



Figure 1: Clifford (Cliff) I. Barrett

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS
Clifford I. Barrett



STATUS OF INTERVIEWS:
OPEN FOR RESEARCH



Interviews Conducted and Edited by:
Brit Allan Storey
Senior Historian
Bureau of Reclamation



Interviews conducted–1996
Interview edited and published–2009

Oral History Program
Bureau of Reclamation
Denver, Colorado

SUGGESTED CITATION:

Barrett, Clifford (Cliff) I. ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS. Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, Senior Historian, Bureau of Reclamation, in 1996, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Edited by Brit Allan Storey. Repository for the record copy of the interview transcript is the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland.

Record copies of this transcript are printed on 20 lb., 100% cotton, archival quality paper. All other copies are printed on normal duplicating paper.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents i

Statement of Donation xxix

Brief Chronology–Clifford Barrett xxxi

Introduction xxxiii

Oral History Interviews 1

 Born in Salt Lake City Where His Father Worked for
 Reclamation 1

 “. . . I was just kind of raised all over the classic
 Reclamation West. . . .” 1

 Graduated from High School in Grand Island,
 Nebraska 2

 On Family Vacations the Family Used to Visit
 Reclamation Dams 2

 Studied Engineering at the University of Denver . 2

 Worked in Private Industry Briefly Before Entering
 the U.S. Army 3

 Went to Work at Reclamation Designing Concrete
 Dams 4

 Had Thought the Job at Reclamation Was in Earth
 Dams Design, Which Is What He Wanted to
 do 4

 Job Interview Was with Jack Hilf 4

 I said, “No, I’m supposed to work in earth dams.”. . .
 So I raised a little bit of fuss. . . .But in the

meanwhile, I had moved my wife and kids to Denver and didn't have any other place to go, so I said, "Okay, I'll work in concrete dams." 5

Worked on Glen Canyon Dam And, Later, Flaming Gorge Dam 5

Dad Worked Downtown and Then out at the Federal Center 6

Reclamation's Orchestra 6

Born in 1933 11

Father Worked in Construction and Then in Planning 11

Father Was Project Manager for the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project 12

Memories of Denver in the Later 1930s 14

Father Was Tasked to Fix the Spillways at Elephant Butte Dam in Anticipation of High Water Flows 15

"I remember they had big slide rules, the big long twenty-four-inch ones, so they could calculate a little bit closer with the big slide rules. . . ." 18

Went to the University of Denver to Study Engineering 20

Father Graduated from Utah State University . . . 20

Utah State University and Colorado State University Engineers at Reclamation 21

Had a Scholarship to the University of Denver . . 21

"I think I got hooked on the idea of *doing stuff*, making big things. . . ." 22

Father Was from Logan, Utah	23
Father Was Joseph Milton Barrett	23
Father Was Project Manager of the Fryingpan- Arkansas Project in the Planning Stages	23
Before Retiring He Worked in Bangkok for the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East	24
Worked in an Engineering Unit in the U.S. Army	25
Platoon Leader in a Military Construction Unit	26
Assigned to the 21 st Engineer Battalion, a Combat Engineer Battalion	28
We Wanted to Live in Denver	28
Liked the Rotation Program for Engineers at Reclamation	29
Worked in the Concrete Dams Branch	29
Worked in Concrete Dams	29
Worked in the Concrete Lab for Three Months	29
Worked in Contract Administration for a Time	30
Worked in Planning in Sacramento for a Few Months	30
Working for Merlin Copen	31
Trial-Load System of Dam Analysis	31
Flaming Gorge Dam	33
“ . . . I got reassigned after a while. . . . I got reassigned and I was put up into what I call the front of the room. . . . ”	34
Moved into Spillway Design Work	35
“ . . . we got into a little flap over grades. One of my best friends quit because they wouldn't	

promote him . . .” 35

The Concrete Dams Branch Had Different Sections
. 36

“One of the luckiest things in life, I think, is to have a
job where you like to get up and go to work
every morning because you like what you do .
.” 39

“. . . in that era of the Bureau when they were *really*
building stuff and doing stuff . . . There was
excitement in the Bureau, *I thought*. . . .”
. 39

“. . . there were big projects going on and big things
getting done. And I think everybody thought
that they were good, inherently good things to
do. . . .” 39

“You're doing something worthwhile and you're
making a difference in the world and this is
good stuff we're doing. I think you could feel
it. . . .” 40

Interaction Between Concrete Dam and Earth Dam
Design Branches 41

There Was Competition 41

“When you were a rotation engineer, you were there
just long enough to see what went on without
getting too deep into it, actually. . . .” . . . 42

Spent Rotation Time in the Hydrology Branch . . 46

Harold P. Grout and Flood Hydrology 46

“. . . they were doing designs for spillways. . . . So
you'd have to figure out, well, what's the
biggest, worst thing that can ever happen

upstream, and how much water does that produce, and that's how big the spillway has to be. They also did things like water-supply studies for projects. . . .”	47
Project Planning During Sacramento Rotation . .	49
Moved to Sacramento in 1959 to Work in the Water Rights Branch	49
“ . . . my big motivator in those days was money. . . .”	50
Moved to the Budget and Programs Office in Sacramento	51
Worked for Mike Catino	51
“I . . . quickly came to the realization that if you controlled the money, then you got a lot of power. . . .”	52
“That's where the action in the Bureau is. If you want to really have a little bit of control, you controlled the money. . . .”	52
Jobs in Sacramento Carried an Engineering Classification	53
“I guess that's at the point where my career goals really started shaping up, and that was I really wanted to have some power, control, management control. . . .”	54
“ . . . it came to me just really clear that if you were in that program, you knew what was going on everywhere in the region, because every program went right across your desk. . . .”	54
“You come to the realization that the program	

follows the money, and that's . . . where I thought the action was, and I . . . <i>liked</i> that. . . .”	55
Solano Project Water Rights	57
Research in Water Rights Records	57
Watched What Was Going on to Protect Government Water Rights	57
Hoped to Get into Project Planning	61
Move into Budget and Finance	61
“ . . . when I got down there and saw how that operated, it just kind of clicked with me that this is worth spending a few years at . . . ”	62
Principal Job Was Budgeting for O&M	63
Assisted with Construction Budgets	63
“ . . . O&M one guy could handle, but the construction budget was big . . . the whole Trinity River Division stuff was going on and there was all kinds of stuff in the Central Valley Project, and the San Luis Project . . . ”	64
Monitoring Construction in the Field	64
The budget office “ . . . would know who had extra money and who wasn't going to spend all their money and who needed money, and was in a position to fix those problems. That's a power base that you operate off of, and that game was played. . . . ”	65
“ . . . there was game-playing, I think, between the regional office and the Washington office. . . .	

.” 66

“That was always the thing that was tough. See, the budgets were in the control of the regional director, but the construction engineer reported to the Denver office. . . .” 66

Having Budget in One Location and Construction Supervision in Another Resulted in Problems for Everyone 67

“My experience was that if you could really demonstrate you had the need, we never had trouble getting O&M money. . . .” 69

“It wasn’t like you had all the money you ever wanted to spend, but when it got down to the real serious stuff, I think we maintained those things pretty darn good. . . .” 69

Program Sessions and Skull Sessions 70

Program Conference Was Held in the Summer to Work out the Details of Budget Documents 70

Skull Practice in February or March Prepared the Commissioner for Budget Hearings 71

Mike Catino 72

Bob Pafford 74

Floyd Dominy Becomes Commissioner 75

In 1964 Moved to Washington, D.C., to Be Budget Officer for the Water and Land Division . 76

Moved to D.C. with Two Weeks Notice in Time for Skull Practice 78

Commissioner Dominy Was Very Good at Testifying Before Congress 79

“I’ve never seen a witness that could do it like he did.
...” 79

“You know, a lot of it was leading towards write-ins
of money....” 81

“The point I’m trying to make is he was *brilliant* at
that....” 82

“Some of them we wrote the questions and sent them
up there to be asked. . . . If we didn’t have
enough money in our budget because OMB
[Office of Management and Budget] cut us
back and we knew we could spend some
more money on a certain item, we would
write a question . . . The budget and finance
people, they were like this, very close to the
committee staffers. . . .” 82

Floyd Dominy and Carl Hayden Getting out of Sync
in the Questions Asked in a Hearing 83

Until 1976 Worked as Budget Officer and “Special
Projects Officer” in the Water and Land
Division 85

Program Conference to Determine the Overall
Reclamation Budget 87

Reclamation’s Budget Cycle 87

Maurice Langley Was the Division Chief 88

Gil Stamm, Assistant Commissioner for Project
Development and Irrigation 88

“My job was to review all the O&M documents,
except the power stuff, but all the water
project O&M figures. . . .” 89

“I had to review all the construction programs for . . .

what we called the construction prerequisites. . . .”	89
How the Program Conference Was Organized . . .	89
“We would shop for money . . .”	90
“If you had a really <i>serious</i> issue, it always kind of got settled between regional director and Dominy, with the rest of us sitting around the table making some input. . .”	91
“So there were always some places like that where you could find a few <i>bucks</i> where it's not the end of the world, and those are usually the first places we looked. . .”	92
Colorado River Front and Levee System– “Engineeringly, it was a beautiful project . . . but environmentally you just couldn't sell it . . .”	93
Gil Stamm	95
Floyd Dominy	96
“He did that a lot. . . he would just reduce people by climbing their frame in front of their peers, and I kind of think he enjoyed doing that. But if you ever stood up to him one or two times, he wouldn't do it anymore. . .” . . .	97
In 1976 Became Assistant Commissioner–Planning and Operations	98
Dick Schunick	99
How Responsibilities Changed upon Moving from Being a Program Officer To Division Chief	100
“. . . there was a major expansion in the scope of	

what I was working with. . . .” 101

“Excess-land issues were just really coming to the
fore, the 160-acre limitation on farms and
how much subsidy there was involved. . . .”
. 101

“Repayment contracts were basically a
regional/Washington office thing. Excess
land was a regional/Washington office thing.
. . . .” 102

Denver’s Responsibility for O&M 102

Excess Land Issues 103

“. . . out in California, especially in Westlands Water
District, we had those huge 1,000-acre farms,
corporate farms, and they were trying to find
ways to get around the law. . . .” 103

“They would find all kinds of *scams* to keep their
land, and it just got to be a big political issue
in California. . . .” 104

Reclamation Reform Act of 1982 105

Denver O&M Oversight Function 106

“You’d have the people out in the field doing hands-
on stuff, and we were dealing with the
political issues” 107

Job Corps Centers 108

In Project Planning the Denver Office Would Second
Guess the Regions 108

Grade Progression in the Washington Office . . 109

Goes into the Senior Executive Service 109

Went to Training at the Federal Executive Institute
. 111

Applied to Be Assistant Commissioner for Planning
When Jim O'Brien Left. 112

“So then I found myself over planning, which is a
whole other ball game. I knew all the *people* .
.” 112

“. . . what we were striving for was to have planning
done in the regions, on-the-ground planning
work done in the regions, Denver office do
the technical review, and then Washington
office doing the policy reviews and making
the policy cuts . . .” 113

“What we continually found was the Denver office
trying to make that call, especially in the area
of economics. . . .” 113

“. . . we did a major reorganization under Keith
Higginson's reorganization plan. It was
driven basically by Teton, but we ended up
reorganizing the whole *Bureau*. . . .” . . . 114

“One of the big thrusts . . . was to say one more time
as plainly and clearly as we could that the
Denver office was the technical service
group, *not* a policy program management
group . . .” 114

During the Reorganization under Higginson Became
Assistant Commissioner–Planning and
Operations 115

Ellis Armstrong 115

“He was an engineering engineer. . . .” 115

“. . . Ellis was–well, we used to make fun of him. . .
. . .” 117

Gil Stamm Left at a Change of Party 118
“ . . . it was the Nixon Administration that put
Armstrong in. That was the beginning of the
end, as far as having career people be
Commissioners. . . .” 119
“Then they picked Stamm, who was actually the last
of the career guys to be commissioner, and I
think that was because he was politically very
strong on the Hill. . . .” 119
Keith Higginson 120
Jimmy Carter’s “Hit List” 121
“ . . . strangely enough, he was very objective. There
were some projects which we knew were
doggies. . . .” 122
Bob Jansen 125
Turf Battle with Bob Jansen 126
Became Aware of Political Influences When He
Moved to Washington 128
“ . . . when the [Dwight D.] Eisenhower
Administration came. . . . They did a big 10
percent budget cut or something. And you'd
feel that right away, because it just took all
your numbers and threw them in the trash and
you start over again. . . .” 128
Floyd Dominy Calls Carl Hayden about the OMB
Passback Levels for Reclamation’s Budget
. 129
“That's the first time I saw real gut-level politics
being played out. . . .” 130
“ . . . the excess-land thing. There was a lot of politics

being played in that. . . .” 131

The Solicitor Has a Lot to Say about What a Bureau
Can do 132

“ . . . if it was a dicey political situation, people like
Gil Stamm and Floyd Dominy [would] run
the trapline” 132

“They had a lot of heartburn if they thought we were
talking to people on the Hill. . . .” 133

Getting a New Airplane for Commissioner Dominy
. 133

Dominy Defends Building Page, Arizona, Before
Congress 134

Editing Hearings Transcripts 135

“It was a really *busy* time around hearings. Getting
ready and having a hearing and then for about
a week afterwards cleaning up the loose ends
. . . .” 136

Didn’t Travel Much until He Be Became Division
Chief 136

How Travel Changed over the Years 136

“Sometimes . . . Dominy, for some reason or other,
brought the Bureau plane back into
Washington, and then he would have to find a
way to get it back to Denver. . . . but my
bosses would very carefully avoid any travel
to Denver so they wouldn’t have to ride that
damn plane all the way back to Denver. . . .”
. 139

“I think one of the neatest ways to get people to know
what you’re about is to show them on the

ground . . .” 141

Dominy’s Relationships with Members of Congress
. 142

“ . . . he was very skillful at making friends and
presenting his program. . . .” 142

Change in Scope When Operations Were Added to
His Responsibilities in the Post-Teton Dam
Reorganization 143

“This was Keith Higginson's reorganization of the
Bureau, and there were a *lot* of issues
discussed. One of them was where's
contracting authority and *who* will the
construction engineers report to. . . .” . . . 143

“I had been planning, and then I had planning plus
then all the operation and maintenance and
the power stuff came into it. Then we had the
Job Corps programs and the youth programs,
foreign activities. . . .” 144

“It was always the commissioner who made the final
decisions on things. . . .” 145

Permanent Management Committee Established to
Deal with Policy Issues 146

Reorganizations in Reclamation 147

Carl Rowe Came up Through the Higginson
Commissionership Working Mostly in
Personnel and Organizational Management
. 148

Gil Stamm Didn’t Want Staff Making Contacts on
the Hill 151

Keith Higginson Began Using Staff to Make Calls on

the Hill 152

Acreege Limitation Issues and the Reclamation
Reform Act 152

Deciding Whether or Not to Proceed with a Project
. 154

“ . . . a lot of people . . . almost thought they had a
birthright to have these projects built for
them. And old [Representative Wayne N.]
Aspinall had put all these things in the Upper
Basin act. A whole long list of projects. And
I think a *lot* of people thought, and probably
were led to believe, that if they got them in
the act they'd get built. . . .” 154

Telling Project Sponsors a Project Was Not Justified
. 156

Reclamation Did Not Want to Build Fruitland Mesa
or Savery-Pot Hook in Colorado 156

“ . . . some of these things don't make any sense. The
issue is, what do you do about it? . . .” . 157

“I think the only reason Animas-LaPlata is *even* still
lukewarm is because of the political pressure
brought by the Colorado delegation and the
Indian tribes. . . .” 159

“Same thing here in Utah. Over in the Uinta Basin
there's the Upalco Unit and the Uinta Unit,
which I think the Bureau was willing to give
up on a long, long time ago, and political
pressure from the state and the Central Utah
Conservancy District got them kind of
revived in the Central Utah Project

Reauthorization Act . . .” 159

“ . . . some of those places, *technically* we couldn't find a dam site. . . .” 160

“ . . . look at all the irrigated land in the United States, only 10 percent of it's on Reclamation projects, you know. But those were the *hard* 10 percent. Those were the really *expensive* ones to build. . . .” 160

How being on the “hit list” affected Reclamation’s actions regarding projects that should not have been built 162

“ . . . in order to gain state support for projects that *should* be built, we had to kind of defend all of them. We took the whole package and tried to defend it. . . .” 163

“Andrus just gave a speech which called the Bureau employees ‘people whose only mission was to perpetuate their jobs and who couldn't do anything except build projects and build everything they. . . .’” 164

“ . . . that attitude that the Bureau was single-mindedly going ahead to build everything they could ever build, was just wrong . . .” 166

Felt There Wasn’t a Lot of Planning for the Projects Before Their Authorization for the Colorado River Storage Project in 1956 167

“But in '56, things could look very good, and in '66 or '76 they'd look *terrible*, because the world is different now. So that was a big problem—big

problem. And they're still authorized. . . .”
..... 167

Congress does not want to take the political step of
deauthorizing projects 169

“ . . . you sign the contract. Well, now it takes you
fifteen years to build the project and the costs
have gone out of sight and it's really
ridiculous. You're almost giving it away, you
know. And most of those contracts didn't
have reopeners in them. . . .” 171

“The municipal and industrial water supply out of
Central Utah had hit up against its
construction ceiling. . . . we eventually
persuaded them to reopen that contract, and
the way we did it was we kind of stopped
building the project until they did. . . .” . 172

“ . . . what we did is we didn't start any new features
until we got the repayment contract issue
solved. . . .” 172

“And that's kind of when the Bureau and the district
split the sheets, and the district is now
responsible for constructing the project. It
will be interesting to see if they're doing it
any less expensively than we would have. I
would suspect their overhead costs are more
than the Bureau's . . .” 175

“There was a lot of criticism of the Bureau's overhead
costs, and I think some of that's pretty
legitimate. . . .” 176

Foreign Activities Program 177

Foreign Travel 178

Assisting Zaire with Construction of a Direct Current
Transmission Line 178

Reclamation Was Go-between Between Zaire’s
Contractor and the World Bank 178

There's a lot of “funny stuff” going on. 179

“ . . . I get the job of going over there and trying to
sort that out. . . . spend a lot of time talking . .
. the bank doesn't want to give the money to
the government until we assure them that
everything is okay. . . . So I take a tour . . . fly
2,000 miles in a helicopter over a
transmission line. Now, it's interesting . . .
It's not that much fun . . . ” 179

“ . . . after the first trip I was there, the very house we
stayed in Kolwesi, the next month the
Angolans come across the border and killed
everybody that's living in that house. . . . ”
. 180

International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage
. 181

Elected President of the U.S. Committee on Irrigation
and Drainage 181

There Were a Lot of People Involved in International
Activities at its Peak 183

On the Board of the World Energy Conference . 184

Ted Mermel 184

“ . . . one of his major functions was he was the
Bureau's professional society guy. You
know, he went to ASCE and *all* those

meetings . . .” 185

“We weren't ashamed of what we did in those days,
you know. What it boils down to, we blew
our horn every time we got our chance. . . .”
. 185

Foreign activities staff visited our overseas projects
twice a year 186

“Morale is an issue. They don't like to feel like
they've been sent out there and left alone.
You know, these aren't the garden spots of the
world where you build irrigation projects . . .
and if you don't go see them once in a while,
they think they're *abandoned* out there. . . .”
. 186

“They almost got to be a roving band of Reclamation
engineers who hadn't worked in the United
States for a long, long time. . . . would just go
from one job to the next . . .” 188

Commissioner Broadbent Tried to Use Foreign
Travel as a Reward 189

“. . . we had personnel issues. . . . You'd get a field
official who was either on the wrong side of
the water users or he's on the wrong side of
the politics or the secretary or somebody.
You just have to do something. . . .” . . . 190

“‘Well, Cliff, you can either quit your job or move to
Salt Lake.’ It's a pretty traumatic experience.
And that happened a lot. . . . especially under
the SES [Senior Executive Service] system. . .
. . .” 191

Terry Lynott 192

“Having been originally a Republican appointee and knowing all the NWRA folks who are basically Republican types, I even at that juncture kind of sounded the waters about trying to be commissioner, because I thought I had a really good shot at it. . . .” 194

“So I thought, ‘Well, at least the Republicans are back in and I’ve got all these friends around. I’m pretty secure. I’ll be able to stay where I’m at.’ . . .” 195

Commissioner Broadbent Announced That Barrett Would Be Deputy Commissioner 195

“It was a very challenging meeting, because Hodel right off the box says, ‘I don’t think you’ll be deputy.’ . . .” 196

Commissioner Broadbent Informs Him He Will Be Moving to the Regional Director’s Position in Salt Lake City Which Started a Chain of Moves among Regional Directors 196

“. . . decided I would just bite the bullet and go to Salt Lake City. As it turns out, it was a very good move . . . that was probably the smartest thing I could have done . . . At the time, it *really* hurt. . . .” 197

Was especially surprised to not be kept in Washington because he thought he had a good relationship with Secretary of the Interior Jim Watt 198

“As I looked back at it, I could see this was part of—it

- wasn't a *vendetta* against Cliff Barrett. It was a *sweep*. You know, they were just going to start over. So I learned to live with that. . . .”
..... 199
- “Higginson was really disappointed, too, because he was basically a Republican and he thought he could stay on. I guess very early on, about the second week after the inauguration, *he* found out *he* was going to have to leave. . . .”
..... 201
- Elected Vice-president of the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage
..... 202
- “... Broadbent *brought in* outsiders to fill all those jobs. . . . He brought in Dave Houston. . . . Christianson . . . and this politicized the whole thing one more layer in that one move . . .”
..... 204
- “The water resource community was really, I think, getting a little upset and tired about it. But they were kind of torn . . . they'd been knocked about so much by Carter and the “hit list” . . . that Jim Watt was a *real* hero and Broadbent was a *real* hero. . . .” 205
- “One of the regional directors had told me a long time ago, he said, ‘Cliff, you don't even really want to be assistant commissioner. What you really want to be is a regional director, because a regional director is just like being a little commissioner. You've got everything

the commissioner's got on a smaller scale.
And I found that to be true. . . . except on a
little bit smaller scale, probably more
manageable scale. So I really enjoyed being
regional director. Great job. . . .” 206

While Regional Director Became More Political
. 207

Among Other Things Was Charged with Fixing the
Water Contracts for the Dolores Project and
with the M&I Water Users on the Central
Utah Project 208

Getting Jordanelle Dam under Construction Was a
Tough Issue 209

Renegotiating the contract for the Central Utah
Project was difficult 210

“The district had an election, and they won pretty
handily on it. . . .” 210

Dolores Project 211

Animas-La Plata Project 212

Working with Indians Is Different 213

Colorado River Management Issues 215

Reoperation of Glen Canyon Dam 216

High Flows on the Colorado in 1982 and 1983 Were
Problems 217

“. . . while we were in that crisis, the challenge was to
keep our people and the E&R Center people
and the Washington office people all singing
off the same chart. . . .” 217

“. . . after we got things under control, physically
under control, and now we had this *immense*

construction program to do in a very, very short period of time . . .” 218

Runoff in 1982 Damaged Both Spillways at Glen Canyon Dam 221

For 1983 Runoff Reclamation Was Able to Draw down Lake Powell and Store the Runoff 221

“ . . . we had problems at Flaming Gorge Dam. We had that spillway already under repair before the flooding season started, so we couldn't use that spillway, and we were running our lake gates and powerplant full bore and putting flashboards up on that dam. . . .” 222

Fontanelle Dam Had Structural Problems That Year 225

“Now, *there's one* I was afraid we might lose it. . . .” 225

“ . . . an emergency repair that took a long time to do because it amounted to excavating a trench the whole length of the dam, from the top of the dam down to bedrock, and building a concrete wall inside the dam. . . .” 225

Dealing with the Public During the Emergency at Fontanelle Dam 227

Was at the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville When Teton Dam Failed 229

Failure of Teton Dam Was Very Traumatic for Reclamation and There Was a Lot of Criticism 230

Was Appointed Acting Commissioner When Bob
Broadbent Became Assistant Secretary . 232

Bob Olson Was Acting Commissioner for a Few
Months Before Barrett Was Appointed
Acting Commissioner 233

Reclamation Was in Another Reorganization While
He Was Acting Commissioner 237

Reclamation Was Having Serious Budget Problems
. 240

“About the first week he was there, he [Jim Watt]
called in all the agency heads. Well, every
one of them was an acting agency head . . .
‘We’re going to change things, and if you
can’t live with change, you might just as well
leave now. And the second thing is, *none* of
you . . . are going to get the jobs that you’re
acting in. . . .” 242

“. . . I think they spent a long time looking for
somebody who would *take* the job . . .” . 243

Dale Duvall Chosen to Replace Bob Broadbent as
Commissioner 244

Lived in Hotels While Acting Commissioner the
Second Time 246

As Acting Commissioner He Did Political Work with
Constituents and on the Hill 247

Colorado Ute Power Company, Ben Nighthorse
Campbell and Black Canyon of the Gunnison
National Monument 247

Fiftieth Anniversary of Hoover Dam 253

Breaking Ground for Construction of Jordanelle Dam

.....	255
1988 Reorganization	256
Darrell Webber Was Trying to Centralize Contracting Authority in Denver	256
Centralizing Certain Functions in Denver During the 1988 Reorganization	258
“I think some regions played the game more above board than others did. . . .”	258
Dan Beard Was Able to Make the E&R Center Bite the Bullet	260
Reclamation Did a Study to See about Increasing Hydropower Production During the Energy Crunch	261
Proposing to Add Units at Glen Canyon Resulted in Widespread Opposition and Attention ..	261
In the End Reclamation Ended up Studying the Operation of Glen Canyon Dam	262
Balancing Water User and Environmental Concerns	263
Environmental Pressure to Do an Environmental Statement on Operation of Glen Canyon Dam	264
Hired Rick Gold in Durango and Then as Chief of Planning in Salt Lake City	265
The Most Disturbing Issue in Salt Lake City Was the Fight with the Central Utah Water Conservancy District	266
“There were a lot of things we couldn't control. All the time that was going on, costs were escalating. . . .”	266

“They got a lot of political help, and I was just getting beat up on mercilessly by Jake Garn . . .” 267

Dispute about Overhead Charges on the Central Utah Project 267

“I guess a lot of that is one reason why I left. It just got to be where it wasn't worth it anymore. . . .” 269

“I didn't figure I was getting all the protection I needed from the Washington office, from the secretary's office. . . . it just was taking a lot of heat I didn't think I needed to take. . . .” 269

Had a Job Offer from the Colorado River Energy Distributors Association (CREDA) 270

“They made me a very attractive offer, and I kind of looked at all my cards and decided, “This might be the time to leave. . . .” 270

During His Last Months at Reclamation Negotiations Were Underway to Use Power Revenues to Pay More of the CRSP System Costs . . 271

Didn't Deal with Reclamation for Two Years after Leaving 272

Left CREDA in 1993 272

Began to Do Consulting after Leaving CREDA 274

Believes He Was Very Lucky to Work for Reclamation During its Golden Years . . 275

“. . . I don't apologize for much that we did. A lot of people think the Bureau ruined the West, and

I guess I don't find very much to be apologetic over. We *changed* the West. We did a lot of great stuff. I don't think our country would be what it is today, particularly the western part of the United States, if it hadn't been for the Reclamation program . . .”
..... 276

(Intentionally blank)

**STATEMENT OF DONATION
OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS OF
CLIFFORD I. BARRETT**

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, Clifford I. Barrett, (hereinafter referred to as "the Donor"), of Salt Lake City, Utah, 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 interviews conducted on August 14, and August 15, 1996, at the Bureau of Reclamation's regional office in Salt Lake City, and prepared for deposit with the National Archives 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.
 - a. It is the intention of the Archivist to make Donated Materials available for display and research as soon as possible, and the Donor places no restrictions upon their use.
 - b. The Archivist may, subject only to restrictions placed upon him by law or regulation, provide for the preservation, arrangement, repair and rehabilitation, duplication and reproduction, description, exhibition, display, and servicing of the Donated Materials as may be needful and appropriate.
3. Copies of the Donated Materials may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the National Archives, including the Bureau of Reclamation. Copies of Donated Materials may also be provided to researchers. The Bureau of Reclamation may retain copies of tapes, transcripts, and other materials.
4. The Archivist may dispose of Donated Materials at any time after title passes to the National Archives.

Date: 8/15/96 Signed: Cliff I. Barrett
Clifford I. Barrett

Interviewer: Brit Allan Storey
Brit Allan Storey

Having determined that the materials donated above by Clifford I. Barrett 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

XXX

(Intentionally blank)

Bureau of Reclamation History Program

Brief Chronology–Clifford Barrett

- 1933–Born in Salt Lake City
Lived in various locations in the West as dad worked on various Reclamation projects
- c. 1946-1947–Participated in Reclamation’s orchestra while growing up in Denver
- 1950–Graduated from high school
- 1954–Graduated from the University of Denver in civil engineering
- 1954-1955–Worked for Beech Aircraft Company.
- 1955–Went into the U.S. Army
- December 1956–Went to work in the Concrete Dam Branch doing design in Denver working on Glen Canyon and Flaming Gorge dams in the Stress Analysis Section and the Spillway Section
- March 1959-To Sacramento to work in the Water Rights Branch for the region
- c. 1961–Moved to the Budget and Programs Office in Sacramento
- 1964–Moved to Washington, D.C., office as budget officer for the Water and Land Division and then subsequently worked as “special projects officer”
- 1976–Became assistant commissioner for planning and later assistant commissioner for planning and operations
- 1981–Acting commissioner of Reclamation
- 1981-1989–Regional director of the Upper Colorado Region
- 1985–Acting commissioner of Reclamation
- 1989–Retired and went to work for CREDA (Colorado River Energy Distributors Association)

April 1993 left CREDA but continued to consult with the
organization

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.

Brit Allan Storey
Senior Historian
Land Resources Office (84-53000)
Office of Program and Policy Services
Bureau of Reclamation
P. O. Box 25007
Denver, Colorado 80225-0007
(303) 445-2918
FAX: (720) 544-0639
E-mail: bstorey@do.usbr.gov

(INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

**Oral History Interviews
Clifford (Cliff) I. Barrett**

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, Senior Historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Clifford I. Barrett on August the 14th, 1996, at 1:30 in the afternoon in Salt Lake City, Utah. This is tape one.

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

**Born in Salt Lake City Where His Father Worked
for Reclamation**

Barrett: I was born in Salt Lake City. My father worked for the Bureau of Reclamation. We were living in Salt Lake, I was born here, and shortly after I was born, my father went to Boulder City to work on Hoover Dam. After about a year or so, I think then my mother and my sister and I moved down and joined him there.

**“ . . . I was just kind of raised all over the classic
Reclamation West. . . . ”**

After that, I was just kind of raised all over the classic Reclamation West. We lived in Boulder City. We lived in Denver. We lived in

Tucumcari. We lived in El Paso. We lived in Grand Island.

Graduated from High School in Grand Island, Nebraska

I graduated from high school in Grand Island. We actually lived in Denver twice. While I was in college, my dad moved to Pueblo, Colorado, where he worked on the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project.

On Family Vacations the Family Used to Visit Reclamation Dams

So I was kind of raised up in Reclamation things, and a lot of my childhood, my dad used to take like postman's holidays, you know. We'd drive and stop at every dam on the way and look at the lakes, and he would take me out. Some of the neatest recollections I have, my father, we were in El Paso. He used to go up to Elephant Butte Dam frequently, and I can remember going up there and staying with him in the government camp while they were working on the spillways at Elephant Butte Dam just *prior* to World War II.

Studied Engineering at the University of Denver

So, yeah, I was just kind of raised up that way. It was just a natural assumption on my family's part that I would be an engineer. So after high school, I went to the University of Denver and studied civil engineering. ~~Then I~~ After ~~the Army~~, I got out of school.

Worked in Private Industry Briefly Before Entering the U.S. Army

I worked in private industry for a short time, went into the Army for two years, and as I came out of the Army, I was at Fort Carson and I just went up to Denver and interviewed with the Bureau and found a job.

Went to Work at Reclamation Designing Concrete

1. Note that in the text of these interviews, as opposed to headings, 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 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.

Dams

Went to work in the design office, which was, in those days, the chief engineer's office for the Bureau, and started out there and worked a whole career for the Bureau.

So it kind of came natural for me. I don't think I ever *planned* on going to work for the Bureau until I was at the end of my Army career, and I was just looking for a job, and I liked Denver and that looked like a good place. They offered me a job, so I took it. It looked like they had a good program.

Had Thought the Job at Reclamation Was in Earth Dams Design, Which Is What He Wanted to do

Actually, I was a little bit really disturbed when I got there. I'd become quite interested in soil mechanics and kind of wanted to make a career in doing soil mechanics, earth dams and things like that.

Job Interview Was with Jack Hilf

When I went there to interview, I interviewed with Jack Hilf, who at the time was probably one of the world's leading earth dam designers, and he agreed to, you know, take me on in his shop.

And then I went back to Fort Carson and finished out my time, and about two months later I came back to Denver and reported for work and they said, "Oh, no. We've got you assigned to concrete dams."

I said, "No, I'm supposed to work in earth dams."

They said, "Well, we don't need you in earth dams. We need you in concrete dams." So I raised a little bit of fuss.

I said, "No, I'm supposed to work in earth dams." . . . So I raised a little bit of fuss. . . . But in the meanwhile, I had moved my wife and kids to Denver and didn't have any other place to go, so I said, "Okay, I'll work in concrete dams."

But in the meanwhile, I had moved my wife and kids to Denver and didn't have any other place to go, so I said, "Okay, I'll work in concrete dams."

Worked on Glen Canyon Dam And, Later, Flaming Gorge Dam

And that's how I started out my career in the Bureau, working actually on Glen Canyon Dam, designs for Glen Canyon Dam. This was in

December of 1956 when they were still designing as they were building, actually, the dam. So that's kind of how I got started in it. But I was, you know, raised in Bureau places, the Bureau towns across the West.

Storey: Which of them is the one you first remember well? Denver? Boulder City?

Barrett: Probably Denver. Denver, because we lived there twice, once when I was just starting kindergarten and first grade we were in Denver, and I remember Denver. Then from there we went to Tucumcari and then to El Paso and then we came back to Denver.

Dad Worked Downtown and Then out at the Federal Center

And by then I'm a junior in high school, and that's the period when the Bureau moved from downtown out to the Federal Center. I can remember that. My dad used to go to work downtown, and then all of a sudden he started going to work out at the Federal Center. That all happened while I was in junior high school.

Reclamation's Orchestra

One of the things I remember about is they

had an orchestra, the Reclamation Orchestra, and

Bureau of Reclamation
CONCERT



West Denver High School
Auditorium
8:15 P.M.
Friday, October 25, 1946.

 PROGRAM

RECLAMATION CONCERT

1. Cortège du Serdare (From the "Caucasian Sketches").....Ippolitow-Iwanow
2. Selection from the Opera "Carmen".....Bizet
by the Orchestra
3. Piano Solo "Etude Fantesique".....Friml
Mr. Dan Doerschler
4. Gems of Stephen Foster (an American
Fantasia).....Tobani
5. Dance of the Buffoons.....Rimsky-Korsakoff
6. Excerpts from "The New Moon".....Romberg
by the Orchestra
7. Selections by the Male Quartette
 1. A Toast
 2. Proudly as the Eagle
 3. He Found it
8. Overture "Raymond".....Thomas
9. Little Rhapsody in Blue.....Gershwin
10. Victor Herbert Favorites.....Arr. by Harold Sanford
11. Malaguena.....Ernesto Lecuona
by the Orchestra

RECLAMATION MALE QUARTETTE PERSONNEL

Lloyd Rollins.....1st Tenor
 Raymond P. Jones.....2nd Tenor
 Marshall I. Laughin.....Baritone
 Gilbert E. Pulsipher.....Bass
 Frank E. Numbers.....Director

The Reclamation Orchestra was organized in 1945, largely due to the enthusiasm of its conductor, Charles C. Nicholson. The Quartette had its beginning in September 1946. Frank E. Numbers of the Personnel Field Office, recently from Washington, D. C. is its director.

Both Orchestra and Quartette contribute their time and talents without compensation.

RECLAMATION CONCERT ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL

Charles C. Nicholson, Conductor

<u>First Violins</u>	<u>Flutes</u>	<u>Horn</u>
Ruth M. Kinnear	Dorothy E. Hill	E. B. Newell
A. D. Penn	Patricia VanDoren	
Josef Lischka		<u>Trumpets</u>
Phyllis Hartsook	<u>Piccolo</u>	Emanuel Michuleski
Helen Elliott	S. C. Fooks	Victor Dahlberg
Henry T. Burtscher		E. Vance Giddings
		Edwin H. Reesor
<u>Second Violins</u>	<u>Oboe</u>	
Angela Lischka	Paul Armstrong	<u>Trombones</u>
Lydia M. Barr		W. G. Danielson
Geneva Braithwaite	<u>Alto Saxophones</u>	Ivan Barrett
Irene M. Mitchell	Kenneth A. McGibbon	Robert Frazell
E. N. Baker	Charles A. Mathews	
<u>Cellos</u>	<u>Tenor Saxophone</u>	<u>Tympani</u>
Kathleen Kotz	Millie Waddle	J. P. VanDoren
Walter Garstka		<u>Percussion</u>
Paul Kuhn	<u>Clarinets</u>	Carl Pierce
Fred E. Sorenson	Jacqueline Waddle	Jack H. Wyatt
	Albert T. Knuckey	
<u>Basses</u>	Harriett Lowe	<u>Piano</u>
Vernon Runge		Maurice E. Day
Paul J. Kopecky, Jr.		
Glenn W. Waddle		
W. D. Lawrence		

RECLAMATION CONCERT ORCHESTRA OFFICERS

Albert T. Knuckey.....President
Dorothy E. Hill.....Vice President
Ruth M. Kinnear.....Secretary



Figure 6. Bureau of Reclamation Orchestra, 1946

we gave concerts. Because I was a budding young musician, it was kind of a family thing. People who worked and their families all got together and they formed this big orchestra, and it was like a regular symphony. It was called the Reclamation Orchestra. In fact, I've got at home a picture of it. I think I may even have one of the programs from the concert they gave. I was raised up in that crowd.

Storey: Who conducted it?

Barrett: You know, I don't remember, but I think it was a Reclamation employee.

Storey: Well, let's go back to the start. When were you born?

Born in 1933

Barrett: I was born in 1933. February 14th.

Storey: And what did your father do for Reclamation?

Father Worked in Construction and Then in Planning

Barrett: In those days, he worked in construction. He had actually worked on part of the Weber Basin Project. Then he went down to Hoover. You had Hoover Dam, was called Boulder Dam in

those days. But he worked down there. I think he was in the engineering office. It was in construction. Then later on, he moved into the planning area. When we were in Grand Island and Pueblo and those places, he worked in planning.

Father Was Project Manager for the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project

He was project manager for Fryingpan-Arkansas Project when he retired from the Bureau. No, before he retired. And then they closed that office down, and he was actually working in Denver. But it was in a planning office in the regional office in Denver.

Storey: The symphony was in the Denver office?

Barrett: Um-hmm. Yeah.

Storey: Was that your first visit into Denver?

Barrett: No, that was the second time we were there.

Storey: That was the second.

Barrett: I was in junior high school probably when they had that.

Storey: So maybe about '45?

Barrett: That's got to be, yeah, after the end of the war, so it would be '46, '47, somewhere along in that [time period]. I'd have to go home and I've got some of that stuff. I ought to dig it out and let you look at it. But, yeah, they actually had a symphony. It was interesting. I suppose it was the employees association or somebody put that together.

Storey: How many people?

Barrett: Oh, thirty-, forty. Thirty-, forty pieces.

Storey: What did you play?

Barrett: I played trombone.

Storey: And the rest of your family played instruments also?

Barrett: No.

Storey: Just you?

Barrett: I think they needed trombone players, and my dad was anxious for me to have some experience, you know, so he wired me in and I went. (laughter)

Storey: What was Denver like the first time you visited?
What was the impression it made on you?

Barrett: The first time we lived there?

Storey: Um-hmm.

Memories of Denver in the Later 1930s

Barrett: And this has got to be like around '38, '39, '40, somewhere along . . . We lived in North Denver. I guess the thing I remember most is streetcars, you know. They had the old streetcar, electric with the iron wheels, the whole thing going up and down on the streets on tracks.

Storey: I remember the streetcars, too.

Barrett: Yeah. I remember that very, very clearly. I don't have a lot of memories of that time. I just know where we lived.

Storey: Do you ever remember going into your dad's office?

Barrett: No. No. The first time I remember going to my dad's office is when we lived in El Paso, and that's probably about the first time I was old enough. I would venture out, go downtown by myself, have lunch with my dad, and then come

home.

Storey: Do you remember what your dad was doing in El Paso?

**Father Was Tasked to Fix the Spillways at
Elephant Butte Dam in Anticipation of High Water
Flows**

Barrett: No, I really don't. At that period of time, the Elephant Butte Dam had been built and the spillways had never operated. I remember they were looking forward to some huge flows on the Rio Grande River, and they were afraid of the spillway problem. His assignment was to go up there and get those spillways fixed, or work on it. I'm not sure. I don't think he was in *charge*, but I know he was involved in that.

I remember we'd go up there and stay in the government camp, and, actually, water was very, very high. I can remember pictures. I can remember actually seeing the water up over what the normal beach was and into the brush around the side of the reservoir, because the water was so high.

Storey: In Denver you just lived in north Denver. What about in Tucumcari? Was that a Reclamation camp?

Barrett: No. No. That's a town. Tucumcari was on Highway 66. It was a regular town. But there was a Reclamation Project there, Arch Hurley Irrigation District² is in Tucumcari. One of the things I remember most about that was they built a new office building, and I remember the dedication of it, because it was, as I recall, kind of—what do you call that style of architecture? It looks like an adobe building, a Southwest style architecture.

Storey: Yes, a puebloan.

Barrett: And they had the luminarias the sacks with the candles in them all up and down the sidewalks in front of the building. That sticks in my mind for some reason. The dedication of that building, I remember that.

Storey: Who was there to speak, or do you remember any of that?

Barrett: I don't remember any of that. What I remember is the luminarias probably more than anything else. I was probably, in those days, in the first or second grade of school.

Storey: What about El Paso? You said you went

2. The Arch Hurley Conservancy District on the Tucumcari Project.

downtown there.

Barrett: Yeah. We lived in El Paso. In those days, kids could do a lot more things than they can do now. I can remember walking up to the corner and catching the bus and going downtown, having lunch with my father, going to the movie, and coming home again. You know, I was probably eight or nine, ten years old then. I don't think most people don't let their kids do those kinds of things anymore.

Storey: Now they're a little worried about it.

Barrett: In those days it was quite safe. I can remember going down to the office and seeing him in the office.

Storey: What was your impression of the office?

Barrett: I don't know that I have any. I can remember they used to have the big high drafting tables with the T-squares and all that. I can kind of remember those and the old calculators, and the whole place had kind of a musty smell to it. I can remember that pretty well. But I suppose it was kind of just a typical engineering office, as far as I know.

“I remember they had big slide rules, the big long

twenty-four-inch ones, so they could calculate a little bit closer with the big slide rules. . . .”

I remember they had big slide rules, the big long twenty-four-inch ones, so they could calculate a little bit closer with the big slide rules. I remember those. They didn't have very many—I'm sure they had, maybe I didn't see them—mechanical calculators.

Storey: Do you remember whether your dad was at a drafting table?

Barrett: I really don't. I really don't, but he may have been, because those are the kinds of things I remember from it.

Storey: So then you moved back to Denver.

Barrett: We moved back to Denver again.

Storey: And it was during that period that the transfer from downtown out to the Federal Center?

Barrett: Yeah. Yeah. I'm pretty sure that's when that happened.

Storey: Did you live in north Denver again?

Barrett: We lived right by Sloan's Lake.

Storey: Sort of west central, then.

Barrett: Well, in those days, it was pretty far out. I went to Lake Junior High. I went to North High School in Denver. And then in my senior year, my dad went to Grand Island, and then we moved to Grand Island.

Storey: And you moved to Grand Island?

Barrett: Yeah. And I finished high school. I did the last part of my senior year in Grand Island.

Storey: Were you in the Reclamation camp at Grand Island then?

Barrett: No, we just lived in town. I don't remember that there was a Reclamation camp by then.

Storey: It was disbanded.

Barrett: By then it may have been gone. The office was out by the airport. I remember that. I think there may have been an old military air base out there, I think. I'm just not sure. I didn't ever go out there all that much. But they were out by the airport is where the office was. And you were talking about John Budd. I suspect that may be just about—because he's quite a bit younger than I am, I think.

Storey: John was my age, and I was born in '41.

Barrett: Yeah. See, there's eight years' difference there.

Storey: But he lived out in the Reclamation camp, and then they subsequently moved to town when the camp was disbanded.

Barrett: Yeah. I suspect the camp was gone when we were there. I don't remember there being in camp. But, see, by then I was only there for the summer and one school year, and then I basically took off and went to college.

Storey: And went to D.U.?

Went to the University of Denver to Study Engineering

Barrett: Yeah. I went to the University of Denver.

Storey: Did you start out studying engineering?

Barrett: Yeah. Right out of the box, yeah.

Storey: Was your dad an engineer?

Father Graduated from Utah State University

Barrett: Oh, yeah. Yeah, he was a graduate from Utah

State.

Storey: A lot of [Reclamation] people graduated from Utah State.

Utah State University and Colorado State University Engineers at Reclamation

Barrett: Yeah. Well, I don't know if it's still true or not, but it was at one time when Utah State people practically dominated the Bureau, because there were so many of them. And people from Utah State and Fort Collins, you know, C-S-U, because those were the two *big* agricultural engineering schools in the *West*, and it's where Reclamation's activity was. I think that's where the Denver office did all their recruiting from those universities. They did dominate the field for a long, long time.

Storey: But you went off to D-U.

Had a Scholarship to the University of Denver

Barrett: Well, I only did that because I got a scholarship to go to D-U. Well, I wanted to go back to Denver, because that's where I'd come from. You know, I kind of wanted to go back to Denver, and I got a scholarship to go back to DU, so I did.

Storey: And you chose civil engineering from the very beginning?

Barrett: Oh, yeah. There's no doubt in my mind. Coming out of high school, I knew I was going to go to engineering school.

Storey: Why?

“I think I got hooked on the idea of *doing stuff*, making big things. . . .”

Barrett: Because I wanted to be an engineer. I think I got hooked on the idea of *doing stuff*, making big things. If you go on your vacations and you go visit dams and canals and irrigation projects, you kind of think these are neat. In those days, I come out of school, I went into engineering school in 1950. See, that's when the Bureau was really on a roll. The whole country was. The interstate highway system was being built. There was big engineering projects everywhere you looked, and I just thought that was what I wanted to do was be a part of that. So I think it just kind of came natural to me. I don't remember ever having any discussions over what I was going to do. It just came natural.

Storey: There was a guy that I was raised with in Lakewood named Don Bingham. His dad

worked for Reclamation. I think he was one of the designers on Glen Canyon, maybe. Every time they'd come home from vacation, he'd say, "Just another dam vacation." (laughter) Because they always went to look at dams and lakes.

Father Was from Logan, Utah

Barrett: My dad was born and raised in Logan, Utah. So every summer we would come home to Logan. And no matter where you come from, you're going to drive by a bunch of these projects. So, yeah, we stopped.

Storey: What was your dad's name?

Father Was Joseph Milton Barrett

Barrett: Joe. Joseph was his name. Joseph Milton Barrett. Everybody called him Joe. He was with the Bureau years and years and years.

Father Was Project Manager of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project in the Planning Stages

Then when he left, the jobs I can remember him having where I know exactly what his job was, he was project manager for Fryingpan-Arkansas Project. That's when it was in the planning stage

and going through Congress. And then it kind of hit a lull in Congress and they had trouble getting it started, so they kind of closed that office down or else pared it way back, I'm not sure which. Then he moved to Denver and they had what they called the Denver Area Planning Office, and they had a planning office that looked after McCook and all that. We used to call it the old Region Seven, the old Region Seven.

Storey: The Lower Missouri.

**Before Retiring He Worked in Bangkok for the
United Nations Economic Commission for Asia
and the Far East**

Barrett: The Lower Missouri Region, yeah. And he had the Denver Area Planning Office, and he was head of that office. Then he left there, retired, and went to work for the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, and he went to Bangkok. In fact, actually, I think he was *detailed* there and retired sometime later from the Bureau. You could do that in those days. You could go to work for the U.N. and places and pay into your retirement account, and then when you were old enough you could leave go to your retirement. Then he worked in Thailand for maybe ten years, and then he really retired.

Storey: Is he alive now, by chance?

Barrett: No. He passed away three, four years ago.

Storey: What did he do out in Grand Island? Do you remember that?

Barrett: I'm sure he worked in planning, in the planning office there.

Storey: Two years in the Army?

Barrett: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Storey: What years would those have been?

Worked in an Engineering Unit in the U.S. Army

Barrett: Oh, let's see. I went into the Army—I remember really well. The first day was New Year's Day, 1955. It was my first day of active—I did R.O.T.C. in college and then we graduated in the spring of '54, and I went to work for Beech Aircraft Company as an engineer. Then I got my call to active duty and actually entered active duty January 1, 1955, and went to Fort Belvoir, went to the engineering school there, and then went to Beale Air Force Base out in California, where there was an engineering unit. We were building a runway. And then my last duty

station was at Fort Carson on a combat engineer battalion at Fort Carson.

Storey: But no overseas duty?

Barrett: No. I never went overseas.

Storey: Were you a construction inspector or something at Beale?

Platoon Leader in a Military Construction Unit

Barrett: No. We had a construction unit. It was actually a military construction unit, and we had all our own equipment and we were building roads and building some airfields out there. Those were training exercises. In those days, that's before the Air Force had its own post engineering system. The Army has a post engineer, which is a Corps of Engineers officer and he has all the stuff that takes care of all the military base. The Air Force didn't really have that quite yet. So they had detailed Army people onto the Air Force bases, and they were called special category units, and we had a construction battalion there. We were building perimeter roads around the Air Force base and they were just training projects.

Storey: You were actually doing the physical labor?

Barrett: It was heavy construction, heavy construction.
Yeah, I was a platoon leader.

Storey: Were you operating equipment or what?

Barrett: No, no. Platoon leaders kind of watch.
(laughter) But I remember we had all kind of—
we had the big trucks. We had big earth-moving
equipment, all that stuff. We had a unit that
could go out and actually start from scratch and
build a major airport if you wanted to do it. We
had all the stuff there. There was a whole
construction *brigade*, and there was probably
four or five of these construction battalions there.
Then that all got phased out eventually. I don't
think they have any of that anymore. But we had
heavy construction equipment.

Storey: And then they sent you to Fort Carson to be
mustered out?

Barrett: Well, they were phasing out those construction
units while I was there, and we actually closed
down that unit while I was there. I was probably
the last guy to turn out the lights and leave. We
spent several months just turning in our property
and inventorying and getting rid of things. Then
we closed down the unit.

Assigned to the 21st Engineer Battalion, a Combat

Engineer Battalion

Then I went to Fort Carson. I think we went there in June, and my two years was up the following December. So they assigned me to a combat engineer battalion, and that's a little bit different thing. They don't have all the heavy equipment. They've got dump trucks and road graders and light bridging and stuff like that. It was the 21st Engineer Battalion. It was a mountain and cold-weather unit. We had jeeps with covers on them and heaters, and we had some ski troops. It was that kind of an outfit.

Storey: So you took leave or something and went up to Denver then to apply for a job?

Barrett: Well, yeah. I just took a day off and went up there to apply for the job. I was living with my dad. I said, "Dad, what should I do?" And he said, "Well, I know the Bureau is hiring engineers." I actually had applications out. I had an application with the California Highway Department and with the Bureau, and then I also had gone back to Beech Aircraft Company. I had an invitation with them to go back.

We Wanted to Live in Denver

I think the thing that drove us most was

location. We wanted really to be in Denver.
And so that was a good job offer from there.

Liked the Rotation Program for Engineers at Reclamation

I thought the rotation engineer program was very attractive. You know, at that point they brought in—you've been through on rotation engineers? You smiled.

Worked in the Concrete Dams Branch

They would bring us in and we would have a home base, and my home base was the Concrete Dams Division, as it turned out finally, Concrete Dams Branch. And then we would work. You'd work there for six months, and then they would send you to different offices for three months each to kind of give you a *taste* of what the Bureau was about.

Worked in Concrete Dams

I worked in concrete dams, and then I had a rotation assignment to the laboratories.

Worked in the Concrete Lab for Three Months

I worked in a concrete lab for three months.

Worked in Contract Administration for a Time

And then I worked in contract administration, which is where they administered the construction contracts. That's when the Denver office would run all the construction programs. They had a big office there that administered the contracts, and I worked in there for a while.

Worked in Planning in Sacramento for a Few Months

I had a field assignment to Sacramento. I worked in the planning office in Sacramento for a few months. Then I came back and settled down in my home base, which was the Concrete Dams Branch.

Storey: What did they have you doing in your first six months on the rotation program there at the concrete dams?

Barrett: Working on Glen Canyon Dam. You know, in those days, like I say, the Concrete Dams Branch was kind of broken up into several little units and I was assigned to the unit which actually designed and did the analysis of the dam structure itself. There's the dam and then there's all the appurtenances—the spill. . . . You had a whole section that did nothing but spillways, and

somebody else did penstocks, and somebody else did—but we actually did the concrete dam design, which I thought, after I got into it, I *really* liked.

Working for Merlin Copen

The fellow I worked for, his name was Merlin Copen, and he was probably one of the *top* dam designers in the whole world, it turns out. I didn't know that then, but I do now. He was recognized worldwide. We had visitors from Portugal and all these places come to talk to him about designing dams. He was one of the world's experts on concrete arch dams, which is what Glen Canyon is a form of. Of course, the Bureau wrote the book on how to do analysis on concrete dams. The big set of blue books on Hoover Dam, that was the standard work for concrete dam design for years, for arch dam designs. In those days, all the analysis was cranked out on Marchant calculators, and they had four or five of us in there, and we'd just sit there and grind numbers all day long—tch, tch, tch.

Storey: What's this system of analysis called?

Trial-Load System of Dam Analysis

Barrett: That was called—what was it called? The

cantilever arch system of analysis. Does that ring a bell?³ There's a set of books on it.

Storey: Yes.

Barrett: Arch cantilever or cantilever arch, I forget which. We would do that, and it was a system of analyzing all the stresses in a concrete dam, arch dam, under different conditions.

Storey: The term that's rattling and I'm not quite getting hold of it is something like trial–

Barrett: That's it. Trial–

Storey: -Load analysis or something.

Barrett: Yeah. We would assume a certain load, running through all these numbers and see how the dam reacted, and then if it didn't react right, we would change the design a little bit and then go through all the numbers again. You know, you'd go through these designs. It took a *long, long* time. This is before we had computers. In fact, while I was there, they were just starting the first computer programs to do this by computers, and there was an old Bell—it was new then, but a Bell computer downtown. I'm trying to think of the

3. This system was most commonly known as the Trial-Load Method of Analysis.

guy's name who did that. He was actually the chief of that unit and Merlin was his assistant, Merlin Copen was his assistant. But he devoted all his time to developing these computer programs to do all this on the computer. While I was there, they did some of their first trial runs on this trial-load analysis on arch dams. It was Glen Canyon Dam.

Flaming Gorge Dam

We were working on Flaming Gorge, and the Bureau was also working on some foreign dams. We were doing Wushai [phonetic], which I think is in Taiwan. We were doing some work on that. I was thinking, as we would sit there and crank through these numbers, there was about two of us rotation engineers and there was a couple of other guys who were making their whole career out of this, God bless them. I don't know how they ever did it.

But for a treat, Merlin Copen, he liked me for some reason, and he would call me aside and sit down with me and show me how he actually laid out the dam. He would have these very detailed drawings of the canyon with all the work that had been done so far. They'd chopped out so much rock on this side and that side, and he knew exactly how to lay this dam in there. And

he would sit there and we would spend a lot of time together, explaining to me why he was laying out the arches just this way, and if we got a bad stress here, how he could fix that by making the dam a little fatter way over here somewhere else. I just found that whole thing very, very intriguing. I loved it. It was really good.

“ . . . I got reassigned after a while. . . . I got reassigned and I was put up into what I call the front of the room. . . . ”

I didn't stay too long. I guess the biggest reason I left was I got reassigned after a while. Part of their moving people around, I got reassigned and I was put up into what I call the front of the room. You've got to visualize this. This is when they were back in the old munitions buildings, you know, and they had this huge, huge room, which was the Concrete Dams Branch, and there must have been thirty people in there, you know. I don't know if they did it on purpose or not, but it was kind of really ranked hierarchically. The rotation engineers sat in the very back and we all had these big flat drafting tables, stools, row after row after row. When you got to the front, there was one desk left facing you, and that was the branch chief.

Moved into Spillway Design Work

Anyway, they moved me out of the stress group and put me in—I was doing some spillway design work, you know.

“ . . . we got into a little flap over grades. One of my best friends quit because they wouldn't promote him . . . ”

And we got into a little flap over grades. One of my best friends quit because they wouldn't promote him, and I'd been there long enough to have completed my whole rotation program, and I thought maybe I was due for a raise, and they weren't seeing it that way. So I just kind of got a little bit—you know, I thought, “I could sit here and work for thirty years, and maybe I'll get to the chair that faces the other way in the front of the room.” And I just analyzed the whole career possibilities and I decided I didn't want to do that forever.

Storey: That was where Mr. Copen sat?

Barrett: No, no, he was back in the back. The stress group was actually a little separate little unit, and they were actually in another room. That's, I think, why I liked that so well. But when you get into this huge big drafting room full of engineers

all sitting there cranking these dam designs out, I just couldn't quite see making a whole career out of that.

So I actually wrote a letter to the people I worked for in Sacramento when I was on my rotation assignment and asked them if they had a job for me, and they did. So I transferred to Sacramento.

Storey: You worked in the Concrete Dams Branch.

The Concrete Dams Branch Had Different Sections

Barrett: The Concrete Dams Branch. And then they had different units.

Storey: Sections, maybe?

Barrett: Different sections, yeah. There was the Stress Analysis Section.

Storey: You worked a little in that.

Barrett: That's where they did the actual designs of the arches of the dam itself, yeah. And then they took me out of that and put me up into a Spillways Section, where I was working on some trash racks for spillways. That's when I got

discouraged, because I just didn't think that was much fun.

Storey: There was a guy named Carl Hoffman who designed spillways.

Barrett: I kind of remember that name, yeah.

Storey: Harold Arthur would have been working with Jack Hilf.

Barrett: Yeah, Harold Arthur was with Jack Hilf and that crowd. Yeah. Yeah.

Storey: But you became intrigued somewhat by concrete dams.

Barrett: I did. I really did. I really thought that was very interesting. And I guess what impressed me the most was you could see the stature of that office in the world, because there was a famous arch dam designer, whose name was Sarafin [phonetic], who designed some very high, thin concrete arch dams in Portugal, and he used to come to talk to Merlin Copen, and they were on like a first-name basis. They would sit there and consult with each other, and I got to watch. That's pretty heady stuff for a guy who's two years out of college. Pretty good stuff.

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1. AUGUST 14, 1996.
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. AUGUST 14, 1996.

Storey: You were talking about being with the Stress Section and Mr. Copen. Is that during your rotation or after your rotation?

Barrett: Well, that was my home base. So I started out there and worked there like maybe six months. Then I went out and did my rotation and came back there and worked there some more.

Storey: What was Mr. Copen like?

Barrett: Nice, nice guy. I'm trying to think how old he was. He couldn't have been all that old. Of course, when you're young, older people look older. But I would guess he was probably in his fifties, wore glasses, white-haired, short, small man, and just as nice a guy as you ever want to be around. He kind of took me under his wing a little bit, I think, you know. I just thought he was really a neat man.

Storey: I don't know how quite to phrase this question. Was he obsessed with designing dams, or how would you describe his relationship to that profession of his?

“One of the luckiest things in life, I think, is to

have a job where you like to get up and go to work every morning because you like what you do . . .”

Barrett: Oh, I don't think he was obsessed with it, but he was very, very good at it and he was world-famous, and he knew that, and he liked what he did. One of the luckiest things in life, I think, is to have a job where you like to get up and go to work every morning because you like what you do, and I think he was one of those. He just really liked it and was good at it.

“ . . . in that era of the Bureau when they were really building stuff and doing stuff . . . There was excitement in the Bureau, *I thought*. . . .”

But, again in that era of the Bureau when they were *really* building stuff and doing stuff, you could feel it. There was excitement. There was excitement in the Bureau, *I thought*.

“ . . . there were big projects going on and big things getting done. And I think everybody thought that they were good, inherently good things to do. . . .”

There was just excitement, because everywhere you went, there were big projects going on and big things getting done. And I think everybody thought that they were good, inherently good

things to do. Do you understand what I'm saying?

Storey: Yes, I think I do.

“You're doing something worthwhile and you're making a difference in the world and this is *good* stuff we're doing. I think you could feel it. . . .”

Barrett: You're doing something worthwhile and you're making a difference in the world and this is *good* stuff we're doing. I think you could feel it. You could feel it.

Storey: Who was Mr. Copen's supervisor?

Barrett: Well, I don't know. I'm trying to think. The guy who was in charge of that section was the man who was trying to develop the computer programs, and he was kind of so wrapped up in that, that we didn't see a whole lot of him. Of course, then the next guy was the chief of the branch. I don't know his name. I was only a rotation engineer. I didn't know that many. You know, I knew my boss and his boss, and that was all I needed to know.

Storey: While you were in that section, did you ever run across any tension between the Concrete Dams Branch and the Earthen Dams Branch?

Interaction Between Concrete Dam and Earth Dam Design Branches

Barrett: (laughter) I knew you were going to talk about that, because I thought about it as I was driving down here. I was thinking my mind-set coming to the Bureau was I *really* wanted to work in earth dams. I really did want to work in earth dams, because I thought soil mechanics was something I really liked, and how disappointed I was to end up in the concrete dams thing. Well, I got over that. But there was, there was actually a competition to see who could make—if there was a particular project with a dam site, who could design the most, best dam to go in that site. Would it be an earth dam or a concrete dam? And it didn't matter too much that we were still building some concrete *gravity* dams in those days, because to make an arch dam, you have to have a particular kind of a site to put a concrete arch dam into.

There Was Competition

So you could see the competition. Yeah, there was competition. That's how I phrase it. Competition. I don't think there was hard feelings or anything, but it was competition. But I can remember very clearly some people being very upset when a certain dam would go to be an

earth dam instead of a concrete dam in the final plan.

Storey: Do you remember any of those in particular?

Barrett: No, I can't remember the names of them. I can remember the incidents where they said, "Well, gee, we could have put a concrete dam in that place. It would have been beautiful." Then the earth guys won out because they could build their dams a little bit cheaper, I think. (laughter)

Storey: What about the lab—your stint in the lab? What did you do there?

Barrett: Well, I was only over there on rotation. There's a fellow by the name of Harry Avery. Have you interviewed him?

Storey: No.

“When you were a rotation engineer, you were there just long enough to see what went on without getting too deep into it, actually. . . .”

Barrett: I don't know if he's even still alive. But he was a youngster in the lab. I worked in the concrete lab. Because I was in concrete dams, I guess they thought that was a fit. Oh, I don't have any really big distinct memories about that, things

that stick out in my mind. I can remember the rotation engineers did a lot of grunt work. You know, like we would shovel gravel to make concrete mixes stuff like that. And then I can remember making these little cylinders and watching them break them on the machines. When you were a rotation engineer, you were there just long enough to see what went on without getting too deep into it, actually.

Storey: Then you went to contract administration?

Barrett: Yeah. Yeah.

Storey: That didn't turn you into wanting to be a contract administrator?

Barrett: No. No. Tyler. There was two men whose last name were Tyler, and they were brothers, and one of them was the head of that outfit. They were *old* Bureau hands, I mean old-line Bureau people. I remember them kind of well.

The thing that impressed me about contract administration was the money involved. You're talking, what was, in my mind, *huge* sums of money. What that particular branch did was they worked with contractor claims. You know, if a contractor had a claim, you would analyze the claim and see if it was legitimate to pay or not,

and contract change orders and things like that. Of course, that was before they had the Federal procurement regulations, which changed that whole contract administration picture quite a bit, I think.

Storey: I would have thought that would have been done in the field engineer's office in the project construction office.

Barrett: Well, I think at a certain level it was. See, in those days, the construction engineers reported to the chief engineer, not like they do now.

Storey: Yes, I understand.

Barrett: I think at a certain level things elevated up into that office. I think you're right. It probably depended on the size of the claim and how much money was involved and those kinds of things.

Storey: Oh, this was claims. So this was in addition to normal contract costs.

Barrett: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Storey: Oh, I'm with you now.

Barrett: Yeah. It was change orders and claims that we worked mostly on. I mean, there were particular

cases. The contractor had a claim, we would analyze it and work on it.

Storey: Did you get to follow one clear through, or how did that work?

Barrett: I wasn't there that long, no, no. It was more like adding up columns and numbers, and doing—this was before we had computers, and everything was cranked out, and it was those kinds of things. I never was in any decision-making or anything like that. It was more just like doing the grunt work.

The idea of the whole thing was to see what went on there, and then if you really liked that, then you would try to swing yourself into that kind of a job later on. People who had been construction engineers who were kind of maybe between jobs somehow landed there for a while. Then they'd go back out and be construction engineers somewhere else. It was that kind of thing.

Storey: Then you went off to Sacramento. How were these areas chosen for you?

Barrett: Well, we had a counselor. I haven't the vaguest idea who he was. But we sat down and kind of he says, "Well, what would you like to do?"

I said, "Well, here's what I'd like to do."

You know, in those days, the Bureau had big programs everywhere. And he'd say, "Well, they're looking for some people out here. So maybe you'd like to go out there."

And I'd say, "Yeah." The only thing I can say that really made a match was the concrete dams and the concrete lab. I can see the connection there, and the rest of it is just kind of like random.

Spent Rotation Time in the Hydrology Branch

I also did a time in the Hydrology Branch, which was a part of the Planning Division.

Harold P. Grout and Flood Hydrology

There was a fellow by the name of Grout, Harold P. Grout. I'll never forget him. He was another, in the engineering community, a real star. You know, you could go almost anyplace in the United States and talk to hydrologists, and they'd know who Harold Grout was. He was very famous over flood hydrology, predicting what the size of the spillway should be, because here's what you could predict the maximum flood would be. It was that kind of thing. And, again,

it was a very complicated and mathematical, statistical kind of thing that they did in there. And I worked in there for three months in the Hydrology Branch. I remember that.

Storey: They were figuring maximum probable floods or what?

“ . . . they were doing designs for spillways. . . . So you'd have to figure out, well, what's the biggest, worst thing that can ever happen upstream, and how much water does that produce, and that's how big the spillway has to be. They also did things like water-supply studies for projects. . . .”

Barrett: Well, they were doing designs for spillways. You know, you'd say, “Well, we're going to put a dam here. How big should we build the spillway?” So you'd have to figure out, well, what's the biggest, worst thing that can ever happen upstream, and how much water does that produce, and that's how big the spillway has to be. They also did things like water-supply studies for projects. You build a project. You want to know how much water you've got to deal with. It was those kinds of things in hydrology. So I worked in there for a while.

Storey: What was Mr. Grout like?

Barrett: He was kind of a short little—the thing I remember most about this, and I don't know, it's kind of extraneous, but there was also an Army Reserve unit that was basically mostly Reclamation people, and Harold Grout was the Commander, and his adjutant was also in the Hydrology Branch, and his third guy in line was also in the Hydrology Branch. So it was almost like being back in the Army. Frankly, it was kind of funny. I actually went to some of their drills, because I was in Reserve, too, and I was actually attached to that unit for a while. But it was basically Reclamation people that met right on the Federal Center, and they all, after work, went and put on uniforms and went over and did their Reserve duty. That's what I remember him for, was he was also Colonel Grout. And when the phone rang, you never knew whether it was for Harold Grout or Colonel Grout. So you answered the phone. (laughter) That's probably not here nor there. But you asked me how I remember him. That's how I do.

Storey: That's good. So then you went off to Sacramento.

Barrett: Yeah.

Storey: What were you doing in Sacramento?

Project Planning During Sacramento Rotation

Barrett: When I went out there on my rotation program, I worked in project planning, and that was basically just kind of floating around and watching stuff for three months, you know how you do. And then when I really decided I wanted to move, I just wrote a letter to his name was Flint, Ivan Flint, and he was head of project planning then, and I asked him for a job and I didn't really much care what it was.

Moved to Sacramento in 1959 to Work in the Water Rights Branch

I ended up working in water rights. They had a Water Rights Branch there because the Central Valley Project at that point in time was in a big rug-chug with the state of California and the water users all up and down the valley over water rights in the San Joaquin Valley. And they had huge—they weren't lawsuits, they were water right cases, before the State Water Right Board trying to firm up the Bureau's water rights for all these projects. They needed help, and so I went to work in there and worked in water rights for, I guess, maybe a couple of years.

Storey: This was when you moved to Sacramento?

Barrett: When we moved to Sacramento, yeah.

Storey: And when was that?

Barrett: We went in 1959, March of '59.

Storey: So you were about two years.

Barrett: Yeah. It was about two years in Denver.

Storey: So after a year you had decided, “No, I don't need this any longer”?

Barrett: Well, I went through the whole rotation program, and that took about a year, and then I worked in concrete dams the rest of that time and finally decided I just didn't really want to make a whole career out of that.

Storey: Do you remember back in those days what your career goals were?

Barrett: No, no. I knew what they weren't, but I didn't know what they were. Do you know what I mean?

Storey: Yeah.

“ . . . my big motivator in those days was money. . . . ”

Barrett: I knew what I didn't want to do, but I wasn't too sure what I did want to do. I can tell you where I crossed that bridge, it's when I had worked in water rights for a while. You know, I think my big motivator in those days was money. I *needed* money. I had three children and a wife and a house and all that stuff, and I just needed to make more money. I got a grade raise to go to Sacramento, and I was in that office, probably—I'm trying to think, maybe two years. I'm not quite sure of the dates, but probably about two years in the Water Rights Branch.

Moved to the Budget and Programs Office in Sacramento

Then I made a *major* change. I went to what they called the Budget and Programs Office, which was the people that—the finance. They put together the budget, allocated the money, and I went to work in there.

A fellow by the name of Mike Catino—have you come across Mike Catino?

Storey: Yes.

Worked for Mike Catino

Barrett: Well, I worked for Mike. He was my boss's boss, actually, in that office.

“I . . . quickly came to the realization that if you controlled the money, then you got a lot of power. . . .”

I started working on budget things and very quickly came to the realization that if you controlled the money, then you got a lot of power. That became obvious to me the first six months I was in there.

“That's where the action in the Bureau is. If you want to really have a little bit of control, you controlled the money. . . .”

That's where the action in the Bureau is. If you want to really have a little bit of control, you controlled the money. And that came to be just as clear, like a light bulb. And I thought, “Ah! This is where it's at.” And actually, that's almost a move out of engineering.

Storey: Did you do that consciously?

Barrett: Yes, I did. I really did.

Storey: I don't mean making the change to Budget and Finance, but I mean did you consciously decide

to give up being a practicing engineer?

Jobs in Sacramento Carried an Engineering Classification

Barrett: That's a hard one. That's a hard one. I made the move over there for money, because I got a grade raise to go over there. The job was an engineering job. It was classified as an engineer. In the Civil Service system, it was an engineering job. It was an engineer's job. So I really hadn't left engineering. I guess I knew I was leaving the drafting-board, hands-on kind of engineering. I think I knew that, but I figured by then that that was okay.

Storey: Had you actually left the drafting-board engineering when you went to water rights?

Barrett: Probably. Yeah. Yeah. Well, the water rights thing was a lot of hydrology kind of stuff, and you're figuring stream flows and where the water is and how much water you can expect over a period of time and how much you can lay claim to. So in the sense it was kind of a hydrology engineering kind of a job. Instead of a design job, it was a hydrology kind of a job. In fact, I think it was actually classified as a hydraulic engineer was the classification of the job. And then I went over to the program finance side, and

that job was actually called a program engineer. So they all had the engineer rating in them, so I hadn't really given up being an engineer as far as Civil Service went.

“I guess that's at the point where my career goals really started shaping up, and that was I really wanted to have some power, control, management control. . . .”

In those days, engineers got premium pay. A grade-11 engineer made more than a grade-11 accountant because you got a bonus for being an engineer. It was probably a definite knowledge that I wasn't dropping engineering in that sense. I still called myself an engineer, but I knew I wasn't going to, any more, design dams and do those kinds of things. That was a major change, and I was okay with that because I guess that's at the point where my career goals really started shaping up, and that was I really wanted to have some power, control, management control.

“. . . it came to me just really clear that if you were in that program, you knew what was going on everywhere in the region, because every program went right across your desk. . . .”

One way to get into that was through the budget process, because it came to me just really

clear that if you were in that program, you knew what was going on everywhere in the region, because every program went right across your desk. You knew how much money they had. You knew what they were doing. We used to go out to the construction jobs and say, "Look, we're going to have to cut your budget. We don't have enough money for you." You just get a sense that this is where management decisions are really made. What is it we're going to stop doing? What is it we are doing to do? What is it we are not going to do?

"You come to the realization that the program follows the money, and that's . . . where I thought the action was, and I . . . *liked* that. . . ."

You come to the realization that the program follows the money, and that's kind of where I thought the action was, and I kind of *liked* that. I thought that was neat.

Storey: Tell me what grade you came to Reclamation at.

Barrett: Seven.

Storey: And when you left Denver to go to Sacramento?

Barrett: I went for a 9. See, that was one big motivator. I couldn't get the Denver office to give me a 9, so

I thought, “Well, I’ll go where I can get one.” I needed the money, I really did. I was raising kids and having problems, so I needed the money.

Storey: And then when you went to the Budget and Finance Office?

Barrett: I went for 11.

Storey: Tell me about what you did in the Water Rights Office, more about that. John Budd, I think, in roughly this time period or a little later was, for instance, settling the riparian water rights on the Sacramento.

Barrett: Yeah. Yeah. That was all part of that thing. In fact, I think John Budd was in there right after me. Right after I left was when John Budd started working in there.

They had a number of big things they had going on. There was the *big* San Joaquin-Sacramento River delta water rights case, which is a landmark case in California over water rights. I was only peripherally involved on that, because that had gone past the data-gathering. This is where they were really doing the fighting and the really big guys were handling that one.

Solano Project Water Rights

But I was involved, we had on the Solano Project was Putah Creek, and the water rights settlement on that had to do with reconstructing what the natural flow would have been without the dam. And so there was a person who was in charge of that, and I kind of worked with them on trying to determine what all these flows would have been. If the dam hadn't been there, how much water could have gone down the river? That was one thing we did.

Research in Water Rights Records

Another thing we did was we had a guy whose job was to kind of review all the water right applications that are filed in the state to see if there was any conflict between those and the water rights that the Bureau held for their projects. And we would have to go up in the county records and research out all these water rights. Did a lot of field trips, a lot of field trips up into the counties of the Sierra foothills with the county seats and reviewing water right records and who had what water rights. Most of the time I spent was surveillance and protecting.

Watched What Was Going on to Protect Government Water Rights

It was that kind of thing, watching what's going on and protecting the government's water rights. And we would file protests to water rights which we thought would be in conflict with our water right, those kinds of things.

In that time, the really big wheel—I have a terrible memory for names—but the really big wheel down at the State Water Rights Board was previous *solicitor* for the Department and who looked after the Bureau's water rights in Sacramento. So we had a really good friend up on the other side, we thought. But that's the kind of work it was. It was interesting.

Storey: This would have been in preparation maybe for the Westside Project, the San Luis?

Barrett: Yeah. This was before San Luis Project got started. Yeah, it is before they got started. In fact, after I moved to programs, another fellow actually went *down* to Los Banos and helped them open that office and wrote up the very first programs, the very first *budget* programs for the San Luis Project.

Storey: But why were we doing all this water rights work?

Barrett: I think the Bureau's water rights were being challenged. You know, the whole San Joaquin water right system was not yet ironed out and settled forever, if anything is ever settled forever. There were big water right cases in the State Water Rights Board, all up and down the Sacramento and the San Joaquin Rivers, trying to prove up all those water rights, the Bureau's projects.

Storey: So, in effect, we were adjudicating the river systems?

Barrett: Yeah. Yeah. See, the California system is a little bit different. In Colorado you adjudicate in a water court. In California, it's the State Water Rights Board. It has a different name now, but this is what it was then.

Storey: But before we could actually get our projects functioning properly, we had to know what was ours and what was theirs and everything.

Barrett: Yeah. Exactly. Exactly.

Storey: And then you decided to go to Budget and Finance.

Barrett: Uh-huh.

Storey: These are pretty radical changes, aren't they?

Barrett: Yeah. They are. They are, yeah.

Storey: Were they hard to adjust to?

Barrett: Oh, not particularly. No. I didn't find them hard.

Storey: One would think, for instance, on the water rights issue, they'd want somebody who knew about water rights.

Barrett: Well, that could be right. (laughter) But water rights aren't all that difficult. At that grade level, you're a very junior person. You're kind of like a trainee, and they will train you and get you started in that field. At that level, that's what you're at.

Storey: What do you suppose was hardest for you to adjust to in the water rights job?

Barrett: Oh, I don't know. I'd come out of a design function.

Storey: That question was poorly phrased. What were the major *issues* that you dealt with?

Barrett: You mean just personally?

Storey: Going into water rights, the professional issues.

Barrett: I don't think I saw it as an issue. It was just another job, and you went and learned how to do it and [then you] do it. I guess actually I saw it, I wanted to go to California, and this was the job they offered me. And I figured, well, I can go in there and while I'm there, I'll do a good job.

Hoped to Get into Project Planning

But what I really wanted to do, I thought, was more in the project planning, wanted to do the project planning kind of thing. That's one thing I really wanted to do when I went to California, and I kind of saw water rights as a way station along the way.

Storey: how did the transition to budget and Finance take place, do you remember?

Move into Budget and Finance

Barrett: Oh, yeah. I can remember it pretty clearly. I was wanting more money again. I was looking for a grade raise again, and it must have been about two years. That's about the right time frame. I was standing out in the hallway reading the job openings, and a fellow by the name of Tom Vasey [phonetic], who was the assistant

regional director for programs and finance, whom I didn't know, he walked by and he said, "I see you're looking at that job."

And I said, "Yeah."

He says, "Why don't you apply for it?"

I said, "Okay. I think I will." And I did, and they gave me the job. So I don't know. You kind of luck into things sometimes. As I look back over my whole career, I probably figured it was about the best move I ever made. It was just a real eye-opener, it really was. I had *no idea*. I went down and talked to them. What are we going to do? And I thought, "Well, this will be interesting for a while." You know, I thought this would be kind of a fun thing to do and it pays more money and I'll go do it. It's an engineering job. So broaden your experience.

“. . . when I got down there and saw how that operated, it just kind of clicked with me that this is worth spending a few years at . . .”

But when I got down there and saw how that operated, it just kind of clicked with me that this is worth spending a few years at and get into that, because from there you can do other things. And that's how I did.

Storey: What were the primary responsibilities in the budget and finance office?

Principal Job Was Budgeting for O&M

Barrett: My principal job was budget plans for operations and maintenance projects, the whole O&M program. I would gather from the operators up at Shasta and Folsom, there was a whole division of O&M people over there, and they would come to me with their budget for the next four or five years, and I would massage that. I set up—I didn't set it up, I just kind of maintained what was already there, the cost accounting system where you assigned every job a number and then they charged against that number and you kind of keep track of are they spending too much money or are they going to have money left over. And then we would do quarterly projections of how they're doing against their budget and we'd prepare the congressional budget documents, all the statements that go with it, justifying the increases and explaining why things are going up and down. Just that whole budgetary process for operation and maintenance. That was my *big* thing.

Assisted with Construction Budgets

Then I would help the people who did the

construction budgets. There was another guy who was in *charge* of the construction programs, and when he got into a crunch, I'd go help him. The budget runs in cycles. About twice a year you get in a real crunch on all these things, and then I would help him do his stuff.

“ . . . O&M one guy could handle, but the construction budget was big . . . the whole Trinity River Division stuff was going on and there was all kinds of stuff in the Central Valley Project, and the San Luis Project . . . ”

Usually the O&M one guy could handle, but the construction budget was big enough they were building—the whole Trinity River Division stuff was going on and there was all kinds of stuff in the Central Valley Project, and the San Luis Project was coming along.

Monitoring Construction in the Field

So there was a *lot* of budget work. We'd take field trips out and interview all the construction engineers. How much money are you going to spend? What are we going to spend it on? Each construction office had its own program engineer, and we would bring them in and we would sit down with them and go over their programs. It was kind of a neat, neat job, I

thought. Fun. And we got to go see all the construction jobs. Twice a year we'd go out on big field trips and visit the construction jobs, see how things are going. So it was that kind of thing.

Storey: When you got in there, what kinds of games did you find people playing? I think you understand what I'm talking about.

The budget office “. . . would know who had extra money and who wasn't going to spend all their money and who needed money, and was in a position to fix those problems. That's a power base that you operate off of, and that game was played. . . .”

Barrett: Sure, I know what you mean, yeah. Well, knowledge is power, right? And he who controls the knowledge and he who knows where the bones is buried has got an upper hand. And that game was played a lot. Particularly, too, in the construction program, because that's where the really big money was. But he would know who had extra money and who wasn't going to spend all their money and who needed money, and was in a position to fix those problems. That's a power base that you operate off of, and that game was played.

“ . . . there was game-playing, I think, between the regional office and the Washington office. . . . ”

Then there was game-playing, I think, between the regional office and the Washington office. We don't tell them quite everything we know, because if we do, they'll take our money away from us. That kind of thing. So, yeah, there's a lot of games being played. Little power games. You know, trying to gain as much control as you can.

Storey: At that time, construction was still the province of the chief engineer, right?

“That was always the thing that was tough. See, the budgets were in the control of the regional director, but the construction engineer reported to the Denver office. . . . ”

Barrett: Yeah. That was always the thing that was tough. See, the budgets were in the control of the regional director, but the construction engineer reported to the Denver office. A lot of it was communication problems because they'd be negotiating in a contract settlement for maybe \$16 million, and the budget people didn't know. All we knew was there was a negotiation going on. How much is it going to cost us? We didn't know how much to budget for it. You know,

there were those kinds of things. And then there was also–

END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1. AUGUST 14, 1996.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. AUGUST 14, 1996.

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey with Clifford I. Barrett at the regional offices of the Bureau of Reclamation in Salt Lake City, Utah, on August the 14th, 1996.

Barrett: ... in the dog kennel. Did you know that building was a dog kennel when it first started out? It was terrible. We went down there and you couldn't stand it.

Storey: This was the project office?

Having Budget in One Location and Construction Supervision in Another Resulted in Problems for Everyone

Barrett: Yeah. The construction office. You couldn't stand to be in there, because it still smelled like dogs. That's where they started. Anyway, you've got him down there, and he's got his program going. And then you got another construction engineer up at Trinity building the Whiskeytown Dam, and you've got a couple of others around. Washington allocates us so much

money for construction, so you say, “Well, here's how we divide this up.” And you go up and tell the construction engineer, “Here's how much money you've got.” But he's got a guy in Denver who wants him to finish this job. You know what I mean?

So construction engineers, I thought, were always getting caught in the middle, because the regional director had responsibility for the money and the regional director had responsibility for the planning program and keeping the water users all happy, and yet he didn't have the decision when it came to the construction. That was in Denver. And there was always this kind of this little split. In cases where people worked together really well, it wasn't a problem. I think in other places it was a problem.

But, anyway, you asked did that give us a problem, and it did. It does give you a problem to have that *split* authority. If something went wrong and the project didn't get built on time, it was the regional director caught hell for it, you know, and yet outside of giving him the money, there wasn't much he could do about it. The other decisions were being made in Denver. So there was a problem.

Storey: The construction program at that time, did you see any politics going on in those days, or were you not at that level?

Barrett: Well, I think I probably wasn't at that level. I'm sure there were politics going on. There has to be some politicking going on. But I didn't see it, didn't get involved in any.

Storey: What about O&M, though, you know, delayed maintenance and all of these kinds of issues, replacement of equipment?

“My experience was that if you could really demonstrate you had the need, we never had trouble getting O&M money. . . .”

Barrett: My experience was that if you could really demonstrate you had the need, we never had trouble getting O&M money. It's not like it is now. Now the agencies have trouble getting appropriations for operations and maintenance.

“It wasn't like you had all the money you ever wanted to spend, but when it got down to the real serious stuff, I think we maintained those things pretty darn good. . . .”

It wasn't like you had all the money you ever wanted to spend, but when it got down to the real

serious stuff, I think we maintained those things pretty darn good. You know, we didn't let anything go by that needed to be done. We always seemed to have the money to repair the spillway gates and do the generators and all that stuff you needed to do. I never saw it as being a terribly big issue. We tried to control it.

Where we got in trouble was the project would want to buy two cranes and ten dozen pickup trucks or something, you know. And then we'd have trouble with *that*, because you couldn't really justify it. And those kinds of things—they were little issues. We didn't have really big problems with O&M.

Program Sessions and Skull Sessions

Storey: I think those were the days when they had the program sessions and the skull sessions.

Barrett: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Storey: Did you participate in any of that—with the preparation for any of that?

Program Conference Was Held in the Summer to Work out the Details of Budget Documents

Barrett: We would prepare a guy to go.

Skull Practice in February or March Prepared the Commissioner for Budget Hearings

You know, they had the program conference in the summer and the skull practice in February or March, and it was always Tom Vasey and Mike Catino would go to those. And we would gin up reams of stuff for them to take. While they were there, we would get daily phone calls and we would—because in a lot of ways that's where you sliced the pie. You know, if the Bureau had a target number they had to live with, that was kind of where the pie was sliced. Then we would get phone calls, “Well, what do you do if you have to take a \$50 million cut here? Can we live with a \$10 million thing? How much more money do we need for this?” We would really prepare them with volumes of material to take with them to those meetings, and then we would kind of work with them. But I never got to go because they went.

Storey: What did they have to say when they came back? Or did they?

Barrett: Well, usually it was a very, very, terribly busy time, because as soon as they got back we had to grind out all new program documents. And again we're doing stuff by hand in those days, and you're talking about big sheets of paper with

jillions of numbers on them to add up and check back and forth. So it was a very busy time.

But you remember, in those days California was kind of golden, politically, and you know we had big projects going on. I can remember dealing with how you deal with a budget cut. I can remember that because we would deal with budget cuts and things like that, but not really serious, serious stuff. They would come back and tell us all what a great conference it was. It was kind of exciting to send them off and exciting to have them come back, and we would watch with interest how they came back.

Mike Catino

Storey: What was Mike Catino like?

Barrett: Catino is a great guy. I like Mike. Mike kind of took me under his wing and helped me a lot, helped me understand, gave me a lot of career guidance. Nice, nice gentleman—I thought. I just really liked Mike. I've been to his home. Really a neat guy.

Storey: Did he have his finger on the pulse of the region?

Barrett: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. See, the program people really are uniquely placed to do that because you

know *everything* that's going on. Nobody spends a dime. When you get right down to it you don't do anything without spending money. And nobody spends any money that the program guy doesn't know about. So he's got to know what's going on. And I thought Mike knew *really* well what was going on in the region. *Later, many, many* years later, I wondered if he really had his finger on what was going on politically around him, but I think always knew what was going on. Inside he knew what was going on.

Storey: He was the division chief?

Barrett: In those days, I'm trying to think what he was. We had a Program Budget Division. Tom Vasey was assistant regional director and Catino was right under him, and he was like a division chief. If I remember right, Catino then became assistant regional director and ultimately was acting regional director. I don't know if he was ever really appointed—

Storey: He became regional director for about a year and a half or two years.

Barrett: He did get appointed regional director, that's right, yeah. Yeah, he did. But that's how he came up through that program chain.

Storey: Who was the head of the Budget and Finance Office?

Barrett: Jim Neal [phonetic]. Have you come across that name?

Storey: No, I haven't.

Barrett: Jim Neal was my boss. And then I think Catino was his boss, and Vasey was in and the regional director was—when I first went out there, Bellport was regional director.

Storey: Barney Bellport.

Barrett: Barney Bellport. He left soon after I got there, and after that was a guy that came from the Corps of Engineers.

Storey: Named Bob Pafford.

Bob Pafford

Barrett: Pafford, yeah. Yeah, he was regional director.

Storey: How did Reclamation folks to having a regional director from the Corps of Engineers?

Barrett: The guys out there kind of choked up on it, frankly. (laughter) If you really want to know,

they choked up on it a little bit.

But I guess one of the things I remember is Tom Vasey coming back from the first program conference he went to with Pafford and telling us that, "Pafford's okay. Don't worry about it. He's going to be okay." I remember that real plain, because we always had kind of a little post conference briefing session, and I can remember Vasey telling us, "Pafford's okay. Don't worry about it." I guess to me it didn't make that much difference, but to a lot of them it was a real shock.

Storey: I think two or three other people have told me *similar* stories.

Barrett: To have a change from the outside. Yeah, a guy from the outside.

Storey: Yeah. This was under Floyd Dominy's commissionership.

Floyd Dominy Becomes Commissioner

Barrett: Yes. I remember when Floyd Dominy got to be commissioner. I was in Sacramento then, and he made a swing around. They trooped us all over to the movie theater which was next door to the office, and he gave a little talk. I don't remember

what he said, but I remember the occasion. I think that was one of his first swings around.

Storey: How did people react to Floyd Dominy?

Barrett: I don't know. I didn't even pay attention to those things in those days. I just thought, "Well, here's another guy and he's 2,000 miles away and I don't care." You know, that's how I reacted to him. But I think it depends on where you are in the organization. I'm sure the regional director reacted a *lot* to it, but to me, it didn't make any difference.

Storey: How long were you in the Budget and Finance Office?

In 1964 Moved to Washington, D.C., to Be Budget Officer for the Water and Land Division

Barrett: I was there until '64. Then I went to Washington to be budget officer for the Water and Land Division. We called it the Code 400 Division, which is like the O&M Division they had.

Storey: Operation and Maintenance.

Barrett: Yeah. And back there they called it Water and Land Division, because we had a Power Division and a Water and Land Division. They created a

job of a budget guy for that division. They didn't have one, and they thought they needed done. They advertised, and Mike Catino says, "Why don't you put in for this job? It would be a good career move for you." And I thought about it. I said, "Well, why not?" It's another grade raise, you know. So I put in for it.

I went back on detail. I remember this really plain, because this was '63. [John F.] Kennedy was assassinated in November, and I went back there on the thirteenth of December for a three week detail right through Christmas, for them to look at me and me to look at them. Couldn't find a hotel room. That town was a zoo at that particular point in history. It's always been a little bit of a zoo, but was really a zoo then. And I remember that.

Then I came home and I didn't hear anything from them until about—well, it was skull practice time. It was a week before skull practice started. I think it was right around the first part of March. We didn't have faxes those days, there was electronic message of some kind, wanting to know if I could be back there the next week, *permanent*. I really didn't think I could move that fast. I went and told Mike. I said, "Mike, I'd like to take that job, but I'm not about to go back there. I got two weeks' notice."

Moved to D.C. with Two Weeks Notice in Time for Skull Practice

And he said, “Well, Cliff, he says, there's a time to do things, and I think this your time and you *really* ought to do it.” Probably the best advice I ever got.

So I said, “Okay, I will.” So I went home and talked to my wife and we decided we would do it. We sent them a fax back saying, “Cliff Barrett will be there in two weeks.”

We went home and called our real estate agent, sold our house in a week, and we were on our way, just like that, and I went back there to be budget officer for the Water and Land Division.

I got there for skull practice. I remember we arrived in Washington, checked into a motel, I call them up—and this is about like noon—and they said, “Can you come down right now?” And I said, “I guess I can.” So I got on a bus and went down into Washington. They were having the first day of skull practice.

Storey: This is practice for the commissioner to present the budget to Congress.

Barrett: This was when the commissioner practices to get ready to go to Congress, yeah. They called it skull practice, yeah. And they have all the regional directors in and some program people from each region, and they sit down and review the congressional budget, the way it's been sent to Congress. The game plan basically is to do any updating and think of any questions you might get asked and write answers for them, called them witness statements, and that's what they did. I was there that night. The whole first week I was there, my wife was out looking for a house and I'm going to skull practice.

Commissioner Dominy Was Very Good at Testifying Before Congress

Storey: And this would have been Commissioner Dominy?

“I’ve never seen a witness that could do it like he did. . . .”

Barrett: Oh, yeah.

Storey: I'm told he did this very well.

Barrett: One of the best. I've never seen a witness that could do it like he did. I think there's a lot of reasons for that. He was very good at it. He relied a lot on staff. Literally—I went to the

appropriation hearing that year, you know, as part of the staff—we literally had a five-foot shelf of *books*, ring binders, with *every* possible question you'd think he could get asked. And then we had to divide it up. I did the O&M stuff and somebody else. We would sit at the table, Dominy and the two assistant commissioners, and then the division heads would sit next to him. Then we would all sit behind *our* guy with our notebook or our two or three notebooks, however many it was.

Storey: And your guy would be the man—

Barrett: My guy was the assistant commissioner for operations. It was Gil Stamm. Gilbert Stamm was my guy. Now, I sat behind him, and they would ask a question. And you could hear it coming. They'd go through the budget kind of, and you could see about where they were, and you would kind of stay with that in your book. When you heard the question coming, you'd go to your book, pull out your paper, hand it to your guy. Dominy would *wing it* for ten or fifteen seconds, reach over, pick up the piece of paper, and read the answer. It was the slickest damn thing I've ever seen. You know, he was *good* at it. And if you didn't have an answer there, he would wing it, and then you'd hear about it. Literally, you'd hear a lot about not having the

answer for him.

But I don't want to imply he didn't know anything either. He *knew* all this stuff. We had carefully thought-out positions on almost every issue and every question you could take, and some of them were very, very detailed.

“You know, a lot of it was leading towards write-ins of money. . . .”

You know, a lot of it was leading towards write-ins of money. A congressman would say, “Well, how much money do you think you could spend on Whiskeytown Dam this year?”

(Makes the sound of pages being quickly turned.) “Well, we could spend \$15 million more dollars.”

And then we could back it up. We knew exactly how you would spend \$15 million. If they asked, we could say, “Well, so much for right-of-ways, so much for this, so much for that,” and he'd have all that. I don't think a human being could *remember* all that. But he knew. He knew enough to know there was a need for money, and he would start off saying, “Well, yes, it's been a good year.” By then we'd give him the piece of paper and he'd say, “Oh,

we could spend \$15 million more dollars.”
Those were probably the easy ones. There were tougher questions that.

“The point I'm trying to make is he was *brilliant* at that. . . .”

The point I'm trying to make is he was *brilliant* at that. He was *brilliant* at it. He would always begin the hearing with a slide show, and he would show slides of all the projects and just tell–tell about them. You've met him. The guy is, he's great. He can bring you along. You know what I mean?

Storey: Did you know in advance a lot of these questions were going to be coming?

“Some of them we wrote the questions and sent them up there to be asked. . . . If we didn't have enough money in our budget because OMB [Office of Management and Budget] cut us back and we knew we could spend some more money on a certain item, we would write a question . . . The budget and finance people, they were like this, very close to the committee staffers. . . .”

Barrett: Oh, yeah. Some of them we wrote the questions and sent them up there to be asked. A lot of them were money problems. If we didn't have

enough money in our budget because OMB [Office of Management and Budget] cut us back and we knew we could spend some more money on a certain item, we would write a question, “How much more money could you spend? What would you spend it on?” The budget and finance people, they were like this, very close to the committee staffers. We'd just take the questions up there, and at the appropriate time they'd say, the senator from California or whoever you were talking about, would say, “Well, couldn't you spend some more money here?” And build the record and give them the justification then to write the money into the budget.

Storey: I think I heard one time that the one of the congressmen asked the wrong question.

Barrett: Carl Hayden. You know Carl Hayden?

Floyd Dominy and Carl Hayden Getting out of Sync in the Questions Asked in a Hearing

Storey: Yes. I know who Mr. Hayden is.

Barrett: Well, he was so old. I can remember them wheeling him into the room. You'd almost have a dialogue written out, question-answer, question-answer, which we would sit down—I'm

not saying “we,” because in those days I didn't participate in that, but about two notches up a chain, they'd go up in there and they would sit down with the committee clerks and they'd work all this out. We would write the questions *and* the answers, and when you'd come to the hearing they would give Carl Hayden, “Here, here is a sheet of paper.” And he had the questions and Dominy had the answers.

Well, Hayden was so old he could hardly talk, and you couldn't really understand what he was saying, and sometimes they'd get out of sync, and literally you'd get out of synch. He'd be off asking the wrong questions where we were on the script, and then we'd have to go back and reconstruct the record to make it all read right.

But you talk about games being played, that was pretty routine in those days, because the Bureau and the committee staffers were really close. A great relationship built up with those people. That was the stuff that *Dominy* was really good at, was building those kinds of relationships.

Storey: A lot of people have said that he worked Congress very well.

Barrett: Oh, he played them like a violin. He was good at it. He was good at it. He really was.

Storey: You went there in about '61?

Barrett: I went there in '64. I was in Sacramento just almost exactly five years, '59 to '64.

Storey: Right. I skipped one of these positions here. And how long did you do this?

Barrett: In the budget stuff?

Until 1976 Worked as Budget Officer and “Special Projects Officer” in the Water and Land Division

Storey: Worked for the O&M office.

Barrett: In one job or another, clear up until 1976. I was budget officer, and then we kind of expanded that job and we called it special projects officer, and I reported directly to the division chief. When I first went there, they had a branch head I reported to, and really the work I did had nothing to do with what he was doing. His was kind of a statistical—they had a crop reporting mechanism going on there. It was called Economics and Statistics [Branch] was the name of that branch. They ginned up propaganda, not in the negative sense of the word, but they were the ones that did

a lot of the reporting and writing articles on Reclamation projects and how they were making out, and did economic studies on the benefits of Reclamation programs and that kind of thing. Then they just stuck this job in there for a place to land.

I worked in there for probably a couple of years, and then we got a new division chief. No, we didn't. We just did it. He created a new job called "special projects officer," and I took the budget function with me and went into that job. I did that plus other stuff for him, special projects he wanted done. I would do those projects.

Storey: But you were in this O&M Division *rather* than in a budget division?

Barrett: Yeah. Each division had its own planning head, its O&M guy. Power Division had its O&M guy.

Storey: His budget guy?

Barrett: His budget guy. And O&M had its budget guy. In the Budget Division, we kind of all fit into that. The Budget Division is the one that really went up and worked the Hill and stuff. We were kind of like helpers to them. I don't know. I

think what it really boiled down to, each division chief wanted his own budget guy, and then we would go to the program conferences. But I guess the *ultimate* responsibility for the budget lied in the Program and Finance Division, and we would feed into it. We worked real close with them.

Program Conference to Determine the Overall Reclamation Budget

Storey: Tell me about the program sessions. This is where, as I understand it, the budgeting, the *big* budget figures, were determined for each region and each major unit.

Reclamation's Budget Cycle

Barrett: Yeah. Well, it was kind of a cycle. The whole budget is cyclical in about a twice-a-year cycle, and we would make a budget call and ask them for their estimates of what they needed. We'd get budget estimates, and then we would gin on them, and then we'd send them back target figures either higher or lower. Then they would put together another round of budget documents, and then we would have what we called a program conference to sit down and talk about those. By then we had usually gotten some kind of a target figure to hit from the Department. So

we would then have to make their plans fit the target number. It always boils down to divvying the pot. That's as clear as I can put it—you know, you got a certain part of the money and you divvy it out, and that was what the program conference was all about.

Storey: And how did that happen?

Maurice Langley Was the Division Chief

Barrett: Well, I'm trying to think. How did it happen? Maurice Langley was my boss. He was the division chief.

Storey: Maury Langley.

Barrett: Maury Langley, yeah. Have you talked to him?

Storey: I haven't, no. He lives in Bethesda, as I understand it.

Gil Stamm, Assistant Commissioner for Project Development and Irrigation⁴

Barrett: Yeah, he does. He was my boss, and then our boss together was Gil Stamm, who was the assistant commissioner.

4. This assistant director's title lasted from 1964 to 1970. The title then became assistant commissioner–resource management.

“My job was to review all the O&M documents, except the power stuff, but all the water project O&M figures. . . .”

My job was to review all the O&M documents, except the power stuff, but all the water project O&M figures. I would review all those. My job was basically to come up with a whole bunch of piercing questions. Why do you need this money? Why do you need that money?

“I had to review all the construction programs for . . . what we called the construction prerequisites. . . .”

Then I would review all the construction programs, because we were involved in the repayment contracts and the right-of-way acquisition. That all came under the Water and Land Division. So I had to review all the construction programs for the right-of-way aspects and what we called the construction prerequisites. Did they have their repayment contracts all signed before they started, you know? So we had some input into the construction program.

How the Program Conference Was Organized

So I would review all of the construction

programs for those kinds of things, and we would gin up questions generally meant to challenge and also to prepare us to answer questions when we went to the Hill. We would sit down and each region would visit. It was kind of like a roundtable thing the O&M Division would set up a table, and each *region* would come by and spend a couple of hours with us, and we would go through their budgets and ask all our questions and things like that.

“We would shop for money . . .”

Then in the O&M program, I had a target figure to hit. I would be shopping for money. I would say, “Well, how much can you give up?” “Can you give up this?” “This item doesn't look right to me.” “Can you give up some money on this?” We would shop for money, is what we would do. It would be a week-long thing, and towards the end of the week we would get together, I would get together with Gil Stamm and Maury Langley, and I'd say, “Well, here's our number and here's where I think we can take the money. Here's how I think we can hit it.” And they would say, “Okay.”

Then, see, at the end of all that, then Dominy and the assistant commissioners and the regional directors—and the regional director brought their

program guy with them, and Gil Stamm would bring Maury Langley and *me* with him, and we would sit down in this big room and kind of review where we were. We would say, “Okay. Now, here's where I think we are. We're going to have to take some money out here and put some money here.” And the construction people are doing the same thing. You know, it's all around the big table.

Dominy would kind of say, “Okay. That's what we'll do.” And the regional director would throw up on the floor or do something.
(laughter)

“If you had a really *serious* issue, it always kind of got settled between regional director and Dominy, with the rest of us sitting around the table making some input. . . .”

That's where the dialogue was. That's where the real nut-cutting got done. If you had a really *serious* issue, it always kind of got settled between regional director and Dominy, with the rest of us sitting around the table making some input. That's how it was done.

Storey: Was there a lot of competition among the regions for money? I don't *quite sense* how this process works yet.

Barrett: Well, competition for money, I guess, yeah. Yeah, it was. And somebody just has to make the cut. And you decide, well, if you've got seven regions and their total budgets added together is \$100 million, and you've only got \$90 million, where can you find \$10 million out of all this? And we would just make our suggestions based on all this dialogue we'd had, you know, and kind of knowing where some of the bones are buried.

Then there were some programs that were a lot more flexible than others. In that time, within the O&M program we had a thing called soil and moisture conservation programs, which are *really* money the regions *gave* to projects to line canals with or do other moisture-saving things.

“So there were always some places like that where you could find a few *bucks* where it's not the end of the world, and those are usually the first places we looked. . . .”

There was another program we had which was kind of flaky; it had to do with weed control. This, again, was one where we got the appropriations, gave the money to the regions, and the regions would actually give it to irrigation projects to go out and do weed control, noxious weed control stuff. So there were

always some places like that where you could find a few *bucks* where it's not the end of the world, and those are usually the first places we looked.

**Colorado River Front and Levee System—
“Engineeringly, it was a beautiful project . . . but
environmentally you just couldn't sell it . . .”**

When I first went into it, one of the most controversial projects we had, and it was within the O&M, but it was actually a construction program, but it was within the O&M appropriation, was a thing called the Colorado River Front Work and Levee System, which is the Colorado River downstream of Hoover where they were trying to channel the river and build levees. This is before EISs [Environmental Impact Statements] and before NEPA [National Environmental Protection Act] and all that, but it was very controversial from an environmental viewpoint. Just getting banged on all the time by the environmentalists over this channelization of the Colorado River is what we were doing.

That was a place—it was big, big money and very controversial and always going to draw you a lot of questions and stuff at a hearing. So we would say, “Well, is this really worth going to fight for a big pot of money when we could use

some of this money over here?” That got to be kind of a political call. We would decrease the Front Work and Levee System Program and spend the money somewhere else. Well then that regional director would go ballistic, “This is the best program in the world. You can't cut this.” Those are the kind of things that Dominy would finally end up saying, “Well, yeah, we'll do this. We won't do that.”

Storey: Now, this might be Arleigh West?

Barrett: Arleigh West, exactly. It was Arleigh West. And after him, [Manuel] Lopez [Jr.]. I guess there's another guy in between. [Edward A.] Lundberg or something like that, wasn't it?

Storey: It was Ed Lundberg.

Barrett: Yeah. But, see, that was before CAP got off the ground, and that was the biggest program that region had. They had big dredges. They had *huge* dredges out there floating on the river, dredging and all this. And we were just catching *so much* flak over that, political flak, over dredging the Colorado River and straightening it out. Engineeringly, it was a beautiful project and we could save billions of acre-feet of water. It was a great project, but environmentally you just couldn't sell it, even then.

END SIDE 1, TAPE 2. AUGUST 14, 1996.
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. AUGUST 14, 1996.

Barrett: ... certain places, which would just lead you to an obvious budget cut that Dominy would go along with, because he doesn't want to go up there on the Hill and take a lot of heat over the Colorado River. He's got enough problems the way it is with Rainbow Bridge and Glen Canyon Dam. He doesn't need this kind of stuff. So there was those kinds of things.

Storey: Tell me about Gil Stamm.

Gil Stamm

Barrett: Gil Stamm was a prince of a guy. These are my heroes, you know, they really were, and, I guess, to some extent, they still are. They're still my heroes. Gil Stamm was a neat, neat guy.

When I first went to Washington, I guess the week I arrived there or maybe the week before, is when they made the big change and he moved up to be assistant commissioner and Maury Langley moved in to be division chief. And I got there. That all happened within about a two- or three-week period. So I kind of knew Gil Stamm right from the beginning of his assistant commissioner job. He was just a prince of a guy,

very much a gentleman.

When Dominy was mad at you, you knew it. He was merciless. He would just tear into you. And Gil Stamm wasn't like that. He could be mad at you and still love you. You know what I mean? (laughter) And not make you feel so bad. But he was also politically a very, very astute guy. Came out of the Northwest.

Storey: Came in from Boise.

Barrett: Came in from Boise. And very *different*, like night and day, from Dominy. They kind of made a nice pair, I thought, because—I don't know how to say it. What one lacked in smoothness, the other one had. They made a nice team to work with.

Storey: He got along with Dominy, apparently.

Floyd Dominy

Barrett: He got along with Dominy. I think Dominy enjoyed—and this is a harsh thing to say, but I think Dominy enjoyed making people feel bad. He enjoyed embarrassing people. He enjoyed coming down on them. If you stood up to him, then he would quit doing that and he would go find somebody else. But there were people in

the office who trembled, and he knew it. I don't know if this is the right place to say this, but he enjoyed, I think, coming down on people.

Storey: And also he was very demanding, I gather.

Barrett: Very demanding, very demanding guy. And I think at the bottom level, okay, but he and I, probably within the first six months I was there, had kind of a, you know—he called me in and we had kind of a “come to Jesus” talk. I just didn't sit down and cry, not literally, but I didn't cave in.

“He did that a lot. . . . he would just reduce people by climbing their frame in front of their peers, and I kind of think he enjoyed doing that. But if you ever stood up to him one or two times, he wouldn't do it anymore. . . .”

I think he appreciated that in people. If you didn't just sit there and hang your head and let him work you over, if you just kind of looked him in the eye and told him what was what and why, he respected that. He never got on my case again, never. Not that I made him happy all the time or that he wasn't mad at me, but he would never embarrass me in front of a group. He did that a lot. At staff meetings and some of these program conference meetings, he would just

reduce people by climbing their frame in front of their peers, and I kind of think he enjoyed doing that. But if you ever stood up to him one or two times, he wouldn't do it anymore.

So he and I had a good relationship. He used to call me up after he left the Bureau. He would call me up to go out and have lunch together, because he and I were kind of friends. But I think it all stemmed from probably the first time that he tried that on me, and I just was too dumb to cave into it. But Gil Stamm, on the other hand, was just a great guy, and I think he and Dominy got along real well, because I don't think Gil ever put up with any of that.

Storey: Now, you were in—it was Land and Water Division?

Barrett: Uh-huh.

Storey: And how long were you there?

In 1976 Became Assistant Commissioner—Planning and Operations

Barrett: Until 1976—I became assistant commissioner.

Storey: So you were there for the whole period, from '64 to '76.

Dick Schunick

Barrett: Yeah. Yeah. I was in the Water and Land Division. I was “special projects officer” and then the guy who—his name is Dick Schunick, he was Langley's assistant, he left and went to Central Arizona Project, and I took his job as assistant. Then shortly after that, Langley retired and I became division chief.

Storey: Do you have any insights into why Schunick went to CAP?

Barrett: Well there was one of the perpetual reorganizations going on, and he was on the reorganization team. I think he got out there and saw what was going on around, he just thought that would be a great job, so he went out there and took it.

Storey: He took it as, what, assistant project manager.

Barrett: He was assistant project manager. Cliff Pugh was project manager. And then when Cliff retired, he became—and I think he saw that coming, and he may have even had a promise that, “If you'll go out there, we'll make you project manager some day.” I don't know. He didn't leave because he didn't like where he was. I think he left because he saw a great opportunity

and took it, if that's kind of what you're getting at.

Storey: I was just wondering.

Barrett: I don't think he left because he didn't like where he was. He was good.

How Responsibilities Changed upon Moving from Being a Program Officer To Division Chief

Storey: You went from, I guess, being a program officer to being head of the division. How do your responsibilities change as you go through that progression?

Barrett: Oh, a lot. A lot.

Storey: Okay. A whole lot.

Barrett: They change a whole lot, yeah. Well, I think the scope of what you're talking about changes immensely. For example, at that period in time, within the division, we had all the repayment contracts for water projects were handled by that division. The excess land law administration was handled by that division, *none* of which were really program issues, but you had to get up to them so you can handle those. We had the youth programs. We had the Job Corps centers

and the YCC [Youth Conservation Corps] camps and YECC [Youth Energy Conservation Corps] camps. They were all administered out of that division.

“ . . . there was a major expansion in the scope of what I was working with. . . .”

So there was a major expansion in the scope of what I was working with.

We also kind of oversaw the operation and maintenance of the projects, the hands-on engineering, construction-type operation and maintenance. Of course, I was pretty much into that from being the program officer, because that's what the program officer dealt with a lot, but it was a *major expansion* of responsibilities. At that point in time, there were some really ticklish issues.

“Excess-land issues were just really coming to the fore, the 160-acre limitation on farms and how much subsidy there was involved. . . .”

Excess-land issues were just really coming to the fore, the 160-acre limitation on farms and how much subsidy there was involved. Basically that was a California problem *driving* the whole Bureau, the Central Valley Project farmers. That's where the problem was, and that problem

was just backing out over the whole Bureau.

So those kinds of things were just a major addition to the whole. The time I spent as being special project officer kind of brought me into some of those issues, because some of the special projects I dealt with were certain excess-land issues and those kind of things, repayment contract issues.

Storey: That was being handled out of Washington rather than out of Denver at that time?

“Repayment contracts were basically a regional/Washington office thing. Excess land was a regional/Washington office thing. . . .”

Barrett: Yes. Repayment contracts were basically a regional/Washington office thing. Excess land was a regional/Washington office thing. Denver didn't deal much in those kinds of things.

Denver's Responsibility for O&M

The division's counterpart in Denver was called Code 400. But I think it was called the O&M Division in Denver. I think it was probably called Water-O&M, maybe, because it didn't do power stuff. But they were more concerned with maintenance activities and going

out to the regions and reviewing projects and seeing how well maintained they were and making suggestions as to what they could do to do things better, and those kinds of things. They dealt with that. But the repayment contracts and right-of-way acquisition issues and excess-land issues were basically a regional-Washington office kind of thing, and Denver didn't get involved much in it.

Storey: How were we doing on excess-land issues, and why was it driving us so much?

Excess Land Issues

Barrett: Well, because Reclamation law says you can only receive water for 160 acres per owner. Well, in most of the area, that was not an issue, because that was the most anybody could really handle anyway. You had 160 acres, husband and wife could have 320. If you've got a couple of kids, you could put title and you could get a 640-acre farm, which is a pretty reasonable-sized farm almost anyplace except California.

“ . . . out in California, especially in Westlands Water District, we had those huge 1,000-acre farms, corporate farms, and they were trying to find ways to get around the law. . . . ”

But out in California, especially in Westlands Water District, we had those huge 1,000-acre farms, corporate farms, and they were trying to find ways to get around the law. That's my view, but I think it's right. We had a program whereby they could receive water for so many years while they brought themselves into compliance, but at the end of that time, they had to be in compliance with the law.

We had the whole branch of our division whose job it was to monitor all that and make sure these guys are bringing themselves into compliance with the law. They would send in documents saying, "Well, here's how we've divested ourselves." And we'd review all those and take them down to the Solicitor's office and get legal reviews and decide whether that was a legitimate meeting of the law or not.

But in California it got to be, frankly, those people just dragged their heels. They didn't want to.

"They would find all kinds of *scams* to keep their land, and it just got to be a big political issue in California. . . ."

They would find all kinds of *scams* to keep their land, and it just got to be a big political issue in

California. You had the people who thought that was *wrong*, fighting to have the farms broken up. You know, there was a big lobby out there. I remember one of them was Father Vizard [phonetic], who was a political activist in the Catholic Church out there and the [National] Land For People group who wanted all those farms broken up so that more people could come in and farm in the Central Valley, the [National] Land For People group. It just got to be—it was a very, very political issue, and the Bureau was just right in the middle of all that.

Reclamation Reform Act of 1982

That's what all resulted in the Reclamation Reform Act of whatever year that was.

Storey: ~~1983.~~

Barrett: 1982. ~~'82 or '83, yeah.~~ And that was the culmination of all that, was Reclamation Reform Act. But you go back and review the record on that, and it was just horrendous political battles, fights, and schemes trying to enforce the basic Reclamation law which said you could have 160 acres for a man, or 320 for a man and his wife. Big, big issue.

Storey: There were O&M offices in the regions, an

O&M office in Denver, O&M office in Washington. How were the responsibilities split up or shared?

Barrett: Well, I think when you're talking about O&M, not construction or project planning where you follow the same pattern, in O&M it was not so much a source of conflict, I think. Actually, the water users, in most cases, were responsible for cooperating and maintaining the projects. Only in Central Valley and one or two other cases did you actually have the *Bureau* doing the hands-on operation and maintenance. Most of the other places had been transferred to the water users. That was pretty straightforward. You'd go out there and paint your gates and clean your canals and operate the projects. That's what the regional office did, and the region actually did it in the field offices—a lot of them had field offices. You know, there's a Tracy office and a Shasta office and a Red Bluff office.

Denver O&M Oversight Function

Then the Denver O&M group, theirs was primarily a function of oversight. They did review of maintenance every year, every two or three years. They'd go out and review the maintenance to make sure everything was being done right and they'd make recommendations to

the region, “Well, you need to do this. You need to paint these gates or you need to do something.” And they would do the review of maintenance. I guess it was a quality-control thing, as near as I can describe it.

The Washington office function, in that particular area, was basically one of getting the money. We never went out and told people how to paint their gates or when to do this thing. We relied on Denver to do that. It was kind of a policy thing.

Then we had the excess land issues, which is also O&M, and the regions had their—and John Budd was one of them—had the land-management people that dealt with that. And Denver never messed around in that. That was a regional-Washington office thing. And there it was basically a matter of the region working with the landowner and us working with the political end and trying to make sure it was kind of bridging the gap there.

“You'd have the people out in the field doing hands-on stuff, and we were dealing with the political issues . . .”

You'd have the people out in the field doing hands-on stuff, and we were dealing with the

political issues and kind of holding hands with the region to make sure nothing went wrong. It was that kind of a thing.

Job Corps Centers

The Job Corps centers, which we worked on, each region had an office that would manage their Job Corps centers, and the Washington office was kind of a policy oversight kind of thing, and, again, being the liaison with the Department and the Department of Labor, who [it] really was their program, Department of Labor program that we were running for them.

In Project Planning the Denver Office Would Second Guess the Regions

So I didn't really see a lot of conflict there. In the planning area, it was a little different. It was a whole lot different in the planning area, because the Denver office always tried to, in my view, second-guess the regions on project planning. Instead of giving technical oversight, they were also applying policy, a little bit of politics, which was really supposed to come out of the Washington office. And through innumerable reorganizations, we tried to get that all straightened out, but it doesn't straighten out very easy because people don't want to straighten

it out. Everybody has their own turf, you know.

Storey: Tell me about your grade progression in the Land and Water Division.

Grade Progression in the Washington Office

Barrett: My grade progression? Well, I went back there for a 12. I was promoted to a grade 13.

Storey: Was that when you took Schunick's position?

Barrett: No, no. That was in the same place I started out. When they made me "special project officer," I got a 14. Then I went to Schunick's job for a 15. In that time, the assistant and the division chief were both the same grade. So I was a 15. When I was a division chief, I was a 15 also. Then in 1976, I moved up to the an assistant commissioner, and went in for a 16.

Storey: And then presumably soon after into the Senior Executive Service (SES)?

Goes into the Senior Executive Service

Barrett: Yeah, then they gave us that. I forget what year that was. That was probably towards the end of the [Richard M.] Nixon Administration when they created the Senior Executive Service, if I

remember right. And then I went into Senior Executive Service then. No, no, it was during the [Jimmy] Carter Administration that they did that, because Keith Higginson was commissioner when I went into the Senior Executive Service.

Storey: That would have been after '76.

Barrett: It was during the Carter Administration that they did that, yeah. Actually, it was kind of interesting, because when I left the division to go be assistant commissioner, at that *particular* time assistant commissioners were like Schedule C. They were quasi-politically appointed. And then shortly after that, we converted that job back into the career service, and then from there we went into SES, is how it worked out.

Those are little fine points of personnel management, but they meant a lot to the guy it happens to, because you leave quite a bit of security behind when you went to a Schedule C. They had to be White House- and Congress-approved. But they were Schedule C appointments. Then we actually converted it back to a career position, and from there went into the SES, which is kind of going the other direction again.

Storey: Which assistant commissioner's position was

this?

Barrett: Well, when I started out, it was assistant commissioner for planning. Gil Stamm was commissioner then, and the assistant commissioner for operations and maintenance was—I can't think of his name. He was regional director in Boise and came in to be assistant commissioner for operations. I'm getting this all mixed up. In those times, there was an assistant commissioner for planning, and an assistant commissioner for operations, and an assistant commissioner for power. There was three. And then there was another one for administration and another one for construction. There was a whole slew of them back then. I went in to be the planning one. I moved from the O&M function to the planning function to be assistant commissioner.

Went to Training at the Federal Executive Institute

What had happened was I was in the job as division chief, and I got selected to go to the Senior Executive Service training. Not SES. What was it called? Federal Executive Institute is what it was called. It was down in Charlottesville. I went to the Federal Executive Institute. It was a six-month program.

Applied to Be Assistant Commissioner for Planning When Jim O'Brien Left.

While I was down there, Jim O'Brien, who had been the assistant commissioner for planning, decided to leave the Bureau, and I applied for that job. I came back from the Executive Institute, I'd only been back a couple of weeks, then they made the selection to move me into that job.

“So then I found myself over planning, which is a whole other ball game. I knew all the *people* . . .”

So then I found myself over planning, which is a whole other ball game. I knew all the *people*, had been around them for years. But it was a major switch of area responsibility for me.

Storey: What were you planning?

Barrett: Projects. This is where they did Animas-LaPlata, Dolores Project, Dallas Creek. Most of those projects were in the planning stages then. It was a lot of CRSP⁵ projects, the Pick-Sloan projects, the whole planning process, which included doing EISs and stuff like that, the whole project planning function.

5. Colorado River Storage Project.

Storey: You mentioned a few minutes ago that the relationship between the planning office in Washington and in the region and in Denver and so on was *different*.

“ . . . what we were striving for was to have planning done in the regions, on-the-ground planning work done in the regions, Denver office do the technical review, and then Washington office doing the policy reviews and making the policy cuts . . . ”

Barrett: It is. It was quite different, because what we were striving for was to have planning done in the regions, on-the-ground planning work done in the regions, Denver office do the technical review, and then Washington office doing the policy reviews and making the policy cuts, which basically boiled down to are we going to go seek authorization for this project or not. You know, that was the policy cut. Is this a good enough project to go forward? Probably at several stages in the planning process you have to decide—is this worth doing or not. Is there anything here, or should we just abandon and get on with something else?

“What we continually found was the Denver office trying to make that call, especially in the area of economics. . . .”

What we continually found was the Denver office trying to make that call, especially in the area of economics. There was a particular group of economists in the Denver office who weren't content to do technical reviews of economic studies. They wanted to apply policy cuts as a part of their review. And there was a *lot* of *contention* about that.

“ . . . we did a major reorganization under Keith Higginson's reorganization plan. It was driven basically by Teton, but we ended up reorganizing the whole *Bureau*. . . .”

In fact, that was one of the things that led to the—Keith Higginson, when he was commissioner, we did a major reorganization under Keith Higginson's reorganization plan. It was driven basically by Teton, but we ended up reorganizing the whole *Bureau*.

“One of the big thrusts . . . was to say one more time as plainly and clearly as we could that the Denver office was the technical service group, *not* a policy program management group . . .”

One of the big thrusts we had on that was to say one more time as plainly and clearly as we could that the Denver office was the technical service group, *not* a policy program management group,

and there was a *lot* of *hard, hard* feeling over that, just a lot of hard feeling over that.

**During the Reorganization under Higginson
Became Assistant Commissioner—Planning and
Operations**

When you asked what my job was, and that reorganization is when we *eliminated* two assistant commissioner jobs and combined them, and then that's when I became assistant commissioner for planning *and* operations. That included, by then, power operations, too.

Storey: This was under Keith Higginson?

Barrett: It was under Keith Higginson.

Ellis Armstrong

Storey: Well, since his name has come up, let's go back and do the commissioners. After Dominy left, Ellis Armstrong became commissioner.

Barrett: Ellis Armstrong came, yeah.

Storey: What was he like as commissioner?

“He was an engineering engineer. . . .”

Barrett: As commissioner. Well, Ellis was a great engineer, and he was a real flag-waver for American Society of Civil Engineering (ASCE). He was an engineering engineer. Floyd Dominy was not an engineer. Floyd was–

Storey: Ag economist.

Barrett: Agricultural economist, I think, yeah. Armstrong was a *real* engineer, and he had built the St. Lawrence Seaway, and he had been–

Storey: I'm sorry. He was an agricultural major, not an ag economist. That's Bill Martin.

Barrett: Yeah. Bill Martin. I liked Bill Martin, too. He and I are contemporary. But, anyway, I'd be curious to hear what all these other guys said about these people. But the way I saw it, Armstrong was an engineering engineer. One of my first encounters with Armstrong is he had to write a paper to deliver to an ASCE conference up in New Jersey, and he ran out of time and called me up to his office and says, "Cliff, I need you to write a paper for this ASCE conference."

I said, "What about?" He said it had to do with building buildings on old swamp land. I said, "I don't know anything about that."

And he said, “Oh, I've got some books for you and some papers I've written.”

So I went down to my office and patched together this speech for him out of other speeches he had given on this subject. It had nothing to do with Bureau of Reclamation. I wrote this speech for him and it turns out he couldn't go, and he sent me to New York City to deliver this paper. So that was my first real eyeball-to-eyeball experience with Ellis Armstrong.

In his way, he was not very smooth. When you go from Dominy to Ellis Armstrong, it's like you've gone the whole length of the scale—do you know what I mean—in terms of smoothness. Now, Ellis Armstrong is not dumb. He's a smart, smart man and a great engineer and a pretty fairly good politician. He never would have gotten where he was if he hadn't have been a good political Republican guy. But they were vastly different, and I think the shock, it was a real culture shock for the whole Bureau. You go from kind of like one extreme to the other.

**“ . . . Ellis was—well, we used to make fun of him. . .
.”**

And Ellis was—well, we used to make fun of him.

We did, because he had some mannerisms and characteristics which were easy to mimic and make fun of. And I think that says a little bit, the fact that we would do that.

Storey: And after Mr. Armstrong was Mr. Stamm, whom you've already discussed.

Barrett: Gil Stamm. Yeah, and Stamm, I think, really made a great commissioner. He was good. And then, see, he's the one that pulled me up to be assistant commissioner.

Storey: Why did he leave?

Gil Stamm Left at a Change of Party

Barrett: Why did Gil Stamm leave?

Storey: Um-hmm.

Barrett: Well, we had a change of party, for one thing. We had a change of presidents, didn't we?

Storey: Yes. In '77 Jimmy Carter would have been—

Barrett: Yeah, that was when the Carter Administration came in. Everybody left.

Storey: I would have thought that the commissioner's job

was not a political one.

“ . . . it was the Nixon Administration that put Armstrong in. That was the beginning of the end, as far as having career people be Commissioners. . . .”

Barrett: Well, through Dominy, Dominy rode out one administration after another. But it was the Nixon Administration that put Armstrong in. That was the beginning of the end, as far as having career people be Commissioners. Armstrong actually was in the Bureau when he got to be commissioner. He was assistant regional director here in Salt Lake City.

Storey: But he had been put in here by Dominy to prepare him to move into the commissionership.

Barrett: That was a holding position. That was a holding position for him, yeah. And then when the politics came, he was ready to move up.

“Then they picked Stamm, who was actually the last of the career guys to be commissioner, and I think that was because he was politically very strong on the Hill. . . .”

Then they picked Stamm, who was actually the last of the career guys to be commissioner, and I

think that was because he was politically very strong on the Hill. He had a *lot of friends* on the Hill, and he had a lot of support from the NWRA, which is the lobbying group. I think that's how he managed it. He's very, very respected and well thought of.

I think a lot of people, after Armstrong, they wanted somebody from the inside that they knew. You know what I mean? And that's how he got the political support.

Storey: And then Higginson came in.

Keith Higginson

Barrett: Higginson came in. Higginson was State engineer in Idaho. He was on the Teton Dam Review Commission. You know, by now Teton Dam has failed, and the government created this commission. He was Governor Andrus' appointee to that review commission on Teton Dam. Andrus lines up to be Secretary of Interior. Higginson is a natural to be commissioner of Reclamation. I mean, he'd reviewed the whole problem, and now he's going to come in and solve it, and that was his charge. That's how I saw it. He came. He had a mission, and his mission was to "fix the Bureau."

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. AUGUST 14, 1996.
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 3. AUGUST 14, 1996.

Storey: This is Brit Storey with Clifford I. Barrett on August the 14th, 1996.

Barrett: By the time his tour was over, he was doing great. I think for a little while maybe he was in over his head a little bit. But one thing I noticed about him, this was the “hit list” thing, too, you know.

Jimmy Carter’s “Hit List”

Of course, we had had the “hit list” before he got there, before he showed up on the scene. Don Anderson, who was the assistant commissioner for programs and finance and administration, had been named acting commissioner while we didn't have one. Stamm had left, and Don Anderson was acting. That's when the “hit list” happened. That was like doomsday. We had this list of seventeen or so projects that Carter wanted killed, and we had to do quickly little emergency studies on each one and justify them and all this.

Then Higginson showed up in, I think literally just a matter of maybe a couple of weeks, and we had to go make this big presentation to the—what is it called, whatever

group that Carter had set up to review all these projects, and we had to go down there and make all these presentations. We'd called in our planning officers from all the regions to help us write reports on these projects. And Higginson showed up. I thought to myself, well, now, here's the death knell, you know.

“ . . . strangely enough, he was very objective. There were some projects which we knew were doggies. . . .”

But strangely enough, he was very objective. There were some projects which we knew were doggies. We knew that, and we were ready to admit it. And there were some projects which we thought ought to move ahead.

We sat down with him and went through all those. He kind of picked up the baton and went to bat for all these projects, which just *amazed* me, because I thought the politics was going to be such that he would be on the other side of every one of those issues, and he wasn't. I think his integrity—and he did have a lot of personal integrity—I think *that's* what won the day for him, because he came in, frankly, being the enemy, from the inside. We only saw him as, “Oh, my God, here's the end of the world coming down on us.” The way he handled going through the “hit

list” made him friends all over the Bureau, both inside and with the water constituency groups. Kind of amazing. It was an amazing act. He did good. Kind of a neat guy.

Personally, I'll never forget this. This is kind of a little personal story. His first day, we'd been told, “Keith Higginson is going to be commissioner. You've got maybe a few days to get ready for him.” So Don Anderson and I had been working on briefing books. We'd been working on this for a couple of weeks so we could sit down with the new commissioner and just tell him everything he needed to know, because budget hearings were coming. This is a bad time of year to change horses. So we were ready to brief him up on everything he needed to know, and we had briefing books prepared by the readings on all the issues and what the projects were, just to walk him through the whole thing. We were all ready to do this.

He showed up, Don Anderson went in to visit with him for a while, came out about the color of that white blackboard, because I mean white.

Storey: Very white.

Barrett: Very white. And he said, “He wants to see both of us.”

I says, "Okay." So we walked in and sat down.

He just kind of started off by introducing himself, introducing us to him. He said, "What is your status?"

At that particular point in time we were both career employees. We said, "We're career employees."

He said, "That's too bad. I wanted to replace you with somebody I trusted."

Talk about getting off on a bad foot, we were both white as sheets. That's how we started with that kind of a feeling. We're thinking, "This guy wants to axe us out of here," but I think, to his credit, he learned very quickly that you can't *fire* all the people who know where the bones are buried. He couldn't fire us. He could make us move; he could make us very miserable and we'd *want* to move. But he didn't do it. He figured out very quickly that you need somebody around you who knows where the bones are buried.

So, as it turns out, after a very rocky start, then he brought in a special assistant who turned out to be a real turkey, and he saw the problem

there, and he got rid of that guy. He did very, very well. He really did. In fact, I've got a lot of respect for Keith Higginson.

Storey: Who was the special assistant?

Barrett: His name was ~~Tom Curtis~~—Ted, no, Theodore— Ted Curtis was his name. Ted Curtis. I don't know where he found him, but the guy was really—he was just bad news. I think within a few months Higginson recognized that he'd made a terrible mistake, and shoot the guy off. He ended up finally working in Denver, finding a job in Denver.

Storey: A guy named Bob Jansen?

Bob Jansen⁶

Barrett: Bob Jansen. Jansen. Yeah.

Storey: Became chief engineer.

Barrett: He became chief engineer. It was called assistant commissioner for something or other, *and* chief engineer, I think it was. Anyway, he was in charge of that whole Denver design

6. Between September 1977 and June 1980 Bob Jansen, successively, held the positions of director, office of design and construction; assistant commissioner for design and research; and assistant commissioner—dam and structural safety.

construction office. Yeah.

Storey: How did that work? That was a Higginson appointment also, I believe.

Barrett: That was a Higginson appointment. If I remember right, he was also on the Teton Dam Investigating Commission. His mission was very clear-cut. His mission was to grab a hold of the design construction process and to identify anything in it that would *lead* to that kind of a situation again. Were there construction problems? Were there problems in the regional office, in the construction engineer's? He had a very specific mission, I think, to *fix* the problem, perceived or real, but his job was to fix it and to grab a hold of it. He was tough. I think he could afford to be, because I don't think he ever planned on making a career out of it. He knew he was there for a set period of time. I think that was his game plan right out of the box was to come in and do that job and leave. So he really didn't.

Turf Battle with Bob Jansen

You know, if you're going to stay someplace a long, long time, you act differently than you do if you know you're going to leave again. You can see that. He and I had a kind of a turf battle,

really, over some things. Had to do with review of maintenance, because Review of Maintenance Program was in the O&M Division, yet his view was, "Well, that's an engineering function, and therefore it ought to be in Engineering Division, and I will take charge of it." He and I had a lot of hard discussions about that, and finally worked them through to where he did the dams and we did the canals, which was not a bad split really.

Storey: Well, I'd like to keep going, but we've been at it almost three hours now.

Barrett: Oh, we have been, haven't we. It's a long time.

Storey: I'd like to ask whether or not you're willing for information on these tapes and resulting transcripts to be used by researchers.

Barrett: Sure.

Storey: Good. Thank you very much.

END SIDE 1, TAPE 3. AUGUST 14, 1996.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 1. AUGUST 15, 1996.

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Clifford I. Barrett, former regional director of the Upper

Colorado Region of the Bureau of Reclamation, in the offices of the Upper Colorado Region of the Bureau of Reclamation in Salt Lake City, Utah, on August 15th, 1996, at about nine o'clock in the morning. This is tape one.

Became Aware of Political Influences When He Moved to Washington

I was wondering if you would tell me when you began to see political influences operating in the way decisions were made in Reclamation. At what stage in your career in Washington did that happen?

Barrett: I guess the first time I ever became ever really cognizant of the political end is when I moved to Washington. You could see it right away.

“ . . . when the [Dwight D.] Eisenhower Administration came. . . . They did a big 10 percent budget cut or something. And you'd feel that right away, because it just took all your numbers and threw them in the trash and you start over again. . . . ”

Back up. In the budget field, you would see it even in the regions, you know, like when the [Dwight D.] Eisenhower Administration came. I guess it was Eisenhower. They did a big 10 percent budget cut or something. And you'd feel

that right away, because it just took all your numbers and threw them in the trash and you start over again. I remember when [John F.] Kennedy got elected President, there was a big push to *spend* money. So we went through again and redid all our budgets to try to pump more money into the economy, you know, through government construction programs was the idea.

So, you know, you could see that effect right away. Almost anywhere in the Bureau you could feel that, and I think those were political things. They were just trying to deal with national economic issues using public works as a mechanism. But in Washington is where I first saw it at, I guess, a more close-up, gut level.

Floyd Dominy Calls Carl Hayden about the OMB Passback Levels for Reclamation's Budget

I guess the first time I really remember seeing it in action was, it was in the fall and we'd gotten our budget pass-back figures from OMB [Office of Management and Budget], which then gives you the target to hit for, what you're going to send to Congress for the budget request. We'd just gotten them back that morning and we'd had a chance to review them and hash them over. Then we had a meeting in Dominy's office to go over with him what the results of the OMB were, and they were

pretty *big* construction cuts. And I'll never forget this, Floyd pushed the button on his phone, gets the secretary and says, "Get me Carl." Well, that was Carl Hayden. And the next thing you know, you could only hear one side of the conversation, but Dominy just ranted and raved about the budget. And he says, "Are you going to let them do that to us?" (laughter)

Storey: (laughter) That's a wonderful story.

"That's the first time I saw real gut-level politics being played out. . . ."

Barrett: And, you know, by magic, within a few days the budget suddenly got raised. That's the first time I saw real gut-level politics being played out.

Storey: And it's those kinds of things I'm interested in.

Barrett: That was just a classic example of that, those political kinds of things.

Storey: But he could rant and rave with Carl Hayden?

Barrett: Oh, yeah. He just said, "Look at these numbers." And he read them and he just says, "Are you going to let them do that to us?" I suppose Hayden called the White House, and the White House called OMB, and we got new numbers.

That was back in the days when commissioners could do those kinds of things, you know. It was interesting. But that's the first time I ever saw politics being really played out.

“ . . . the excess-land thing. There was a lot of politics being played in that. . . . ”

I think we talked a little bit yesterday about the excess-land thing. There was a lot of politics being played in that. When the people signed their original contracts, they had like ten years to bring themselves into compliance with the law. There was a leeway period—when the project started delivering water, then they had ten years to divest them of their excess lands, and then they would come up with these compliance proposals. In the Division of Water and Land was where those were all handled. I can remember very clearly we would talk about those and then maybe do a little—not at my level, but up the line, Gil Stamm or somebody would do an informal consultation with the local congressmen and maybe the chairman of the committee. Then we'd decide if we could get the solicitor to bless it and we all said it was okay, then we would kind of check to see if it was politically acceptable, I guess.

Storey: But that has to be a fine art, because on the one

hand, you're constrained by the law and what you can do legally and illegally. And on the other hand, you've got these politicians *pushing* on you. How do you try and work those kinds of things out?

The Solicitor Has a Lot to Say about What a Bureau Can do

Barrett: Well, if you have a legal reading from the solicitor that says flat out you can't do it, then your direction is pretty clear-cut. But if the solicitor is saying, "Well, you could make this work." Depending a lot on who the solicitor is, you know. Some kind of solicitors will say, "Well, you tell me what you want to do and I'll help you find a way to do it." And others, I think, place themselves in a position to be policymakers through legal dealings. We saw a lot of that more later on in the Bureau's history.

“. . . if it was a dicey political situation, people like Gil Stamm and Floyd Dominy [would] run the trapline . . .”

Once you got through your legal calls that were made, then if it was a dicey political situation, people like Gil Stamm and Floyd Dominy [would] run the trapline, is what happened. At my level, we never did that.

Storey: Well, at your level *then*.

“They had a lot of heartburn if they thought we were talking to people on the Hill. . . .”

Barrett: At my level then, yeah. They never liked us to do that. They had a lot of heartburn if they thought we were talking to people on the Hill. So, you know, we just kind of watched it happen.

Getting a New Airplane for Commissioner Dominy

Storey: Did you happen to be at the budget hearings when Floyd Dominy introduced the idea of getting a building in Denver, or buying himself a new airplane?

Barrett: I remember the airplane. I don't remember the building. I think maybe the building was before I got there. But the airplane incident I remember very well. He had an old Aero Commander, which wasn't pressurized. It wasn't very comfortable, and he was pushing for a new one. I think one of the ways he did it, he was always volunteering to take congressmen and senators on plane rides, you know, and how much better this would be if we had a pressurized cabin. We'd go a little bit higher and miss the rough air, you know. But I remember the hearing where he pled the case.

Dominy Defends Building Page, Arizona, Before Congress

I also remember the hearing where we were talking about the city of Page, Arizona, and building that town for the government employees to live in, and he was getting a lot of flak from the congressional committee and, I think, from OMB on that one. He gave a very excellent speech in the hearing about you can't expect these people to go down there and live in tents and drink the muddy river water. It was quite a speech he gave to the committee on that.

Storey: About building Page?

Barrett: About building Page, Arizona, yeah.

Storey: Page is pretty isolated, isn't it?

Barrett: It is. It's out in the absolute middle of nowhere. Yeah, you really can't expect people to go up there to live in tents and drink muddy water for as long as it takes to build that dam, you know.

Storey: Well, you know, in Reclamation's early days, they did. (laughter)

Barrett: They did. (laughter) Yeah, that was then.

Storey: Does all that appear in the *Congressional Record*?

Barrett: I think not in the *Congressional Record*, but in the record of the hearings.

Storey: In the hearings records.

Editing Hearings Transcripts

Barrett: You can get the hearing transcripts. I suppose it's all there somewhere. I'm sure they *save* all that stuff. I remember we used to get the transcript of the hearing, and then they'd give us like overnight to edit it and take out obvious mistakes, you know.

Storey: How quickly did you get the transcripts, do you remember?

Barrett: Oh, probably within two days after the hearing, and then we would have a real short time to sit down. There was two things. There would be blank places. They would ask a question. If we didn't have the answer, we'd say, "Can we furnish that answer for the record?" And they'd say yeah. And then when the transcript came, we usually had like, maybe, two days, three days at the most, to edit it and give them all the stuff which would fill in those blank spaces for the

record.

“It was a really *busy* time around hearings. Getting ready and having a hearing and then for about a week afterwards cleaning up the loose ends . . .”

It was a really *busy* time around hearings. Getting ready and having a hearing and then for about a week afterwards cleaning up the loose ends was really a busy time.

Storey: Did you travel much when you were in Washington?

Barrett: Yeah.

Storey: This would have been the sort of mid-sixties on.

Didn't Travel Much until He Be Became Division Chief

Barrett: Yeah. When I was *budget* guy in Washington, about the only travel I did was I would go to the program conferences and then maybe one other thing a year to go out and just kind of get a feel for a project. Didn't do a whole lot of travel. As division chief, I did a *lot* of traveling.

How Travel Changed over the Years

Storey: When you traveled, how did you travel? Let me ask this question in a little bit more detail. At first when you came to Reclamation, if you traveled, how did you travel? Then when you moved to Washington in your early years, how did you travel? And then later on, how did you travel?

Barrett: Well, let's see. When I first came to Reclamation in the E&R Center, I never went anywhere. Travel wasn't an issue.

Storey: What about when you went to Sacramento?

Barrett: When I went to Sacramento, I actually rode the train from Denver to Sacramento.

Storey: Why?

Barrett: Because I didn't like flying.

Storey: Oh, okay.

Barrett: I just didn't really like flying at all, so I rode the train to Sacramento. And then when we were in Sacramento, we traveled around the region always in a car. We just took the car and drove up to wherever we were going. When I moved to Washington as budget officer, about the only

trips I made, like I mentioned, were to the program conference, just flew commercial. Sometimes when you got to the region and they wanted to show you something, if the region had a plane, you'd take a regional plane or maybe sometimes a charter, charter plane, to go where you wanted to go and back.

I can remember coming to Salt Lake City and Dave Crandall was regional director. We got in a plane and flew over to look at the Animas-LaPlata Project. I can remember that, that kind of thing. When I got to be assistant commissioner, it was always just commercial airline travel.

Storey: I'm just trying to place where the transition began, because in the early fifties there wasn't plane service to a lot of our areas.

Barrett: Oh, yeah, there wasn't. And a lot of the people like Louis [G.] Puls, who was the—he wasn't assistant commissioner and chief engineer, he was more like the chief of the Design Division, and he was very high up in the hierarchy there in Denver, he refused to ride airplane, so he went everywhere by train. And when they'd have skull practice, he would leave a few days early to take the train back to Washington. So I think there was a transition. Today you ride the

airplane like you get on the bus, you know. You think very little about it. But it was almost all commercial travel just about.

“Sometimes . . . Dominy, for some reason or other, brought the Bureau plane back into Washington, and then he would have to find a way to get it back to Denver. . . . but my bosses would very carefully avoid any travel to Denver so they wouldn't have to ride that damn plane all the way back to Denver. . . .”

Sometimes, once in a while, Dominy, for some reason or other, brought the Bureau plane back into Washington, and then he would have to find a way to get it back to Denver. I remember my bosses, it wasn't a problem for me, but my bosses would very carefully avoid any travel to Denver so they wouldn't have to ride that damn plane all the way back to Denver. (laughter) It was kind of like whoever got the short straw had to fly in the Bureau plane all the way to Denver. You know, in those days you had to stop for—I think they had to stop twice on the way.

Storey: For fuel?

Barrett: For fuel and breaks, yeah. That didn't happen very often. But it used to be kind of a joke amongst us that we would always try not to go

anywhere when the Bureau plane was in Washington, because we didn't want to fly it that far. That was before they got the new pressurized airplane.

Storey: So it wasn't a very comfortable plane, I gather.

Barrett: I only ever rode in it once, and I didn't find it very comfortable, because you have to fly in such low altitude. You can't get high enough to get over the rough air. In a hot summer afternoon over the West, it can be pretty cloudy up there.

Storey: Do you remember anything about the conversations that went on when Dominy was trying to get the committee interested in giving him a plane?

Barrett: I don't remember a lot. I think I was at the hearing where we justified the planes. It was basically on the lines that, "We need a plane that's pressurized so we can go faster and do better and be more comfortable. Certainly when you fellows come out to look at the projects you want to be comfortable." There was a lot of that in there, you know.

Floyd was very skillful at using his resources to make friends. He would bring congressmen

and their staffs out to the West and fly them around. I did that when I was regional director here. We used the Bureau plane frequently for flying congressmen and people around to show them the projects. You know, Tom Beville, when he was chairman of the committee, the Appropriations Committee, he was out here a lot and we'd fly him around over to Animas-LaPlata, look at the projects.

Storey: And staffers, I suppose.

“I think one of the neatest ways to get people to know what you're about is to show them on the ground . . .”

Barrett: And staffers, uh-huh, yeah. I think one of the neatest ways to get people to know what you're about is to show them on the ground, and so you get these people to fly to Denver commercially. Then you'd pick them up in the Bureau plane and take them down to Animas-LaPlata, Glen Canyon, and around. Drop them off in Salt Lake City and send them home again. But I think it sure enhances their understanding of what it's all about.

Storey: How did you perceive Dominy's relationship to congressmen? Was he friends with them? Was it more a professional relationship? How did

that work?

Dominy's Relationships with Members of Congress

Barrett: Well, it depends on who. You know, some of them he was enemies with and some of them he was friends with. There was [John P.] Saylor, I think his name was, from Pennsylvania, who was an enemy of Reclamation, just hated it, and Dominy didn't like him. It was obvious, you know.

“ . . . he was very skillful at making friends and presenting his program. . . . ”

Then there was people like Carl Hayden, and they were buddies. But he was very skillful at making friends and presenting his program.

Storey: In his interviews he's very up front about the people he didn't like, and getting the plane, he has interesting stories.

Barrett: Yeah, he does. He's got a lot of good stories, yeah. (laughter)

Storey: When your assistant commissionership was changed from assistant commissioner for planning to assistant commissioner for planning

and operations, I believe it was, did the scope of what you were responsible for expand radically?

Change in Scope When Operations Were Added to His Responsibilities in the Post-Teton Dam Reorganization

Barrett: Oh, yeah. Really big. It was quite a large change in scope, what we were doing. The history of it was this is the post-Teton Dam reorganization.

“This was Keith Higginson's reorganization of the Bureau, and there were a *lot* of issues discussed. One of them was where's contracting authority and *who* will the construction engineers report to. . . .”

This was Keith Higginson's reorganization of the Bureau, and there were a *lot* of issues discussed. One of them was where's contracting authority and *who* will the construction engineers report to. Then there was also a *big* discussion at that point about why do you have to have regional offices.

Anyway, the whole thing was aimed at kind of simplifying the structure. Also, I think Keith really thought there were too many people in the Washington office. At that time there was assistant commissioner for planning; there was

the assistant commissioner for operations; there was a power division chief, who just kind of floated out there, because by then Western had been created and the power marketing function was gone. They had had, up to that point, an assistant commissioner for power. That never filled again after it was vacated. Then there was kind of an assistant commissioner for construction. His name was Don Giampaoli. But, anyway, if I remember right, there were four *bodies* there, four assistant commissioner jobs being filled, and Keith really wanted to simplify that whole thing.

So what it all really boiled down to and was over was there was an assistant commissioner for administration and an assistant commissioner for planning and operations, and then [Robert B.] Jansen in Denver over the E&R Center. That was kind of your assistant commissioners at that point. They just kind of really abolished a couple of jobs.

“I had been planning, and then I had planning plus then all the operation and maintenance and the power stuff came into it. Then we had the Job Corps programs and the youth programs, foreign activities. . . .”

I had been planning, and then I had planning

plus then all the operation and maintenance and the power stuff came into it. Then we had the Job Corps programs and the youth programs, foreign activities. It was quite a big job. Keith Higginson jokingly said one time, "Well," he says, "we have Jansen in Denver doing design and construction, and we have our budget and management guy in Washington, and Cliff Barrett's everything else." That's basically what it boiled down to. Everything else that wasn't design and construction or administration was the other assistant commissioner's job.

Storey: Was this a line position? Were the regional directors reporting to you?

Barrett: No. Regional directors always reported right to the commissioner and then the assistant commissioner. That's how it was on paper, but it depended a lot on what kind of relationship you had with the regional directors, *I found*. Because Keith was new and he was part of the [Jimmy] Carter Administration and initially he was the "hit list" guy, everybody was afraid of him. Most of them would call me on *any* issue. Then as they became more comfortable with him, then they started talking more to him.

"It was always the commissioner who made the final decisions on things. . . ."

But, I think the way it *actually* worked was *most* regional directors, if they had a problem or an issue or whatever, they would call me, and then I would get the story and then I would go see Keith, and that's how we worked. I didn't make final cut on many decisions. It was always the commissioner who made the final decisions on things. It was an interesting set-up.

Permanent Management Committee Established to Deal with Policy Issues

Also during that time, as a part of that reorganization, we set up what we called the Permanent Management Committee, which still exists in a little different name now. It was basically the regional directors, the assistant commissioners, and Keith, and we would meet *frequently*. That was the forum where a lot of policy things were worked out with everybody all together, which I thought was a pretty slick idea. It was a neat way of doing business. Instead of doing it piecemeal, we'd get everybody all together in the same room and work things out.

Storey: There wasn't that kind of forum before?

Barrett: No. The only time they met that I knew about,

the only time they did that before was at skull practice and program conference, and they were really focused on budget issues. We formed the Permanent Management Committee, and we talked about things like how are we going to divvy up personnel ceilings. We did policy things like—what should the policy be about safety of dams. That was always a big issue, the safety-of-dams reviews and the hydrology reviews. There was a lot of divergent opinions on those things. We worked most of those out through the Permanent Management Committee.

Reorganizations in Reclamation

Then eventually that also became kind of the permanent committee on reorganizing the Bureau, because every commissioner after that wanted to reorganize again, and we would use that group to kind of spearhead the reorganization effort.

Storey: Whose idea was the Permanent Management Committee?

Barrett: I'm trying to think of whose idea that really was, and I think it was one of Keith's staffers that he kind of brought in. His name was Carl Rowe, and he was kind of a personnel, organizational management specialist kind of guy.

Storey: Who do you spell Rowe?

**Carl Rowe Came up Through the Higginson
Commissionership Working Mostly in Personnel
and Organizational Management**

Barrett: R-O-W-E. I think that's it. Carl Rowe. He kind of came up through the Higginson administration, and then he was a pretty big player during [Robert N.] Broadbent's time also. Then he left. But he was an organizational management type of a guy. His training was how to organize businesses and do that kind of thing. I guess I really think that was his idea. I really think that was his idea.

Storey: How often did the PMC meet?

Barrett: At least quarterly, sometimes more often.

Storey: Where would you meet?

Barrett: All over. We would kind of travel around. Different regions would take turns having a PMC meeting in their region. We'd go to Washington once in a while.

Storey: Was it *strictly* limited to those folks?

Barrett: Yes.

Storey: Or did they bring other people?

Barrett: No, it was pretty tightly controlled. If you needed somebody to come in and talk to us about something, we'd bring him in and have him explain something to us, and then they would leave and we would do our business. So, yeah, it was a pretty tightly controlled thing.

Storey: So that would have been a group of about eleven folks?

Barrett: Uh-huh.

Storey: Seven regional directors at that time, three assistant commissioners.

Barrett: Yeah.

Storey: There was no deputy commissioner.

Barrett: There was. Keith had the first deputy commissioner.⁷

Storey: Oh, he did? Okay.

Barrett: And I can't think of his name either. He didn't make a really big splash in the pond. I guess that's the best way to put it. (laughter) But Keith

7. Orrin Ferris was deputy commissioner 1979 to 1981.

did have a deputy.

See, and this is where I think we begin to see the real politicalization of the Bureau. First you had the commissioners. I guess Keith is probably the first *really* outsider to become a commissioner, given the fact that Armstrong had been with the Bureau and left and then come back and then gotten to be commissioner. You know, Keith was the really first outsider. So he was the first real political type, political appointee. He was an engineer and knew *water* stuff. That was a plus for him.

Actually, he told me he got a lot of pressure to bring in a deputy who was not one of *us*. You know what I mean? And so he did. He advertized and actually brought in a fellow who came in from Montana. I think he'd been in the Montana State Engineer's office or something like that. In my mind, he was never a real player, never a real player.

Storey: What did Mr. Higginson use him for? What kind of responsibility?

Barrett: When Keith was gone, this guy would be acting commissioner when Keith was out of town. He read all the mail. He kind of sat there. He just kept up to speed with everything and knew the issues. But he was never, in my view, never

really involved in the decision-making loop in a serious way. I'm not trying to belittle the position. I think it was just the way it was and he had to live with it. But probably the biggest things he decided were how to manage office space in the Washington office and stuff like that. But he went to all the meetings. He was there all the time. I wish I could think of his name. It probably says something that I can't.

Storey: It'll come to you in the shower tomorrow morning. (laughter)

Barrett: Probably, yeah, yeah. (laughter)

Storey: At this stage, were you beginning to have political pressures applied and beginning to make politicized decisions, or is that still something only the commissioner does?

Gil Stamm Didn't Want Staff Making Contacts on the Hill

Barrett: Let's back up a little bit. When Gil Stamm was commissioner, he was very, very controlling about who went to the Hill, and I would guess probably 99 percent of *all* the congressional contacts were made by Gil Stamm. I'm sure some regional directors made congressional contacts with his permission, but outside the liaison between the budget staffers and the

Appropriations Committee staffers, I think everything else was done by Gil Stamm. He tightly controlled that and did not want people going to the Hill and making their own Hill visits and stuff, especially Washington office staffers.

Keith Higginson Began Using Staff to Make Calls on the Hill

Now, Keith Higginson was really not very good at that. He, in my view, had kind of a natural distrust of the political *arena* and was not comfortable in going to the Hill. At that point, then he would start asking some of the others of us to go do things like that and make calls on the Hill and kind of do some of the political work, even though we *weren't* political people.

Storey: Well, for instance, one of the things that's beginning to come up with increasing stridency in here is the acreage limitation issue, and Reclamation had to decide how to approach Congress about that issue. How would that work through?

Acreage Limitation Issues and the Reclamation Reform Act

Barrett: Reclamation Reform Act *occurred* during the Higginson Administration, if I remember right, didn't it?

Storey: Well, '82-'83, I think it was.

Barrett: Well, then it was after.

Storey: It may have been.

Barrett: It was Broadbent. There must have been some legislation pending or something up on the Hill, though, because I remember—

Storey: I think we were being forced to do regulations.

Barrett: Yeah. Yeah, we were doing regulations and stuff. I can remember them sending us up to the Hill to lobby on Reclamation Reform Act stuff.

Storey: What was the tenor of what Reclamation was trying to achieve?

Barrett: I think under the Carter Administration, Reclamation's position was to really tighten down on acreage limitation administration and then really tighten up on it. I think the Dominy/Gil Stamm/Armstrong approach to trying to live with it and trying to work with it and bring people along, I think a lot of folks, especially in California, again, saw that as just not getting the job done the way they wanted it done and they really wanted a real major directional change on the Bureau's approach to enforcing the law. And, of course, our view was,

“Well, we're enforcing the law. If you don't like what we're doing, change the law.” And that's how it got politicized. If you want to change the law, we will. And people started drafting new laws for us, you know. So I think the Carter Administration really drove a lot of that. They drove a lot of the Reform Act thinking.

Storey: What kinds of issues came to you as the assistant commissioner? What I'm *trying* to ask, let me put it that way, is the character of things that bubble *that* high in the hierarchy.

Deciding Whether or Not to Proceed with a Project

Barrett: Some of the really big ones had to do with repayment contract negotiations, subsidy issues, and then the real gut-wrenching ones, and this had to do with the planning program, is when do you decide to go forward with the project or abandon it as a bad idea. And those are some of the real tough calls that we had to make.

“ . . . a lot of people . . . almost thought they had a *birthright* to have these projects built for them. And old [Representative Wayne N.] Aspinall had put all these things in the Upper Basin act. A whole long list of projects. And I think a *lot* of people thought, and probably were led to believe, that if they got them in the act they'd get built. . .

”

I think in the earlier years, a lot of people, and I particularly claim with the Western Slope of Colorado and the Upper Colorado River Basin, because that's where a lot of these things were happening, they almost thought they had a *birthright* to have these projects built for them. And old [Representative Wayne N.] Aspinall had put all these things in the Upper Basin act.⁸ A whole long list of projects. And I think a *lot* of people thought, and probably were led to believe, that if they got them in the act they'd get built. And then I think because of budgetary things it didn't all get built right away. You know, they didn't all start the same day and get finished.

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1. AUGUST 15, 1996.
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. AUGUST 15, 1996.

Storey: You were saying that the upper basin sort of thought they had a birthright in, I think it was, the Colorado River Project Act of 1968.

Barrett: '56.

Storey: Oh, the earlier one.

Barrett: The '56 act and the '68 act named a whole bunch of projects, and I think they thought they almost

8. Colorado River Storage Project of 1956 and the Colorado River Basin Project Act of 1968.

had a birthright to have those projects built, and I think the same thing existed in the Missouri Basin where there was a lot of projects in the planning stage. The real *tough* decisions came as to when do you say to yourself and to the regional director and to all those construction people who are out there looking for, “Here’s my next job, We’ll move from this one to the next one,” and to the water users and then their whole political chain, that, “No, the Bureau thinks this is a bad idea and we’re not going to do it,” and then hunker down and take the heat that comes from that kind of a decision.

Telling Project Sponsors a Project Was Not Justified

Those are pretty *tough* calls, and we started making those clear back in Gil Stamm's Administration.

Reclamation Did Not Want to Build Fruitland Mesa or Savery-Pot Hook in Colorado

Gil Stamm—I was assistant commissioner—he sent me out to Colorado to tell the state engineer and all the water resource folks that the Bureau didn't want to build Fruitland Mesa and Savery Pothook, two of their “wish list” projects. That was in the waning *months* of Gil Stamm's time. I actually went out to Denver and had a meeting.

The regional director, who was Dave Crandall, said, "I won't do it by myself. Somebody from Washington has to come with me." So I got the job. And we went and told those people that we just had found those projects infeasible and we were going to write what we called concluding reports and put the whole thing on the shelf and shut it down. I got the job of going up to the Hill and advising their congressman and the committee staffers. Those were tough decisions. The decision itself is pretty obvious. But the decision to do it, you know what I mean?

Storey: Or to not do it, as the case may be.

Barrett: Or to not do, as the case may be, was really, really hard to come by. You just kind of had to wait. How much heat are you willing to take over this decision? So there were those kinds of things. And then I remember—

Storey: Before we go on—excuse me—how many projects did we study as opposed to how many we actually built? Do you have any sense of that?

“... some of these things don't make any sense. The issue is, what do you do about it? ...”

Barrett: In the upper basin, I think there were probably fifteen or sixteen projects, maybe as many as twenty when you add the 1968 act, the

participating projects. There's a long list of them. That number may be a little bit high. But there was a certain group which just *really* you *couldn't* find a project to build that was really economic. Fruitland Mesa, Savery-Pot Hook, West Divide, San Miguel. Animas-LaPlata was pretty marginal. Dallas [Creek] and Dolores Projects, they got started and built, but their economics were a little shaky, you know. I think as we got into that and we got Dallas and Dolores under way and were trying to get Animas-LaPlata under way, we just came to the conclusion that even from a guy who *loved* to build projects, *some* of these things don't make any sense. The issue is, what do you do about it? Do you just keep hiding and delaying, or do you just come up front and say, "We're not going to build these things"?

Storey: Did Reclamation ever say, "We shouldn't build this"?

Barrett: Absolutely.

Storey: And then be told, "Oh, yes, you are." Were you ever involved in anything like that?

Barrett: (laughter) Well, at one level or another, probably, yeah. I think there was a lot of feeling within Reclamation about Animas-LaPlata Project, and it's *still*, because of the political

weight of those people and its involvement with the Indian tribes, it's still, on paper at least, a "go" project.

There was one in Nebraska. It was called—I can't think of it. But we said we weren't going to build it, and then it came back later under another name and got *partially* built.

Storey: But that's because there's enough political power there.

"I think the only reason Animas-LaPlata is *even* still lukewarm is because of the political pressure brought by the Colorado delegation and the Indian tribes. . . ."

Barrett: Sure. Sure. I think the only reason Animas-LaPlata is *even* still lukewarm is because of the political pressure brought by the Colorado delegation and the Indian tribes. That's the only reason in the world it's still alive.

"Same thing here in Utah. Over in the Uinta Basin there's the Upalco Unit and the Uinta Unit, which I think the Bureau was willing to give up on a long, long time ago, and political pressure from the state and the Central Utah Conservancy District got them kind of revived in the Central Utah Project Reauthorization Act . . ."

Same thing here in Utah. Over in the Uinta Basin there's the Upalco Unit and the Uinta Unit [of the Central Utah Project], which I think the Bureau was willing to give up on a long, long time ago, and political pressure from the state and the Central Utah Conservancy District got them kind of revived in the Central Utah Project Reauthorization Act, and it revived them, put a little different spin on them.

“ . . . some of those places, *technically* we couldn't find a dam site. . . . ”

But some of those places, *technically* we couldn't find a dam site. You couldn't find a suitable geology to build a dam.

Storey: I've always been fascinated by the fact that there are so many people out there who say Reclamation runs wild across the West. And Reclamation builds a relatively small portion actually, I think, of all the projects it actually looks at.

“ . . . look at all the irrigated land in the United States, only 10 percent of it's on Reclamation projects, you know. But those were the *hard* 10 percent. Those were the really *expensive* ones to build. . . . ”

Storey: Yeah, that's true, and also this statistic probably

isn't quite right anymore, but at one point you look at all the irrigated land in the United States, only 10 percent of it's on Reclamation projects, you know. But those were the *hard* 10 percent. Those were the really *expensive* ones to build. The rest of them, people could build on their own.

Storey: They were the easy ones.

Barrett: They were the easy ones. The easy ones got built.

Storey: The direct diversions.

Barrett: Yeah. Didn't require a lot of storage. But you bring up an interesting point, the view that the Bureau was self-perpetuating and wanted to build everything that it could lay its hands on. While I was looking for that picture last night, I came across—

Storey: The picture of the symphony.

Barrett: The symphony picture.

Storey: The Reclamation symphony.

Barrett: The symphony, yeah. While I was looking for that, I came across in my memorabilia a letter, a copy of a letter I'd written to Keith Higginson,

that touched on this very issue. And I think it's worth talking about. I guess I think it's worth it because I feel strongly about it, is why it's worth it to me.

How being on the “hit list” affected Reclamation’s actions regarding projects that should not have been built

When the Carter Administration came with their “hit list,” that list was put together by a group of environmentalists, I believe, who just wanted to shut down a *lot* of construction projects. There were seventeen projects on that list. Some of them I could see we ought to defend right down to the wire, because some of them were already under construction, and they were good, you know. They were good, solid projects. Others, you could take them or leave them. And then there were some which were obvious doggies, really ought not to be built.

The four projects I just mentioned a minute ago were four of them, San Miguel, West Divide, Savory Pothook, and Fruitland Mesa, they were real bow-wows, you know. You shouldn't build those, and we knew that. And, under Gil Stamm's Administration, I had already been to the Hill, and I'd been to the state and said, “We're going to write concluding reports on these projects.”

“ . . . in order to gain state support for projects that *should* be built, we had to kind of defend all of them. We took the whole package and tried to defend it. . . . ”

Well, then comes the Carter Administration and they're on the “hit list”, you know. And because of the politics of the thing now, in order to gain state support for projects that *should* be built, we had to kind of defend all of them. We took the whole package and tried to defend it.

The National Water Resources Association had their big annual conference, and it was in, I think, San Antonio or someplace in that part of the country. Andrus came down and talked, as secretary. That was his first big appearance to the water resource community. He gave a talk and later wrote a newspaper story, which just made me so angry. Actually, we're in the audience. The regional directors are all there. We go to that meeting so we can meet with water users, you know.

Storey: And you were an assistant commissioner, I presume.

“Andrus just gave a speech which called the Bureau employees ‘people whose only mission was to perpetuate their jobs and who couldn't do anything except build projects and build

everything they. . . .”

Barrett: I was an assistant commissioner then. Keith Higginson was commissioner and I was assistant. Andrus just gave a speech which called the Bureau employees “people whose only mission was to perpetuate their jobs and who couldn't do anything except build projects and build everything they. . . .” I mean, he just really laid it on us. Then it turned up in the newspapers, and he actually wrote an article where he accused us of all these things.

I sat down, I was really angry, and I wrote a letter to Keith Higginson, and the point of the letter was, “Look, people. My job, I'm a career civil servant, and my job is to work for the people I work for, and I think I do a pretty good job at that. In fact, you ask us to explain these projects to you and defend them, and we did, and now you accuse us of trying to defend every project there is. I want you to know that before you guys ever came on board, I'd been up to the Hill and taken the heat for four of these projects already, for stopping them. And I really don't appreciate being called a ne'er-do-well hanging onto the government for the sake of my job.”

I just kind of put it to them that I thought that regional directors and assistant commissioners and people that work at that level realize that we

work for the commissioner and the secretary. “Our job is to explain to you what the program is. You tell us what you want to do, and we give you good advice, you know, whether the law says you can do that or not.”

A lot of people that come into the administration, they come in with some *thing* they want to do, which is actually illegal. A good staffer will say, “Yeah, you can do this, but first you've got to go change the law, because the law says you're going to do this.” Well, then they kill the messenger. That's what they do, and that's what he was doing, and I got really angry about that. I actually told him if they didn't think I could do that, then I'd quit. And gave it to Keith kind of like a letter of resignation.

Storey: So you actually turned this letter in?

Barrett: Yeah, I did.

Storey: You know, I write lots of venting letters that never get sent. (laughter)

Barrett: I wrote that, sat on it a week, and then gave it to him, because I still felt the same way about it. “If you don't trust me or don't think I can carry forth the program you want to lay out and give you good advice, then my choice is not to fight you. My choice is to quit. I can't fight you and

still work for you at the same time. So my choice is to leave.”

I stayed, and later on become the “assistant commissioner for everything,” is the way he put it. So we kind of made up.

“ . . . that attitude that the Bureau was single-mindedly going ahead to build everything they could ever build, was just wrong . . . ”

But that attitude that the Bureau was single-mindedly going ahead to build everything they could ever build, was just wrong, but yet we had a whole administration, secretary on up, who kind of ran for office on the theory that they were going to shut down people like us. And I took great exception to that, and some of the other regional directors did, too.

Anyway, it gets to the point that you brought up, and that is, a lot of people thought we would *never not* build anything, given the money to do it, and actually that's not right, because there was a lot of things we thought shouldn't be built and we didn't.

Storey: Now, those four projects that you went and said, “These are not economically feasible,” I presume, had they been authorized to be built?

Barrett: Oh, yeah.

Storey: Or had they been authorized for study or what?

Barrett: They were authorized for construction. They were authorized for construction.

Storey: Okay. So we'd already done a little bit of preliminary work somewhere.

Felt There Wasn't a Lot of Planning for the Projects Before Their Authorization for the Colorado River Storage Project in 1956

Barrett: *Very little.* When the 1956 Act was written, I wasn't here. I wasn't even working for the Bureau then. But I had the strong sense that Aspinall—you know, this is part of all this negotiation and trade, you know, what do we get for what? And he just said, "Give me your wish list." They had all these projects on the—you know, they'd done some very preliminary studies on them, and they probably looked *good*.

"But in '56, things could look very good, and in '66 or '76 they'd look *terrible*, because the world is different now. So that was a big problem—big problem. And they're still authorized. . . ."

But in '56, things could look very good, and in '66 or '76 they'd look *terrible*, because the world is

different now. So that was a big problem—big problem. And they're still authorized. Those projects are still authorized.

When you look at the Bureau's budget—I know this because I deal in power issues now for the people I work for now—when we do power repayment studies, those projects are *all* still in the power repayment study as a repayment obligation. We reached agreement in 1983 on how to *deal* with that so that they don't really affect today's rate. But when you look at a repayment study, those projects are all in the repayment study as projects that will someday be built and repaid. When you look at the depletion schedules for the river, which the Upper Basin Commission does to figure out how much water is going to go down the river in the year 2020 or whatever, those projects are all in the depletion schedule as future depletions.

Storey: That's because they haven't been deauthorized?

Barrett: They've never been deauthorized. And that was an issue. You go up to the Hill and you say, “Okay, we're going to write concluding reports on those projects.”

“Oh, all right. What else do you like to do?”

“Well, we'd really like you to deauthorize these projects so we don't have to carry them on the

books anymore.”

**Congress does not want to take the political step
of deauthorizing projects**

Now, that's a political step that congressmen won't take. I had one—I forget just which one it was—he made it very plain. He says, “Cliff, I'll never win a vote by deauthorizing a project. There's *nothing* in it for me. And as long as it doesn't hurt you, let's just leave them alone.” And that's where we are. No congressman ever *won* anything by deauthorizing a project, and if you can find a way to deal with it so it doesn't hurt you—which is where we are. We've *accommodated* all that. In the places where it really makes a difference, we've *accommodated* it. But they're still there as authorized projects, because nobody really wants to—

Storey: Take the next step.

Barrett: Take the leap, you know. Every once in a while, Carter Administration did this, they'd send down to the Bureau, “We'd like to deauthorize some projects. Give us a list of projects we can deauthorize.” Because within the environmental community there's a lot of points to be gained. If you can deauthorize some projects that the environmentalists don't like, then you'd get some environmental votes. And I'd say, “Sure, here.

Here's a list. I can sit down and write it for you right now on the back of an envelope. Take it and run." And nothing ever happened, because they couldn't find a congressman who was willing to introduce a deauthorization bill. I mean, that's *suicide* for a congressman to do that. Actually nothing to gain and a lot to lose.

Storey: But it complicates Reclamation's life later a little bit.

Barrett: A little. Where it really rubs is in the repayment arrangements, because if you've got all those projects here that have to be repaid and then the depletion schedules on the river. But we've found a way to accommodate that.

Storey: We were talking about the kinds of issues that would come to you as assistant commissioner, and have spent some time on this one, and you were getting ready to start on another one when I interrupted you.

Barrett: Oh, what was it? Repayment contracts. Repayment contracts were a *big* issue, because every project out here has got a contract with water users [detailing] when they're going to repay some money. Well, there's two sets of problems. One of them is cost have overtaken them. A lot of the contracts were written with ceilings in them, and they were written like a firm ceiling. You know,

they would repay, oh, most of them are running around—they'd never pay more than about 4 or 5 percent of the cost, anyway. The rest of it was all subsidies in the form of power sales or something.

Storey: *Four* or 5 percent you said?

“ . . . you sign the contract. Well, now it takes you fifteen years to build the project and the costs have gone out of sight and it's really ridiculous. You're almost giving it away, you know. And most of those contracts didn't have reopeners in them. . . . ”

Barrett: Four or 5. Not 45. Four or 5 percent. Central Utah Project here in Utah, their repayment obligation is probably about 2 or 3 percent of the total cost of the project. That's the irrigation component of the project. So we had that, and those were written, usually the repayment obligation is X million dollars and you sign the contract. Well, now it takes you fifteen years to build the project and the costs have gone out of sight and it's really ridiculous. You're almost giving it away, you know. And most of those contracts didn't have reopeners in them. So we had some issues about, well, how do we deal with that issue, because we're getting beat up on the Hill over this irrigation subsidy issue.

“The municipal and industrial water supply out of

Central Utah had hit up against its construction ceiling. . . . we eventually persuaded them to reopen that contract, and the way we did it was we kind of stopped building the project until they did. . . .”

We had M&I repayment contracts. Central Utah's another example. The municipal and industrial water supply out of Central Utah had hit up against its construction ceiling. I mean, the contract had a ceiling, and the M&I costs were getting to that, and we had to decide, well, shall we try to get the Utah people to reopen that contract? And that was a really tough, tough call to me. And we did, we eventually persuaded them to reopen that contract, and the way we did it was we kind of stopped building the project until they did. That was kind of a call I made when I was in Washington and had to live with when I came out here. I wasn't planning on that, but that's the way it worked out. (laughter)

“. . . what we did is we didn't start any new features until we got the repayment contract issue solved. . . .”

We kind of said, “Look, here's the repayment ceiling, and the costs within a couple of years, if we build the particular feature, the costs are going to be above that. And we figure it was our *obligation* to make sure the Federal Government got repaid.”

Actually, what we did is we didn't start any new features until we got the repayment contract issue solved. And that was a tough call. I guess *Keith* and I made that call together.

Storey: So let's see if I'm thinking correctly. This is because when CUP started up, you [Reclamation] signed a repayment contract based on the estimates at that time of what it was going to cost?

Barrett: Right.

Storey: And then as costs escalated, we didn't have a repayment obligation for the increased costs?

Barrett: That's right.

Storey: Oh, that's rather than you'll pay X percentage of whatever it costs?

Barrett: That's true. The reason they wrote contracts that way is because under the *state* law—you know, they had to have an election on that, and they couldn't have an election and sign a contract that was open-ended. They had to have a number. So we gave them the best number we had. Figure out this is probably about—I think those contracts go back around 1964 or '65, something like that, and the project is *still* under construction today. So things catch up with you, and there was no mechanism for adjusting the contracts.

We had two things. We had a law that says you'll recoup the M&I costs with interest, and you have a contract that has a fixed amount in it. And we said, "Well, we can't spend any more money until you guys change your repayment contract." And that's how we *muscled* them into it.

That was a *hard fight*, and that was the beginning, really, of the whole division between the Bureau and the Central Utah Water Conservancy District. It was that kind of thing. They were saying, "Well, gee, guys, you've spent so much money," in their view, needlessly. "Why should we amend our repayment contract to pay it back to you?" You could debate that. We ended up having to do a bunch of environmental impact statements. We had construction delays because of lawsuits. We had construction problems. I mean, the actual construction costs went up because of problems that came up during construction. Some of the *tunnels* cost a lot more than we thought they would be because of geology conditions we found inside.

So, yeah, there was a lot of reasons why the costs went up. But it got to be a real fight between the Bureau and the district over cost control and how much costs were and all that. The net result of all that was we did get the repayment contract amended, and we did get Jordanelle Dam started,

which was the next *big* M&I piece,⁹ and then we had to go back to Congress and get the appropriations ceiling raised, because the cost of the project was exceeding what Congress had authorized to be appropriated for the project.

Storey: And was it exceeding the cost of the project plus the indexing?

“And that's kind of when the Bureau and the district split the sheets, and the district is now responsible for constructing the project. It will be interesting to see if they're doing it any less expensively than we would have. I would suspect their overhead costs are more than the Bureau's . . .”

Barrett: Yes. Yes. And then that all ended up then with the district saying, “Well, we'll go along with the appropriated ceiling increase, but we want to have more responsibility for construction.” And that's kind of when the Bureau and the district split the sheets, and the district is now responsible for constructing the project.¹⁰ It will be interesting to see if they're doing it any less expensively than we would have. I would suspect their overhead costs are more than the Bureau's were, but at that time they didn't see it that way.

9. Jordanelle Dam was finished in 1993.

10. Central Utah Project Completion Act of 1992.

Storey: Sounds very similar to what happened on the Central Arizona Project.

Barrett: Yes.

Storey: And with their water user group.

Barrett: Right. Right. The Bureau had those kind of problems in a number of places. I think a lot of it's because projects were formulated and cost estimates put to them and authorized, and then for various reasons, budget restrictions, environmental issues, the projects were never really started and expeditiously finished. They were drug out. They were drug out. And as you drag things out, costs go up. I don't think there's any way around that.

“There was a lot of criticism of the Bureau's overhead costs, and I think some of that's pretty legitimate. . . .”

There was a lot of criticism of the Bureau's overhead costs, and I think some of that's pretty legitimate. The Denver costs were *extremely* high. The overhead costs in the Design Center were pretty high, I thought. And that was a lot of discussion in the Permanent Management Committee between the regional directors and the commissioner and the Denver office guys about overhead costs and Denver staffing and a lot of those kinds of problems. But, anyway, those

repayment contract kind of issues were a *lot* of what I dealt with as assistant commissioner.

Foreign Activities Program

Another thing which was *really* interesting to me, and I had a lot of *fun* with, was that job also included the foreign activities program. We had some pretty major issues *there*, too. Just besides the management issues of sending people overseas to work for a foreign government through the AID¹¹ program, we had to deal with the State Department and all these things, you know. Some very interesting issues came up there about how much spillover does our Environmental Policy Act have on what we do overseas.

I can remember very plainly in a hearing with George Miller when he was chairman of the committee, and we were talking about foreign activities, and he asked me did the Bureau plan on doing an environmental impact statement on Three Gorges Dam in China. I said, "Well, I don't think we need to." Wow! Wrong answer, you know. And we got a little lecture about that. (laughter) But the law doesn't say anything about doing NEPA [National Environmental Protection Act] compliance on overseas projects. Anyway, there were those kinds of issues to deal with. And they

11. USAID is the United States Agency for International Development.

were fun, you know. It was kind of interesting.

Storey: Did you ever take any foreign trips while you were assistant commissioner?

Barrett: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Foreign Travel

Storey: Everybody sees these as a *boondoggle*, okay? Where did they come from and why did they happen and what's going on while you're on trips?

Barrett: Well, let me give an example. An example. We were building a transmission line. No, we weren't building. Back up.

Assisting Zaire with Construction of a Direct Current Transmission Line

In Zaire, in Africa, their government was wanting to build a *big state-of-the-art* direct current transmission line from Stanley Falls on the Zaire River clear back up into the copper mines. This is maybe about 2,000 miles, I guess, of very high-voltage direct-current transmission line, which is really state-of-the-art stuff.

Reclamation Was Go-between Between Zaire's Contractor and the World Bank

They wanted to borrow money from the World Bank to do this with, and the World Bank said, “Well, that's okay, but we need to have some assurance that you've got really adequate engineering and adequate construction. So we will ask the Bureau of Reclamation, *through* the State Department (you know, these things are all interwoven) to send a team over there, and they will be your kind of like go-between between the contractor and the bank, World Bank, and the Zaire Government.” And that was our role. We had a small team. I think at the most we had maybe less than ten people there at the peak.

“There's a lot of “funny stuff” going on. . . .”

Well, they immediately got into some financial problems. Their government's a little bit shaky. They were borrowing money and the bank wasn't sure they were ever going to get their money back, and the contractor is upset because he's not getting paid. There's a lot of “funny stuff” going on.

“. . . I get the job of going over there and trying to sort that out. . . . spend a lot of time talking . . . the bank doesn't want to give the money to the government until we assure them that everything is okay. . . . So I take a tour . . . fly 2,000 miles in a helicopter over a transmission line. Now, it's interesting . . . It's not that much fun . . .”

So as foreign activities guy, I get the job of going over there and trying to sort that out. So you fly to Zaire, which is not beautiful, and spend a lot of time talking to the contractor, talking to the bank people, talking to the government people, and trying to figure out when's the bank going to give the money to the government so the government can pay the contractor. And the bank doesn't want to give the money to the government until we assure them that everything is okay. Well, is everything okay or not? So I take a tour of the project with our project manager who's over there, fly 2,000 miles in a helicopter over a transmission line. Now, it's interesting and it's fun, but I wouldn't call it a boondoggle. It's not that much fun, you know. You know what I mean?

Storey: I know exactly what you mean. I just want you to say it.

“ . . . after the first trip I was there, the very house we stayed in Kolwesi, the next month the Angolans come across the border and killed everybody that's living in that house. . . . ”

Barrett: Okay. Well in fact, I made two trips over there. After the second trip—no, it was after the first trip I was there, the very house we stayed in Kolwesi, the next month the Angolans come

across the border and killed everybody that's living in that house. Morrison-Knudson contractors out of Boise lost, I think, four or five people. I mean, this is not a boondoggle, in my mind. Going to those parts of the world is not always fun. Bob Jansen and I made that trip together. So there's those kinds of things.

International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage

Another thing that kind of had to do with foreign activities was there's a group called International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID). It's kind of a little U.N. kind of thing, and the Bureau's always been represented in there.

Elected President of the U.S. Committee on Irrigation and Drainage

When I was division chief in Washington, I belonged to the U.S. National Committee and was elected President of the U.S. Committee on that, and then started going to the ICID meetings. They go once a year somewhere in the world. Now *that's* a little bit more of a boondoggle. It's kind of like going and waving the flag for the Bureau, is what it amounts to, because in those days the Bureau was a *major, major* player. Throughout the world everybody looked at the

Bureau as here's where you go to get expert advice, here's where you go to find out how irrigation projects ought to be built. That's all *changed* now, but that's the way it was then.

I used to go to all those meetings, one a year, and it usually tied in with a visit to something we were directly involved in where we had AID money or [World] Bank money that we were supervising. We had the projects in Zaire. We had projects in Malaysia. We had some projects in South America, Brazil, where Rod Vissia was. We had them kind of all over. But I never did visit all of them. I just went to the ones where there was—we had the same thing. We had one in Malaysia where there was, again, a problem between the Bank and the government. When I say the bank, I mean the World Bank. And they had a problem there about whether they should proceed with a dam or not. So I went over there and kind of visited with our guys and then visited with their guys and have a meeting and try to get everybody—

Storey: On the same page.

Barrett: Back on the same page again.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. AUGUST 15, 1996.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. AUGUST 15, 1996.

Storey: This is tape two of an interview by Brit Storey with Clifford I. Barrett on August the 15th, 1996.

You were talking about the foreign affairs program, and I was just getting ready to ask, was this handled out of Washington in those days?

Barrett: In those days it was.

Storey: Do you have a sense of how many people Reclamation had involved in these kinds of programs?

There Were a Lot of People Involved in International Activities at its Peak

Barrett: At its peak, which is before I got there, I would guess in the early sixties they had a *lot* of people involved. The Bureau had teams in Afghanistan. They had teams in Ethiopia. They had teams in China—not China, but in Taiwan. It was a *big* outfit. We had an office in Washington with a subset in Denver just to manage the whole thing. We were in Spain. We had projects in Spain. So it was a big program.

The number of Bureau people involved, I hesitate to guess. I would guess we had a dozen right there. Between Washington and Denver we had a dozen people, and some of those overseas offices were big. I think in Ethiopia they

probably had fifteen or twenty people, because they were down to construction inspection and that kind of stuff, giving them technical help.

Storey: Did you participate in any other foreign travel? The ICOLD [International Commission on Large Dams] and the irrigation group and all of those, I understand, but—

Barrett: Yeah. I went to that and I went to a couple of ICOLD meetings. Then there was a group called the World Energy Conference that I went to a couple of.

On the Board of the World Energy Conference

In fact, I was on their board of directors of the World Energy Conference—I went to a couple of their meetings.

Storey: Ted Mermel was active in some of these.

Ted Mermel

Barrett: Ted Mermel was active in almost all those, yeah. Ted Mermel is extremely interesting. Have you talked to Ted Mermel?

Storey: Yes. I think we've done about six or eight hours.

Barrett: A very interesting gentleman. He was a very

professional engineer type. You know what I mean? And was very big in the society activities.

“ . . . one of his major functions was he was the Bureau's professional society guy. You know, he went to ASCE and *all* those meetings . . . ”

In fact, when I first came to Washington, that was probably one of his major functions was he was the Bureau's professional society guy. You know, he went to ASCE and *all* those meetings, and that was his job, to keep the Bureau out front.

“We weren't ashamed of what we did in those days, you know. What it boils down to, we blew our horn every time we got our chance. . . .”

We weren't ashamed of what we did in those days, you know. What it boils down to, we blew our horn every time we got our chance. And that was his function. He would go to all the ASCE meetings, ICOLD, USCID, all those he went to. In fact, he was on the World Energy Committee for a while. Actually, when he left is when I got put on that committee.

Storey: What about things other than the professional organizations and the World Bank activities? Were there other kinds of foreign travel?

Barrett: No. Well, for the bank stuff, no. Other than that, there would be no reason. I mean, you just couldn't go because you wanted to. You had to¹ have a reason to go.

Storey: But there were no other reasons, is what I'm wondering.

Barrett: No. No. I don't think there was for anybody, no. I don't know anybody who went overseas unless they were going to go visit a Bureau project overseas. And there wasn't an awful lot of that.

Foreign activities staff visited our overseas projects twice a year

Our foreign activities people, they went overseas. I think every overseas office got a visit maybe twice a year by one of the overseas office people. You're checking on living conditions.

“Morale is an issue. They don't like to feel like they've been sent out there and left alone. You know, these aren't the garden spots of the world where you build irrigation projects . . . and if you don't go see them once in a while, they think they're *abandoned* out there. . . .”

Morale is an issue. They don't like to feel like they've been sent out there and left alone. You know, these aren't the garden spots of the world

where you build irrigation projects, and so you send people out there and it's hot and dirty and not like what we're used to, and if you don't go see them once in a while, they think they're *abandoned* out there. So we would send people. A lot of it was morale-building and let them know, "Yeah, we know you're here and we love you and we'll bring you home," you know. See how things how are.

Storey: "We haven't forgotten about you."

Barrett: "We haven't forgotten about you." Some of them lived in pretty terrible conditions. Some of them lived in luxurious conditions, but some of them lived pretty poorly, I thought. And so you would go out there and hold hands with them for a while. We would send people out to do that. Joe Cutchall, who was one of the activities directors most of the time I was there, was very concerned about those kinds of things. How do you take care of our people? So, yeah, you would do that.

Engineers out of the E&R Center, we would send them overseas when we needed their technical expertise. I remember a case that comes immediately to mind was the generators of the High Aswan Dam in Egypt. There was some problem with those, and so we lined up some electrical engineers out of the Denver

office to go over there and help.

“They almost got to be a roving band of Reclamation engineers who hadn't worked in the United States for a long, long time. . . . would just go from one job to the next . . .”

There was for a while almost a permanent roving crew. When the foreign program was really big, they were basically construction people. Some planning people would go to one job and then they'd go to the next job, and they'd be overseas a long time because they liked it, and they would go from overseas job, from one to the next. They almost got to be a roving band of Reclamation engineers who hadn't worked in the United States for a long, long time. They were all working overseas and would just go from one job to the next, when it was at its height.

Other than that, I don't know that anybody went overseas, you know. I just don't. Gil Stamm used to go to the ICID meetings. Floyd Dominy used to go to them. But I don't think they made big boondoggle trips.

Storey: Well, I didn't phrase that question very well.

Barrett: No, but I think I know what you mean. One man's boondoggle is another man's serious work, you know. (laughter)

Storey: One of the issues that often comes up with people who have never been managers is, “Well, that guy is never here. He's never doing his *work*.” And they don't understand that his work doesn't necessitate him being *here*.

Commissioner Broadbent Tried to Use Foreign Travel as a Reward

Barrett: His work isn't here. It's somewhere else. Well, the way I was looking at it, and one of the things that really irritated me was Broadbent, when he came in, decided that foreign travel should be used as a reward. So now instead of sending people overseas because we need that man's particular expertise, we looked for somebody who somehow deserves a trip to Egypt and he gets to go, regardless of his technical capability. And that really upset me when I heard that being proposed.

There was a *little* bit of that, but I think, again, they found out that that doesn't work. So they went back to relying on the Bureau people to decide who was going to go where, instead of making it a little political reward. I think that comes about because the people who were coming in saw us taking these trips and thinking, “Gee, that would be a neat thing to do. Why don't I do that?” Well, because you're not an electrical engineer; you're an accountant or

something. Well, they go see the commissioner and he says, "Well, we can make these into rewards for people, use them for incentive programs." They found out it didn't work that way.

Storey: What were the other kinds of issues that bubbled up to *your stratospheric* level in the organization?

“. . . we had personnel issues. . . . You'd get a field official who was either on the wrong side of the water users or he's on the wrong side of the politics or the secretary or somebody. You just have to do something. . . .”

Barrett: Well, we had personnel issues. Personnel issues. You've got a person out in the field somewhere who, for one reason or another, has gotten himself so screwed up that the people out there can't work with him anymore. And then they say, "Well, gee, you've got to change your project manager because the local people can't live with him anymore."

Well, the commissioner comes knocking and says, "Cliff, you've got to find a place to put So-and-so, because he can't stay here anymore."

Those kinds of personnel issues were sticky, and that happened more than once. You'd get a

field official who was either on the wrong side of the water users or he's on the wrong side of the politics or the secretary or somebody. You just have to do something. And somehow those jobs kind of fell to me once in a while.

Storey: Was there sort of a, I don't want to say a policy, but a *standard* of how that was dealt with that they were lateraled into a similar or at the same graded position doing something else? Or, how did that work?

Barrett: Yeah. That was generally it. You tried not to just—well, for one thing, it's very difficult to fire anybody. You can't just fire a person. Well, you can, but it's very hard. It's more like find a place where he fits and move him into it as quickly as you can and get on with life and let him get on with his life.

Storey: That has to be traumatic for everybody, though.

“Well, Cliff, you can either quit your job or move to Salt Lake.’ It's a pretty traumatic experience. And that happened a lot. . . . especially under the SES [Senior Executive Service] system. . . .”

Barrett: It is. It's traumatic for everybody, yeah. It *happened to me*, you know. So, yeah, it is traumatic for everybody. You get either a political call that says, “Well, Cliff, you can

either quit your job or move to Salt Lake.” It's a pretty traumatic experience. And that happened a lot. To a lot of people that happened, especially under the SES [Senior Executive Service] system. The SES system made that very easy. SES, you give them two weeks' notice. That's what the regulation said. You give them two weeks' notice and he either goes or he quits. Use that system. And if they weren't SESers, you just kind of found them an equivalent job somewhere else and say, “We think you'd better move over here.” And they knew why, you know. So those kinds of things came up.

Storey: Since this has come up, let's talk about a couple of these. I walked into the assistant commissioner for resources management's office in October of 1988, had to go to a professional meeting, came back and was called into an all-employee meeting that announced that the assistant commissioner was no longer the assistant commissioner—Terry Lynott.

Barrett: Terry Lynott, yeah.

Storey: What was going on there? Do you have any idea?

Terry Lynott

Barrett: For one reason or another, Terry Lynott was pretty much unacceptable to the whole PMC and the commissioner. I think the reason that happened is because—let's see if I can play this back now. He was acting. I think he was acting something or other, and was on the PMC when we were doing a reorganization, and he was a part of that reorganization team. It didn't come out quite the way he wanted it to be, and yet in order to protect his position, he was assigned to that job, and he never was philosophically agreeing to what that job was. My view. And couldn't quite pull it off, I think because he wasn't committed to it. And it became obvious that he wasn't doing what the PMC and the commissioner wanted done in that office, so he was given a chance to go somewhere else.

Storey: Uh-huh. Well, let's go back a step to what happened to *your* situation. This would have been when about?

Barrett: This was in 1981. What happened to me was I was made assistant commissioner in a Republican administration. Okay? And then Keith Higginson came on, who's, like I said yesterday, his first remark was he'd really like to get rid of me and find somebody he could trust. That was the view. I managed to hang in there, and I think through diligence and patience and doing the right thing, he and I got to be very

close and a very, very good team. We worked *really well* together.

But I ended up staying where I was when a lot of other people moved. Regional directors were shifted. A lot of other people were changed. But I managed to stay there. I thought I was very lucky, because in the Carter Administration, especially when the SES came into being during the Carter Administration, and they could have moved me any minute, you know. The way that thing reads, you can be gone.

“Having been originally a Republican appointee and knowing all the NWRA folks who are basically Republican types, I even at that juncture kind of sounded the waters about trying to be commissioner, because I thought I had a really good shot at it. . . .”

So I thought, “Well, I really survived this.” When the Republicans came, I thought, “Well, man. Whew!” Having been originally a Republican appointee and knowing all the NWRA folks who are basically Republican types, I even at that juncture kind of sounded the waters about trying to be commissioner, because I thought I had a really good shot at it. Talked to a few people, didn't make any overt—you know, when you play that game, timing is everything. I

just kind of sounded it out, and I came to the conclusion that probably—well, I had some pretty close friends in the [Ronald] Reagan White House, and their advice to me was, “Just drop it, because it's going to be somebody you never heard of. None of you guys who are trying to be commissioner are going to be commissioner.” And there were others who were wanting to be commissioner at that time frame. So I just backed down and let it go.

“So I thought, ‘Well, at least the Republicans are back in and I've got all these friends around. I'm pretty secure. I'll be able to stay where I'm at.’ . . .”

So I thought, “Well, at least the Republicans are back in and I've got all these friends around. I'm pretty secure. I'll be able to stay where I'm at.” Well, Broadbent came. He and I struck it off pretty good right off the top. I thought I was pretty secure.

Commissioner Broadbent Announced That Barrett Would Be Deputy Commissioner

In fact, he was being encouraged to pick a deputy, so he picked *me* and even announced it. At an NWRA meeting he announced that he had selected me to be the deputy commissioner. The next week he gets called up into [Donald P.] Hodel's office, and I wasn't there, but I think he

kind of got taken to task for that. Then he and I had to go up and see Hodel together, and Hodel had me explain to him why I thought I'd be a good deputy, with Broadbent sitting there.

“It was a very challenging meeting, because Hodel right off the box says, ‘I don't think you'll be deputy.’ . . .”

It was a very challenging meeting, because Hodel right off the box says, “I don't think you'll be deputy.”

So I explained to him my philosophy of life in the Bureau. He says, “You're too close to the Carter Administration.” So I just kind of gave some history to him about where we were and what had been going on all those four years.

Broadbent and I thought we kind of had it fixed. In fact, he told me the next day or so that, “It looks like you're going to be all right.”

Commissioner Broadbent Informs Him He Will Be Moving to the Regional Director's Position in Salt Lake City Which Started a Chain of Moves among Regional Directors

The next week after that, I got called into Broadbent's office and says, “Cliff, we're going to move you to Salt Lake City.” That started a

whole—you know, the guy who was in Salt Lake City had to move to Boulder, the guy that was in Boulder had to move to Amarillo, the guy that was Amarillo was good enough to retire. It was a whole *chain* of moves that resulted from all that.

I was really upset. I was really ticked off. I'd been in Washington eighteen years, had raised my children there. We lived in Virginia, and *that was home*. That was really home, and I didn't want to go anywhere. My wife was in college finishing her degree. You know, it was just a real lousy time to move.

“ . . . decided I would just bite the bullet and go to Salt Lake City. As it turns out, it was a very good move . . . that was probably the smartest thing I could have done . . . At the time, it *really* hurt. . . . ”

I looked around, actually looked at some other job opportunities, checked my bases around. And finally, again with some advice from some people who were in the Reagan White House, decided I would just bite the bullet and go to Salt Lake City. As it turns out, it was a very good move for me as it all *washed* out, you know. I sit here fifteen years later. It looked like that was probably the smartest thing I could have done was to do that.

Storey: But at the time, it was very painful.

Barrett: At the time, it *really* hurt. It *really* hurt. Because I saw myself as the guy, and actually other people told me, “You're the guy that held the Bureau together during the whole Carter Administration. You were the only insider in the front wing and really held the place together.” And now all of a sudden the reward you get is instead of being deputy, you're getting booted out to Salt Lake City, which is like kind of going to the colonies, you know. (laughter) That's how I viewed it. I really *didn't* want to come here.

Storey: Tell me Hodel's role at that time. James Watt was the Secretary, right?

Barrett: Watt was the Secretary and Hodel was Under Secretary.

Storey: The right hand of Watt, then.

Was especially surprised to not be kept in Washington because he thought he had a good relationship with Secretary of the Interior Jim Watt

Barrett: The right hand of Watt, right. And I knew Jim Watt. I guess I just built myself up such a comfortable feeling that everything was going to be all right, that I was so surprised. Because I

had known Jim Watt, because Jim Watt was deputy assistant secretary during the [Richard M.] Nixon years and I worked with him, you know. I was division chief and he was deputy assistant secretary, and we worked together on repayment contract issues and all these things we've been talking about, you know.

I remember seeing him in the airport. We were waiting for my child to come home from college, I think, and he was coming into Washington during the transition in that period after the election but before inauguration. I ran into him once in Washington National Airport and, gee, we were like old lost friends, you know, pats on the back. And I like Jim Watt. You'll never find me saying much bad about Jim Watt, because I like the guy, one of my heroes. But I was just so surprised.

“As I looked back at it, I could see this was part of—it wasn't a *vendetta* against Cliff Barrett. It was a *sweep*. You know, they were just going to start over. So I learned to live with that. . . .”

As I look back at it and talk to other people, that same thing happened throughout the Department. Jim Watt and, I think, maybe throughout all of government, they were so *spooked* by the Carter crowd, and they wanted to remove *any chance* that there would be a

“Carterite” in any kind of position of influence, that they just swept clean. I had friends in the Fish and Wildlife Service who were also at the assistant commissioner level who ended up being regional directors of Fish and Wildlife Service regions. And it happened in the Park Service. As I looked back at it, I could see this was part of—it wasn't a *vendetta* against Cliff Barrett. It was a *sweep*. You know, they were just going to start over. So I learned to live with that.

Storey: I believe you would have been, what, about a 16 as assistant commissioner?

Barrett: I was a 16, yeah. Yeah. Of course, then it was SES and I was an SES-4, I think.

Storey: But didn't you have the choice of whether you joined SES or kept your old grade?

Barrett: I did. Yeah. Back when we made those choices, I had that choice. And I guess actually I could have—I never really looked into it. I guess I could have said, “No, I don't want to go. I'll drop back and be a Grade 15 or something.” If they would have found a job for me. But I'm not sure they would have, you know. I never considered that an option, really.

Storey: That's what I was wondering.

Barrett: To drop out of SES. Now, it may have been technically an option, but in my mind, that was no option. It was either go or leave. That was kind of where I was at. I probably could have fallen back and taken some grade cuts, but, you know, once you do that, that's pretty untenable, *I think*. Unless you have some *overwhelming* circumstance which makes you *have* to stay there because of family reasons or something, I think professionally and careerwise that's almost untenable to fall back like that. That would have been a real—

Storey: So how long before you came out here?

“Higginson was really disappointed, too, because he was basically a Republican and he thought he could stay on. I guess very early on, about the second week after the inauguration, *he* found out *he* was going to have to leave. . . .”

Barrett: Well, this all happened probably within a couple of months after the inauguration. Well, let's see. I was acting commissioner from the time that Higginson left. That's interesting. Higginson was really disappointed, too, because he was basically a Republican and he thought he could stay on. I guess very early on, about the second week after the inauguration, *he* found out *he* was going to have to leave. So they made me acting commissioner, and I was acting until Broadbent

came on board. Broadbent came on board the *week* of skull practice, so he came on board probably in February or March. This was probably April or May when this happened. They were very nice about it. He says, "How soon can you leave?"

And I said, "Well, gee, I'd really not like to go until fall." I wanted to buy time, you know.

And he said, "Okay."

Elected Vice-president of the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage

Then another interesting thing happened. The International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage was having a meeting in Grenoble, France, and I got a chance to run for vice-president of the Commission. So I said, "Bob, will you let me stay here long enough to go to Grenoble, see if I can get elected vice-president of that Commission, and then when I get back give me a couple of weeks and I'll go?" He said, "Fine." So I did. And I actually packed up and moved my body out here, I think around the end of September of 1981.

Storey: And were you elected?

Barrett: Yeah. Yeah, I was. So that worked out all right.

Looking back at it, they were just about as nice as they could be, and probably a lot nicer than we were to a lot of other people when we made them do those kind of moves. I *can't* complain, I really can't. It just really hung on me that they would do that to me. But I can see why. Actually, later on I defended them for it in a public speech. Colorado River Water Users meets annually down in Las Vegas in December, and this was, I think, that December. They invite the commissioner out and the two regional directors from Boulder City [and Salt Lake City].

Storey: Upper [Colorado Region] and Lower [Colorado Region].

Barrett: Yeah, for Upper and Lower. And were always on the program. So we had our little speeches, and I gave my speech. And then they asked if there was any questions from the audience. When I was standing at the podium, one of my good friends says, "I think this is a question for Mr. Broadbent. But Mr. Broadbent, when you move people around like you moved Cliff Barrett around, don't you think you're destroying the Bureau?" (laughter)

He looked at me and says, "Cliff, you're standing there. Why don't you answer that question." Threw the ball right in my court.

I said what I *really believe*, and that is people at that level work for the administration, and if the administration wants to move us, that's their *right*. And as far as I could tell, and I still believe this, they have never gone down to where they are destroying any technical capability within the Bureau. Because I wasn't a technician. I was not a design engineer or a dam operator. I was a policy, political type. And they're certainly within their rights to do that. As near as I could tell, they have *never* done any *damage* to the *technical* skill of the Bureau, with those kinds of moves. And that's what I said. Got a big hand. Broadbent was happy. I thought it was a nice save, myself. (laughter)

“ . . . Broadbent *brought in* outsiders to fill all those jobs. . . . He brought in Dave Houston. . . . Christianson . . . and this politicized the whole thing one more layer in that one move . . . ”

But I think the water community was getting pretty weary. They had seen new assistant commissioners. The thing is, Broadbent *brought in* outsiders to fill all those jobs. We had now politicized one layer lower. He brought in Dave Houston. There was Christiansen [phonetic], who was a City Manager in Provo before he came. Dave Houston worked for Las Vegas City. Broadbent, himself, was a pharmacist from Boulder City. See, and this politicized the whole

thing one more layer in that one move, and he brought in these guys to be assistant commissioners.

“The water resource community was really, I think, getting a little upset and tired about it. But they were kind of torn . . . they'd been knocked about so much by Carter and the “hit list” . . . that Jim Watt was a *real* hero and Broadbent was a *real* hero. . . .”

The water resource community was really, I think, getting a little upset and tired about it. But they were kind of torn because, see, they'd been knocked about so much by Carter and the “hit list” and all this crap, that Jim Watt was a *real* hero and Broadbent was a *real* hero. They really were torn because they could see, on one hand, salvation coming in the Reagan Administration, but on the other hand, they could see these other things which were happening, which they thought was tearing at the very fabric of the Bureau.

So, yeah, it was an interesting time. I came to Salt Lake City and, as it turns out, that was probably a very good move for me. I really don't think I could have hacked it. The new climate in Washington would have bothered me a lot if I had been there. It's better to be out here a little bit away from it and not see quite so much all

that's going on so close.

Storey: And then all of a sudden you were out here functioning in conjunction with the Lower Colorado regional director as the watermaster of the Colorado River.

Barrett: Yeah.

Storey: It must have been quite a change.

“One of the regional directors had told me a long time ago, he said, ‘Cliff, you don’t even really want to be assistant commissioner. What you really want to be is a regional director, because a regional director is just like being a little commissioner. You’ve got everything the commissioner’s got on a smaller scale.’ And I found that to be true. . . . except on a little bit smaller scale, probably more manageable scale. So I really enjoyed being regional director. Great job. . . .”

Barrett: Well, it was. One of the regional directors had told me a long time ago, he said, “Cliff, you don't even really want to be assistant commissioner. What you really want to be is a regional director, because a regional director is just like being a little commissioner. You've got everything the commissioner's got on a smaller scale.” And I found that to be true. The personnel problems

become much more immediate. You're meeting water users eyeball to eyeball a lot more. It is, it's kind of like a microcosm of the whole Bureau. Each region has its own little culture and way of doing things, and has the *whole set* of problems that a commissioner has, except on a little bit smaller scale, probably more manageable scale. So I really enjoyed being regional director. Great job.

Storey: And you were here how long?

Barrett: Let's see. I came in '81 and I retired in 1989.

Storey: So—

Barrett: Eight years.

Storey: Eight years.

Barrett: Well, no. I came at the end of '81—more like seven years.

Storey: Were you now making political decisions?

While Regional Director Became More Political

Barrett: Yeah, at that level, sure, because Broadbent gave me a lot—see, unlike Stamm, who didn't want anybody to go to the Hill, Broadbent was always critical—I use that word in a positive sense—he

was kind of critical of me. He says, “Cliff, you're not political enough. You need to get up to the Hill and talk to these people more. You need to go up there.” And I kind of enjoyed doing that. So, yeah, I became *more* political. And we had *big* problems out here, *really* big problems.

One of the reasons I came out here was that the water community here *didn't like* the regional director they had. I think they were killing the messenger. You know what I mean? They didn't like the Bureau program and they were blaming it on that regional director, and so they wanted a new regional director. I think all these things just fit into place, and so I ended up coming out here. But my charge coming out here was, one, fix that repayment contract.

Storey: With?

Among Other Things Was Charged with Fixing the Water Contracts for the Dolores Project and with the M&I Water Users on the Central Utah Project

Barrett: With the M&I water users on Central Utah Project. See, we'd started that ball rolling but it had never come—they said, “Get that repayment contract renegotiated and get Dolores Project.” Dolores Project had repayment problems. Dallas Creek Project had repayment problems. And

they were already *well* under construction, nearing completion. And see if you can't get Animas-LaPlata going and get Jordanelle Dam started, which is a part of Central Utah Project, a very controversial structure. And my charge, I had a little meeting with Broadbent and Hodel and, "Here's what we want you to do. We're sending you out there to do this list of things." So I had my charge and some of those were pretty political issues.

Getting Jordanelle Dam under Construction Was a Tough Issue

The repayment contract was tough, because the Utah delegation was basically on the district side of that issue. The Jordanelle Dam was tough because we and the district and the congressional delegation were united, but the rest of the world, the environmentalists were killing us. They had serious concerns about the geology and all those things. So those were tough problems. I kind of came out here with a-

END SIDE 1, TAPE 2. AUGUST 15, 1996.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. AUGUST 15, 1996.

Storey: So you had all these issues that you were expected to deal with.

Barrett: Yeah.

Storey: Tell me about it.

Renegotiating the contract for the Central Utah Project was difficult

Barrett: Well, I guess probably the stickiest one was the repayment contract with Central Utah. That was a tough, tough issue, because they were saying—they were basically *afraid* of reopening that issue. They would have to have an election to amend that repayment contract, and they weren't sure they could *carry* an election. Meanwhile, they had changed project managers down there, because the one they had when I first got to be regional director retired and they brought in a new guy.

Storey: This was with the water district.

“The district had an election, and they won pretty handily on it. . . .”

Barrett: With the water district, yeah. They'd changed water district managers. They brought in a new guy just to handle that issue, I think. And it was a serious problem, because they had to raise the—I'm trying to think. I can't remember what the dollar figures were, but it was a *lot* of money. They had to actually have an election to authorize them to execute this new repayment contract. Meanwhile, we're slowing down

construction until they do that just as a way of putting the pressure on. Well, actually, we convinced ourselves that we couldn't go ahead, because we would be building something we had no repayment assurance for. So that was a tough issue and a hard sell. As it turned out, we got around that one. The district had an election, and they won pretty handily on it. We amended that repayment contract.

Dolores Project

The Dallas Creek and Dolores ~~Creek~~ [Project] problems were pretty much the same, except we resolved those in different ways. Dolores Project we finally ended up decreasing the size of the project where we were back down within repayment ceiling, and we did that by having the state of Colorado agree to build the last segments of the project as a state project. So the water users were whole, but now the state would fund it and they would have some repayment arrangement with the state instead of with us—probably on better terms. In fact, I don't know if that will ever get built or not. They haven't built it yet.¹² It's a northern extension project up in the Dove Creek area, and I don't know if they'll ever build it, because the

12. The Ridges Basin Dam was dedicated in 2008, and conveyance systems are yet to be built as of this editorial work in early 2009.

economics just aren't there. But that's how we got around that issue.

Animas-La Plata Project

Animas-LaPlata was—I guess technically on paper we got Animas-LaPlata to a construction start while I was here. That whole Indian water rights settlement was negotiated during that period of time. That was kind of a thrill for me. I worked and I was kind of the Department's negotiator. There was an attorney from the solicitor's office, and I was the head of that team for the Department to negotiate that whole settlement with the Southern Utes and the Ute Mountain Utes. Actually, when we signed that thing, they signed it in one of the chambers of the Colorado state legislature, which the stained-glass windows around the room were all Indian scenes. The room had something to do with some Indian historical thing that happened, and we got to sign it. And actually I got delegated by the Secretary to sign for the secretary on that agreement. That was kind of a neat experience, you know.

Storey: Was that the first time you'd ever worked with Indians?

Barrett: That closely, yeah.

Storey: Was it a different kind of an experience?

Working with Indians Is Different

Barrett: It is. It is. They're a different group. We work a lot with the Uinta Utes up here in the Uinta Valley and Uinta Basin in Utah. Working with the Indians is different. It is. They see things differently than we do, and they work on a different—and I'm not putting a value statement on this. I'm just saying they are different than we are. Their perception of the world is different. Their perception of time is different. If you can't get used to that, it's very tough to work with them. Very, very hard. We would schedule meetings out in the Uinta Basin three weeks in advance. We would confirm them the day before, and then drive out there and nobody shows up. They didn't think they needed to meet today on it, you know.

One experience I had we go up there and meet with them, we had the tribal council in a room, and the project manager from Provo and I were out there to talk to them [about] the Uinta Unit and the Upalco Unit. And we're visiting and one guy gets up and walks out, and I think, "Well, he's gone to the rest room or something." Pretty soon another guy gets up. Within a half hour we find out we're there alone, almost, and you go outside and all the pickup trucks are

gone. They just left. That's tough to do business with people like that. But that's their culture, you know. But it's difficult to do business.

The other thing that makes it hard is they elect tribal councils, and you'll have an agreement with one tribal council. Then they have an election and nothing the other one did before counts anymore. You almost have to start all over again. (Storey: Yeah.) So we had that problem a lot. We particularly had that problem in the Uinta Basin with the Uinta Utes. The Southern Utes and the Ute Mountain Utes were much easier to work with. They seemed to be *better* organized, and they got *better* advice, I think, from their attorneys and things like that.

Storey: If I understand it correctly, which is unlikely since I'm so distant from it, the settlement agreed to provide water by a certain date?

Barrett: I haven't read that for a long, long time, but I think that's true. What *they* had was they had a process in the state of Colorado the water right adjudication system to challenge all the water rights out there in that part of the state. Then the settlement was if we would build Animas-LaPlata Project for them, they would back down on all these other claims they had to water. So there was that quid pro quo there. I think it did have a date that we needed to have that project

built and delivering water to them by some date certain or else the deal is off. I really ought to read it before I say that, but that's vaguely what I remember. I know there was a trade there, you know. They're smart enough not to trade without something.

Storey: But that's part of the record, the written record.

Barrett: Yeah. I'm sure it is, yeah.

Colorado River Management Issues

Storey: What were some of the other issues as regional director? Was California always calling up and saying, "You know there's got to be a surplus this year, don't you?"

Barrett: Well the annual review of the operating plan for the Colorado River was always an issue, not so much in those years as it's gotten to be now. For a *long* time, for a long time, the annual operating plan on the Colorado River was just really a matter between the Bureau and the [Colorado River] Basin states. We could find ways to make things work. The Basin states were willing to talk to each other and negotiate out their kind of informal compromises on how we would do all that, and then we would get in and talk to them about it and work with them on it and then we would send the plan up to the secretary. You

know, it was kind of in the family.

Of late, there's been a lot more players at the table. They've kind of opened the whole thing up. You find the environmental community is in there a lot now, and the other thing that's happening is in the lower basin, particularly, they're really bumping up now against their water allocations, and it's getting tougher and tougher for them. It used to be the upper basin kind of working on the lower basin and back and forth that way. But now a lot of the dispute is amongst the states in the lower basin with each other. Arizona, California, and Nevada are having some problems. So that whole annual operating plan process is getting to be a lot more difficult.

Reoperation of Glen Canyon Dam

Then you layer into that the reoperation of Glen Canyon Dam as a result of the EIS and what that does to river operations, and it gets to be a lot more complicated, because you get a lot more people at the table now, a lot more environmental interests. So that's difficult.

I guess, actually, from where I sat, from where I sat in the years I was here, it was never really a terribly big, big issue, because the states managed to kind of work it out themselves, and

we had some excellent people working here. Wayne Cook, who was head of the Operations Division here, is a *master* on the Colorado River. He knows Colorado River stuff inside out and was very good at working with these people to kind of work these issues out. And I never really, as regional director, had a huge problem with it. (Storey: Uh-huh.)

High Flows on the Colorado in 1982 and 1983 Were Problems

I'm trying to think. There was one time where we had a kind of a problem. After we had the big really high flows in 1982 and '83, there were some really worry time. There was a lot of issues there. One of the really big exciting things to me was what was going on at Glen Canyon Dam, you know, the spillway damage and the spillway repair and all that. That was just a *horrendous* thing.

“ . . . *while* we were in that crisis, the challenge was to keep our people and the E&R Center people and the Washington office people all singing off the same chart. . . . ”

I guess the challenge from a regional director's viewpoint—probably a couple of them—*while* we were in that crisis, the challenge was to keep our people and the E&R Center people and the

Washington office people all singing off the same chart. What's the story? What's going on? What are we going to tell people is going on?

There were some real problems with that, because we had our people out here on the ground who knew what was happening and saw what was happening. We had technical experts from the Denver office out advising us, helping us, and at that level I think we were all pretty much linked together. On the public information side, we had our office here putting out press releases and stuff saying one thing, and we had offices *in Denver* who were at the same time *preparing* to sing quite a different song. We had some real rug-chug battles between I and the Denver office over *who* was going to put out the press releases on Glen Canyon Dam. That was a real challenge during that.

“ . . . after we got things under control, physically under control, and now we had this *immense* construction program to do in a very, very short period of time . . . ”

The other big issue was after we got things under control, physically under control, and now we had this *immense* construction program to do in a very, very short period of time, and government construction and contracting process doesn't *lend* itself to doing things in a hurry, you

know, so we had to find ways to on an emergency basis get those contracts awarded, get contractors in there, and get that job done and built before the next big runoff season. That was the real challenge.

On that the Bureau just hung together like glue. It was amazing. We got one of the *best* construction engineers in the Bureau reassigned from California to come over on an emergency basis. We got ways to shortcut the whole contracting process *approved* by the contract administration people in Salt Lake City. We got the Denver office people just *hustling* to get design work done. That was just an amazing effort. It was one of those things that really makes you proud, because everybody was just—it's an example how everybody can play together when there's a problem that everybody wants to get solved. And, man, when you work together like a team, you can just get great stuff done. That was neat.

Storey: Tell me what happened. This was a high-water year, I take it.

Barrett: This was a real high-water year, and we had to start using the spillways. They'd never been used before. Well, we did test them once in a while. You know, we'd open the gates—run some water through, but never on an extended basis

and never at that level of flows. What they found out was— nobody who really knew about these things was surprised when it happened, that we started getting cavitation in the concrete at the bottom of the spillway, and we started getting really serious problems with the spillways operating, and the water is still coming up. So we had to decrease the flow in the spillways so we could get a handle on that. We actually put flashboards on the top of the spillway gates made out of plywood so you could get four more feet of elevation in the lake. Barry Wirth's got a wonderful video on that. But it was a matter of routing the water through these damaged spillways.

Then in the process of that, this cavitation kept going on, and you couldn't shut them down, because you had to get rid of the water. It was either run the spillways or over [the] top of the dam. So we had to run the spillways. We made some pretty tough calls there. We decided we would hold one spillway as long as we could without using it in order to extend the time we'd have at least—you know, if we had to shut one down because it got so severely damaged, we could then open up the other spillway. There's one on each side of the dam. We made some pretty tough calls there. What's the risk of losing both spillways? How much water do we *really* think is going to come down this river? You

know, just a lot of unknowns and risk-taking trying to get this thing all put together.

Runoff in 1982 Damaged Both Spillways at Glen Canyon Dam

Both spillways were *substantially* damaged before we got all done with it, and then we had another record water year coming up right up behind it. We knew it was coming, because we could see the snowpack and stuff. So we had to get those spillways *repaired* just as *quickly* as we could. We just did some wonderful, wonderful work on the part of the designers and the construction engineers and the contractors to get all that put together and running again.

Storey: And taken care of before the next runoff.

For 1983 Runoff Reclamation Was Able to Draw down Lake Powell and Store the Runoff

Barrett: Yeah. Well, actually, we were able to draw the reservoir down and store the next runoff, which was also a very, very high year. But we got through it all. We managed our way through it.

“ . . . we had problems at Flaming Gorge Dam. We had that spillway already under repair before the flooding season started, so we couldn't use that spillway, and we were running our lake gates and

**powerplant full bore and putting flashboards up
on that dam. . . .”**

At the same time we had problems at Flaming Gorge Dam. We had that spillway already under repair before the flooding season started, so we couldn't use that spillway, and we were running our lake gates and powerplant full bore and putting flashboards up on that dam. The design problem– the Bureau knew the design problem existed, and we'd already modified the spillways. We were in the process at Flaming Gorge and had already done it at a couple of dams up in Montana. I think Yellowtail Dam had been modified.

Storey: Yellowtail and maybe Hungry Horse, though I've forgotten.

Barrett: And Hungry Horse. Glen Canyon and Hoover were the next on the list to do. We were doing them kind of one at a time. Glen Canyon and Hoover were the next ones to be done, and the flood got there before we got the job done.

Storey: So there was a design problem?

Barrett: Yeah. I think they knew it was going to happen, because if you didn't know it was going to happen, you wouldn't have already repaired all these other dams, and it was just a matter of

time, and we were on a program to get those things fixed. It was a problem they didn't know about when they designed the spillways, and they since found out a cure for it. So we actually repaired the damage and *modified* the spillway at the same time so it wouldn't happen again.

Storey: And you were regional director then?

Barrett: Yeah.

Storey: Was there any fear we were going to lose the dam?

Barrett: Well, that was the issue. I think the people who really knew, the design engineers who knew what the design of the dam was and who knew the nature of the damage, because we had shut those down and sent people down there to look at it so we knew what was going on and we'd sent people up in boats and down over the edge in a little trolley car, so we knew what was happening.

I was always confident that the designers and the people who were operating the river to minimize the amount of water coming down that we'd have to deal with, I don't think that crowd ever thought we would lose the dam. I don't think they even thought that as a serious possibility. But we had a public affairs guy in

Denver who was already writing press releases on the failure of the dam. Now, whether he was told to do that or whether he was just doing it to have them ready in case he needed them, the thing that scared me was as soon as you put that on a piece of paper, you can't control it anymore. And you know that as well as I do—it will get out. The next thing you know, you've got the *Denver Post* running a story on the failure of the dam or the imminent failure of the dam. I think that would have been a real disaster, because you would have scared people to death that didn't need to be.

Personally, I was never worried about the integrity of the dam. The worst thing that could have happened probably was you would lose your ability to shut the spillway down and you'd probably drain the reservoir down to the spillway lip. So now you've got a lot of water going down through Hoover and all the way down into the Gulf of Mexico, the Gulf of California. That happened anyway. There was a lot of water going down.

Storey: *A lot* of water that year.

Barrett: Hoover was spilling, Glen Canyon is spilling, and there's water all over the place.

Fontanelle Dam Had Structural Problems That

Year

We had kind of a similar thing on a much smaller scale but probably more serious because there were actually people downstream at Fontanelle Dam in Wyoming, where we had in this same time—and these things *all* happened in the *same* year. It was just a terrible year. We had Flaming Gorge problems, Glen Canyon problems, and Fontanelle Dam, which did have a real structural problem. It had the same kind of thing that was going on at Teton, and we were really afraid of losing that dam.

“Now, *there's one* I was afraid we might lose it. . . .”

Now, *there's one* I was afraid we might lose it. But we were handling that. We were going up and making almost daily visits to the radio station in Rock Springs and doing call-in shows and talk shows and telling people what our program was for evacuating people out of the river if it happened, you know.

“. . . an emergency repair that took a long time to do because it amounted to excavating a trench the whole length of the dam, from the top of the dam down to bedrock, and building a concrete wall inside the dam. . . .”

We had a fairly good program laid out for handling the public on that. Now, they didn't like it, because I don't think anybody would like to live downstream in that kind of a situation. But there again, we did kind of an emergency repair that took a long time to do because it amounted to excavating a trench the whole length of the dam, from the top of the dam down to bedrock, and building a concrete wall inside the dam. It took the contractor a long time to do that. But we had that all under way. But, gee I think there was one where we were lucky. We were lucky it didn't go.

Storey: Was Fontanelle while you were regional director?

Barrett: Yeah. This happened twice up there. The first time on the original filling—

Storey: The first time was before Teton.

Barrett: Yes. Yes. The first time was on the original filling of the dam. The first time it filled, they started getting some sloughing problems on the face of the dam. That's when Dave Crandall was regional director. In fact, he'd only been regional director a few weeks when that happened. That was his baptism into regional director was the imminent failure of Fontanelle Dam. So they fixed that. That was a seepage problem where

water was coming through the dam and causing some erosion. I think they thought they had it fixed.

But after Teton, we went back and looked at all these dams and figured out well we better do some repair work, and a *lot* of them were repaired after that. Again, it was matter of which one are you going to fix first. You have limited budgets. Which one you going to do next? We did this same fix down at Navaho Dam. Exactly the same fix, concrete wall from the top of the dam down to the abutment–rock.

Dealing with the Public During the Emergency at Fontanelle Dam

So through that period, there was a lot of tense moments. To put it mildly, there was a lot of tense moments. But the point I'm making is, there were two issues. One, how do you fix a problem? How do you deal with the problem? And the other one was how do you deal with the *people*? How do you deal with the people? I always thought the best thing to do is be just as honest as you can be, just tell them everything you know. If they don't like what they hear, then they'll rail on you about it, and they'll criticize you. But at least you can never been accused of *pacifying* them by saying everything is okay when it's not.

Storey: Or hiding things from them.

Barrett: Or hiding things. At Glen Canyon I never seriously—after talking to the engineers and everybody who was involved, who were the real technical people who knew a lot more about it than I did what was going on, I *never really* thought that we were anywhere near having a failure of the dam. At Fontanelle, I was scared to death. But we told people. We said, “Hey, look, this could go wrong. We’re running the river full bore. We’ve got everything open. We’re trying to keep the water [moving on downstream].”

The trouble is, the water was coming in faster than you could let it out. We had a sick dam and the water was rising. We told people that, and we said, “Look, we’re watching this. We’ve got guys on the dam night and day, *walking* around looking for problems. And if they see one, we have a system in place. We’ll alert you immediately, and you pick up and move.” They don’t want to hear that, because they’re scared.

Storey: Teton is already there.

Barrett: Yeah. They’ve got the Teton experience in the back of their mind. Yeah, exactly. Teton, that could have been so much worse. Was it like eleven people died?

Storey: Yes.

Barrett: Some of them from heart attacks. Not very many people actually drowned. Just so lucky. So lucky, you know. That could have been a *lot*, lot worse.

Was at the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville When Teton Dam Failed

When that happened, I was at the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville doing my executive training. I wasn't even in the office when that happened. I remember it really plainly. We had a wives' weekend where the wives came down and stayed with us. Our class did things together. We were laying in bed on Sunday morning listening to the radio and heard the announcement— the Teton Dam disaster. That's how I heard about it. I think it was either Saturday or Sunday morning, one or the other. I immediately called the office and talked to Gil Stamm. That was a real experience. It just makes you sick, you know.

Storey: Did you go back to Washington?

Barrett: No. They told me to stay where I was. There wasn't anything I could do. They were kind of on top of it, and they had Rod Vissia and everybody. Not much a guy can do. That was

right in the middle of the program then, so I just stayed where I was at.

Storey: How much longer were you down there in Charlottesville?

Barrett: I was down there for six weeks altogether, and that was probably about the third week. So I stayed a couple of weeks down there and then went back.

Storey: And then you went back to the office?

Barrett: Uh-huh.

Storey: How were people reacting to Teton?

Failure of Teton Dam Was Very Traumatic for Reclamation and There Was a Lot of Criticism

Barrett: Oh, it was a very traumatic experience for the Bureau, from top to bottom. No matter where you worked in the Bureau, you were—I'm trying to find a word—dismayed, sick. Sick about it. The worst thing that could happen had happened. And then also dealing with the criticism. You weren't only sick about what had happened, but you were getting beat up on at the same time. You know what I mean? In the press, you know. Gil Stamm made a very unfortunate off-the-cuff comment that he just got beat up with. I don't

know if you knew about that or not.

Storey: No, I don't.

Barrett: He was with some reporters and they asked him some question and he said, "Well, I'm not losing any sleep over *that*." And they interpreted that as a crass comment about how he felt about Teton Dam. And they weren't connected at all. But I remember reading him quoted in the paper. Somebody said, "Well, how do you feel about Teton Dam?" "Well, I'm not losing any sleep over that." You know, and that was *attributed* to him and it was taken out of context. We were just getting *beat up* all over the place over that.

So there was two things. There was one, I guess, kind of like a family losing its child, you know. And then beside that, you're getting beat up on because you killed the child. Do you know what I mean? It was just very traumatic. Everywhere you went in the Bureau, at whatever level you went, people were just sick about it. And yet at the same time, they were mobilizing to do what they could about it. We sent teams of people up there and they lived in the—what was it? The Doubletree Motel. I remember really well. We sent whole teams. They lived up there for months settling claims. One of the government's first reactions to a thing like that is to throw money at it, and we did a lot of that, and

helping people.

Storey: Did you ever have to go out there?

Barrett: No. No. Rod Vissia was regional director, and they set up a special office in Idaho Falls to deal with the water users and the people who were damaged, claims and things like that. I never, *never* saw Teton Dam until many years later when I was regional director here. I drove up there one day just to look at the site. But I never saw it. It wasn't an issue that I dealt with.

Gil Stamm took it very, very hard, personally took it very, very hard. It was kind of a real traumatic experience.

Was Appointed Acting Commissioner When Bob Broadbent Became Assistant Secretary

Storey: Yes, it would be. While you were regional director here, you were also acting commissioner for a period of time.

Barrett: That was interesting. Yeah. Broadbent moved up to be assistant secretary, which is the job he *really* wanted all along, I think. In fact, he told me when he came to be commissioner, the very first time I met him, I remember this really well, because we were having skull practice, because we didn't know when he would show up. So we

had to go ahead and have skull practice, because we were having appropriation hearings the next week. He just came in the room and says, "I need to talk to you." I went out. He says, "I'm Bob Broadbent."

And I said, "Yeah, I guessed you were." You know, and we visited. And that night I drove him home, because he was staying with a relative out not too far from where I lived. So I drove him home. And he just said, "You know, Cliff, I don't know why I'm here." He says, "This isn't the job I looked for. I wanted to be assistant secretary, and I'm getting this job instead." He and I struck it off pretty well. We were good friends. And he said, "I don't know why I'm here."

So, anyway, he wanted to be assistant secretary and eventually he got there, which left the commissioner's job open. Bob Olson, whom he had brought in, who had been a Bureau employee and then went to Western when Western was created, and was a Boulder City guy, and he and Bob were pretty close, so Bob brought him into be assistant commissioner.

Bob Olson Was Acting Commissioner for a Few Months Before Barrett Was Appointed Acting Commissioner

When Bob went up to be assistant secretary, they made Bob Olson acting commissioner for a few months. He wanted to be commissioner *really* bad. I think he read the tea leaves and saw he wasn't going to be. He got a good job offer and *left*.

Storey: At Western?

Barrett: No, at the Bureau. He was assistant commissioner of the bureau, made acting commissioner when Broadbent left. Saw that he wasn't going to get that job, got a good opportunity to go out into private industry, and left. He went to work for PMI,¹³ which put him back in the power field, which is where he was really comfortable, anyway. He did *power* things. PMI is a consulting outfit, and they're very big in the *power* business. So he left.

Broadbent calls me up. I got a phone call in here one afternoon. "Cliff?"

I says, "Yes."

He says, "How would you like to come back to Washington and be acting commissioner?"

END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 2. AUGUST 15, 1996.

13. Power Monitors, Inc.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 3. AUGUST 15, 1996.

Storey: This is tape three of an interview by Brit Storey with Clifford I. Barrett on August the 15th, 1996.

So you really had to think about it.

Barrett: I had to think about that one, because Hodel is now Secretary. Jim Watt's moved on. Hodel is Secretary, and he's the guy who I sat in his office and he told me he didn't think I could be a deputy commissioner. And now they want me to be acting commissioner for some indefinite period of time. They didn't know how long it was going to be for. I said, "Wait a minute. What does this mean?"

There was a lady, a very nice person, Anne Gorsuch.¹⁴ No. No. That's not her name. Ann.

14. Mr. Barrett's recollection that this person was not Anne Gorsuch is correct. Anne I. (McGill, Gorsuch) Burford, (1942–2004) served as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from 1981-83, under President Ronald Reagan. She was a lawyer educated at the University of Colorado at Boulder. She was twice married and was known at various times as Anne Irene McGill, Anne M. Gorsuch (or Anne McGill Gorsuch), and Anne M. Burford. At EPA, she advocated regulatory reform and budgetary cuts. Under her leadership, the EPA's budget dropped by \$200 million and staff was slashed 23%. Burford was later compelled to resign with twenty of her top employees after being found in contempt of Congress in a 259-105 vote after refusing to disclose documents related to a conflict of interest involving the Superfund program.

(continued...)

It will come to me. She was the deputy secretary.

To Bob Broadbent, I said, "Look, you know what the problem here is. These are the people who wanted me out, and now you're asking me to come back. Have you cleared this with Hodel?" is what I asked him.

He said, "No."

I said, "Why don't you do that, and then if he says okay, I'll come back."

So he did and I went back. The very first day I was there I had a meeting with the under secretary, who was a lady, and her name really escapes me. It was Ann something. And I said,

14. (...continued)

She subsequently wrote *Are You Tough Enough* in 1986 in which she stated that her time at EPA was an "expensive mid-life education. . . ." "When congressional criticism about the EPA began to touch the presidency, Mr. Reagan solved his problem by jettisoning me and my people, people whose only 'crime' was loyal service, following orders. I was not the first to receive his special brand of benevolent neglect, a form of conveniently looking the other way, while his staff continues to do some very dirty work."

Information derived from Wikipedia

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne_Gorsuch] and a Washington Post obituary of July 22, 2004,

[<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A3418-2004Jul21.html>] on March 16, 2009 at 2:45 P.M.

“Look. You know the situation. You know why I wasn't here when you got here, and now I'm coming back and you know all that history.”

She said, “Yes.”

I said, “What is it you want me to do while I'm here? What are the parameters of being an acting commissioner?”

And she gave me kind of a list of things she'd like to see done. I took that as my charter and went up there. I was acting commissioner for probably— by the time [they] got [C. Dale] Duvall actually on board, I think I was acting commissioner maybe six or seven months. Seemed like a long time.

Reclamation Was in Another Reorganization While He Was Acting Commissioner

That was an interesting period, because we were in the middle of another reorganization. That's when we were closing down the regional office in Denver, moving everybody to Billings. One of the *really big* issues was who's going to be the regional director in Billings. We had a regional director, Ed—

Storey: We had two.

Barrett: Yeah. We had two. Ed [Edward M.] Hallenbeck was leaving Boulder City. And who's going to be regional director there? So we had a lot of management kinds of issues to deal with.

Storey: Did you feel constrained about dealing with those?

Barrett: No, I didn't. I went down and Broadbent now is assistant secretary, and I wanted to know from him. I said, "Bob, you can either run the Bureau from upstairs or from downstairs." And he was downstairs now. I says, "How much are you going to want me to do?" We talked specifically about the regional director jobs. He says, "You do it and tell me what you want to do. You make the selection and clear it with me, which you have to do anyway." So he pretty much left it up to me.

Now, as I found out, it wasn't *quite* all that clear. I'm trying to remember how this worked. It wasn't Hallenbeck who left.¹⁵ It was the regional director who was there when I got there that was leaving. I can't think of his name. Because Hallenbeck got to be regional director during that period. Hallenbeck was a choice. He was project manager in Phoenix for Central Arizona Project. The politics of that situation

15. Nelson W. Plummer.

was there probably was no other choice. You just couldn't put anybody but Hallenbeck into that job, because the Arizona crowd liked him and they wanted him to have that job and they did their homework on the Hill.

Storey: He was the project manager at CAP?

Barrett: For CAP, yes. So he went to be regional director then. That's how that worked out. I mean, I made the choice, but it was a pretty obvious choice. Nobody else would have *flown* politically. Broadbent and I talked about that, and he said, "You know, really, when you stop to think about this, this is what it's going to be." And I says, "Yeah, I can see that now." But he let me go through a lot of steps before I got there. He actually let me go through. I interviewed one-on-one all the regional directors, asked them what their plans were, how long were they going to stay on, did they want to move, you know. We had little one-on-ones. It was like being a commissioner. It was like being real. I thought I had full charter to do whatever. So we did and we made those selections. Billy Martin went to Billings.

Storey: Was it Gordon Wendler?

Barrett: Gordon Wendler was program officer.

Storey: I'm thinking incorrectly. Who was the other?

Barrett: Joe [Joseph B.] Marcotte [Jr.]. Joe Marcotte. He ended up leaving the Bureau. I brought him into Washington office, because, see, we didn't have an assistant commissioner, because they never filled in. Bob Olson was assistant commissioner. Being acting commissioner, they never filled in behind him. So I had that vacancy and I brought Marcotte in to be acting there. So he had a place to go. And then he worked there a while and then finally Duvall found a place for him to go to. Anyway, we had that.

The secretary, before I got there, had started a team working on—it was one of these studies of what the Bureau should be, what do we want to be five years from now, those kind of forward-looking studies. They had put together a team to work on that already, and she wanted me to kind of get a hold of that—“she” being the deputy secretary. She said, “Get a hold of that study and kind of direct it and see if we can't get something we can use out of it.” And so that was another one of the things I worked on.

Reclamation Was Having Serious Budget Problems

At the same time, we had some really serious budgetary problems. We weren't getting the

money we needed to do construction programs. We had to make some pretty hard decisions on how we're going to divvy up the pie on construction and stuff like that. Bill [William] Klostermeyer, who was the assistant commissioner for management, he and I had been friends for a long, long time. He was an old-line Bureau guy. He and I worked out some kind of new ways of—actually, we put a whole new spin on the program conference, actually, and how things worked, and how we ended up that conference. In that period of time, we went through a whole budget cycle. I ended up being the acting commissioner for the appropriations hearings. So I went almost through a whole cycle with the Bureau during that period. It was kind of fun. Yeah, kind of fun.

Storey: You've already addressed this, but I'd like to go back and readdress it. Somebody told me that their sense was that Broadbent was running Reclamation from the assistant secretary's office, and that's why it took so long to fill the position, something like a year or more. What would your perspective on that be?

Barrett: Well, I guess that's probably, to a large extent, true, and I think that's one reason why Bob Olson was maybe a little bit unhappy, because Broadbent wasn't making him commissioner and giving him full charter. I think the reason was,

and again they made it *very, very* plain to me when I went there to be acting, they said, “Don't ever think you're going to get this job, because it's just not in the cards for a career Federal employee to be commissioner of Reclamation. Those days are over.” They made that very plain to me.

“About the first week he was there, he [Jim Watt] called in all the agency heads. Well, every one of them was an acting agency head . . . ‘We're going to change things, and if you can't live with change, you might just as well leave now. And the second thing is, *none* of you . . . are going to get the jobs that you're acting in. . . .”

In fact, they made that plain to me the first go-around. When I was acting, Jim Watt was secretary. About the first week he was there, he called in all the agency heads. Well, every one of them was an acting agency head, because the previous crop had already left. So we were all acting. He gave us a little talk. One of his favorite words was “change.” He says, “We're going to change things, and if you can't live with change, you might just as well leave now. And the second thing is, *none* of you, *none* of you, are going to get the jobs that you're acting in. Just don't even think about it. You're *not* going to be commissioner. You're not going to be the head of Fish and Wildlife. You're not going to be

head of the Park Service. Just forget that. None of you guys are going to have those jobs.” He was very open about that.

Storey: This was Watt?

Barrett: Jim Watt, yeah. So when I went back there to be acting, Hodel is now Secretary, and I guess, frankly, Hodel and I at this juncture were probably not really good friends, you know. So I never dealt with him much. We would go to meetings and he would talk to me, but there was never a *friendship*. Do you know what I mean?

Storey: Yes.

Barrett: But I was friends with the deputy, and I could talk with her and we could talk with each other. That first interview I told you about, she says, “Cliff, don't think for one second that you'll ever get this job. You'll be acting. You'll do a good job, and when you're through, we'll be happy, and you'll go home.” So I approached it that way. So I wasn't disappointed when I went back this time.

“ . . . I think they spent a long time looking for somebody who would *take* the job . . . ”

But getting back to Broadbent, I think they spent a long time looking for somebody who

would *take* the job, because, see, you're now a couple of years into the cycle. There's going to be an election pretty soon. Who wants to move to Washington from wherever for what they *know* is going to be kind of a short-term deal? You know what I mean? So I think it took them a while to find somebody. I'm not sure how hard they were looking. I guess that's where Broadbent kind of liked to have both jobs, and so he really wasn't pushing to look hard. But the White House really makes the search and the selection. But I don't think Bob was pushing them too hard to do that. He was kind of happy to let it rock along.

Dale Duvall Chosen to Replace Bob Broadbent as Commissioner

They finally landed on picking Dale Duvall, who was already in Washington, already a politically appointed guy, so they didn't have to do a lot. I mean, all the FBI background searches and all that stuff had already been done on him. It was just a matter of moving a few blocks down the street.

Storey: But all that time you were also, or were you, regional director of the Upper Colorado Region?

Barrett: I guess—tried not to be. Tried not to be. I had an assistant. When I left, I said, “You're acting

regional director until I get back, and don't do anything dumb." (laughter)

Storey: Who was this?

Barrett: Wes Hershey. Wes Hershey. Have you talked to Wes Hershey?

Storey: Yeah. I spent two hours with him Monday, and I'll spend three hours this afternoon.

Barrett: It was Wes Hershey. He was the assistant regional director and we made him acting.

Storey: So during that period of time you tried to stay out of the regional business?

Barrett: Yes. You really can't, because as commissioner you're involved. Every major decision gets run up that way, you know. So I tried to stay out of the way. But it was during that time that we had the election on the repayment contract in Central Utah. That all happened while he was acting regional director. So there's a lot of stuff happened while he was out here, while he was acting. I tried to stay out of his way, because I had my hands full. I had a lot to do the way it was.

Storey: How did you work this? Did you take your wife back to Washington with you?

Lived in Hotels While Acting Commissioner the Second Time

Barrett: No, no, she stayed here. I probably got home one way or the other every other week, back home for the weekend, or we had a program conference, I took her with me, you know. So it was a difficult time. *Personally*, it was a difficult time living in hotels.

Storey: That's the way you did it?

Barrett: Yeah. I just stayed in hotels and got per diem. If you stay too long in one space, you lose your per diem, you know. So I would travel.

Storey: Rotate around.

Barrett: Kind of every couple of weeks get out of town and change hotels. We agreed all ahead of time that that's how it would work, so there was no problem. I just went back there and lived at the Park Central Hotel, which is a couple of blocks away from [the] Interior Building.

Storey: As commissioner, does your political involvement change?

Barrett: Yeah, sure.

Storey: Tell me.

As Acting Commissioner He Did Political Work with Constituents and on the Hill

Barrett: Well, you deal directly with the people on the Hill. Again, Broadbent *wanted* me to do that. Now, he could very easily have said, "Look, Cliff, I'll do all that from downstairs. You just kind of take care of the Bureau and I'll do the political work." But he didn't do that. He had me doing the political work, *both* with the constituent group and with the Hill. I went to NWRA. There was a NWRA annual meeting during that period, and I went there and gave the speech and met with all the water users. Typically at those meetings the commissioner goes and meets with any water user group that wants to meet with him, and I went out there and had all those meetings. I did a lot of work on the Hill. I went through the budget cycle. I was the witness at the appropriation hearings. You know, he could very easily have said, "No, I'll do all that," but he didn't. He just let me do the job. It was really interesting, a lot of fun. Had some interesting political kinds of things.

Colorado Ute Power Company, Ben Nighthorse Campbell and Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument

For example, I'll just give you one example. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, he was then

congressman from southwestern Colorado, and he put in a bill. In effect, it would expand the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, which I think was then a national recreation area or a national monument, and he was going to try to expand its land and make it into *more* than that. It involved a right-of-way, some land he wanted to take and put in the park, belonged to Colorado Ute Power Company. They had water rights and dreamed some day of building a dam there and having a hydroelectric plant. This would have affected their ability to do that.

So they went back, cut their own deal with—Campbell was gone and this is the next guy now. I can't think of his name, but he was only a one-term congressman. They cut a deal with him where they would support the legislation in exchange for their water right on the Gunnison River, he would give them rights to develop power at the Bureau's powerplant on Blue Mesa [Dam]. They wanted to upgrade the generators and have all the energy that came from it.

So one morning I get a phone call, “Cliff, can you come up to the Hill and have breakfast with me tomorrow?” I said, “Sure.” So I went up there. To my surprise, it wasn't just him. It was him and Gertz Grummonds [phonetic], who was manager of the Colorado Ute Power, there together. We had a nice breakfast. He says, “By

the way, we've been talking about this Black Canyon of the Gunnison thing. We have this package put together. All you have to do is agree to it." (laughter)

I said, "Oh? Tell me what the deal is." So they laid this proposal out for me, and I said, "Gee, that's interesting. Have you guys talked at all to Western Area Power Administration who are really the guys who *market* this power and do all that?"

"Oh, yeah. It's okay with them."

I said, "That's neat." So I said, "I'll look into it."

We finished our breakfast. I gave Gertz Grummonds a ride back downtown. I went up there in the Bureau car, and I just took him back downtown. Got on the phone, called out to Bill Claggett, who was Administrator of Western. I says, "Bill, have you heard this deal?"

He says, "Never heard of it."

Turns out, I think Colorado Ute were trying to pull a fast one, and they kind of snookered the congressman and everybody else. That was the kind of political thing, you know. They were trying to muscle, muscle us through the

congressmen to do this. It never happened. That bill still has never passed Congress, and that's still an issue. Colorado Ute now belongs to Tri-State. They've taken them over. But the water right issue still hangs out there. There's a cloud over that whole thing. But it's an example of the little political games that are played.

Storey: Did you then get back to Ben Nighthorse Campbell and say, "Well, Mr. Congressman..."
Or did you just let it lie? How does this work?

Storey: I just told them I didn't think that would work. They had obviously not done all of their homework. That's what I told the congressman. I said, "You know, Colorado Ute really hasn't done all their homework on this yet, and we can't buy into it until the power customers buy into it, because they're the ones you've really got to deal with on this." So he started to try to work that out.

Actually, what they did was they formed a work group that meets. I think they still meet periodically in Grand Junction or someplace, to discuss ways to try to get this legislation all put together where everybody's happy. But it's got a lot bigger problems than that, a lot bigger problems than that one. There's just a lot of things that go with that legislation. But that's the one that we were being dinged on was the idea of

investing, putting money into a Bureau powerplant and have a right to the power in exchange for a water right, which is probably not too valuable at this point.

Storey: When you went before Congress and testified, was it our appropriations?

Barrett: For the Bureau's appropriations, yeah.

Storey: Did that go well?

Barrett: Yeah.

Storey: Or was this the period when our budget was beginning to shrink?

Barrett: Well, the budget *was* beginning to shrink. I mean, that was part of the problem. We were short of money. But the relationship between the Bureau and the Appropriations Committee, I've always thought, was really good. There was no animosity or problems like that. They were a friendly kind of hearing, you know. They would ask you piercing questions, but you could see where they were going. In fact, you could probably anticipate the question, and I'd reached behind me and somebody handed me a slip of paper and I'd read the answer. You know, it was just like it had always been.

We didn't do the slide show, because the committee wanted to have a little bit shorter hearing. So we didn't do the slide show that year. I just kind of gave a little kind of an update on where we are on the various projects I knew they were interested in. Then we sat down and went through the budget a page at a time, you know. But it was kind of a neat hearing. We had—I wish I could remember his name. I think it's a function of age. I'm not remembering names very good. But the old senator who was from the South and he was Chairman of the committee, you know. What's his name?

Storey: I've forgotten the name right now.

Barrett: He's not there anymore.

Storey: He retired recently.

Barrett: Yeah. Anyway, we're all through, he says, "Well, Mr. Barrett, you're a great American." You know how they do. They lay that on you and it just makes you feel so good. You almost begin to believe it, you know. But he would congratulate you on the program and a fine bit of testimony and, "You're a great American, and carry on," you know. That's the kind of stuff that really pumps you up. You know what I mean? I walked out of that hearing room—we all did. Bill Klostermeyer was there with me. He was the

budget assistant. And we had a couple of the budget guys. We just all felt *great*, you know.

Now, the hearings went well that year. They asked the questions, and we gave the answers, and I think we were still humping for write-ins on money and explaining things. But it went all right.

Storey: Anything else of significance while you were acting commissioner?

Fiftieth Anniversary of Hoover Dam

Barrett: I guess one of the neatest things that happened then was that was when we had the twenty-fifth anniversary for Hoover Dam, 198–

Storey: Well, depending on how you figure it. (laughter)

Barrett: No, it wasn't twenty-five. It was the–

Storey: Fiftieth, maybe, for '86?

Barrett: That's right. It was in '86 and it was the fiftieth. It was the twenty-fifth for Glen Canyon was just right around that same time frame. It was the fiftieth anniversary for Hoover Dam, and we had a *big, big* celebration, a big to-do down there. I got to go down there as the acting commissioner. I took my dad with me. That was kind of neat,

because we got to do some fun things. The contractors invited us all out to dinner, and we had a big dinner in a tent on a little point of land overlooking the dam, and at night it got dark and the dam lit. It was just beautiful. And then the next day we had the big speeches and all that. I took my dad and we drove around Boulder City, and he showed me where we lived when I was a child and he was working on the dam. It was just a really neat experience. It was really neat. So I got to do a lot of *fun* things while I was acting commissioner. It was just kind of fun, you know.

Storey: And then you had to come back here and go to work again.

Barrett: I came back here and, yeah, it was a different world. I'll never forget this one particular conversation I had with Wes Hershey. I'd been back about a week, and I guess I was feeling a little let down, you know. You've been on a really high and you come back to what I guess amounts to the real world, you know. And I said, "Wes." I forget how it came up. I think we were just kind of maybe biting at each other just a little bit, grousing *at* each other instead of *with* each other. And I said, "Wes, you've just got to realize, I've been back in Washington this time being acting commissioner, and coming back here is just a real letdown."

And he says, “Well, Cliff, I want you to know that I've been acting regional director and having you come back is a real letdown, too.”
(laughter)

I got a whole new perspective on human relations that day. Here's a guy who's got exactly the same problem I do, and I need to lighten up a little bit. I'll never forget that conversation. In fact, my wife and I, just a couple of weeks ago we were driving in the car somewhere, and we were talking about how you feel about how other people feel, you know, and I remembered that conversation and related it to her. It was kind of an eye-opener to me that, you know, everybody's having the same experience at a different level, maybe, and you're not the only guy that feels bad when you get moved and not the only guy who gets disappointed. You're not the only guy who feels bad about Teton Dam or a hundred other things. Everybody feels bad. We're kind of all in this together.

Storey: Were there any significant events *after* you came back? You were here about three years before you retired, I guess.

Breaking Ground for Construction of Jordanelle Dam

Barrett: Yeah. I'm trying to think. I think during that

time I came back is when we broke ground for Jordanelle Dam. That was a pretty big event. That was a terribly controversial dam, a lot of hard feelings and real concern, congressional concern, and studies and restudies and studies of those studies, you know. We finally got the thing under way and constructed. That was kind of a *big* event. In *my* life, that was a big event just to get that thing going. We completed some of the other big Central Utah Project features in that time frame.

1988 Reorganization

We did another reorganization, you know. Dale Duvall immediately began a reorganization effort, and we went through all that before I left.

Storey: This was the '88?

Barrett: That would be the '88 reorganization. That's when we kind of moved a lot of people to Denver, so that Denver could be a real technical resource contractor thing for us. We debated one more time whether we ought to centralize all the contracting authority into Denver or not.

Darrell Webber Was Trying to Centralize Contracting Authority in Denver

Darrell Webber was assistant commissioner for

that. He was pushing *really, really* hard to centralize contracting authority.

Storey: But it had been decentralized, what, in the seventies?

Barrett: Yeah.

Storey: In the late seventies. After Teton, I think.

Barrett: After Teton, it was decentralized, and there was a fight over it then. That issue, and you mentioned it yesterday, some other people have talked about that, that was a terribly big issue in the Bureau. It always pitted regional directors against the Denver design office and contracting office. There was always that fight. I think every new commissioner got lobbied by the Denver crowd to take one more look at that.

Storey: “The Denver crowd.” Tell me about the Denver crowd.

Barrett: Well, what I mean is the assistant commissioner in Denver and the top-level design and engineering group were always—I think every new commissioner got *lobbied* by them on, “Please take another look at putting the contracting authority back into the commissioner's office.” And every one of them did. Higginson looked at it. *Duvall* looked at it.

Broadbent looked at it.

Storey: But it never happened.

Barrett: Never happened. Never happened.

Storey: Is that because it was working?

Barrett: Yeah. I think the regional directors all thought it was working fine.

Centralizing Certain Functions in Denver During the 1988 Reorganization

Storey: How about the reorganization in '88 and sending technical expertise to Denver? How did that work? Well? Poorly? Indifferent?

“I think some regions played the game more above board than others did. . . .”

Barrett: That was a real tough one. I think two things happened there. I think some regions played the game more above board than others did.

In this region, I subscribed to it pretty hard, and I sent a lot of people to Denver. I sent a lot of people to Denver out of the Provo office and the field offices and from here. Other regions kind of hid a few, you know. They stashed them. They didn't send many bodies, they just kind of

moved their people around. Not every regional director really subscribed to that theory. It was funny, though. We'd all worked it out together and thought we had consensus. But then when it came to implementing, actually implementing the program and going out to your field office and say, "Well, we're going to reduce you people by half and you can go to Denver or you can leave," you know, those were *tough* things to do, and not every region played that game straight, is my view.

Then the other thing that was supposed to have happened was Darrell Webber was supposed to take a really hard look at the engineering and design functions and see if he couldn't reduce his personnel ceilings, too, because there really were more people there than most of us thought we needed, and the overhead was just killing us. The cost of running that office all gets assigned out to projects, and we're getting beat up by water users for this high overhead charges we're passing on to them. I don't think Darrell Webber ever really *bit* the bullet on that. I've got to give a lot of credit to Dan [Daniel P.] Beard. Dan Beard, when he came in, the commissioner that came in with the [Bill] Clinton Administration—

END SIDE 1, TAPE 3. AUGUST 15, 1996.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 3. AUGUST 15, 1996.

Storey: You were saying that you give a lot credit to Dan Beard, who came in with Clinton.

Dan Beard Was Able to Make the E&R Center Bite the Bullet

Barrett: Yeah. He was able, I think, to go out to the E&R Center and really make those guys bite the bullet. I think the reason he was able to do that is he had *no* intention of staying too long. He could afford to make a few enemies. You know what I mean? And so he could be kind of ruthless about it, which I think he was. He got *that job done*, as near as I can tell. From the outside looking in and talking to the people I know, I think they finally got the message that they're really going to have to do something about the size of the staff and making it match more equally to the workload that goes on.

As far as making Denver kind of a resource for the region so they can contract with to get work done, we want you to do this for us, we want you to do that for us, I don't know how that's working. I sense that it's working relatively well. I don't know. It seems to make sense to me. That theory always made sense to me that you could centralize certain functions and then let the regional offices go to Denver for that work, where they had some kind of a arrangement where they could control the cost

that they have to spend.

Storey: One of the things that I think in this period you were getting pressure on was the operation of Glen Canyon.

Reclamation Did a Study to See about Increasing Hydropower Production During the Energy Crunch

Barrett: Oh, yes. When I was still in Washington in the eighties or late seventies, even, this region started a study of looking at powerplants. We had a bureauwide study of where could we add capacity to our powerplants. The whole nation is in an energy crunch, you know, we need more electricity. We did several studies bureauwide looking for places to put increased capacity into power.

Proposing to Add Units at Glen Canyon Resulted in Widespread Opposition and Attention

Of course, one of them was to add some more units at Glen Canyon. The regional office floated out the plan and did a little EIS on it and, I think very naively, just stepped into it, and that just drew the ire of the whole environmental community. The idea of doing those powerplants just became unacceptable.

It was interesting. When I was in Washington, I knew I was coming out here. This was during that fall period of 1981. Broadbent and I got together and we wrote a letter to the region saying didn't they think it was time to *abandon* that proposal and just forget putting those powerplants there. Then I called up out here and says, "Don't answer that letter until I get there." And so when I got out here, then I wrote the letter back saying, "Yes, we're abandoning those powerplants."

Well, I think, very naively, we thought that would be the end of it, and that was really just the beginning of it, because they went political and said, "Well, you're not doing enough." We know you're going to abandon those powerplants. We thought we'd won that one already. What we want you to do is look at a study of the whole operation of that river."

In the End Reclamation Ended up Studying the Operation of Glen Canyon Dam

So then the response to my *letter* to the commissioner came back, saying, "Yes, we will abandon that, but in the meantime, we want you to do a study of the operation of Glen Canyon Dam and its effects on the environment." And that was the tradeoff that, I guess, Watt was buying some peace with the environmental

community. So we began the Glen Canyon environmental studies, which eventually turned into the Glen Canyon—the first round of studies was completed while I was still here. And I think, again very naively, I really misjudged that whole thing. I thought that would be the end of it.

Balancing Water User and Environmental Concerns

One of the things they wanted to look at was how could we prevent floods like we had in 1983 and '82, how could we prevent that from happening again. We had sat down with the states and worked out a whole new spin on operating Glen Canyon Dam within the constraints of the annual operating plan and the whole Colorado River Compact. The water users, the states, would like you to keep that reservoir completely full all the time and use the spillways and run them, and we were saying, no, we thought we could probably meet the demands of everybody if we would just do a little bit different job of forecasting and operate a little bit differently. We finally got the states to agree with us on that.

Again, Wayne Cook, who is now the Upper Basin Commission director, he was the chief of operations here then, and he really masterminded

that whole thing. I can remember very well sitting down in his room right upstairs here with representatives of the seven basin states and *cutting* that deal. *Finally* after he'd worked it all out, we all sat down and we all agreed, signed papers on it. I thought that would kind of be the end of it, I really did.

I remember an environmental group came in to see me in the office here and they said "Well, you've done these studies and now what are you going to do about it?"

I said, "Well, we've already done it. We've come up with a new way to operate the river so we're not going to have those big flood flows anymore."

They said, "Well, how can you do that?"

I said, "Well, we sat down with the basin states and we did it."

They said, "You can do that? You can just change the operation like that?"

I said, "Yes."

Environmental Pressure to Do an Environmental Statement on Operation of Glen Canyon Dam

I think that scared them, because they thought “Gee, if you can do that, you can go the other way just as easy.” And that's when they began to really press us to do environmental impact statement on the whole operation of the river. For a long time we said, “No, we don't need to. NEPA does not apply.” We had pretty sound legal ground, I thought. But the political pressure just got to be so great. By the time I had left the Bureau, see, in 1992 we finally got the Grand Canyon Protection Act. Before that, they had pressured [Manuel] Lujan and he finally agreed to do an environmental impact statement. That was after I left.

But I think that was one where I really missed it. I really *misjudged*, one, their intent and, two, their political power. In looking back at it, maybe a smarter thing would have been to do an EIS right out of the box. It would probably have been a lot easier if we'd just started out from scratch that way.

Storey: I was thinking that you hired Rick Gold as assistant regional director.

Hired Rick Gold in Durango and Then as Chief of Planning in Salt Lake City

Barrett: No, I hired Rick Gold to go to Durango, and then I brought him from Durango to be chief of

planning. Then after I left, they moved him from planning to be assistant regional director.

Storey: Anything else in those later years?

**The Most Disturbing Issue in Salt Lake City Was
the Fight with the Central Utah Water
Conservancy District**

Barrett: No, not a whole lot. The thing that disturbed me most about those later years was the fights we were having with Central Utah Water Conservancy District, the Central Utah Project sponsors.

Storey: Yeah, tell me about that.

**“There were a lot of things we couldn't control.
All the time that was going on, costs were
escalating. . . .”**

Barrett: They were just really disturbed about the lack of progress on the project. Before I ever got here, the project was held up for a couple of years based on environmental lawsuits. There were a lot of things we couldn't control. All the time that was going on, costs were escalating. Some of the delay in the project was the result of the decisions we had made not to proceed until we had the repayment contract done, and I laid that right at their feet. I said, “Gee, guys, we could

have been two years further along if you'd just done this contract two years ago when we asked you to instead of dinking around.” So there was a lot of fighting.

They were really *concerned* about *cost* control. They viewed everything that wasn't a construction dollar as overhead, and that was their view of life, was, well, if you're not paying it to a construction contractor, than it's overhead. I was saying, “No, we have a law that says you have to do environmental impact statements. We have design work. That's not *free*, you know. We can contract out to some consultant to do design work, but it's going to probably cost you just as much or more.”

“They got a lot of political help, and I was just getting beat up on mercilessly by Jake Garn . . .”

They got a lot of political help, and I was just getting beat up on mercilessly by Jake Garn, who was the senator then, basically him. He was their flag carrier on that, and he actually wrote language into the appropriation act requiring us to audit our overhead and setting a percentage limit on how much we could spend on overhead.

Dispute about Overhead Charges on the Central Utah Project

So we went to the General Accounting Office, which is Congress' arm, and said, "How should we compute this?" We figured that environmental impact statement costs and design costs were not overhead. Overhead was really overhead. You know, just because you didn't put it in a construction contract didn't make it overhead. And we got them to agree with us on that, and we actually came in that year with a number considerably less than what he had told us was our limit. He accused me in an appropriation hearing—I wasn't there, but he told the commissioner that Cliff Barrett was playing games with the numbers and lying to them about our overhead costs.

There was just so much animosity being built up over that whole issue. Then we were saying, "Look, guys, you're going to have to get the appropriations ceiling raised or we're going to have to shut down construction again." In fact, again, we actually *delayed* the initiation of some construction programs because we didn't have appropriations to finish the job, and we decided we couldn't start anything we couldn't finish. It was just a great deal of animosity and it almost got personal between Don Christianson and I over those issues.

"I guess a lot of that is one reason why I left. It just got to be where it wasn't worth it anymore. . . ."

.”

Those are the things that *hang* in my mind about the last two years that I was here, and I guess a lot of that is one reason why I left. It just got to be where it wasn't worth it anymore. Like one guy said, it's not fun anymore, you know. It was just getting beat up all the time. I think Dale Duvall was trying to be helpful, but then again he's getting a lot of political pressure from Jake Garn, who's a good Republican. These are the Republican years and all that.

“I didn't figure I was getting all the protection I needed from the Washington office, from the secretary's office. . . . it just was taking a lot of heat I didn't think I needed to take. . . .”

I didn't figure I was getting all the protection I needed from the Washington office, from the secretary's office. So I kind of, in a way, think that's what motivated me to leave, was it just was taking a lot of heat I didn't think I needed to take.

Storey: That would have been how many years of service?

Barrett: I came to the Bureau in December of '56 and left in March of '89.

Storey: So, what, thirty-three years or so.

Barrett: Thirty-three years, yeah.

Storey: Did you have plans for what you were going to do when you left?

Had a Job Offer from the Colorado River Energy Distributors Association (CREDA)

Barrett: Yeah, I had a job offer when I left.

Storey: Tell me about it.

Barrett: I stayed out two weeks and went to work. The Colorado River Energy Distributors Association, which is an association of all the power customers who buy from the CRSP system, they were looking for an executive director, and they had approached me the previous summer about coming to work for them.

“They made me a very attractive offer, and I kind of looked at all my cards and decided, “This might be the time to leave. . . .”

They made me a very attractive offer, and I kind of looked at all my cards and decided, “This might be the time to leave.” I could see we were coming up on an election year, and I just thought it was time to go.

Storey: So you went and worked for them?

Barrett: Yeah.

Storey: Did that mean you had contacts with Reclamation still?

Barrett: Well, we were very careful about that. I spent a lot of time talking to the Department's ethics office about that, and actually about the last six months I was here I was—what's the word you use?

Storey: Recused?

**During His Last Months at Reclamation
Negotiations Were Underway to Use Power
Revenues to Pay More of the CRSP System Costs**

Barrett: Recused from certain activities, yeah. I couldn't involve myself in a lot of—see, we were at that point negotiating a deal, trying to cut a deal with Central Utah to help them fund the project with power revenues, more power revenues. We had all the Upper Basin states, Central Utah, and the Bureau and Western, and we're all in a negotiation on a way to recut and refinance the whole CRSP system. It involved power users putting up more money than they would have otherwise. It involved deauthorization of some projects that we've already talked about. We had a big legislative package all put together, and actually we got that—anyway, we were into that

when I started thinking about leaving. So I had to recuse myself from all of that, and I just turned that all over to Wes Hershey and some other people. Joe *Hall* from Denver kind of picked that up and run with that.

Didn't Deal with Reclamation for Two Years after Leaving

I actually didn't set my foot inside the Interior Building in Washington for two years after I left. I didn't deal directly with the Bureau on any issues. I just dealt with other stuff until that time frame was up, and then I started ~~kind of like, you know,~~ expanding my—what I did for—we call it CREDA, C-R-E-D-A. It's an acronym, CREDA.

Left CREDA in 1993

That's where I went and worked for them until April of '93.

Storey: Is Reclamation important to them?

Barrett: Important to me?

Storey: CREDA?

Barrett: CREDA? Oh, yeah. Yeah, sure. We have contracts with Reclamation. Reclamation is still

Bureau of Reclamation History Program

the watermaster of the Colorado River, and all the dams that CREDA gets its energy from or that CREDA members get their energy from, are Reclamation dams. We're *deeply* involved. We're real close to Rick Gold and the commissioner. We deal with them regularly. We have agreements between us and the Bureau on how we're going to treat each other in budget reviews and the rate-setting process. Everything they do affects the power rate. Everything they do affects the power rate.

We were deeply involved in the Glen Canyon EIS stuff. I was deeply involved in the Grand Canyon Protection Act legislation representing CREDA, representing the power users in that case, pretty deeply involved in Central Utah Project legislation, again representing the power users. The power users are involved in the Upper Basin recovery program for the endangered fish. There's not a thing you do up there that doesn't affect power one way or another. So CREDA is really kind of, among other things, kind of a watchdog over Western and the Bureau and all these issues.

We have, I think, really an excellent relationship. The guy who took my place as Director of CREDA is Joe Hunter, who was deputy assistant secretary to John Sayre during the [George H. W.] Bush years.

Storey: Now, why did you decide to leave CREDA?

Barrett: It just got to be more than I wanted to do. I mean, it's *gone* all the time. *Hard, hard* work. A lot of travel. It was getting where I never saw my wife anymore. I just figured I didn't really need that in my life anymore. I could deal with CREDA where I could step down and they would retain me as a consultant, and so I do maybe forty hours a month.

Storey: Instead of eighty hours a week. (Laughter.)

Barrett: Instead of eighty hours a week, you know. (Laughter.) I think one of the tricks in life is knowing when to quit and still be able to have some fun. So that's kind of why I left. I gave them a year's notice that I was going to leave.

Began to Do Consulting after Leaving CREDA

Storey: And now you're just doing consulting?

Barrett: Uh-huh.

Storey: For them?

Barrett: Actually I work for R. W. Beck, which is a consulting firm out of Seattle, and they're very big into the power industry. They consult to a lot of power industry people, and they were CREDA's consultant. CREDA was kind of like a

one-man shop. Everything else was done with consulting engineers or law firms or lobbying firms. We'd contract out a lot of work, and *Beck* was their contractor for consulting services. So I just joined the Beck staff. But my *primary* client is CREDA. I do a little bit of other stuff, but not very much. Mostly all CREDA stuff.

Storey: What else should we talk about?

Barrett: I don't know, Brit.

Storey: We have a few moments.

Barrett: We've got a few moments, but I've really got to leave at twelve. One of the other things I do is I teach an English class to people who don't speak English, and my class starts at one o'clock. So I have to get over there.

Believes He Was Very Lucky to Work for Reclamation During its Golden Years

I don't know. I think one of the things, if I was to say something for the record, as I've reviewed back over my career, and I've made this comment a lot of times, I probably was one of the luckiest guys in the world because I was with the Bureau during what I call the golden years, you know. Truly the golden era of the Bureau, I think, was in the fifties and the sixties. I don't know if

I'd want to embark on a career with the Bureau now, because I don't think it would be nearly as much fun. So I think I was there during the prime time.

“ . . . I don't apologize for much that we did. A lot of people think the Bureau ruined the West, and I guess I don't find very much to be apologetic over. We *changed* the West. We did a lot of great stuff. I don't think our country would be what it is today, particularly the western part of the United States, if it hadn't been for the Reclamation program . . . ”

The other thing is, and I've given this speech a lot of times, and I get a lot of various responses to it, depending on who you talk to, I don't apologize for much that we did. A lot of people think the Bureau ruined the West, and I guess I don't find very much to be apologetic over. We *changed* the West. We did a lot of great stuff. I don't think our country would be what it is today, particularly the western part of the United States, if it hadn't been for the Reclamation program and people who in the forties and thirties, even, were willing to take a risk in the hope that they were doing something which would change the country for the better thirty or forty years later. I think we did that, I really do. I'll never apologize for what the Bureau has done, because I think it's been good for the

country.

I guess that's why I think I'm so lucky, is to have been a part of it. I don't think there's a lot of jobs in government where you can say you really made a difference. I would hate to have to work for the Veteran's Administration and the Social Security or a lot of these places where—I'm not putting down what they do. They do needed and necessary work. But to have stuff that makes such a wide impact and really leave your mark on the countryside and the country itself, it's just been a really neat experience. I think I'm lucky, one of the luckiest guys in the world. I've always had a job I love. It was, at times, disappointing and trying and all that, but as you look back over it, I regard myself as an extremely lucky guy to have been here when all this happened.

Storey: Good. Well, I'd like to ask you again whether you're willing for the information in these tapes and the resulting transcripts to be used by researchers.

Barrett: Sure.

Storey: Good. Thank you very much.

Barrett: If you ever learn anything out of it—

END SIDE 2, TAPE 3. AUGUST 15, 1996.
END OF INTERVIEWS.¹⁶

1.

16. Editor's note. A glitch in the data in the computer file for this interview prevented correction of two minor typos. In the last full paragraph of comments by Mr. Barrett note that in the first sentence he said "so lucky" rather than "so luck." In the eighth sentence he said "at times," rather than "at time,"