Storey: Yeah, you know, I did the Belle Fourche Project.

Maxon: Yes.

Superfund Work at Idaho Springs, Leadville, and Central City

Storey: We were working on the Superfund stuff up at Central City, and Idaho Springs. (Maxon: Um hmm. Um hmm.) Leadville.

Bureau of Reclamation History Program

Work on Jackson Lake with the National Park Service

Maxon: Leadville. Yeah. Um hmm. Yeah, and it strikes me that we had some other contract stuff that we were doing at that time with our staff. (Storey: Um hmm.) We had, well we still had the joint project going on with Park Service, at Teton on . . .

Storey: Jackson Lake?

Maxon: Yeah, Jackson Lake. It was winding down but it was still, we were still spending money up there. (Storey: Hmm.) And, I'm trying to think, it strikes me we had a couple of other joint agency projects like that where we, it seemed more logical to run them out of our office.

Storey: Hmm. Let's see. I forgot to ask, earlier, when you first came to Reclamation that would have been about the time they changed the name of the Bureau, to Water and Power Resources Service?

Reclamation's Name Change to Water and Power Resources Service and Separation of Power Marketing Function from Reclamation to the Western Area Power Administration

Maxon: Oh yes, and we had the (Laugh) yeah, there were the water and power guys, Department of Energy people. Yes. Uh huh. Yes, that transition took place *just exactly* at the time that I was hired in Boulder City.

Storey: How did, how was Reclamation reacting then?

Maxon: Well, I think Reclamation just, at least it was my impression from the Regional Office there, is that, "Well it's about time we get these guys under our wing here and get them shaped up. Get those functions in where they belong." That was sort of my (Laugh), I think the view that I saw in the Regional Office there. And, there were a lot of employees. I know there was a great deal of shuffling back and forth between the, you know, the two branches of people, depending on what their jobs were. A lot of shuffling to get that all together. I had forgotten about that whole time with the name change. (Storey: Um hmm.) And all of that.

Storey: Well, they also created Western Area Power Administration.

Maxon: Yes. Yeah.

Storey: How did all this affect Reclamation?

Maxon: Again, at that, there was a great deal of shuffling, in Boulder City *particularly*, because of the role that Hoover Dam played in the power generation, and so on. And, the guys who had been on working with the power stuff they were, that was called WAPA, [pronounced wah puh] [Western Area Power Administration] of course. W-A-P-A. So, it was the WAPA guys. (Laugh)

Storey: And the “whoppers” [WAPRs].

Maxon: Uh huh. Yes. And the WAPRs.

Storey: The Water and Power Resources.

“It was my impression that it was the classic exercise in bureaucratic reorganization without accomplishing much of anything. . . .”

Maxon: Resources. Right. Yeah. So, we had WAPAs and WAPRs. (Storey: Uh huh.) (Laugh) It was my impression that it was the classic exercise in bureaucratic reorganization without accomplishing much of anything. New job titles, and much energy to spend on writing new job descriptions, and with probably very little change in how things actually functioned and worked. But, (Storey: Um hmm.) uh-hmm. Yeah.

Storey: In the time you were at Reclamation, we have this transition from the Park Service to Reclamation staffing up? (Maxon: Um hmm.) My impression is that the Park Service *tended* to favor using universities (Maxon: Um hmm.) and there was a *lot* of concern and consternation about that, out in the general archaeological community? (Maxon: Um hmm.) Do you have any memories and insights (Maxon: Yeah.) about this?

Universities Versus Private Companies for CRM Contracting

Maxon: Yeah, I could talk a little bit.

Storey: And stories? (Laugh)

Maxon: And stories. Well, I'm not sure I have any really good stories but I could talk about generally, yeah. I think there was always this question whether one should hire a university, an established learning institution, to do research, or whether one could really hire all of these fledgling consulting companies that were springing up at that time as a result of the Historic Preservation Act and some of the other legislation. There was just a whole lot of little independent research companies, consulting companies showing up. And, then some of the

major consulting engineering companies got on board and put on archaeological staffs or historian, they all wanted to hire an archaeologist and historian. Then they were *bidding* on contracts.

“ . . . anytime that I can remember giving a contract to an independent consulting firm I was pretty sure I was going to get some static from one of the universities or the colleges . . . ”

And, anytime that I can remember giving a contract to an independent consulting firm I was pretty sure I was going to get some static from one of the universities or the colleges who thought they really should have had it, because after all they're people who really understand this. And, they're not mercenary, you know, they're doing it for the love of research and everything. It was sort of a, well, a snobbish viewpoint. (Laugh) (Storey: Um hmm.) Yeah. Um hmm. That went on quite a bit, and I can remember giving one survey contract to a gal by the name of Anne Peak. I don't know whether you had dealings with Anne?

Storey: I've heard of her.

Maxon: Okay. And, anything that you heard about her was probably all true. (Laugh) And, it was a

little survey of some kind of a line, and it didn't strike me as terribly important. And I, but I got a great deal of flack out of UNR [University of Nevada, Reno] on that, and "How could," you know, "that this person, you know, wasn't competent." Well, she came into the office to do her report and something and she still had on her six shooter, you know, she always carried out in the field. (Laugh) She was a character. And, as I recall, her survey report was just fine. It did what it was supposed to and everything, but there was a real, you know, a feeling of ownership from the academic institutions, and a great deal of mistrust on hiring any outside people. Even people like Jim Fitting and Susan, you know, had this nice little consulting company, and somebody yelled at us on that too, and I can't remember now why. But, uhm-hmm.

Storey: Huh. Did you see any changes?

“. . . [my] experience with some of the academic institutions [was], that they were running on academic time and didn't understand contract deadlines, and didn't understand how to write so that we could use the information for compliance, and couldn't submit a scope of work that would match what the contract requirements were. . . .”

Maxon: Several things happened, and I'm not sure what the correlation was but my first experience with some of the academic institutions, that they were running on academic time and didn't understand contract deadlines, and didn't understand how to write so that we could use the information for compliance, and couldn't submit a scope of work that would match what the contract requirements were.

“ . . . there was a period of education for the academic institutions . . . they didn't understand . . . why they were doing it, and what needed to be done, or the simple fact that there is a deadline . . . ”

So, that period of time when I started working there was a period of education for the academic institutions, the people who were doing the research, because they didn't understand what it was, why they were doing it, and what needed to be done, or the simple fact that there is a deadline, you know, and when we expect a draft report we expect it now and not a year from now.

The Better Engineering Consulting Firms Understood the Need to Meet Deadlines

That kind of thing was a source of a great deal

of frustration on my part. And, some of the better engineering consulting firms understood that. They knew how to comply with a contract, and the better ones hired competent archaeologists and did competent work right off the top.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 3. JANUARY 29, 2004.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 4. JANUARY 29, 2004.

Storey: This is tape four of an interview by Brit Storey with James C. Maxon, on January 29th, 2004.

So, these consulting firms, right off the bat, were doing okay?

Maxon: I think, for the most part, yeah, and there were obviously some exceptions, but the ones particularly who were affiliated with bigger groups, and I'm trying to think, C-H . . .

Storey: 2-M Hill [CH₂M Hill]?

Maxon: Hill, and groups like that very quickly had hired competent staff, and they understood the process, and knew how to write a proposal, and . . .

Storey: Yeah. Dames & Moore I remember.

Maxon: Yeah. Dames & Moore.

Ruth Ann Knudson

Storey: There's that one Ruth Anne Knudson worked for out in San Francisco.

Maxon: Yeah. Which one?

Storey: I've forgotten the name of it.

Maxon: Um hmm. A little aside, Ruth Anne Knudson worked for me as a Seasonal Archeologist at Bandelier. (Laugh)

Storey: Oh she did?

Maxon: Yes. Uh huh. One summer.

Storey: Well, you know she's the Superintendent at Agate Fossil Beds now?

Maxon: No kidding? Well, I'm glad to know that.

Storey: And, it's interesting because in their collections—you know, it was on a private ranch. I think it was called the Agate.

Maxon: Hmm. Okay.

Storey: Maybe it was the Agate Fossil Ranch.

Maxon: Ranch, yeah.

Storey: Or the Agate Ranch, or something like that, and the guy was friends with all the Indians from up in North-, South Dakota. He has a *fabulous* collection of Indian stuff.

Maxon: Wow.

Storey: And it all is in the Park Service storage vaults there.

Maxon: Is that right?

Storey: It's a *wonderful* collection.

Maxon: Good heaven.

Storey: Plains material.

Maxon: Wow.

Storey: But, anyway.

Gene Rogge Went to Work for Dames and Moore

Maxon: Yeah. Real, real resource. Yeah. I particularly think of Dames & Moore. I'm trying to think of

Gene Rogge went, eventually went to work for Dames & Moore.

Storey: And he may have.

“ . . . that learning curve and transition that we talked about between Reclamation and Park Service was *also* going on with the academic institutions at that time too. And, it took them just as long to gear up and understand what the whole program was about as Reclamation . . . ”

Maxon: And, I’m not sure where he is right now, but that learning curve and transition that we talked about between Reclamation and Park Service was *also* going on with the academic institutions at that time too. And, it took them just as long to gear up and understand what the whole program was about as Reclamation (Storey: Um hmm.) to get people do that.

“ . . . we were fortunate with C-A-P in that we had people like University of Arizona, who had done just enough to understand what needed to be done, and understood deadlines, and was able to field big enough crews. . . . ”

Again, we were fortunate with C-A-P in that we had people like University of Arizona, who had done just enough to understand what needed to

be done, and understood deadlines, and was able to field big enough crews. They had good administrators too, and had they had not had good people we wouldn't have pulled off the work as well as we did too. (Storey: Um hmm.) So. So, it was a mutual learning experience for everybody.

Storey: Like, now on, let's talk about how cultural resources management was handled, within your region.

Maxon: Okay, within . . .

Storey: You talked about how independent C-A-P was?

Maxon: Um hmm.

Storey: Did they just go off and hire whoever they wanted for the CRM [Cultural Resources Management] work on the C-A-P? (Maxon: Um, okay.) How does something like that work for Reclamation?

As Regional Archaeologist He Had an Advisory Relationship with the CAP Staff on CRM Matters

Maxon: I provided an overview, I guess. I didn't have any, for example, I had no line authority over the archeologist down there, but I had an

advisory role, I guess you would call it. Which was pretty much the kind of relationship that the Regional Environmental Officer had in relationship to the C-A-P Environmental Officer, or probably the Regional Director and the Director of C-A-P. It was pretty much an advisory thing. I would review the proposals, and worked in very close contact when it was time to start a new contract or something. I would work with Gene or Tom or whoever, and provide my input and so on. And, on the major contracts, would sit in on the actual awarding of the contract.

The Region Awarded All CRM Contracts

The one place where the Region had the power is that the Region *did*, at least on the CRM stuff, *did* actually award the contracts through the Regional Office. So, we did have that pretty important (Storey: Um hmm.) bit of power there. But, it was always as an advisory thing. I would assist or review their proposals, or their Request for Bids, or RFPs [Request For Proposal].

Storey: Did they have to ask you?

Maxon: I don't think they had to. The only place that probably I had any real authority is that I would

work through the Regional Contract (Laugh) Officer. But, fortunately we had just an absolutely great working relationship. So, it was just always understood that they would seek my advice. But, I don't think there were, I don't think there was, there were no things in job descriptions or tables of organization that required them to seek my advice, (Storey: Yeah.) or seek the Regional Archaeologist's advice. Yeah.

Storey: Same question, Federal Preservation Officer, Regional?

The Federal Preservation Officer Worked with the Regions in an Advisory Role Also

Maxon: Pretty much the same thing. The Regional Archaeologist, certainly under *my* watch, functioned pretty much independently, but consulted with me and would seek my advice, but I'm not sure that there was anything in job descriptions. I'd have to read an old job description, but I think basically it just said that I sort of, you now, had oversaw the Reclamation projects. But, I don't think there was anything to say that I had any direct authority over a (Storey: Yeah.) Regional Archaeologist.

Storey: Oh, you mentioned, you did mention regional

reviews? (Maxon: Um hmm.) What was that about?

Establishing a Regional Review Process

Maxon: Ward and I, at the point that we began to get staff at C-A-P, and as the regions began to put on archaeologists, we began to realize that, just for exactly the reason we're talking about, that there was no direct authority that it was important that we begin to coordinate the Reclamation program and to see how everything was working. And, so, we set up this and got, probably got a letter from the Commissioner, I'm sure, to say there will be regional reviews and annual, or whatever it was, to review the, you know, the programs. And, of course that, I think I helped Ward put together the details of those, but I wasn't directly involved. Although what we did do when we set up these, this mechanics for regional review I think we asked—probably, again, the authority was nothing more than a letter from the Commissioner to the Regional Director saying that there will be a regional review, and the Regional Review Team will consist of the Preservation Officer and one or two other Regional Archaeologists selected by the Preservation Officer, and then maybe a couple of maybe another key player out of Denver or something. And, at this point I can't

remember, but I, it seems like we always had two other peer, two other Regional Archaeologists, and then, (Storey: Um hmm.) and that was as much as anything just so that the Regional Archaeologists could talk face to face with each other and discuss views.

Eventually Regular Reclamationwide Meetings of CRM Staff Were Established

And then that escalated into the point where we were able to pull off about a yearly or once every two years convening of all the Regional Archaeologists and their staffs in Denver. We did that two or three times before Ward died. And, I guess once or twice on my watch, too. (Storey: Um hmm.) Um hmm. To get all of the, sort of all the CRM people together at one time.

Storey: Yeah. You retired about '92? Was it '90?

Retired in 1990

Maxon: '90.

Storey: '90.

Maxon: Yeah. Uh huh.

-
- Storey: And you had started work at the Park Service?
- Maxon: At the Park Service in 1958, in June, right fresh out of D-U.
- Storey: Uh huh. Okay. So, if you would think back to that period, that whole period, (Maxon: Um hmm.) how did communications change?
- Maxon: You want to, shall we start with Park Service (Storey: Yeah. Yeah.) or just in general? Okay, with the Park Service.
- Storey: But, in general, yeah. (Maxon: Um hmm.) The Park Service, Reclamation, *why*, you know, (Maxon: Uh huh.) *why* you may think there were differences, whatever.

Communication in Reclamation and the National Park Service

- Maxon: Yeah. Differences. Yeah. I see those two agencies as quite a bit different. There's always an over-arching bureaucracy, but it manifests itself differently with different agencies, and your perception of the communication depends on where you are in the organization. (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) If you start out like I did at the Park Service, at Aztec Ruins National Monument as a GS-5 you don't have probably a

very broad picture of how the National Park Service functioned. Within the Park Service the Regional . . . ~~is that getting really hot?~~

Storey: ~~No.~~

Maxon: ~~Okay.~~ There was less independence between the various functions. The Regional Archaeologist, or the Regional *Office*, I should say, with the Park Service, had a great deal of control over the individual parks within its region, and there's probably some notable exceptions. Empires like Yellowstone, and Yosemite, and probably Rocky Mountain, but you take the run-of-the-mill small monuments and so on, really functioned pretty much under a much more direct, directly under the regional staffs and so on, and I think are more subject to their control certainly in terms of policy and budget allotment and so on. So, I see the Park Service functioning more like I would guess the military still functions, more *absolute* control from the top that flows down. And so the communication from my standpoint in those early years and through most of my Park Service career was that policies and things flowed down from the upper offices, and not very much goes the other way. (Storey: Um hmm.) It was never, if somebody came out from the Regional Office in the Park Service it was not, you know,

“I’m here to help you.” “I’m here to show you how to do this.” (Laugh) “Or, tell you what to do,” pretty much. And, I’m not sure how things function now but my guess is still pretty much like that, within the various Park Service organizational groups.

Reclamation, as I said, I see the field offices and so on being *much* more independent and functioning very much, much more on their own, and with communication flowing both ways much better. It was always very easy for me to, in the Regional Office, to call up Ward to talk to him, whereas working for the Park Service I probably talked to the Regional Archaeologist in my seventeen years, I could probably count the number of times that I put in a phone call to them, or that they called me on the phone. Communication was, to me, much more much freer flowing in Reclamation. As I say, Ward and I talked all the time, and the fellows at C-A-P and I talked *all* of the time, and you know, very free-flowing on a much more equal basis. There was, the hierarchy didn’t seem particularly important, as much in the Park Service. And, the same working in Denver. I talked with the Regional Archaeologists virtually on a daily basis, or a week wouldn’t go by that I didn’t talk to each one or they didn’t call me on something, or we

didn't discuss things. So, the, there was not a real strong sense of hierarchy and, at least within the cultural resource things. Now, I also talked to the folks back in D.C. within the office. I didn't, of course, call the Commissioner. (Laugh) (Storey: Uh huh.) I was at not a level. And, it strikes me you have a much better relationship with the, really the upper management and a closer relationship now than *I* ever did with anybody at the time that I was in Denver.

Storey: But only because I've done oral history with them, and so they know who I am.

Maxon: Okay.

Storey: Not because I have any power or influence with them. (Laugh)

Maxon: But that also implies something in that, because you have done that work, you do have that communication, (Laugh) and you know, that's, to me shows a freer flow of communication than (Storey: Um hmm.) what I experienced in the Park Service. (Storey: Yeah.) And it wasn't that I didn't get along with my colleagues in the Regional Office in the Park Service, you know. I always felt like they were my mentors and everything, but there just wasn't that much.

(Storey: Yeah.) Yeah. Going on.

Storey: So, what are the big issues that you saw in Reclamation, the problems?

Some Reclamation employees “. . . must have seen Ward and I not so much as solving problems but simply bringing up problems that they didn’t want to think about. . . .”

Maxon: Oh, the problems. Well, I came in as a problem solver and a problem child. (Laugh) And, sometimes I’m sure that they must have, those early days, must have seen Ward, some of the old engineer types whoever, that’s sort of a stereotype, and I don’t even know who they were, but must have seen Ward and I not so much as solving problems but simply bringing up problems that they didn’t want to think about. (Laugh) (Storey: Um hmm.) So, yeah, those were always the issues that I personally dealt with. Although, as time went on, as I say as the process *finally* began to turn over and start the flow a little better I felt like that at some point Cultural Resource Management *finally* was included in the flow and everything rolled along.

Overreaction to Reclamation and Corps of Engineers Projects in the Environmental

Community

The problems that you could see, overall problems, are, of course, with Reclamation during the '70s, was this growing environmental movement, whatever that is, and with the overreaction that Reclamation and Corp of Engineers and everything were out to destroy the environment. And, so you always had those outsiders saying that. And, I can remember some of my Park Service colleagues, if not saying it outright sort of implied, "Well, you've sort of sold out to Reclamation. You know, you've gone over to the other side." (Laugh) You know, in terms of preserving the environment, whatever that may mean, (Storey: Um hmm.) or doing those things. So, those were, I see Reclamation facing those things, but it's pretty hard to fault an agency when you're using their water and their power, you know, for (Laugh) destroying something, or you're eating the vegetables that were grown from the water that Reclamation put into the Central Valley, or wherever, or so on. So. They never seemed terribly important to me, but I was at a level in the organization that I didn't get hit up with those kind of things. (Storey: Um hmm.)

"I can remember receiving personally more gaff from environmental groups when I was working

for the Park Service. . . . I guess what it comes down to is. . . if you're in the middle of an organization the big issues that face an organization probably don't affect you too much .

. .

I can remember receiving personally more gaff from environmental groups when I was working for the Park Service. I would go over to give a talk someplace that, at some organization, and they would rag on you because you had a boat ramp open, or didn't have it open, or you know, it didn't match whatever that organization's view of how the recreation area should be run, (Storey: Um hmm.) than I ever did with Reclamation, from a personal level.

I guess what it comes down to is Brit, if you're in the middle of an organization the big issues that face an organization probably don't affect you too much within the scheme of the bureaucracy.

Storey: Hmm. Let's see, what else should we be talking about (Maxon: I don't know.) about Reclamation?

Maxon: (Laugh) If I have, overall I think if I feel like I have sort of a biased view of Reclamation, I really do. I'm very proud to work for

Reclamation, and never could find a whole lot of fault with anything that the agency did. And, that's not to say that we can't look back and say, "Well, maybe we shouldn't have built this dam or that dam, because look what it did." But, on the other hand, the benefits, you know, have to be balanced. And, I'm not probably the rabid environmentalist that I thought I might have been in 1969. (Laugh) (Storey: Um hmm.) I don't know whether you recall the first Earth Day, but I was at Lake Mead and all three of we environmental, or naturalist types, went out to three of the major high schools in Las Vegas, and each talked to the entire student bodies in a great big massive assembly.

Storey: In your uniform, huh?

Maxon: In uniform. And, extolled the virtues of saving the environment, whatever that meant in 1969. (Storey: Um hmm.) Yeah.

Storey: That raises a question I meant to ask. Do you still have your hat?

Maxon: Yes. My Park Service hat? (Laugh) My guess is any Park Service employee who ever had a hat probably never got rid of it. (Laugh) Yeah, still have a flat hat. Right.

Storey: Well, why did you choose to retire?

Choosing to Retire from the Federal Government

Maxon: I felt like, Brit, my whole life has been, I always like to use the term “another life,” because I feel like I have gone through a whole series of lives. Some hard, sometimes hard to define each one, but by the time I had thirty-two years in with Park Service, and Reclamation, it struck me that there were other things that I wanted to do in life and I felt like, with the honor of having the chief job at Reclamation, that was probably as far as I was going to go, as far as the federal government. And, it was time to do something else. And also, I was exhausted. (Laugh) Just a . . .

Storey: We wore you down, huh?

Maxon: I was worn down, and in a good way. Not discouraged or anything, but it just struck me that it was time to do something else. I’ve always had an interest in art and music, and as we have discussed, when one is working full time, and after raising children and so on, there was never energy left over at the end of the day to do art, or get back into music, or some of these things I wanted to pursue, so that it was just simply time to go into a new life. That’s

sort of what I've done for the last thirteen years.

Now I don't call myself an archaeologist. I, if somebody asks, I tell them I'm an artist. (Laugh) (Storey: Um hmm.) So. So, that's sort of fun. And, I still, the old saying, I still don't have a clue what I'll do when I grow up, but in the meantime I'm pursuing art a little bit, and my son and I do some entertaining around. We play Celtic music, and do that. And, I even have, here in the last year or so by virtue of being probably the only living accordionist in the area, I have done several accordion concerts, if you can imagine me doing that. (Laugh) Doing Celtic and other kinds of very traditional music.

Storey: But it sounds like you don't normally play accordion?

Maxon: I do. That's sort of my life-long instrument, but I dabble with high string banjo and guitar, and Kevin and I sing quite a bit, and we do that. (Storey: Uh huh.) Yeah. So, that's all fun. And besides, I'm a ham. (Laugh) I enjoy getting up and performing. So, (Storey: Uh huh.) so this is fun.

Storey: But, you haven't done any consulting?

Did one consulting job after retirement, but it “. . . helped remind me why I wasn’t still doing it . . .”

Maxon: No. You know, after I quit I did one little consulting job down in the Yuma area there for, I’m trying to think of the name of the consulting firm. They needed some little survey down there, just a very preliminary thing, and did it, and wrote up the report, put together the consultation information for the SHPO and everything, and it helped remind me why I wasn’t still doing it, because I had done all of that before and it was time to do something else. (Storey: Um hmm.) And, I think they were satisfied with the work and would have liked to have had me do more, but I was okay, I had done that and that pretty well satisfied my interest in doing that.

Storey: And, so you’ve been retired over thirteen years now?

Maxon: Um hmm. Yeah. Time flies. (Laugh)

Storey: It surely does.

Maxon: I can’t imagine.

Storey: Well, let’s see. I’ve been there since ‘88, so I’ve been there fifteen years, I guess.

Maxon: Fifteen years, and you and I certainly had contact before that (Storey: Oh yeah.) with the Council. So. We've known each other quite a long time. (Laugh).

Storey: Yeah. Well, anything else you'd like to add?

Maxon: I think I've probably talked too much already.

Storey: Oh, I don't know about that.

Maxon: I can't think of anything that's probably terribly important right now.

Storey: Well, let me ask if you're willing for researchers to use the tapes and the transcripts (Maxon: Oh, of course.) from this interview.

Maxon: Right. Yes, and certainly they're free to contact me and if I can fill out any details. It's become very apparent to me, this afternoon here, is that one forgets a lot of details and people's names, dates and so on.

Storey: Names particularly.

Maxon: All things that you think are always a part of your life and they tend to slip away a little bit.

Storey: Yeah.

Maxon: Um hmm.

Storey: Well, thank you very much.

END SIDE 1, TAPE 4. JANUARY 29, 2004.
END OF INTERVIEW.