ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

Mike Catino

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STATUS OF INTERVIEWS:
OPEN FOR RESEARCH

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Interviews Conducted and Edited by:
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Bureau of Reclamation

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INTERVIEWER:_____
Brit Allan Storey

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Introduction

In 1988, Reclamation began to create a history program. While headquartered in Denver, the history program was developed as a bureau-wide program.

One component of Reclamation's history program is its oral history activity. The primary objectives of Reclamation's oral history activities are: preservation of historical data not normally available through Reclamation records (supplementing already available data on the whole range of Reclamation's history); making the preserved data available to researchers inside and outside Reclamation.

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

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For additional information about Reclamation's history program see:
www.usbr.gov/history

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Oral History Interviews
Mike Catino

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Mike Catino, formerly Mid-Pacific regional director of the Bureau of Reclamation, in the Bureau of Reclamation's regional offices in Sacramento, California, on March the 17th, 1994. It is about two o'clock in the afternoon. This is Tape 1.

Mike, could you tell me about where you were born and raised and educated and how you ultimately ended up at the Bureau of Reclamation, please?

Born in New York City in 1920 and Moved to Sonoma Valley at the Age of 2

Catino: I was born on January 26, 1920, in New York City. I came to California when I was two years old. My father was in the shoe business, and I was raised in Sonoma Valley, which is well-known for its great wines, Napa and Sonoma valley. At the age of two years old, my family came to California in '22, and I was raised in the agricultural small town of Sonoma, which was then about 1,500 people, which is notorious for being the home of the last California Mission. There's a lot of history steeped into the town of Sonoma. And I bring that up because the children, or the students that were going to Sonoma Valley High School where I graduated, they are all pretty well steeped in California history, and as I look back on it now, it was great to have had profound increase in California history over probably some other areas, which really helped me in knowing the state as I do know it.

Attended Santa Rosa College but Was Drafted Before Pearl Harbor, Went into the Corps of Engineers, and Attended Engineering School at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri

I went to Santa Rosa College, however I left college. I was drafted prior to Pearl Harbor, and I went to the Corps of Engineers engineering school at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

". . . I spent all of my career with the Corps of Engineers from the period of January 1942 to the time I was discharged in July of 1945, so I spent a good period of my life with the Corps of Engineers in the South Pacific. . . .

And I spent all of my career with the Corps of Engineers from the period of January 1942 to the time I was discharged in July of 1945, so I spent a good period of my life with the Corps of Engineers in the South Pacific.

"I . . . had numerous engineering assignments, with only a junior college background. I was able to add to both my work experience and my education. . . ."

I was decorated for my engineering work in terms of rehabilitation of Clark Air Force

Field in the Philippines, had numerous engineering assignments, with only a junior college background. I was able to add to both my work experience and my education.

"When I was discharged from the Army . . . I heard that the Bureau of Reclamation was hiring engineers to work on the Central Valley Project [CVP], and I got intrigued with that . . . in October of 1945, four months after the time that I was discharged from the service, I joined the Bureau of Reclamation as a civil engineer . . . in Antioch, California. . . ."

When I was discharged from the Army, I was kind of unsure as to what I wanted to do, however I heard that the Bureau of Reclamation was hiring engineers to work on the Central Valley Project [CVP], and I got intrigued with that because I found material in the local library on what the Central Valley Project meant to the state. Actually, the Central Valley Project is really an overlay of the State Water Project which was looked at in the early '30s as a way of moving water from the northern part of the state to the southern part of the state. And so I seeked out a job with the Bureau of Reclamation and in October of 1945, four months after the time that I was discharged from the service, I joined the Bureau of Reclamation as a civil engineer, was appointed to that job, in Antioch, California.

Worked on Completion of the Contra Costa Canal

In Antioch, the Bureau was working on the completion of the Contra Costa Canal, which was one of the *initial* features of the Central Valley Project. At that time, the Contra Costa Canal in eastern Contra Costa County was only completed between Antioch and Walnut Creek.

". . . the Contra Costa Canal . . . started out primarily as an irrigation canal . . . however, Contra Costa County grew tremendously during the war and . . . was now a municipal and industrial water canal. . . ."

So after the war we completed the Contra Costa Canal, and it was started out primarily as an irrigation canal for agricultural activities; however, Contra Costa County grew tremendously during the war and actually what [started] ~~turned~~[1] out to be an irrigation canal was now a municipal and industrial water canal. And today, there's very little agricultural water being served in Contra Costa County, it's all municipal and industrial water.

"With . . . completion of the Contra Costa Canal . . . the office moved from Antioch

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 also have removed some extraneous words such as false starts and repetitions without indicating their removal. The meaning of the interview has not been changed by this editing.

to Tracy, California, where our engineering group commenced construction of the Tracy Pumping Plant . . ."

With that completion of the Contra Costa Canal, and it's terminus in Martinez, the office moved from Antioch to Tracy, California, where our engineering group commenced construction of the Tracy Pumping Plant, which is the *heartbeat* of the Central Valley Project.

Tracy Pumping Plant Pumps Water into the Delta-Mendota Canal

It pumps water from the Delta[2] into the Delta-Mendota Canal, which is a 120-mile canal from roughly Byron, California, to Mendota, which is the old dam on the San Joaquin River.

"The purpose of the Delta-Mendota Canal. . . with the construction of Friant Dam on the San Joaquin River, and turning the water into the Friant-Kern Canal, and the Madera Canal, the water had to be replaced in Mendota Pool . . . and so the Delta-Mendota Canal was designed not only to irrigate the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, but also to replace the water in Mendota Pool on the San Joaquin River. . . ."

The purpose of the Delta-Mendota Canal was to bring water to the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, and also to replace water at Mendota Pool which was originally filled from the San Joaquin River. However, with the construction of Friant Dam on the San Joaquin River, and turning the water into the Friant-Kern Canal, and the Madera Canal, the water had to be replaced in Mendota Pool by some other means, and so the Delta-Mendota Canal was designed not only to irrigate the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, but also to replace the water in Mendota Pool on the San Joaquin River.

The "Exchange Contract" Requires Large Amounts of Water to Replace Water Formerly Provided to Water Rights Holders by the Flows of the San Joaquin River–the Delta-Mendota Canal Provides That Replacement Water

This particular arrangement is very important to the Central Valley Project, because what it did was turn the San Joaquin River from flowing north, and now putting it in a canal that would be flowing south to between Fresno and Bakersfield, some 160 miles south. The replacement water from the Delta-Mendota Canal amounts to roughly about 800- to 900,000 acre feet annually, but this arrangement is under a very specific contract called the *Exchange* Contract, and to us that are in the water business, it really ended up as the kingmaker on CVP. Without this arrangement of a contract, CVP would not have been extended into the Lower San Joaquin Valley because there had to be some replacement of this water.

"It was a very unique arrangement, not only from an engineering standpoint, but

2. Referring to the Sacramento River-San Joaquin River Delta which empties into northeastern San Francisco Bay through Carquinez Strait.

it was also unique in the sense of the contract of the four major users of water out of Mendota Pool who *relied* on San Joaquin water that was now being diverted by the construction of Friant Dam. . . ."

It was a very unique arrangement, not only from an engineering standpoint, but it was also unique in the sense of the contract of the four major users of water out of Mendota Pool who *relied* on San Joaquin water that was now being diverted by the construction of Friant Dam.

The Backbone System of the Central Valley Project Was Pretty Much Completed in 1951

So after completion of the Delta-Mendota Canal and the Friant-Kern facilities, as well as the Madera Canal, in 1951 you had pretty much a celebration of the completion of the backbone system of the Central Valley Project. And just to review that, the backbone system of the Central Valley Project at that time consisted of Shasta Dam, Keswick Dam on the Upper Sacramento River, the Tracy and Delta-Mendota facilities, and the facilities from Friant, both north and south. And those were the initial features, plus the Contra Costa Canal which is dependent on a water supply out of the Delta. Those facilities were completed, and there was a celebration, in 1951, honoring the work of the Bureau of Reclamation in California for those irrigation and storage developments. Out of that comes a tremendous amount of hydroelectric power, specially developed at Shasta and Keswick facilities, and irrigation to approximately two million acres in the California area or the Central Valley Area.

In 1950 Went to Sacramento as Principal Programs Engineer

Later authorizations started with Folsom Dam on the American River, and in 1950 I moved from Tracy to Sacramento.

". . . concerning myself and staff on the development of programs and budgets and engineering estimates for the development and not only the development, but as well as the planning and construction *and* operation and maintenance of the Central Valley facilities. . . ."

I became the principal programs engineer, concerning myself and staff on the development of programs and budgets and engineering estimates for the development and not only the development, but as well as the planning and construction *and* operation and maintenance of the Central Valley facilities.

Addition of Folsom Dam to the Central Valley Project

Additions to the backbone system of CVP, which I've generally highlighted here, we have the construction of Folsom Dam. The dam was built under a unique formula. The Corps of Engineers built the dam, and the Bureau of Reclamation built the power facilities. This had not been done before, but there's a tremendous amount of flood control in Folsom, so that was *rightfully* a job that the Corps of Engineers should do.

And in the 50s, that was completed.

Trinity River Division of the Central Valley Project

We also have additional authorizations, such as the Trinity River Division, which built the Trinity Dam and Whiskeytown facilities for diverting water from Trinity into the Sacramento River Watershed, just below the city of Redding. That was, in those days, considered quite an engineering feat, a transmountain diversion of water from one watershed into another.

San Luis Facilities

And later on, we had, after the Trinity facilities, we have the authorization for the San Luis facilities, which includes San Luis Dam and pump generator plant.

Cooperation on the State Water Project by Reclamation and California

This was another unique thing in terms of cooperation with the State of California. The State needed to build, in conjunction with their Oroville Dam, a State Water Project facility that would bring water to Southern California and into San Diego. So the Bureau and the State of California put together a joint package in which the State paid fifty-five percent of the construction, and the Bureau, or the Federal government, paid forty-five percent of the construction. And that construction consisted of the heretofore mentioned the San Luis Dam, San Luis Pump-Generator Plant, and the San Luis Canal.

"The Bureau was the construction *agency* for these facilities, with the state cooperating on a liaison basis, but it was Bureau construction throughout. Along with . . . development on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. . . In that area is the world's largest irrigation district, known as the Westlands Water District, which consists of 600,000 acres. . . ."

The Bureau was the construction *agency* for these facilities, with the state cooperating on a liaison basis, but it was Bureau construction throughout. Along with that construction was the development on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley between Los Banos and Kettleman City, which pretty much straddles Interstate 5 now, as we know it. In that area is the world's largest irrigation district, known as the Westlands Water District, which consists of 600,000 acres. The Bureau of Reclamation built distribution systems from the San Luis Canal into the Westlands and West Plains service area, which, again, straddles Interstate 5 in the western part of the San Joaquin Valley. Along with that distribution system, why a tremendous amount of drainage facilities there to take the effluent from the farmlands along the west side. It's been a controversial issue as to the drainage of these lands.

Tehama-Colusa Canal and the Red Bluff Diversion Dam

During my career with the Bureau, certainly there's been a numerous amount of distribution systems built, both along the Friant-Kern Canal, the Madera Canal,

and I failed to mention in sequence here, is the authorization for the Sacramento Valley Canal, better known as the Tehama-Colusa Canal, which gets water from the diversion of the Sacramento River at Red Bluff on the Red Bluff Diversion Dam. That is roughly a 100-mile canal, and it takes care of about a quarter of a million acres on the west side of the Sacramento Valley. But over the years the Bureau has spent *in* California, approximately three billion dollars for various facilities, some of the repayment of that three [billion] ~~million~~ has been taken care of through water and power revenues.

"There are some that have criticized that the water was sold too cheaply in the early days. In the 1940s and 50s, why water was contracted for at three and a half dollars [$3.50], and at that time, . . for example, Shasta Dam was built for $123 million . . . And so those water rates were in correlation to the fairly reasonable costs of building water facilities. . . ."

There are some that have criticized that the water was sold too cheaply in the early days. In the 1940s and 50s, why water was contracted for at three and a half dollars [$3.50], and at that time, with the construction costs as they be, for example, Shasta Dam was built for $123 million, and at today's prices in the 1990s, you couldn't build Shasta Dam for less than three *billion* dollars. And so those water rates were in correlation to the fairly reasonable costs of building water facilities. Another example is the Tracy Pumping Plant was built for approximately $21 million–today you probably couldn't duplicate it for $150 million. The same thing is true of the Delta-Mendota Canal, which was originally estimated at around $50 million, and today why it would cost you probably $300 million to build that canal.

". . . there's a conflict in here of the water rates being placed so low, but they were placed low because of the lower costs for building water facilities in the early 50s and into the 60s. It all translates into the costs of materials and labor by the contractors. . . ."

I bring that up because there's a conflict in here of the water rates being placed so low, but they were placed low because of the lower costs for building water facilities in the early 50s and into the 60s. It all translates into the costs of materials and labor by the contractors. Today we have higher costs in both materials and labor, so we have an impact on the repayment of Central Valley Project.

". . . the Central Valley Project, which is capable of delivering in the neighborhood of six to seven million acre foot of water annually, in good water and snow condition years, all of the water has been contracted for with various water user agencies, irrigation and water districts, but also to take care of water quality in the Delta, and fish and wildlife requirements. . . ."

The water contracts that were completed in the 40s and 50s were on a flat rate basis with no escalation, and they were for forty-year contracts, so as a result, why it was very difficult to increase the cost of those contracts. In today's terms, all of the water of the Central Valley Project, which is capable of delivering in the neighborhood of six to seven million acre foot of water annually, in good water and

snow condition years, all of the water has been contracted for with various water user agencies, irrigation and water districts, but also to take care of water quality in the Delta, and fish and wildlife requirements. It's very unique when you talk about the Delta, which is being fed by the two major rivers in California, namely the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and its tributaries, that the Delta is held in such a position that now is being considered for *additional* water supplies from both the State Project and the Bureau of Reclamation projects, to keep the Delta sweet.

". . . *absent* the. . . the major water projects in California, why the Delta itself would be just subject to the runoff of streams in which there was no control at all. . . . the Delta itself today would be very salty . . . So you have a benefit of water quality in the Delta . . . both on the basis of the State and Federal Central Valley Projects. . . ."

And it's important to turn out, *absent* the water projects, the major water projects in California, why the Delta itself would be just subject to the runoff of streams in which there was no control at all. Going back prior to the major projects, the Delta itself today would be very salty, or the salinity would increase in the river from below Sacramento to . . . Well, the salinity is very *high* in the Delta, it fluctuates with the tide, but the salinity would approach the cities of Sacramento and Stockton on both the respective Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers. So you have a benefit of water quality in the Delta on the basis of both on the basis of the State and Federal Central Valley Projects.

Another project that has an affect on the Delta, which was constructed by the Corps of Engineers, but turned over to the Bureau of Reclamation as part of the Central Valley Project, is New Melones Dam and Powerplant on the [Stanislaus River, a tributary of the] San Joaquin River. This is a 2.1 million acre foot reservoir, just south and east of Stockton near the city of Sonora. And it is dependent on some rainfall and snowpack on the western side of the Sierras. But its purpose is to take care of the flooding that happens in the Stanislaus River area, namely around the community of Ripon in the lower part of San Joaquin County. The powerplant there is very small compared to, say, Shasta Generation, however it does add kilowatts of energy, which is brought into the CVP system, but it is marketed by the Western Area Power Administration, through their contracts with the various communities, such as the City of Roseville, City of Healdsburg, Palo Alto, Santa Clara.

"I believe there is about twenty-nine preference customers, municipalities that get power through the Western Area Power Administration . . . this power . . . of course, is generated by the Central Valley Project. . . ."

I believe there is about twenty-nine preference customers, municipalities that get power through the Western Area Power Administration, which this power in turn, of course, is generated by the Central Valley Project.

At the initial stage of the Central Valley Project, there was a considerable block of power available. However, that power is now being used at Tracy Pumping Plant and the San Luis Pumping Plant, and other minor pumping plants for relifting

water to irrigate lands.

Can we cut there? (tape turned off and on)

". . . Central Valley Project now is being operated by a number of water user organizations . . ."

While Central Valley Project now is being operated by a number of water user organizations, it is important to point out that the Tehama-Colusa Canal is operated by the local water users. That canal runs from Red Bluff down to the small community of Dunnigan on the west side of the Sacramento Valley, and the Friant-Kern facilities are operated by the Friant Water Users Authority, and over on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, of course the State of California operates San Luis Dam and the San Luis canal, and they administer the water contracts or the delivery of water to the Westlands Water District, and the San Luis and Panoche Water Districts. So the point I'm raising here is you have an intermixing of people or organizations that operate the Central Valley Project. Another aspect of it is the Western Area Power Administration, operates and maintains *all* of the transmission lines and switchyards from the Central Valley facilities, and market all of the power. In the early days, the Bureau *was* a power marketing agency, but that was turned over in the late [1970s] ~~1980s~~ to the Western Area Power Administration. Rather, it was the late '70 that it was turned over to the Western Area Power Administration.

Auburn Dam

Going back in review now of the backbone system of CVP, we've indicated that all of that is complete, as well as other additional authorizations. However, there is one authorization for the construction of Auburn Dam and Powerplant, as well as the Folsom South Canal which is not complete at this date.

"Much controversy has settled in on Auburn Dam, whether it is vitally needed from an engineering and hydrologic standpoint for the flood control of the city and county of Sacramento. There's numerous studies being made, it was authorized in 1965, the Bureau has spent approximately $100 million, and spent in total $28 million just in the geological aspects of Auburn Dam. . . ."

Much controversy has settled in on Auburn Dam, whether it is vitally needed from an engineering and hydrologic standpoint for the flood control of the city and county of Sacramento. There's numerous studies being made, it was authorized in 1965, the Bureau has spent approximately $100 million, and spent in total $28 million just in the geological aspects of Auburn Dam. Part of the Folsom South Canal has been completed, however it only serves a very minor amount of municipal and industrial water. There is a tremendous need for water from the municipal standpoint in San Joaquin County, the northern part of the county. There's also a need for water in the Placerville and El Dorado Counties area, which completed Auburn Dam at 2.1 million acre feet would supply.

". . . delays since 1965 . . . for earthquaking, and *re*design and *re*studies, has

pushed the total cost of the Auburn-Folsom South Unit, primarily the dam, from roughly about $325 million to about $2 billion . . . However, the flood control aspect of the value of that flood control aspect today is worth probably $1.2-1.3 billion, while the water and power allocation of the dam would be in the neighborhood of $700-900 million. . . .what Auburn would safeguard is probably a investment in Sacramento County alone, of about $35 billion in terms of property and buildings . . ."

However, the delays since 1965, or rather since the authorization of the various environmental aspects and delays for earthquaking, and *re*design and *re*studies, has pushed the total cost of the Auburn-Folsom South Unit, primarily the dam, from roughly about $325 million to about $2 billion, and this goes back to other statements made on the construction costs of facilities in California. However, the flood control aspect of the value of that flood control aspect today is worth probably $1.2-1.3 billion, while the water and power allocation of the dam would be in the neighborhood of $700-900 million. It is one of the problems of building water and power projects today, is that the costs are so high, and how do you recoup the investment from a water and power standpoint? However, with such a large amount allocated to flood control, especially what Auburn would safeguard is probably a investment in Sacramento County alone, of about $35 billion in terms of property and buildings, and not only saving a life, which you can't put an estimate on.

". . . there's a tremendous need for this facility. These counties surrounding Auburn are in need of water. . . . the combination of Auburn and Folsom together gives you an opportunity to get some additional water which is not available in the state today . . . So another way of saying it, water development in the future will be very costly, however there's a point in time where you have to bite the bullet and average it in with the lower-cost facilities that were constructed during the 40s and the 50s. . . ."

But there's a tremendous need for this facility. These counties surrounding Auburn are in need of water. While Auburn doesn't *yield* a tremendous amount of water for sale, but the combination of Auburn and Folsom together gives you an opportunity to get some additional water which is not available in the state today, either from the State Water Project *or* from the Central Valley Project. So another way of saying it, water development in the future will be very costly, however there's a point in time where you have to bite the bullet and average it in with the lower-cost facilities that were constructed during the 40s and the 50s.

I think with that, we can now move over to any questions that you might have.

Storey: Well, you mentioned that you came to work for Reclamation at (Catino: Antioch.) Antioch, and then you moved to Tracy. And then you started talking about the history of the Central Valley Project. Where did you go after Tracy?

". . . in 1972 I was appointed an assistant regional director to operate the Central Valley Project as well as the other projects that come under the Mid-Pacific Region. . . ."

Catino: I came here to Sacramento. At that time I was a programs engineer and did a lot of the budgeting and financing work of that. I later took over the Division of Program Coordination and Finance. I've had numerous successive assignments in the Bureau and in 1972 I was appointed an assistant regional director to operate the Central Valley Project as well as the other projects that come under the Mid-Pacific Region.

Spent Six Months in D.C. on the Departmental Management Training Program

I also have spent a considerable amount of time in Denver and Washington. I was in the Washington Office for six months under the Department of Interior's training program. I did some graduate work at George Washington University under the Bureau's management training program. I've had a number of various successive appointments, and, as I said, in 1972 I became the assistant regional director for operation and maintenance for the Mid-Pacific Region.

1980-1983 Served as Acting Regional Director and Then Regional Director

And then in 1980-81, I was appointed acting regional director, and later became regional director of the Mid-Pacific Region. So I had a period in there of about three years where I was the regional director for the whole region.

"I retired in 1983, primarily because of the political pressures, wanting to reassign me. After having spent thirty-eight years with the Bureau of Reclamation, and California being my home, and raising a family and seeing them all graduate from college, I decided to retire and go into other water environment activities with various water districts and flood control agencies. . . ."

I retired in 1983, primarily because of the political pressures, wanting to reassign me. After having spent thirty-eight years with the Bureau of Reclamation, and California being my home, and raising a family and seeing them all graduate from college, I decided to retire and go into other water environment activities with various water districts and flood control agencies.

Storey: Uh-huh. Why don't we go back to the start of our discussion and talk a bit more about your youth in Sonoma. (Catino: Okay.) You mentioned, for instance, yesterday, the way you studied the state's geography, and of course that's going to be vitally important to being in this *particular* organization, in this *particular* office.

Catino: Right. My parents . . .

END SIDE 1, TAPE 1. MARCH 17, 1994.
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. MARCH 17, 1994.

Traveled Around California a Good Deal in His Youth

Catino: . . . canning and making wines–grapes, for instance, and tomatoes and peaches. So I got to travel around the state quite a bit, and I learned where the rivers were, I had a

good picture on the mountains and the communities, and I was always fascinated with geography as a whole. But another aspect of it, I was a Boy Scout, and so I used to, in the scouting activities, we had numerous trips around, and especially I became fascinated with the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. And having gone to Stockton from my home to Scout Camporees or Camperalls. But being able to travel around and sort of hitch-hiking my way through the state, I really got to know a lot about the communities and I never hesitated to stop looking at road maps and being fascinated with that. You know, when people say, well, they were growing cotton in the Southern San Joaquin Valley, I had an interest to know that the cotton was being raised in Bakersfield and the lower part of Fresno County, which is the largest agricultural county in the world, as far as total production. So it was a fascination as a youth, and not only my family encouraged me to travel around, but my Boy Scout activities. So as a result, I probably had an over-advantage of other youngsters as far as geography. But, you know, everybody has their hobbies, and I kind of think that maybe that was my kind of an unwritten hobby, but I enjoyed every bit of the traveling around to the various communities and finding out what went on in them.

Storey: Well, what communities did you travel to?

Catino: Well, practically everything, every community from San Francisco south to Bakersfield, and I had a few trips into the Los Angeles area to get a feeling for, say, driving over the Tehachapis into Los Angeles County. And then going north to Redding and seeing where the Sacramento River . . . I can remember a trip of going to Yuba City in my youth, and it was during the drought period in California, and going across the Sacramento River at Knight's Ferry and not seeing very much water in the Sacramento River at that particular time.

Little did I know that later on that this was going to be a part of my work environment in the future, knowing where the rivers were and how they flowed and how much water was running through them. Offhand, I would say I covered a good part of the area from Northern California down to the lower part of the San Joaquin Valley. But also along the coast, you know, from San Francisco down through Monterey and Santa Barbara Counties. But living in Northern California, you were always taking one-day trips over to the coast, places like Stinson Beach or Bodega Bay and so you got a feeling for the Sonoma Valley, coastal areas. Of course in the Boy Scouts, we had a camp at Cazadero in Sonoma County, and so you took fifty-mile hikes, which were three-day trips to the coastal areas, and so you got a feeling for that particular environment.

Storey: And how old were you when you were doing this?

Catino: Well, I was riding with truck drivers when I was about twelve years old, and of course you had to be twelve to join the Boy Scouts, and so I had a period of about four years there that I was involved in Boy Scouting. I might point out that this was a good activity, didn't cost too much money, and we were in the Depression era throughout the country, and Boy Scouts didn't cost you too much, and you got a *lot* for your money. And so I enjoyed that activity, but it was something that my family could financially handle. If I remember right, you got to go to Boy Scout camp for

two weeks for around twelve dollars, and that'd include your room and board and transportation, which was really a very reasonable activity for what you got out of there, earning merit badges and other outdoor activities. It was money well spent.

Storey: You mentioned that your family was in the shoe business. What does that mean, exactly?

Catino: Well, my dad was a cobbler, and he also sold shoes in a small town. As I said, I was raised in Sonoma Valley, and at that time it was only 1,500 people, and today Sonoma Valley, with all the other activities of resorts and tourists and the wine country and all of that activity, Northern California and Sonoma Valley is probably in the neighborhood of 20,000 to 25,000 people. But it was a small community and very close-knit. In fact, the high school, as I remember right, the total student body was around 350 kids, which was really drawing them in in school buses, north and south of the town of Sonoma.

Storey: Do you know why your family decided to move west to California, and how they ended up where they ended up?

Why the Family Moved to the Sonoma Valley

Father Immigrated from Italy and His Mother Was of Italian Descent

Catino: Yes, both my mother and father are of Italian descent. My father's brother-in-law had come out to California and came to Sonoma Valley and wrote back to my father that Sonoma Valley reminded him very much of Italy. My dad was born and raised in Naples, south of Rome, of course, and there was a fascination of Sonoma Valley being *similar* to Italy. In fact, the population in Sonoma, of the 1,500 people, I'd be willing to guess that forty percent of them were of Italian descent, and they came there for the agricultural aspect and the dairy business was very big among Italian people, as well as raising grapes and making wine. Agricultural activities such as orchards of prunes, pears, and apples. And so Italians being fairly good merchants, I can think around the city square of Sonoma there was a number of merchants that were of Italian descent. So it was a fairly predominant Italian community, but right close by you have San Francisco, which has quite an Italian settlement in there, and in fact in parts of Marin County and other parts of Sonoma County, there's a considerable amount of people of Italian descent or Italian surnames, even today.

Storey: Did they speak Italian in the town a lot?

"I was *raised* as an American. I know very little Italian. . . . my dad insisted that this was an American house, and as a result my mother and father very seldom, if ever, spoke Italian. In fact, my dad had to go to school for his naturalization papers, and his teacher for his naturalization papers was my first-grade grammar school teacher. . . ."

Catino: Yeah, some of the oldtimers. It's interesting that you bring that question up. I was *raised* as an American. I know very little Italian. I can understand some of the

language, and people speaking, but my dad insisted that this was an American house, and as a result my mother and father very seldom, if ever, spoke Italian. In fact, my dad had to go to school for his naturalization papers, and his teacher for his naturalization papers was my first-grade grammar school teacher. So she taught us both our writing and reading and arithmetic, so to speak, at the early ages.

Storey: A fairly *recent* migration of Italians into that area is sort of the picture I'm getting. When World War II came were there any problems over that?

Catino: No, there was no problems. However, I recently read where some Italians had been interned similar to the Japanese being interned during World War II. But I know of no Italians being interned there. To me they were all very loyal citizens, and in the case of the Japanese, they were also very loyal citizens. The town of Sonoma had only two Japanese families, and they were truck garden people. One family was taken off to intern camp, but their children were in the service. In fact, *both* of the Japanese families' youngsters were in the service. And when I was in the service at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, why we had a number of Japanese there for boot camp from Sacramento Valley and the San Joaquin Valley. But far as I know, there was never any problems with the Italians or Germans or any other nationality, other than the two Japanese families were interned.

Storey: One of the subjects of study that's interesting American historians right now is immigrants who came to the United States in order to "make a fortune," and *then* returned home. Did you happen to know any families that did *that* in the Sonoma area?

Grandfather, Multiple Times, Came to Pennsylvania to Work in the Coal Mines for a Period of Time and Then Returned to Italy with His Savings

Catino: No, there was no families that I knew of in the Sonoma Valley area, and I knew practically everybody in that community. What you're speaking of is something that my grandfather did. He came from Italy to the Pennsylvania coal mines, and he worked maybe twelve to eighteen months, made money in the United States in the coal mines and then went *back* to Italy with U.S. dollars in his pocket. But he did that, I don't know, maybe two or three times. But I remember my father telling me about him coming to the States for a very short period of time. But I know of no families in Sonoma Valley that made the so-called "pot of gold" and then took it away and left.

Samuel Sebastiani

Now take–well, in Sonoma Valley, you have the Sebastiani Winery, which is world famous. My father and Samuel Sebastiani were real good friends. At one time Samuel Sebastiani paid one-seventh of the city's taxes in Sonoma, and he was a community-minded guy, he built apartment houses, hotels, a number of residential places for renting. During the Depression he had the cannery running at full-steam, and he provided work to the local people in not only his cannery but his winery. He was a very community-minded person, and his *family* followed in those same

footsteps. There are some families that were in the dairy business that did very well. As far as I know, they never packed up and went back to the old country, so to speak.

Storey: When did you become interested in being an engineer? How did that happen?

How He Became Interested in Engineering

Catino: Actually, how that happened was that I had a summertime job with the city engineer of Sonoma and I somewhat got fascinated with surveying for lots and subdivisions and some of the public works that he was involved with.

". . . I had a choice of going to the infantry or the Corps of Engineers. And so I chose the Corps of Engineers because I had some pre-engineering work in school. . . . after I got out of Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri . . . I was with the combat engineers out of Provo, Utah. Later I joined the topographic engineers . . ."

And then when I got into the service, I had a choice of going to the infantry or the Corps of Engineers. And so I chose the Corps of Engineers because I had some pre-engineering work in school. So I followed in those tracks. First, after I got out of Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, my ninety-days there, I was with the combat engineers out of Provo, Utah. Later I joined the topographic engineers, which in effect turned out as a *blessing*, because I got to do so many different projects, such as airfields, and building hospitals, and locating roads. We were a very small topographic engineering company and had a tremendous amount of talent in it–not only from a field engineering standpoint, but we could turn out *maps* in the field from airplane photos, so we got into the cartographic business. And so there was a full range of engineering activity on there. In fact, we had the capability to turn out an eight-colored map in the field, because from off an airplane photo why we could separate and put in the contours and the different buildings and do a real printing job out in the field. So we were decorated many times for our activities overseas. I worked on a number of emergency landing strips, later. And then of course I worked all throughout the South Pacific. My organization was involved in engineering public works type of activity as we know it now, in there.

". . . I had a tremendous amount of education in the Army, and I made it count in the long run in the future. . . ."

So I had a tremendous amount of education in the Army, and I made it count in the long run in the future.

Storey: A lot of practical experience in engineering. (Catino: Yeah.) After the war, did you go back to school?

Received a Degree in Civil Engineering from California State University-Sacramento

Catino: I completed here in Sacramento at Sacramento State. And then I mentioned I've

done some graduate work in management.

Storey: A degree at Sac State in?

Catino: Civil engineering.

Storey: Going back to Sonoma again, what do you remember about *water* there?

Water in Sonoma When Growing up

Catino: Water there was all from wells. We had some tanks around, and that was the water supply. And outside of the city of Sonoma why we had a number of wells. All of it was from groundwater sources. In fact, I lived in the city limits of Sonoma, and our next door neighbor put a well down and my dad negotiated with him to use some of that water to water the vegetable garden that we had in the back of the house. A lot of people had their own private wells, but it was interesting to look at the early-day water system which were pipes made of redwood staves and wrapped with steel rings around them to where the water delivery in those days and the early-day water supply. You sort of rubbernecked around and watched the construction of any new water meter being put in, so to speak. But there was no surface supply, and this is the way most of the communities were in California–they were supplied by local wells into a storage tank. That was a benefit in terms of fire protection by having a storage tank so that you had a greater volume of water to fight fires, in case you needed it. Now in the neighboring county over in Napa County, in fact the city engineer that I worked for in Sonoma was also the city engineer for Napa, and they did build some small dams and reservoirs. There was some of that kind of activity in California. You do have some bigger developments, which date back like Modesto Irrigation District and Turlock Irrigation District, they have systems on the Tuolumne River. and you had some communities, Yuba County, for example. Of course communities that were along the Sacramento River and San Joaquin Rivers pumped out of the river. And you still have that today where the City of Redding gets water out of the Sacramento River and a good number of farmers along the San Joaquin River pump out of the [San Joaquin] ~~Sacramento~~ River. There are twenty-nine major pumpers along the Sacramento River from Anderson, which is just south of the city of Redding, down to the city of Sacramento, the northern part of the area. There's agricultural pumping out of the Sacramento River. They are people that have early-day water rights that were filed and one of the larger ones is in Colusa County: Colusa Irrigation District, Maxwell Irrigation District, Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District, which is the biggest one–they have tremendous pumps on the Sacramento River and they irrigate rice land, which is predominantly the agricultural activity in the northern part of Sacramento Valley. But most of the communities in California were [supplied] by wells.

Now, you do go back to when the Hetch-Hetchy system was built, which supplies water to the city and county of [San Francisco] ~~Sacramento~~. That's taking water from near Yosemite National Park and bringing it all the way to San Francisco. You have the East Bay Municipal Water District which takes water out of the . . . Well, part of the Mokelumne River up at Pardee Dam. Those were early systems and

you have to admire those engineering works and the thoughtfulness that they had to transfer water, say, 100 to 150 miles. Of course you have the biggest one where the city and county of Los Angeles came to Mono Lake and brought water along the Owens Valley into Los Angeles, which is still a very controversial issue, and it's under court decree now to maintain a certain level in Mono Lake. But you do have a lot of the mountain communities, Placerville for example.

Sly Park Dam and Reservoir

One of the things we didn't mention was the construction of Sly Park Dam and Reservoir in the upper part of the Sierras there, that the Bureau built this reservoir and now supplies water to Placerville and Western El Dorado County. But you have a number of small developments. Some of them were financed by the Federal government for irrigation and municipal and industrial purposes.

Storey: So when, then, is the first time you remember water rights being talked about?

Catino: Actually, water rights, the first time being talked about is probably when I came to the Bureau in 1945. In fact, we were just starting up after World War II to build the Central Valley Project. We got involved in the purchase of right-of-way for building canals, namely the finishing of the Contra Costa Canal and starting up of the Delta-Mendota Canal. You couldn't help but get involved. When you talked about land rights, you also got involved in water rights.

San Felipe Unit of the Central Valley Project

I have failed to mention one other project which came in in the 60s, was authorized, and that's the San Felipe Unit which is an adjunct to the San Luis Dam, where you take water out of San Luis Dam and bring it over into the San Benito and Santa Clara Counties. San Benito County is primarily agricultural water, while Santa Clara County, the city of San Jose and Santa Clara, receive water from the Central Valley Project. They also receive water from the State Project too. But it's interesting that Santa Clara County, and especially the San Jose area–that area used to be on groundwater, but as pumping went on for a number of years, we had a tremendous amount of land subsidence there. They had to move to import water. And so Santa Clara Valley Water District, as well as the San *Benito* County Water District now buys water from the Bureau of Reclamation to take care of their needs. Santa Clara now has turned out to be one of the largest M&I [municipal and industrial) users on the Central Valley system. But it's again, a case which repeats itself, which is important to highlight, is the *reason* for building the Friant-Kern Canal between Fresno and Bakersfield was that considerable amount of groundwater pumping took place and a surface supply had to be found, and it was found through the construction of Friant Dam and the Friant-Kern and Madera Canals.

Storey: Because underground sources were being depleted?

Issues with Pumping Groundwater

Catino: Yeah, depleted, and there's an over-pumping of roughly a million acre feet in the Fresno-Bakersfield area annually. The replenishment rate is not equivalent to that. In fact, if you go through a number of drought years, you find that you're pumping from greater levels, and the quality of the water is not as good as it should be. The same thing is true over in the Santa Clara-San Benito areas where they've groundwater pumped for many a years and now their water supply is less and the quality is of a poorer texture. So you see these examples all along, and you will find that people, especially environmental types who are against projects saying, "Well, we can pump more from the groundwater, we can pump more from the ground," and that's not true. Sooner or later, like you've seen in the city of San Jose, there's some subsidence there that has caused the streets to go down anywhere from six to eight feet in certain areas. You have subsidence below San Francisco Bay at Alviso, which is a problem. You have subsidence on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley before they got water supply there.

"When you start talking about pumping from 700 to 800 feet for a water supply, you're talking a considerable amount of investment, but you're also dealing with a poorer quality of water than is available annually through the projects. . . ."

When you start talking about pumping from 700 to 800 feet for a water supply, you're talking a considerable amount of investment, but you're also dealing with a poorer quality of water than is available annually through the projects.

Storey: Let's go back and talk about the city engineer at Sonoma for a little bit before we go on. Did you just do that for one summer?

Working for the Sonoma City Engineer as a Chainman

Catino: No, I worked for the city engineer for a couple of summers. It was kind of interesting there, just getting that experience there of primarily land survey work, and laying out what might be a potential pipeline to a subdivision or houses. But it was something that a junior engineer would be interested in. Most engineers, when they go to college, why, they have to take land surveying, and this is just a follow-up on the trigonometry or the spherical trig that you took in high school and you just move on from that. But the same thing is true with some of the things that are involved with a municipality as far as engineering streets and roads and sewer lines and water lines and property entitlements. There's always an argument sometimes–I'd better clarify that a little bit–there's arguments as to where the property boundaries are. And I can remember one case where an individual wanted to put an access to his building there in my home town, and we found out if he put his building there, then there wouldn't be any room for the butcher to take his *truck* into the back of his meat market. And he said, "That's where *I* own." The other guy said, "This is where *I* own." So we got the city engineer out there and he–probably my first lesson in negotiations–the city engineer told these two owners that he would have to dig up the street to find the Spanish land grant marker out there–monument. When they found out what it was going to cost to dig up the street, and they would be vulnerable to paying for returning, after you find the Spanish land grant stake . . . See, Sonoma's set up on a square in town. There was a big plaza in the middle of it. You find that, then he

could survey over to wherever their building would take place, and property. And so when they found out how much it was going to cost to dig up the streets and everything, they decided to have an access so the butcher could get his truck into the back of the meat market. I always remember that as a part of the negotiation that goes on. It really didn't involve trigonometry or engineering as such, it was a *management* principle of negotiating with people to allow twelve feet between the buildings so the truck could get through there and deliver the sides of beef to the butcher. The other fellow wanted to build a Sprouse-Reitz Store, so the they settled the problem as to access in building.

Storey: The other fellow wanted to build what?

Catino: He wanted to build a Sprouse-Reitz five-and-dime store. Where his foundation was, and he was going to come up with these concrete blocks, he had his foundation there with the reinforcing bars in there, and measuring it over to the existing building, there was not enough room to get a truck through there. But I always admired that city engineer for being a capable manager to negotiate between these two owners to settle something that–it would have been very costly to dig up the streets or go into court and have it taken on by a judge and maybe a jury to settle the thing.

Storey: Now what years was this that you worked for the Sonoma city engineer?

Catino: That would be in the early 30s.

Storey: It was two years while you were in college?

Catino: No, I was in high school. I graduated from high school when I was seventeen, so it would have been when I was about fifteen-, sixteen years old. But I was just a chain man, I held up the rod for the city engineer. I helped with some of the computations and I could run an old hand calculator in those days, not sophisticated calculators that we have today.

Storey: Tell me about "chains." What is this?

Catino: That's a 100-foot chain, marked off in hundred-foot lengths, that the surveyors used. You measured the distances with this chain. But they're referred to by surveyors as "chains."

Storey: Tape measures or something?

Catino: Yeah, it's a steel . . .

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. MARCH 17, 1994.
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. MARCH 17, 1994.

Storey: This is tape two of an interview by Brit Storey with Mike Catino on March the 17th, 1994.

Catino: . . . set up the transit and a level so we could make measurements. Say you're laying out a road and you wanted to put in a number of stakes as to where to cut and fill the material. So I helped with that.

Storey: Now while you were in the Corps, working in the Pacific and so on, what kinds of things did you do there, specifically?

Sent to Australia to Map the Northeast Part of Australia

Catino: Well, I left from San Francisco and went to Brisbane, Australia, and the first job we had in Brisbane, Australia, is they were afraid that the Japanese would invade the northeast part of Australia and above Queensland there. So our first job with my topographic engineering organization was to take a number of airplane photos and make *maps* of the northeast part of Australia. And a lot of Australia had not been *mapped* as such, so we took the airplane photos and converted them over to various engineering drawings or topographic drawings, and then proceeded to make colored maps.

"I was in the field survey computation group that . . . picked up what we called the *ground* control. . . . *coordinates* of those areas . . . December 1942 I was in Port Moresby in New Guinea . . . to work on the airstrip in Port Moresby . . . [for] the Fifth Air Force . . ."

And I was in the field survey computation group that traveled all over and picked up what we called the *ground* control. In other words, you had to have a ground control that tied-into the airplane photos. You had to know what the *coordinates* of those areas were. So I worked in Australia for a good many months, and then Pearl Harbor happened on December the 7th, 1941, and December 1942 I was in Port Moresby in New Guinea and the first job I had there was to work on the airstrip in Port Moresby, and that was the *main* airstrip for the Air Force, the Fifth Air Force there.

Storey: That was designing or actually building?

Siting and Development of Drainage at an Emergency Landing Strip at Hood Point

Catino: Surveying so that the engineers could construct–making computations so they could make the roadways around the airport. There was a landing strip there that was extended out. One of the interesting jobs I had out of that location at Port Moresby, I was sent down to a place called Hood Point with a few other surveyors. It was an emergency landing field there. In other words, if Port Moresby was being bombed, why you needed to have an emergency landing field, and so this was an emergency landing field about a hundred miles south of Port Moresby, and it was called Hood Point, and I went there because they had hacked-out an emergency landing field. But the thing had a drainage problem, so my job working for, I think it was the Ninth Corps, I forget the Corps number, but our job was to develop some drainage around that airfield. And so we did that work with wheelbarrows, shovels, and native people, digging ditches to get the water away from the airfield. And so that was one of my jobs. I was just assigned by the Corps of Engineers to go down and do this drainage

work. As it resulted, the war moved north, and we completed the drainage work, but the strip was never used as an emergency as such, although it did have a certain amount of air traffic periodically, Port Moresby.

"The war moved to Milne Bay, to Woodlark Island, to Finchhaven [New Guinea], and Hollandia–these were all other places that I went and worked . . ."

The war moved to Milne Bay, to Woodlark Island, to Finchhaven [New Guinea], and Hollandia–these were all other places that I went and worked on various what you might term public works projects.

". . . it was *all* very good experience. . . ."

But it was *all* very good experience. My little outfit got details. We'd have four or five people going off on this detail for putting up a hospital someplace, or doing engineering work, surveys. We had real talented people in the organization and we were in demand. I made a number of "D-days" there, invasions, on New Britain. Then we all ended up going into Leyte in the Philippines and I worked there on a number of projects. Then I made the invasion into Lingayen Gulf, which was the northern part of the Philippines before moving on down to Manila.

"So after forty-five months in the Army, they shipped me home. I'm pretty proud of my Army career. I guess I got as much out of it as anybody could get out of it from an engineering standpoint . . . spent some time under fire . . .'Great, they didn't drop an egg on me, I'm here!' . . . there's managing a crew or a platoon . . . Near the end of my career with the topographic engineers, I had a crew that was well trained . . ."

So after forty-five months in the Army, they shipped me home. I'm pretty proud of my Army career. I guess I got as much out of it as anybody could get out of it from an engineering standpoint: a couple of decorations and feeling good about the time I was in there. I spent some time under fire, being bombed, and you look back at it now, it was a great experience, because you came home alive. But I've seen some pretty rough times: for example, at Arawa on New Britain, twenty-two straight nights of bombing kind of shakes you up. So you look back at those things and say, "Great, they didn't drop an egg on me, I'm here!" You know, there's more than engineering here, there's managing a crew or a platoon or whatever it is. Near the end of my career with the topographic engineers, I had a crew that was well trained to do–we called it the computer section–but we did all the computations for, we'd get the raw data or the survey data and convert it over into cuts and fills as far as earth work is concerned, where's the location of this, worked with other engineering organizations and turned out the drawings for what we're doing at Clark Field there. We wanted to make that into a super-bomber strip. The Japs had done that over pretty well, so we had to go back out there and refill all the bomb craters and make sure that the material was properly compacted for a super-bomber strip. I moved on to Manila and worked on a number of jobs there. Manila was pretty well beaten up from the bombing and moving the Japs out of there. It was an experience to see how the engineers were going to raise the bridges. The bridges had been bombed and cut off

at the abutments and dropped into the Pasig River, and how we put all those works back together. And you know, it's a tremendous experience to *be there* and be a part of rehabilitating an area and getting it back into operations. There's just a tremendous amount.

Repairing a 1981 Slide on the Upstream Face of San Luis Dam

I talked about rehabilitation. I need to mention that while I was regional director we had a slide on the upstream face of San Luis Dam. This happened in the fall of 1981. And we pretty near lost San Luis Dam. The rock on it and the gravel on the inside face of it slipped out of position, so we had to come back in and rebuild that dam.

"I'm pretty proud of the effort of the Bureau people and the crew we put together . . . an effort that I look back at as tremendous cooperation, not only from within the Bureau staff, but the State people who now operate the facilities. The contractors . . . consulting engineers . . . consulting geologists . . . a tremendous effort, and the water users all pat the Bureau on the back and say, 'Well, you put that dam back into readiness, and you never lost an acre foot of water as far as delivery to the people.' . . ."

I'm pretty proud of the effort of the Bureau people and the crew we put together and the appointments that I made as to the field engineer and the geologist and that. We worked around the clock from that fall period, and I've been happy about the situation. The crew that we put together, all the way from the little girl who took care of the time reports, to the people that did the engineering work and the contractors. We awarded, within a short period of time, about $11 million worth of contracts to get that dam back in shape. And all through the winter we worked on that to where we could guarantee full water deliveries in the spring of '82. And I've been reminded a number of times from people down in the valley what a great effort that was, and of course the effort is really shared by a number of people. We had great public relations on it, we ran four meetings in Los Banos all throughout that, we *told* people what we were doing. We even had Secretary [James] Watt out to take a look at the dam slide. He gave us all the help we needed financially. In fact, he allotted $15 million to put that dam back in shape. The awards were numerous that were given locally to the regional engineers and the staff and the geologists. We had people working on that job twenty-four hours a day. But the highest award to me came from the [*Engineering News-Record*] ~~*Engineer News-Record*~~ which is like saying you get an Oscar for your work, and they've given me a plaque which I've shared with the Bureau people as well as the Denver people who were consultants on this job. We ran a hotline all the time on just every activity. After the slide on the dam, within a week we had a three million dollar job awarded to a contractor for quarrying rock so that we could use the materials to rebuild the dam. So it's an effort that I look back at as tremendous cooperation, not only from within the Bureau staff, but the State people who now operate the facilities. The contractors, we had three very notable consulting engineers from the University of California, California Stanford, and the University of Nebraska. We had consulting geologists, if I remember right. But this was a tremendous effort, and the water users all pat the Bureau on the back and say,

"Well, you put that dam back into readiness, and you never lost an acre foot of water as far as delivery to the people."

". . . that's one I look back at with tremendous pride of the people that worked with us on that. . . ."

Now, also dependent on that water out of San Luis dam is the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Of course, the State pumps it over the hill. But, we put it back, and I'm really proud of that job. You see something in your career has been highlighted, that's one that I look back at with tremendous pride of the people that worked with us on that.

Storey: Back in the Corps, what rank did you start at and end up?

Catino: I went to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, as a buck private, and came out of the Army as a Tech Sergeant.

Storey: One more thing: I believe you said four months after you got out of the Army you joined Reclamation at Antioch. (Catino: Right.) That must mean then that you got your degree at Sac[ramento] State while you were working full-time for Reclamation?

Catino: Right here. Yeah, right here.

Storey: So when was that that you went back and finished up your degree?

Working on His Degree at California State University-Sacramento

Catino: Oh, I came here to Sacramento in 1950, so off and on I took courses, you see, as well as I could fit them in–plus raising a family of four kids and it's not easy.

Storey: That's what I want you to talk about. Tell me about the problems you had of working and getting your degree too, *plus* scheduling it with the things that . . .

Catino: Well, it was very difficult, to do this. There was others in the building, and we shared classes together and notes and stuff. It takes you a long time. I graduated from junior college, you see, before I came to the Bureau. I graduated from Santa Rosa Junior College, basically I had only two years to complete. And so it just took me a long time. Some years would go by, I wouldn't take any classes at all, I just couldn't fit it in with the *work*. But eventually I got it done.

Storey: When did you get your degree finally?

". . . I didn't graduate. I pretty much terminated my classes in 1968. . . ."

Catino: Well, you've been using "degree"–actually, I didn't graduate. I pretty much terminated my classes in 1968.

Storey: That includes the graduate work you did?

During Departmental Management Training Took Courses at George Washington University

Catino: The graduate work, yeah, I did that . . . Let's see, I went in the Department. They permitted me to take graduate work at George Washington University under the Department of Interior's training program, and that was in 1961. So I got a duke's mixture of education.

". . . I took the examination shortly after I came to the Bureau. I *was* appointed as a civil engineer, but I took the examination and passed for a grade higher than what I was, and if I remember right, I passed at ninety percent for the current grade, and eighty percent for the grade higher with it. . . . you file all of your work and your papers, and then they review them. It's an unassembled examination. So I'm a little bit of a duke's mixture, you might say, of having passed the Bureau or the Civil Service requirement for an engineer, and then get an education on top of that. . . ."

But as long as you're on this subject, I might point out that I took the examination shortly after I came to the Bureau. I *was* appointed as a civil engineer, but I took the examination and passed for a grade higher than what I was, and if I remember right, I passed at ninety percent for the current grade, and eighty percent for the grade higher with it. So I took the examination with the Bureau.

Storey: I'm not familiar with what examination you're talking about.

Catino: Well, you file all of your work and your papers, and then they review them. It's an unassembled examination. So I'm a little bit of a duke's mixture, you might say, of having passed the Bureau or the Civil Service requirement for an engineer, and then get an education on top of that.

Storey: And then did you go ahead and get a license? Is it a license? A P.E. is it?

Catino: No, I never became a registered engineer, as such. There's no requirement in the Federal government to be a registered engineer. But a lot of the young engineers do that nowadays.

Storey: Well, when you went to work at Antioch on the Contra Costa Canal, what were you actually *doing* in that office?

Worked on Right-of-way, Construction Management, and Some Design Work for the Contra Costa Canal While in Antioch

Catino: When I first came there, I was working on right-of-way. We had to buy right-of-way so that we could get on to construction. So I was doing right-of-way plats and descriptions and that type of thing. And then I moved into construction management, construction contracts, and I was the guy that did the computations and paid off the

contractors–so much concrete, so much steel, so much earthwork and so on. And then I also did some design work for pipeline distribution systems there. We built the canals and then you built pipelines that go out from the canals. If I remember right, there were seven laterals or pipelines that were built off of the canal. I helped design some of those. In other words, you start out with a twenty-four-inch pipe, and when you get down the road you got to make sure you've got enough capacity in the line so that you get down to a six-inch line at the far end–is there enough water in there [for] all the deliveries? So we did some of that design work. But a lot of the work in the Antioch Office was keyed to starting up on the Tracy Pumping Plant and the Delta-Mendota Canal, so we were doing a lot of the right-of-way design work for starting up on those facilities.

Storey: Now when you say you were doing right-of-way work, you don't mean going out and negotiating land purchases?

Catino: No, no, no, I meant taking the engineering information and you're going to buy a piece of property from Mr. Jones, and so you're going to buy a strip of property 300 feet wide by 600 feet long, and you take that and take the engineering drawings for that, or information, and turn it into a drawing and you write a description of that piece of property, so then that the right-of-way people, those that are involved in *appraising* the land, can go out and appraise that parcel and then after that is followed by an individual that goes out and negotiates with the owner. If the owner does *not* want to buy in, then you end up with a condemnation suit and you go into court and condemn the land. Now that piece of property that you're talking about buying is tied to an engineering understanding of how wide and how long you need for building that canal or that facility or that pumping plant or whatever you're going to do with it.

Storey: So you have to do the preliminary design and location before that can even proceed.

Catino: Yeah, you make up your mind that you're going to need a right-of-way of, let's say, like you do on a highway. You'll go down and see a highway and they have fences out there that they bought 600 feet wide, and they're going to build an interstate down it. It's the same proposition with a canal, except it isn't that wide. You might buy a strip of land 400 feet wide for a *big* canal, maybe something less than that.

Storey: Is that the only thing you did while you were in Antioch?

Catino: I administered construction contracts, but these contracts were awarded, and then I did the computations for paying off the contractor. This month he got so many cubic yards of concrete, so many yards of dirt. Now, this comes to you in terms of field notes, the field engineers say, "Well, contractor finished from station such-and-such to station such-and-such," and so then you take that information and correlate it into paying out on that specification. And so you work all that out, so at the end of the month the contractor gets $100,000 or $150,000. And of course I did a number of those contracts. If I remember at one time I had about eight contracts going, and I had people helping me, you don't do this all by yourself. So we had a number of construction contracts for building the canal between Walnut Creek and Martinez, and then we had a small dam, a reservoir there that holds a couple hundred acre feet

of water. They built a little terminus reservoir there. That was another contract. And we built some small pumping plants along there, and I had *those* contracts to pay off the contractor.

Storey: Okay, now exactly how did this process work? The field engineer would send you notes that would be sufficient to tell you what you needed to know to figure out how much the contractor would get.

Catino: Yeah. You see, on the specifications, you awarded the contract. And you said in that specification, when he put his bid in, that he was going to, let's say, have structure concrete at twenty-five dollars a yard. Now that isn't relevant today, but that was relevant in those days. Or he's going to have canal-lining concrete at seven dollars a cubic yard, and he was going to put reinforcing bars in, furnish and install the reinforcing bars for *nine* cents a pound. And was going to install gates and motors for so much. And so you had the specifications that he bid it on. If you have those unit prices, and then the field engineer, which you were talking about, he gave you the quantities. He gave you that this concrete was poured in this structure to a certain elevation. Or the canal lining was done between points "A" to point "D," so you were able to take those notes and from your predetermined bid, or your *bid*, then you were able to work that up as to what you pay the contractor.

Storey: And this field engineer was there inspecting the work that was being done?

Catino: Yeah, him and his crew, see.

Storey: So he was assuring that (Catino: The work was done.) it was actually eight inches thick instead of two inches (Catino: Right.) and all of that kind of thing. Then it came into your office and you did the calculations. How did you pay?

Catino: Well, you developed a pay voucher, just like the same voucher that you get for your per diem. So you work up a voucher, and then it's taken out to the contractor and you tell the contractor, "This is what I'm paying you this month, this, this, and this. If you want to argue about it, you come into the office and talk to Mike. He's the guy that worked this up." And so he says, "Okay, I'll sign it, I'll take the $150,000," or a million dollars or whatever the contract amount is, and then you take that and send it to the Finance Office and the Finance Office reviews . . .

Storey: Where's the Finance Office?

"In those days we had our own Finance Offices in the field. Later on it moved to Stockton, and then later on it moved to Sacramento. We had one Finance Office for this region. Now, they process the paper here, but the Finance Office is in Denver, so they pay the contractors out of Denver. . . ."

Catino: In those days we had our own Finance Offices in the field. Later on it moved to Stockton, and then later on it moved to Sacramento. We had one Finance Office for this region. Now, they process the paper here, but the Finance Office is in Denver, so they pay the contractors out of Denver.

Storey: Okay, so then it went to the Finance Office. Then what happened?

Catino: Then he okayed the voucher and sent it to the Disbursing Office and got the check drawn to send to the contractor. So that's how he gets paid.

Storey: And the contractor, in effect, has to sign the voucher.

Catino: The contractor signs the voucher for progress payments. If he has an argument with you, then he comes in and discusses it with you and says, "You didn't pay me enough," or "Why didn't I get paid on this item? I did this and this and this." So you actually have the field engineer's notes, the construction management, in this case myself, and the contractor. So you have to settle these issues.

Change Orders, Extra Work, and Wage Rate Changes

Now there's also other things that sometimes there's extra work added to it, change orders to a contract. (Storey: I was going to ask that next.) So you have change orders and extra work. So a change order is an amendment to an existing contract–that's what that is. And it says that instead of doing this, you're going to do this, and we're going to compensate you in such a way for this change order. In other words, you might have an item, like take reinforcing bars, and the specification said, "We're going to pay you for 50,000 pounds of reinforcing bars." Well, it so happens that the contractor now, we find that we want to add *more* reinforcing bars, and so we increase that. And so we will negotiate with the contractor and say, "Instead of 50,000, it'll be 70,000 pounds of reinforcing bars. Now, we're not going to pay you the eight or nine cents that was in your bid, we want to negotiate for that increase," because that particular pay item in his specifications, he might have been putting that in for cost, you know, what it was costing him, without any profit in there at all, so we're going to sit down and negotiate that. So those are change orders, and then sometimes you *add* work to a job. Let's say we've decided now that we want to put another turnout out of a canal, which is a structure with a gate with a pipe, and we've decided we'd better put another turnout here now before we get the lining in there, and put that turnout. We left that out of the specifications, so that's an extra work item. And so we negotiate for that. So those are things that are done.

Storey: Did you as the office overseeing the contract, do that negotiation, or did somebody else?

Catino: Usually it is negotiated at . . . Well, at the field engineer or the construction engineer level. And you as the contract administrator prepare all the papers. So you have to show that you're making a change to the contract. And so you prepare all the papers and usually the construction engineer, the high man in the place, will sit down and negotiate that, if it's significant. Sometimes these are not all that significant. Now, at today's prices, they probably are *very* significant. But years ago, well, I guess the value of a change order for a couple of thousand dollars in a million-dollar-contract didn't mean an awful lot, but it had to be done to keep everything nice and neat as far as that contract is concerned. Well, let's say you had an item for installing a *big* generator, and that was bid in at a lump-sum price. The contractor said, "I'll put that

generator in for half a million dollars, at a lump sum price." Well, he comes back to you and says, "Now I've had a wage increase, and we have wage rates in the contract. They're spelled out in there, but the wage increased, so I kept that in there for a half a million dollars, because of the wage increase, I've now got to increase this to $550,000 or $600,000." And so you make that negotiation. He has to show you that the electrical workers, the welders, all the mechanics, machinists, and so on, people involved in this job, this is all tied to the half a million dollars, now it's going to have to tie to an increase of, say, $600,000. So then you discuss that particular increase. So contracts are permitted to be adjusted because of wage rates. Of course I've been away from contract administration for a good many years, so there's probably a lot *more* things involved.

Storey: But that's the way it was then–that's what we're interested in. (Catino: That's right.) But these wage rates, is this some sort of a minimum pay scale or something?

Catino: Yeah, under the . . . Let's see, Hartley? wage . . . It was put into contracts. I can't think of the act itself, it's under the Federal Procurement Regulations, that when you bid, in the specifications itself, it says that you will pay a common laborer, let's say, in those days, $1.75 an hour. And all of the wage rates are spelled out in that specification. And the contractor should *not pay less* than those wage rates. So now there's an increase in those wage rates. In other words, the union and the associated general contractors have now negotiated an increase. And so you go back over all of those wage rates and you find that they've increased four or five percent. And that's permitted, under the Federal procurement or contracting, to increase the cost of that. So a better way of handling that is to say, "Well, they had so many hours of this," and we used to have a young lady down at Tracy that would go over the contractor's books, and he would show that he had so many hours on this particular trade, a tinsmith, machinist, welder, truck driver, big truck driver, small truck driver, carpenter, cement worker, cement finisher–all the trades have had these increases in here. So then he would get a payment for wage increases. But that's a part of the contract, so you have that entry in there. But also, a part of the discussion, when you have change orders or extra work orders, as to what the new wage rates are.

Now you see some of these contracts spanned . . .

END SIDE 1, TAPE 2. MARCH 17, 1994.
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. MARCH 17, 1994.

Storey: Contract administration. That wouldn't include, for instance, land acquisition contracts or anything?

Catino: No, that's done separately.

Storey: That's a different unit.

Land Acquisition at Reclamation

Catino: Yeah, you mentioned Mike Harrison. He was in the real estate business, and they

have a land acquisition group here now. We've always had a land acquisition group. And the land acquisition group primarily takes the land description, the *plat*, as it was referred to, for a piece of property that we want to buy, plus the description, and you have an appraiser that goes out. Now sometimes you get people outside of the government to appraise the land too. And so you go out and appraise it, and you say, "Well, the government's appraisal for this piece of land is $100,000." And so then he turns it over to the negotiator, who's a different person altogether, and the negotiator goes out and sees farmer Brown or Jones or Smith or whoever, and they discuss buying this land for $100,000. The farmer says, "No, I won't sell it to you for $100,000. I don't want you anywhere near here," and so on and so forth. But the government then says, "Well, this is in the right-of-way of our facility, and we need that land." See, the appraiser is going to look at what's on there. Buying the land is one thing, but there's buildings on there. There might be an orchard, there might be a crop. I can remember a situation where a guy was growing *roses* and here was a whole bunch of roses out there, and there was a hell of an investment in that thing, so he maybe wanted those roses to grow two years out there in the field before he . . . So come up there and all of a sudden we want this land, so he's got some roses or almond trees or walnuts or peaches, and he's got an orchard, and you've got to compensate him for that. He might have a barn or facilities in there, so that's all a part of the appraisal process. Now, if they don't want to buy-into the government's estimate for that, why then you have the right of condemnation, so you then take it to the court and you can have a condemnation suit and by jury, the jury sometimes awards more than what the government appraisal was, so that's part of the game. A lot of people do that, because there's a lot of sympathy in juries to award at a higher amount.

Storey: Right. Did you do anything else in addition to the contract administration and the right-of-way . . . at Antioch?

Catino: Yeah, I did a lot of estimating on facilities to be built, and programs. I was the principal programs engineer. In fact, I was the first one in this region to have the title of programs engineer.

Storey: This was at Antioch?

"What a program engineer does . . . all the estimates. . . . what it costs to build certain facilities . . . right-of-way estimates . . . manpower estimates for that. . . . get *all* of these estimates and put them into a formal estimate for building a facility . . . then you program that thing out. You need so much of that. And you're going to get the design data into Denver. Denver's going to turn out the specifications, you're going to bid on a certain day, you'll award a contract on a certain day . . . it's going to spread over two, two-and-a-half years, how much money you need in the first six months, nine months, right down the line. . . ."

Catino: This was at Tracy. What a program engineer does is first of all he whips up all the estimates. He gets people to work up estimates, he works up estimates, of what it costs to build certain facilities, whether it's 100 miles of canal or you work with the Denver people, you work with just about everybody you can to get estimates. You

also get right-of-way estimates, you sit down with the construction engineer and try to figure out the manpower estimates for that. It's just not something that you say it's going to take "X" number of people. So you get *all* of these estimates and put them into a formal estimate for building a facility, like a canal or a pumping plant. And then you program that thing out. You need so much of that. And you're going to get the design data into Denver. Denver's going to turn out the specifications, you're going to bid on a certain day, you'll award a contract on a certain day, you estimate that this is a $10 million contract, it's going to spread over two, two-and-a-half years, how much money you need in the first six months, nine months, right down the line. And so when I was a programs engineer, why I used to do all of it: did the estimating, tied it into the budget process. You go to Congress. I was better-known as the money bags around here–not for construction work, but also for the planning effort.

"We used to have a couple million dollars a year here for planning and operation and maintenance. . . ."

We used to have a couple million dollars a year here for planning and operation and maintenance. As all these facilities get completed, why you need more money to operate and maintain it, so we have what we call the O&M [operation and maintenance] budget. So we had *all* kinds of budgets. I used to work up the justification. I say "I," but I had a staff to do this. I took care of all the programs and budgets, and for a good period of time before I became an assistant director, I also had the finance operation. I had accountants and clerks working for me.

Storey: Well, while you were at Tracy as programs engineer, what specifically were you all working on?

Program Engineer Work at Tracy

Catino: I was working on the Tracy Pumping Plant and the Delta-Mendota Canal and distribution system estimates for building pipelines from out of the Delta-Mendota Canal. And we also had the Delta Cross-channel, which is another facility down here. But those were the facilities that were assigned to the Tracy Office at that time, so I did all of the program engineering work.

Then in 1950, I moved here.

Storey: Yeah. What kind of staff did you have at Tracy? Was it just you?

Catino: Myself and another engineer.

Storey: So two of you were doing the work on this project.

Catino: I was dependent on probably, let's see, two other estimating groups. And I was dependent on the design people. See, the design people would say, "Okay, we're going to put out here a design and send it to Denver for fifteen miles of canal." So I used to take their data, and they would send that off to Denver, and I'd take their data and with their help I would determine how many yards of concrete, how many yards

of excavation, how much reinforcing bars, this thing and this thing, and right down . . . The gates, the machinery. Now, you look back at experience–you don't start from scratch on this. You say, "Well, we've put a set of gates in over here, big radial gates, and they cost us $200,000 to put those in there." So you'd move those into the new work. You're always reaching back for experience. It's the same thing as the Denver estimating thing. I worked real close with the Denver people on estimates. Then I used to go back there quite a bit to Denver to coordinate a lot of the activity.

". . . when I came here to Sacramento as a programs engineer, we had . . . four people . . . but we were dependent on the programs engineers and the program and budget people in the field office to bring us things, and we coordinated it here. Then we put it in a package that became the Mid-Pacific Region's programs and budgets . . ."

But when I came here to Sacramento as a programs engineer, we had at that time, four people from the shop here, but we were dependent on the programs engineers and the program and budget people in the field office to bring us things, and we coordinated it here. Then we put it in a package that became the Mid-Pacific Region's programs and budgets, you see. So we put the whole packet together and I had to travel with the regional director and testify before the commissioner as to what the program was. I never did testify up on the Hill, because the commissioner of Reclamation always did that. But we prepared all the briefing statements for him and when Floyd Dominy was commissioner, and later Gil Stamm, they all had our briefing statements as to what this amount of money was going to do in terms of building this, this, this, and this.

Storey: Who was the first commissioner you met?

Mike Straus

Catino: The first commissioner I met was Mike Straus. He walked into the Tracy Office and we were in little aluminum buildings there, and Mike Straus was such a big man, he filled the door frame. I'll never forget him. He was a very tall man and we had these like Quonset huts, that was our first office in Tracy. That's the first commissioner I ever met. He just went through the place.

I knew every commissioner after that on a personal basis–yeah, every one of them I knew. After Mike Straus, of course you had Dexheimer, who came out of Denver, and I knew him personally. I've known every one of them.

Storey: Tell me about Straus. Did he stop, or you saw him go by, or what?

Catino: He came in with the project construction engineer to look at the offices we had. These were Quonset-type buildings, prefabricated metal buildings that we'd laminated together and made an office out of. They were not concrete and steel as some of these buildings are that you have today. They were better than an Army barracks, let me put it this way. He just came out to visit out in this region and came to the Tracy office to see the start-up of the Tracy Pumping Plant and the Delta-

Mendota Canal. And so he came through and he shook hands with some of the employees. He didn't know who *I* was, but I knew who he was.

Storey: What was your impression of him, other than he was big?

Catino: Well, he was pro-Reclamation works. That's what I remember of him. He had a great sense of what these public works would do to the nation and the seventeen western states. He knew by building irrigation works and water and power facilities, it would enhance the well-being of the states and the communities. He was a well-read individual, very knowledgeable of Reclamation works. See, Reclamation ties back to 1902, I believe is the Reclamation Act itself. (Storey: Yes.) But his background was in public relations and newspapers, if I remember right. But he was a very learned man.

Storey: Did you ever do any business with him?

Wilbur Dexheimer

Catino: No, no, never did any business with him. I knew Commissioner Dexheimer, because he was in Denver, and I got to know him in Denver, but not on any great basis. And then he went to Washington as commissioner and I used to put the programs and budgets together, and so there was an occasion to see him. He was commissioner when I went to Washington the first time with Barney Bellport who was then the regional director. I went back there with the regional director to present the budget for this region.

Storey: Well, this has been very interesting, but I'm afraid our two hours is up. I really appreciate your coming in. At this point, I want to ask you if you are willing to have the cassette tapes and the transcripts from the cassette tapes used by Reclamation researchers and other researchers who are interested in Reclamation history.

Catino: Yes.

Storey: Good, I appreciate it, thank you.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. MARCH 17, 1994.
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 1. SEPTEMBER 2, 1994.

Storey: This is an interview by Brit Allan Storey with Mike Catino, former regional director of the Bureau of Reclamation in the Mid-Pacific Region, in the regional offices of the Bureau of Reclamation in Sacramento, September the 2nd, 1994. This is Tape 1.

If you could tell be about Keith Higginson as Commissioner and how he functioned, I'd appreciate it.

Keith Higginson

Catino: Well, Keith Higginson was a very knowledgeable individual on water resources

development in the West. He came from Idaho and he was the Director of Water Resources for the State of Idaho. When Secretary [Cecil] Andrus was appointed to be Secretary of the Interior, why Keith Higginson came along. I found him to be a very knowledgeable man in water resources development. He came from a perspective of engineering and economics and probably a *true* state view of how water should be developed within the state boundaries. However, he was in a regime in the Department of Interior where the assistant secretaries and other secretaries were *all* political appointees who had a different viewpoint than pure water development. As a result, Mr. Higginson's efforts were probably not totally appreciated. But in the rank and file in the Bureau of Reclamation, why I think Mr. Higginson would rate up there among the better commissioners because of his forthright stand on water development, as well as the design and construction of worthwhile water- and power-related facilities.

Storey: How did Guy Martin relate to him?

Guy Martin

Catino: Well, Guy Martin was totally a political employee, tied pretty well to the Democratic group that was in Congress. I've heard from one source, from the legal side, from outside of this Mid-Pacific Region, that the Carter people within the Department of Interior came in without knowing too much about the resources development, and when they left, they really didn't know an awful lot more. They didn't accomplish an awful lot. Their whole aim was to really slow down the whole Reclamation program as far as any development. They wanted to make very decided changes, especially the solicitor that was appointed during that time wanted to make radical changes in the acreage limitation and found out that there were so many laws involved with it, and so many pieces and principles that it was very difficult to just change it by the pen of a solicitor's opinion.

During the Carter Administration Little Was Done Within Reclamation and the Western Area Power Administration Was Created to Market Federal Power in the West–Causing Many Concerns in Old-Line Reclamation Employees

The politics were pretty heavy during Commissioner Higginson's regime as commissioner of Reclamation. However, I think he did an excellent job under the conditions. The politics were probably as heavy as in the history of *my* career during that period of time, and if you weren't on a favorite list you didn't even get a hearing as to your particular project. Actually, during the Carter Administration, very little was done in completing Reclamation facilities and the principles of operating within the laws of the Congress. I've felt that it was a period of not much being accomplished, putting on a pretty good show, but not much being accomplished for the ways of distributing water and power. Also during that period of time the Western Area Power Administration came into force and a number of the power facilities or the power activity as such was reduced from the Bureau of Reclamation and passed over to the Department of Energy. And this caused some great consternation between old-line Bureau people as to who was to operate these facilities and the whole power marketing structure was of great concern to the power

users, especially the preference power customers within the various regional boundaries.

Storey: Were there any specific projects in Mid-Pacific that were slowed down because of the Carter Administration?

Auburn Dam Was Slowed During the Carter Administration

". . . neither was there any great interest in terms of the Reagan Administration. The Reagan Administration took a little different viewpoint than the Carter people. Actually, the Reagan people came up with a *formula* in which local participation was required from a funding standpoint to move a project as large as Auburn. . . ."

Catino: Well, namely Auburn Dam, Auburn-Folsom South Unit was slowed down. There wasn't any great interest by the Carter people in building Auburn Dam. And I don't mean to put them completely down, neither was there any great interest in terms of the Reagan Administration. The Reagan Administration took a little different viewpoint than the Carter people. Actually, the Reagan people came up with a *formula* in which local participation was required from a funding standpoint to move a project as large as Auburn. Although the Reagan Administration, as well as the Carter Administration, kept funding the project to take care of the preliminaries in terms of geological investigation in the Auburn Canyon, as well as the detail engineering that was required to move a project. They didn't close it down completely, but neither one of the administrations were interested in placing concrete in the canyon and getting the project done. The Folsom-South Canal is partially built today, as a part of that unit of the Central Valley Project, and it is intended by law, or authorized by law, to extend from Nimbus Dam on the American River to the San Joaquin County, in other words in the Stockton area. Only a fifty-mile piece has been constructed, and while we have a need of water in San Joaquin County for both agricultural and municipal and industrial use, it stands there as a monument to the authorization, but not as a full functioning facility. Therefore the investment in the Folsom-South Canal is not *fully* being realized. Its repayment is being paid by other CVP water users at a greater amount than had it been fully developed so that you could sell more water in both Sacramento and San Joaquin Counties.

Storey: What was Higginson like as a person to deal with? Did you ever do business with him?

Keith Higginson

Catino: Yeah, I did a lot of business with Higginson. When I came aboard, Bill E. Martin was then the regional director. I was his assistant and Billy had been transferred to the Denver region and Keith Higginson appointed me as acting regional director. It was a pleasure working with Keith Higginson because he was *knowledgeable* of a lot of the activities in the West, having come from the State of Idaho, and from a personal and professional engineering standpoint, I enjoyed working with Keith Higginson, although in many cases he got tied up into the political world of the Carter

Administration, rather than the straightforward, "Let's do it engineering-wise and get the water on the land. Let's develop the power for the cities and the people." And a lot of that detracted from his abilities. I sized him up as an individual that had abilities in the management as well as the engineering area, and to go straightforward with the project.

Storey: And was he a person that related well to people?

Catino: Yes, he was. He related very well to people, not only his staff in Washington, but he related well with the regional directors in all of the various regions and he had very good relationships with the Engineering and Research Center in Denver. And I believe part of that was due to the fact that he spoke from an engineering side, that was his education and vocation, but he also was a great human being in terms of the needs of an organization and how does an organization function. I thought that he did fairly well with the many thousands of employees that were in the Bureau of Reclamation at the time.

Storey: Now you mentioned that Higginson appointed you as acting regional director. (Catino: Right.) Who appointed you as regional director?

"I stayed as acting regional director from 1980 'til when the Reagan people came in, and then I was appointed as the regional director. In other words, I served for about a year-and-a-half in an acting capacity. In other words, I got caught in the crossfire of one administration going out and a new administration coming in. . . ."

Catino: I stayed as acting regional director from 1980 'til when the Reagan people came in, and then I was appointed as the regional director. In other words, I served for about a year-and-a-half in an acting capacity. In other words, I got caught in the crossfire of one administration going out and a new administration coming in. I do not have any feelings for that, I really thought I should have been appointed by the Carter Administration. I received no additional compensation, I did the job of a regional director from the day that Bill E. Martin left, and I ran the organization, and from the constituency out in the field, namely the farmers and the water users, they all felt that I did a fairly good job in the acting capacity, and a great number of them individually as well as organizationally were supporters of my being appointed as regional director, and they were very open about telling that to the members of the Reagan Administration for them to appointed me on a permanent basis.

Storey: Was Bob Broadbent in office when you were appointed?

Catino: Yeah, Bob Broadbent came in as commissioner fairly early during the Reagan Administration. I can't think of his first name [Garrey], but the last name is Carruthers, he was the assistant secretary for water and power. I met with those folks on a number of occasions and I believe they came in–of course when the administration comes in in January and I was appointed in the spring of '82. I guess that would be right, as far as the Reagan Administration coming in. So it wasn't very long after the Reagan people took office. Jim Watt was Secretary of the Interior, so it

didn't take long for them after that to appoint me.

Storey: And you had occasion to work with Broadbent then?

Catino: Oh yes, I worked with Broadbent up until the time that I decided to retire, which was in April of '83.

Storey: What was Broadbent like to work with?

Bob Broadbent

Catino: Well, Broadbent, in my classification, was a duck out of water. He didn't have a feeling for, one, a big organization. He was not founded in water and power resources development. He had a completely different viewpoint on that. He did serve for a short period of time on the Water Board of Las Vegas in the Las Vegas area, Clark County, I believe. But this was a whole new world to him. He was truly a politician being appointed to a high-level job that really required high managerial and engineering skills–not necessarily engineering skills, but certainly management ability of a multi-million-dollar organization. The Bureau of Reclamation probably was in the neighborhood at that time of an appropriation of about three-quarters of a billion dollars, and this was a whole new world to him. He was not founded in this kind of activity, compared to, say, an individual that had worked his way up through the Bureau of Reclamation like Commissioner Dexheimer, for one; Commissioner Dominy, Commissioner Stamm. Higginson came from the outside, but he was certainly well-founded in organization and the development of water resources. When you look at the series of commissioners, and I've worked with any number of them all the way through my career, I would have to say that Mr. Broadbent was the odd member of that group from both a professional and managerial standpoint. But I don't mean to put the individual down, I understand fully how political appointees are made, and what they try to carry out and what their functions are. But I wouldn't rate Mr. Broadbent very high in relationship to other commissioners of Reclamation.

Storey: How about him personally to work with? Was he personable or abrupt or what?

Felt Broadbent Was Too Political and Didn't Have the Necessary Background to Be Commissioner of Reclamation

Catino: No, I don't think he . . . From a personal standpoint he was a reasonable individual that understood people. But I don't think he understood groups of people, of how they function as a group. He was a more one-on-one type of leader and he left a lot of things which he should have taken direction, he left it on his other political appointees within the Bureau, and he had a considerable amount of passing down from the Department as to how the Bureau should operate. In other words, he did not really direct the Bureau show, he let somebody else direct the Bureau show.

Storey: Who was that somebody else?

Catino: The somebody else was Jim Watt, who was then secretary of the interior, Garrey

Carruthers who was an assistant secretary for water and science. So those were the people that were calling the policy shots, and he was not bringing up . . . And I don't mean to put the man down, he didn't have the background to be able to go up and confront the politicos and say, "You see, what this directive will do, it will affect the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Wyoming, and Colorado, and it will also affect California, Arizona, and New Mexico, in these areas." He didn't have that background. So as a result, he was not an *effective* leader. I wouldn't say that he was a real fast learner, as such, either. We've had people in the Bureau that came aboard and learned pretty fast. Keith Higginson had a feeling for a lot of these things that were foreign to him when he first came there, but he didn't take long to get aboard.

Comissioners Dominy, Stamm, and Higginson

And then, of course, there was other commissioners that were really concrete-and-steel people like Commissioner Dexheimer–problems with the Indians, he didn't really care about that, he'd just as soon let somebody else take care of that. He took the choice of that. But overall, people like Commissioner Dominy and Commissioner Stamm had about as keen of interest from "A" to "Z" as to the whole total Reclamation program. I rate them high marks, and I give Keith Higginson some high marks too, in terms of being a quick learner and getting aboard.

Storey: Did you ever work with Garrey Carruthers? (Catino: Yes.) What was he like?

Garrey Carruthers

Catino: Well, Garrey Carruthers, number one, was a politician from the word go. He left the Department of Interior and immediately became Governor of New Mexico. He *was* a Westerner, and he had a background of agricultural economics and so he was a very interesting guy. I toured with him in California, taking him on a couple of occasions to meet with water users as well as on speaking engagements in here. He went over very well with the public, but he was one to say, "We're going to make some very decided changes here in the Reclamation program," but never carried them out. In effect, some of the statements he made turned out to be kind of like threats. But he was well accepted as a man from the West and he had a pretty good feeling for agricultural development, having come from the state of New Mexico where things grow pretty readily down there.

Storey: How was he to work with as an individual, as a person?

Garrey Carruthers Visited the Auburn Dam Site

Catino: Well, as the regional director I never got too much on a one-to-one basis with him, other than when he was out here in this region, and I used to say, "Well, I think you people in the Department ought to look into this," and he was a very willing guy to listen to your input. I don't mean because you're a regional director and he was an assistant secretary he'd shut you out, but he was very willing to listen to what you had to say, as well as your staff. I have to say that in terms of Auburn Dam, he wanted to see the site, he visited with former Congressman Harold T. "Bizz" Johnson

who was the author of the Auburn Folsom-South Unit. We spent time in the canyon and had lunch together and listened to what a former congressman has to say, and he gave a lot of time to that. We did travel up and down the valley, so I appreciate his attention, but I didn't find that he picked up on what was told very much, and wanted to forcefully direct it.

Westlands Water District Contract

I thought he was very delinquent in terms of the Westlands Water District. We had sent in–"we" being Sacramento, or the Mid-Pacific Region–had sent in a number of proposals, and alternatives to make a settlement on a revised Westlands contract for additional water and other things that were necessary from the preliminary contract, but he never gave that any great, full attention. It's my belief had he put his mind to it, and attention, the Westlands contract would have been revised and some of the feelings in terms of the largest irrigation district in the nation would have been set aside. It would have been a milestone in his career had we made a settlement on the Westlands contract, but he sort of kept aloof and never wanted to bring it to a conclusion.

Storey: Did that contract ever get settled?

Catino: No, it hasn't been settled. Other aspects of it get settled through various laws that have been passed, such as the Reclamation Reform Act. And right now there's a suit pending between the United States and Westlands Water District, in terms of completing the drainage facilities. It's a lawsuit that's going to take some time to square away.

"But Westlands has been paying money since the first drop of water has been delivered to their district for drainage facilities and the Bureau of Reclamation or the Federal government has failed to build those facilities. . . . they're entitled . . . by law, and the contract, to have some facilities for disposal of their drainage water. . . ."

But Westlands has been paying money since the first drop of water has been delivered to their district for drainage facilities and the Bureau of Reclamation or the Federal government has failed to build those facilities. As a result, some land has had to be taken out of production because of not completing that. But water has been delivered since the late '60s to Westlands, and they're entitled to, by law, and the contract, to have some facilities for disposal of their drainage water.

Storey: And Kesterson was part of that?

Use of Kesterson as a Wildlife Refuge

Catino: *Kesterson* was a part of the facilities that was at an intermediate terminal reservoir on the San Luis Drain, and it was approved originally by the Fish and Wildlife people and the environmental organizations as a function of retaining drainage water in Kesterson. And what happened here is that the quality of the water in the drain

containing a considerable amount of selenium, and as a result some birds had passed away, and a lot of name calling and things went on, and a lot of people got blamed. I look at it this way: the Bureau of Reclamation *did* exactly what the Fish and Wildlife people said they should do in terms of that drainage water in providing ponding for birds and wildlife. And I might say wildflowers, because a lot of the various varieties of flowers are growing down in that area. But since then, Kesterson has been covered over and filled in, and it's forced the districts to hold drainage water in ponds in certain areas.

Originally, California Was Supposed to Participate with Reclamation in Building Drainage Facilities

One of the bad things about the San Luis Drain was originally the State of California was to come aboard with funding the piece from Kern County, namely Bakersfield, up to the San Luis area–in other words, participate in the drainage facilities. And the State of California backed away from it under the State Water Project, namely the Kern County interests. And pulling that funding out and participation in there didn't help. And so as a result the Bureau had to go it alone. Had the State been aboard, it could have been a material as well as financial help to completing that drain.

Alternatives for Providing Drainage to the Westlands Water District

Now where that drain's terminus is to be, originally the Bureau thought of terminating it in the Delta, which today would be very difficult with all of the aspects on the fish and killing fish in terms of the Delta and the amount of water that's needed. The Bureau did look at taking in an outflow line and bringing it over on the other side of Suisun Bay, closer to Martinez and the Carquinez Straits. That would have given a great opportunity for dilution of drainage water with storm runoff that you would have in the winter periods. From a hydrologic standpoint, you could hold that drainage water until the winter months when there's so much water running through the Delta you could flush that drainage water right out the Golden Gate. Then there's other aspects of taking the drainage water over the coast range into Monterey Bay which is not too palatable with the environmental types. You'd have a hard time with that. So the answer right now happens to be that some land is being taken out of production in the Westlands area, Kern County on the State Water Project side is devoting a certain amount of land for ponding of drainage water, so we're giving up some good farmland to withhold drainage water, and we're making any number of "sumps" out there, so to speak. So in effect you have kind of like a subdivision that starts in with–you can relate to this–a subdivision that starts out with a series of septic tanks, and later on the position gets pretty bad with all the septic tanks, you finally decide to go with a first-class sewer disposal system with a treatment plant and so on and so forth.

Storey: Back to Garrey Carruthers. One of his staffers, I believe, was a man named Dan Beard. Did you ever have any contacts with him while he was there?

Dan Beard

Catino: Well, yes, I met with Dan Beard a few times. He used to come to the various Bureau of Reclamation program conferences we had, but I didn't have any profound one-on-one relationships with him. I do know at the end of the Carter Administration Danny Beard wanted to come to Sacramento as regional director where I was as acting regional director. He had aspirations along that line. And we visited in Park City, Utah, on various aspects of this region. I was an *acting* regional director at the time, and so I gave him the same knowledge I would have given any other person as to the scope of the job, some of the aspects of it–so that was an extent. I met with him after I left the Bureau and he was on Congressman George Miller's staff and I was doing some work as a consultant for El Dorado Irrigation District, so I met two or three times with Congressman Miller's staff on hearings in which Danny Beard was present during those hearings.

". . . El Dorado Irrigation District, they thought at the time that they would like to buy out Sly Park Reservoir . . ."

This was on El Dorado Irrigation District, they thought at the time that they would like to buy out Sly Park Reservoir, up near Pollock Pines. They operate the dam right now, and they also are involved in operating the conduit that brings water from that dam down into the Placerville-Shingle Springs area, and there was members of the board that felt that they could take over the financial responsibility of buying out Sly Park Dam, and so that's where I became involved with that district. We did write a couple of bills for that venture, so I did appear before Congressman Miller's committee, as well as Danny Beard who was an assistant to Miller at the time. When he was in the secretary's office, I didn't have any close one-on-one relationships, other than as I mentioned at Park City Utah, and visiting him.

Storey: And I misstated, I think–he wasn't under Carruthers, but under Guy Martin. (Catino: That's correct, yes.) In the Carter Administration.

Catino: Right, yeah. Carruthers was the Reagan Administration, Jimmy Watt.

Storey: Did the Sly Park sale go through?

Catino: No.[3]

Storey: Why not?

Catino: Well, El Dorado Irrigation District changed *board* members, and some board members felt that they didn't need to do that, so this is what happens with water districts. Water districts go along with their five- or seven-man boards and things are all nice and rosy, and then somebody decides to run for the board and one member is eliminated and a new face appears on there, so they have different ideas. The feeling at the district was . . .

3. Title transfer did occur later, under initiatives supported by Commissioner Daniel P. Beard.

END SIDE 1, TAPE 1. SEPTEMBER 2, 1994.
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. SEPTEMBER 2, 1994.

Storey: But when the board changed, they decided they didn't want to put the money there.

Catino: Yeah. And we had a good bill and everything was going along smooth until the members of the board decided that they didn't want to do that, they wanted to put the money into some other venture. The Sly Park Reservoir, if I remember my numbers correctly, was about a $7 million investment, and it was probably about half paid out, so this would require a new repayment contract for the district to pay out the balance of that. And this would pull it out of the repayment sphere of the Central Valley Project, would make it an isolated project, as such. But this was nothing new to the El Dorado people. They have about two, if not three, what we call nine "D" distribution systems that they're paying on separately, so it wouldn't have been anything *new* to the district, it would have just meant another repayment contract. But I'm not fully up to speed as to why some of the new directors changed the course of action. I was hired to do a job, did a job, wrote the bill, and with a good congressman for that area, and we got it there and just didn't move. The change in the district didn't want to pursue it any further.

Storey: Tell me why Reclamation would want to be selling its facilities. How did we get into that?

". . . Solano Irrigation District wants to buy out Monticello Dam. . . ."

Catino: This was privatization. There was other projects, Solano Irrigation District wants to buy out Monticello Dam. In the early days I helped write some language for the sale of that facility. This is the way, if you look at it from a present worth standpoint, it's better to have $3 million in your hands today, than to wait for periodic payments to pay it off. And there is no, on the case of Sly Park, there was no payout as such. It was waiting for the whole Central Valley Project to pay out, which now is probably up to year 2020 or 2030, it just extends out. And so this would be advantageous to the United States to get early repayment on these facilities, and there's been some discussion of selling so-called government property to put money in your hands at an earlier date. When you look at it from an economics and financial table standpoint, it makes a lot of sense. And that's why Solano people wanted to buy out Monticello Dam. There was another project which, he was then a congressman from Colorado, Congressman [Ben Nighthorse] Campbell–now I guess he's a senator from Colorado–I believe that was on the . . . I can't remember the project in Colorado–I want to say Platoro, but I'm not sure that's correct.

Storey: Well, there's Animas-La Plata, and there is . . .

Catino: Well, this was an old Reclamation project that they wanted to buy out, and I can't remember the name of it. One of the aspects of it is who takes the responsibility for a dam failure. Now in the case of Sly Park Dam, why there are insurance policies to take care of that. You have under the Association of California Water Agencies an insurance policy which water districts contribute to that, so in case of emergencies,

they can draw on that fund at a low interest rate to build their facilities, should damage occur.

Storey: That's ACWA? [Association of California Water Agencies]

Catino: Yeah, ACWA [pronounced aqua], right. And then, you know, there's individual policies that are available for water facilities. I don't know enough about . . . Well, most of these water districts also carry a liability type insurance for not only their employees or any visitors [that] get hurt, or if there is damage beyond the natural scope, of say, a flood or something, or say one of their warehouses catches on fire, why, they carry insurance on those facilities and equipment. So it's natural for districts to carry this burden. Now, if it stays in the United States' hands, the United States does not pay any insurance, all they do is run to the Congress and get an appropriation to fix it up. So that's an aspect of it. But you *could* write a contract with these districts to where the Bureau of Reclamation's emergency fund would be available to them in the event of that. But I think a water district that bought out a facility would want to seek their own arrangements from an insurance standpoint, whether it's Lloyds of London or Prudential Insurance or ACWA. So there's other avenues of taking care of yourself.

Storey: How does Sly Park fit in? What part of the puzzle is Sly Park in the Central Valley Project?

Sly Park and the Central Valley Project

Catino: It's a very *independent* project, in fact, it has *no* relationship to the other parts of Central Valley Project. It has a reservoir up here in the foothills, it catches water from the runoff of the creeks up there, Alder Creek for one, and it also catches water from PG&E [Pacific Gas and Electric] development, and it supplies water to that portion of El Dorado County on the western slope, namely Placerville, Shingle Springs, down to Cameron Park off of Highway 50. But it is a project that many years ago was a *separate* project in the eyes of the planners, but it couldn't stand on its own as a facility, it didn't have that repayment capability by itself at that time. *Today* it probably would have that repayment capability, looking at the growth of El Dorado County, which is now becoming a *bedroom* community to Sacramento and the state capitol. And so as a result, it went forward through the Congress as what we call sort of a piggyback piece of legislation to the big boy, being Central Valley Project. And that's how it got authorized and got built, so it got woven into the repayment structure of the Central Valley Project. And it was a very nominal amount, I believe Sly Park Dam was originally about $7 million and the district signed a contract for buying the water which would then pay for the dam over a period of time, also including the Sly Park-Camino Conduit, which brings water down along Highway 50 to the Placerville area. But it got priced out under the repayment of the whole Central Valley Project. So in effect it carried its own weight, but it got authorized under that umbrella. Now, you could have built that project today, even though the Sly Park Dam would cost much more than $7 million, but with the development in those counties, El Dorado County especially, from a municipal and industrial standpoint, I don't think you'd have any problems from a

repayment standpoint. The water probably would be up in the $150 an acre foot area, but the people could afford to pay that. So that's sort of the history of the thing. But that's also true in a lot of other areas of big projects where little ones get added-on. They can't carry the burden themselves. You've got some in Colorado and Utah and Arizona, for example, and the big project carries the little ones along so they can balance the repayment table on it.

Storey: Um-hmm, so the water from Sly Park doesn't really enter the *big* CVP system?

Catino: No, it doesn't. In fact, the effluent from the sewer system is used in, I believe, on a golf course at El Dorado Hills. In fact, I think there's a couple of ponds out there from a wildlife standpoint, and so that does not enter into the CVP system. Furthermore, it's only a 40,000 acre foot reservoir, so we're not talking about a lot of water here.

Storey: Okay. Let's go back to your career as regional director. What were the major issues that you had to deal with when you were regional director?

Auburn Dam

Catino: Well, the major issue, of course, was Auburn Dam. Here the Bureau had spent over $300 million to get Auburn Dam started. *Personally*, I wanted to build it, as much as the next guy, not because of the engineering functions. I think it's necessary in terms of water supply, and especially proven out in 1986 when we had the great floods here. And today I still feel the same way. I attend a lot of meetings of various water groups, listen to a lot of people, so I think there's a need for Auburn Dam. It's being held up by a handful of environmental types, and that's usually the story throughout the West where there's any development. You have no interest on the part of administration. The present administration, the Clinton people, are no better than the Carter Administration, and so you don't have any great interest. But while I was regional director, I was plugging pretty hard for Auburn Dam. In fact, I probably annoyed some of the people in the Reagan Administration, because of my insistence on keeping it going. We had done everything necessary from a standpoint of we were ready to design it and get going with it. But I could not convince the Reagan people that we should commence designs of it, because in the meantime the *costs* of it were going up very significantly. Auburn-Folsom South Unit–that includes the canal–was authorized at $435 million. Today you can't build that dam for less than two billion dollars. In other words, the cost is practically five-fold. But that doesn't mean that you couldn't do it. You could do it two ways: you could integrate it into Central Valley Project, but you've got some opposition from the local water users, because that would add a considerable amount to the repayment of CVP at that high cost. At $435 million, when it was authorized, had it gone straight forward and been built, it would have made a bit of a bump in terms of the repayment, but nothing like it would be today. So when you look at that standpoint, I also sought funding from other folks. For example, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company was always interested in kilowatts in California. They were going through a very tough financial period themselves with their nuclear plant at Diablo Canyon, below San Luis Obispo there. They had had increased costs on that, and they were in the billion-dollar range. I

spoke with those people. They would love to have the kilowatts, but they were in no position to put financing to it. The same thing was true with the Sacramento Municipal Utilities District [SMUD], they were building and working on the Rancho Seco nuclear plant, so they were financially strapped. There was a group of people in both El Dorado and Placer Counties–in fact, they still are organized today–called the American River Authority. From a bonding standpoint they could make it work. But while I was regional director, that was one of the *main* issues, was to see if we could get Auburn started. Auburn does not yield a tremendous amount of water. It'll yield quite a bit in terms of kilowatts of energy, but in terms of water, it doesn't. But when you look at Folsom, which is lying downstream at one million acre feet, and you build *big* Auburn at two million acre feet, that gives you three million acre feet of water in a very short span of geography. It gives you some opportunities to maneuver the water supply with the rest of CVP as well as the coordination with the State of California's Oroville Dam. That's another aspect, I could not interest the State of California to financially participate in Auburn. They have their own problems. In fact, they're more real today in terms of the operation and maintenance of the existing State Project. So there was so many forces that say, "Yeah, we'd like to see you build it, but we're strapped financially." So it became very difficult to move a project with Auburn. Now if it had a *bigger yield* of water, you might have been able to entice a significant group of people. But you went through an economic hard time there through the Reagan Administration and then the Bush people were not all that intrigued with building any water projects, and so as a result the Reclamation program as a whole has pretty much slowed down to operation and maintenance and fixing up. So if you look at it from a construction curve, you put it on a graph, the *bottom* pretty well drops out of the Reclamation program. So as regional director I could see that coming, and so I was out seeking help from other people to exist–to get this project going. It's kind of interesting that at the time of authorization of Auburn-Folsom South, we did not have a large flood control allocation. In other words, a big part of the cost would have been charged off as non-reimbursable flood control. And we had the floods in '86, and what you see on the horizon now, with the Corps of Engineers restudying Auburn, the Bureau of Reclamation restudying, you have a very decided $700-800 million as a potential for writing off as a flood control. Had we *had* that back in the early '80s or the late '70s, had that kind of a number, that would have really helped bringing Auburn together from a financial [standpoint]. You might have been able to convince the Reagan people, or even the Carter people to go ahead with this if you had such a write-off like you have today.

Now, Auburn, to get it off the ground, would have to be reauthorized, and there's no interest in terms of the Congress to [do so]. Certainly the congressman from the area, being Congressman Doolittle, is interested in Auburn. But being a Republican, he doesn't carry much weight with Congressman Miller who is a Democrat and chairman of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. There's no way a new Auburn Dam bill can get through at a *new* total estimated cost, with a *new* allocation.

So the Corps of Engineers came out with a modified Auburn Dam, but it basically got no place. But there is some potential, and as we sit here today, there is a good possibility that the city and county of Sacramento, if we were to lose one of the

levees, and we have more than a 150-year flood down there, we're going to flood downtown Sacramento. And always in the back of my mind was the standpoint that there's probably right now maybe $40 billion worth of investment in properties, and you can't measure lives, you lose lives. But we should learn from what happened on the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers and those people are still going through hardships along there in terms of the floods. It sort of drops out of the newspaper, but we that are in the water resources and flood control development, we listen to these things, and those people are *still* having trouble getting paid off. We're now two or three years since the flooding of that area. They're talking about moving cities out of the flood plain, and moving them up on higher ground. These are expensive things in lieu of fixing levees.

I might say that the levee system around Sacramento and down in the Delta, having worked for those people after I left the Bureau, the levees are in pretty good shape, but some of the districts are not financially able to do a lot of the rehabilitation work that's necessary. Levees take *constant* maintenance in terms of there's a certain amount of erosion on the water side, they lose the gravels and that. And so when you ask about Auburn Dam, you can see that there's just so many factors that are involved in a big dam sitting next to a *big* metropolitan area that's just going up, continue to build in the South Sacramento area, *all* in the flood plain. They're collecting money in Sacramento County for continuous studies. I believe it's about a five-million-dollar study which the local people are contributing half of. So we continue to study, but no concrete is being placed in the canyon up there.

"To me . . . the solution to the whole flooding problem is building a big Auburn Dam. And you can talk all you want about reoperating Folsom, but you're playing with a dam that has only a capacity of one million acre feet. . . ."

To me, with my background and my interests, and the interests of so many other people, is that the solution to the whole flooding problem is building a big Auburn Dam. And you can talk all you want about reoperating Folsom, but you're playing with a dam that has only a capacity of one million acre feet. You can punch some holes in it to make more *outlets*, get water out of there faster, then you have to build up on the levee system where it's deficient below the hundred-year flood, and you've got all these problems, and you just can't say "to hell with the Delta people below the city of Sacramento." They're all in Sacramento and San Joaquin and Yolo Counties and if you wash those farmers out down there, you're going to be just like the farmers along the Mississippi River. They don't have a way of paying. I believe on Twitchell Island, I don't know if the Bank of Stockton is still holding a two million dollar bill on that, whether they've been paid by the government. But these things go on and on and on, and when you have a flood, there's just tremendous loss of property, and in some cases loss of life. And to rebuild that infrastructure is just tremendous. The *utilities*, in terms of gas and water and power and the sewer systems and maintaining the rapid transit system and all these things that are affected. A good part of all of this lies in the flood zone. Now out here where this office is on Cottage Way, you'd be probably high and dry, although you've got Strong Ranch Slough sitting in back here, would probably back up a little bit. But the flood lines are in the Sac city and county and the southern part of the county where they continue to build

houses. There's a *great* effort to build more houses in the north area, out towards the Sacramento Metropolitan Airport. And they're subject to the hundred-year flood, and so what they do is, they ask Congressman [Vic] Fazio to get some new legislation through to every so often to let them go another inch further, but *still* nobody is taking care of the flood aspects. We get different things so that Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, will take the pressure off of these people for building facilities to protect. They'll say, "Well, if you want loans for these houses and these buildings–mostly houses–why, you got to have flood insurance." Well, the flood insurance in some cases is pretty prohibitive, and you can't build a house and put that insurance on there. So then they seek some legislation to change that. But that still doesn't get rid of the potential of the flood and something to deter that particular activity.

Storey: Am I understanding correctly, that in the late '70s, early '80s, when you were directly involved, Auburn Dam was conceived of as a storage project? And more recently it has come to be conceived of as a flood control project also?

Catino: That's correct. The aspect of Auburn has changed considerably since the flooding in '86, it's just changed completely.

Storey: Yeah, I believe the Corps recommended basically a dry dam.

Catino: Yes, put a dam up there and then just have no conservation at all, and just drain it out and run it down through when you can run it down through. And so then you *waste* that resource. You built a hell of a facility, which is about $800-900 million dollars in terms of a dry dam, and you don't put any power on it, you just store the flood water for a temporary period of time, and when Folsom is lowered, you run it down the American River. And so you run it down the American River, you run it through the Delta, and you run it out the Golden Gate. And so you *lose* that resource, you have no way of capturing it. And so it would be different if you had a big reservoir below Folsom. You don't have it. When it leaves Folsom, it hits the American River and other than Nimbus Dam, which is nothing but a reregulating dam for Folsom, it's just to smooth out the water to put it down the American River, it runs all the way out the Golden Gate through the Delta.

But the aspect of the flooding . . . In fact, today, if you went back over the Corps-of-Engineers-built dams and the Bureau of Reclamation-built dams like Shasta, and the State's Oroville Dam on the Feather River, and went back and *evaluated* them from a flood control standpoint, you'd have a bigger write-off for flood control activities. There's just no end of what Shasta has done in terms of preventing floods in the whole Sacramento Valley. Before that, you flooded out the areas and then wait for it all to drain out. That's what caused the local people, caused the Corps of Engineers to build levee systems along the Sacramento River and up in, well, all the way clear to Red Bluff, you've got levee systems along in there. And down in the Delta. But if you went back . . . Now if my recollection is correct, when Oroville was built, the Federal government gave the State of California $78 million for the flood control aspect of Oroville Dam. That's why I bring up, if you went back and you evaluated these dams at today's prices, and the facilities, the infrastructures

that are out there in terms of a $10,000 house in 1950 is probably worth about $80,000 today. I'm just using that from some of the real estate here in Sacramento. In 1950 I bought a $10,000 dollar house, and in that neighborhood they're selling for $80,000-$90,000 now. So you have all this property, and that's how flood allocations are made–you look at what they are protecting. See, you can get a lot of chatter about the Federal government putting all their money into these water projects, and people don't realize the value in terms of today's protection that they get. The city and county of Sacramento, just on Folsom Dam, more than benefitted out of one flood for the . . . I think Folsom Dam cost around $55-60 million. There's property in the American River flood area that's worth $40 billion today, so it doesn't take much of a mathematician to figure out the value of what Folsom means to this area. It's quite interesting when you look back at a lot of the people don't realize that Folsom originally was going to be a 400,000 acre foot reservoir, and that's what the State of California thought would be sufficient there. And the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation said, "No, I think we ought to do something better than that." And they put their heads together and they came up with a million acre foot reservoir. Nobody really knows that, unless you study the background and you see the steps through there. With a million acre foot reservoir, it has many times in the '50s and the '60s done a great job of saving this area. It's quite interesting to note, if you look back into the hearings on the appropriations for Folsom Dam, that it was then Congressman [Clair] Engle, who later became a senator, was telling the congressmen, "Yeah, we started out there with a 400,000 acre foot reservoir, but we're going to make it a million acre feet because we think that that makes more sense." And he was being challenged by the other congressmen, "You mean, you're going ahead and you haven't been authorized that large?" "Yeah, we're going right ahead and we're taking care of the foundation and all that sort of stuff, and that's why we're asking you your permission."

". . . the Corps built Folsom Dam and the Bureau built Folsom Powerplant, and the Bureau built Nimbus Dam. . . ."

But here in the minds of the local politicians, these engineers, both the Corps and the Bureau–see, the Corps built Folsom Dam and the Bureau built Folsom Powerplant, and the Bureau built Nimbus Dam. And going right along and saying, "By God, we just got to build something bigger and better." Even though it was all documented, it was originally going to be a 400,000 acre foot reservoir. But many times over . . . There's a lot of local people that don't *know* that history of Folsom, and they only recall the one-time flood. They don't remember all the potentials of floods along in there that we've been twenty-four hours from disaster. Had it rained another bit for another day or two, we'd have had water *all* over the levees. We'd have water in downtown Sacramento.

SIDE 2, TAPE 1. SEPTEMBER 2, 1994.
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. SEPTEMBER 2, 1994.

Storey: This is Tape 2 of an interview by Brit Storey with Mike Catino on September the 2nd, 1994.

Catino: Why, there's a lot of background, having lived here and seen the floods and certainly realized that the power that could be developed there, sure it would be expensive, but it would be of value to SMUD, the local utility district, because it's right in their back yard. SMUD has power lines that come in there, that could pick up the power. The Bureau could have built the power lines from Auburn down to Elverta where SMUD can pick it up. So when I was talking with the SMUD people, we went through all this. But again, when you're financially strapped in a nuclear plant like Rancho Seco and Diablo Canyon, you have a hard time going to your folks and saying, "We want money to put into Auburn Dam."

"Auburn Dam, from a recreation standpoint, is just a tremendous opportunity. . . ."

Auburn Dam, from a recreation standpoint, is just a tremendous opportunity. There's people in the area that camp now, but it would open up Auburn, it would open up that whole American River Canyon, both the North Fork and the Middle Fork to boating. Auburn is not a great swimming area. *Folsom* would be the swimming area, because it's got some low-lying beaches there. Auburn would be more in the canyon, but boating up into a canyon, forty, fifty miles in there, would be just a tremendous thing. Handicapped people could get on a boat and see Cathedrals of the Canyon that they'd never seen before. And there's no way they could get there now. There's a few campers in there, they do get some day use in the area, but nothing like you see, boating like you have at, say, Shasta on the arms of the Sacramento, the Pit and McCloud rivers. There's houseboating in the area. People up there rent a houseboat for a week and just pull into these little coves and camp and ride their boats up the various arms of that. That would be also true at Auburn. And Auburn having ~~been~~ access to Interstate 80, one of the things *I* wanted to do when I was regional director, and the staff pretty well agreed with me, is that we ought to put in the visitors center at Auburn, the *final* visitors center at an early date so people could come there, especially school children and see probably the last concrete dam that was going to be built in this nation of any size–not that we wanted to entice a lot of engineering students, but we could have grade school kids there seeing something coming up out of the canyon. Also, it would be a great opportunity if you had a recreation vehicle, you would be able to go over in between the North Fork and the Middle Fork and camp in an area and see the construction of the facilities. We did run here for a good many years before I was regional director and while I was regional director, educational programs. Every week we rented a Greyhound bus and took elementary school kids, both as a tour of Folsom and Auburn to acquaint them with water resource development. I should say water and power development, because we brought the young children into the Folsom Powerplant so they could see a generator turning. It was quite an education program. But when you have a facility such as Auburn, not because of my feeling for building dams and canals and powerplants over my thirty-eight years of career, but you can see the *value* of such a facility.

". . . it's too bad that it got caught in the political swirl of the Carter and Reagan and Bush administrations, and certainly the Clinton Administration is of no mind at all to build a big dam. . . ."

And it's too bad that it got caught in the political swirl of the Carter and Reagan and Bush administrations, and certainly the Clinton Administration is of no mind at all to build a big dam. They'd just as soon let the people flood out and then try to pay them off like they do on the Mississippi River.

Storey: But I understood one of the reasons that the dam wasn't built was because they discovered an earthquake fault under the foundation of the keyway.

Catino: Well, that's another aspect of it, not that throwing money against it is the answer. The Bureau spent $38 million with the prominent geological firm of Woodward and Clyde, and there's probably twenty volumes of geological data. We had a geological board made up of the heads of the geological and engineering departments, the University of California, Stanford, the University of Nevada who has a good geology school, UCLA if I remember right. We got a board of eminent scientists on that. And when we got through, Cecil Andrus who was then Secretary of the Interior concluded with his own geological survey in Washington that a safe dam at Auburn could be built. Now the *fault* is not in the bottom of the canyon, the fault is over on the left abutment, and you look at some of the Corps of Engineers' sketches of that, they moved the dam slightly to avoid that. But we have done, the Bureau has done, a tremendous amount of dental work in that canyon. There's one area there called the "J" block which goes down 125 feet that's been filled up with concrete. The dental work has been tremendous to satisfy that.

"*. . . all* the data that has been put together . . . has concluded that you could build a safe concrete dam at the Auburn Dam site. . . . The Engineering and Research Center in Denver has all of that data that supports that. But as time goes on . . . you lose this knowledge, you've lost the geologists that worked down here. You've got it all in . . . books and stuff, but people don't want to look . . . they want it all neatly on a platter. . . ."

And *all* the data that has been put together, it has concluded that you could build a safe concrete dam at the Auburn Dam site. You can find volumes on that. The Engineering and Research Center in Denver has all of that data that supports that. But as time goes on, you see, this is what happens when you don't move–as time goes on, you lose this knowledge, you've lost the geologists that worked down here. You've got it all in documentations, in books and stuff, but people don't want to look at books and stuff, so to speak, they want it all neatly on a platter. But at that time, when Secretary Andrus, with the benefit of the Bureau of Reclamation, and his [U.S.] Geological Survey people, concluded that–that would have been the time to start on this. But certainly the Carter Administration did not want to put any money there.

"But there is environmental reports and geologic reports that conclude that a safe dam at Auburn could be built. . . ."

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"In fact, there was a kind of a contest in the Engineering and Research Center in

Denver as to whether it should be a concrete dam or an earth-filled dam, from a cost standpoint. The safety question was satisfied with both . . ."

In fact, there was a kind of a contest in the Engineering and Research Center in Denver as to whether it should be a concrete dam or an earth-filled dam, from a cost standpoint. The safety question was satisfied with both: What could you design to meet this safety criteria? So the engineering and the earth dam people in Denver and the concrete dam people in Denver came up . . . Actually the earth dam is a *little bit* cheaper by a few million dollars than the concrete dam. Keith Higginson was then the commissioner of Reclamation, and I was the acting regional director. Rod Vissia was the chief engineer in Denver, and we had this powwow in Washington on which we were going to recommend, an earth-filled dam or a concrete dam. And Keith Higginson turned to me and said, "Mr. Regional Director, what are you going to recommend?" And I said, "I'm recommending a concrete dam, even though it's a few million dollars more than an earth-filled dam, for this reason: For earth-filled dam, you are going to have to bring various types of soils and clays from off of that left abutment over in the area towards Cool. You're going to scar up that whole canyon area to get the building materials for that. Now with a concrete dam, you put your rock crushers down in the bottom of the canyon in the reservoir area, and you crush that rock for the concrete placement. And so from an environmental standpoint of not running roads all over the hills to pick up the proper clays . . ." You see, on an earth-filled dam you have a number of different zones of material, and you try to get the most impervious material in the center of the dam. Now, there's a whole bunch of gradations in terms of the various materials. It's a work of art to do that. Now, on a concrete dam, it's a work of art in terms of the construction of lifting and making these various lifts of concrete. But from a gravel standpoint, the gravel is available in the reservoir, and it [the gravel source] would be covered up by water, you wouldn't see it later on. It would add a certain amount, but not much, to the reservoir capacity. But the geology people said there was adequate rock in the bottom of the canyon going up the North Fork as well as the South Fork of the American River–the Middle Fork, rather–the South Fork comes into Folsom. But that was the reason for that position that I took, and so if you look in the Archives, you'll find my name on there with the Commissioner and Rod Vissia who was then the chief engineer, and we supported the concrete dam.[4]

But that was the end of that aspect. What did you do in that particular meeting? You satisfied the safety question or the earthquake question, which you just have raised, and you satisfied the type of construction. The cost was about the same for either one, so you were in all readiness. You were at a point where a decision had been made on the type of the dam, you could then turn it over to the concrete dam people and say, "Start designing it, start making your analysis, start putting it on the computer." You see, we're a lot different today in terms of the designing of a dam with the aid of computers. People say, "Well, the safety up there." We can tell you today, with the aid of a computer, what the pressure is on every foot of the face of a

4. Harold Arthur, in his oral history with Reclamation, also discussed this issue. During a site inspection he determined that obtaining the fill material for an embankment dam, and, in particular, the impervious material for the core, would cause extensive environmental damage. He then ordered the staff in the Denver office to undertake a study of a concrete dam for the site.

dam, and we can design against that, we can make it bigger, we can make it thinner, we have all of these capabilities in terms of designs today.

Questions Whether Reclamation Now Has the Design and Construction Skills to Undertake a Large Project like Auburn Dam

But if you ask me, I don't know enough about the design capability in the Engineering and Research Center in Denver, but I'm inclined to think that since the Bureau hasn't built a big concrete dam for a good many years, that those folks, with that engineering capability, have left the Bureau, and you would have to go out and probably get an engineering firm like a Bechtel, a Harza, who have built dams all over the world, International Engineering, to design these facilities.

Another aspect of going back to why I was promoting Auburn, is it's important to maintain an engineering competency in an organization. And had the Denver office, the Engineering and Research people, given the green light to start designing Auburn Dam, there would not have been this void in terms of *that* technical ability in the E&R center. Those people are gone today, but they would have continued their careers. And you *lost* people there with maybe twenty to thirty years of experience in terms of concrete dams. Now, there's some folks, maybe, still there today. I don't know the composition of the Denver office, but I knew at that time when I was regional director, they had the capability of designing and managing the construction of such a big dam.

From another aspect, personnel aspect, and this is what a regional director has to look at, is that we had the engineering capability in this region as well as other regions. There were people that were leaving certain jobs in Central Arizona, leaving certain jobs in the Central Valley Project, that they could come to Auburn to build. And that's what you want to do. It's nice to hire young folks out of college, but they don't have the experience along some old guy with a hard hat that's been there for thirty years. And you lose that competency, and that was one of the things that I spoke to Commissioner Broadbent at the time. I said, "If you don't go ahead with Auburn, then we ought to proceed with closing the Auburn Dam office, and we ought to just reduce that down." Because you're losing that competency, those people are going to leave, they're going elsewhere. You don't have a job, so you're going to RIF [reduction in force] them out. And the same is true in your Denver office, and you're going to lose that. So as a regional director and as a Bureau player, you try to say what's good for the organization. You always look for the best crew possible to put on a job, and certainly we had a competent man up there in Auburn as a potential construction engineer. We had a good staff around there, we just needed to build onto that with inspectors from these other projects in Utah and Arizona and Colorado, wherever they came from. It'd have been the last big *hurrah* in terms of a concrete dam, but we'd have had competent people throughout the Bureau working on it, it would have been a first-class organization. I can guarantee you that.

Storey: Your decision about whether to go concrete or earthen: was there anything about the psychology of the public involved in your decision? That they would feel more comfortable with the concrete dam?

Catino: Oh, I think once you got–you'd have to get out on the street and explain that. And you know, why you choose this. Originally Auburn was an earthfill dam, and you bring up a good question. It started out the sketches of it was an earth dam. Then came along a thought in the Denver office, and it was during Commissioner Dominy's regime, of putting in a thin arch concrete dam, one that has a big "U" shape to it, that the top of the "U" faces upstream, of course. This was a way of saving a good many million dollars. But then the earthquake question came up and all that I could find, and all my staff could tell me, a thin arch concrete dam, number one, just didn't fit that earthquake composition there, although in Europe, in fact, we brought–his name escapes me right now–a doctor from Portugal who designed a number of concrete dams throughout Europe. He felt pretty strong that you could build a thin arch concrete dam. The idea of a thin arch concrete dam is you save on materials and the cost is less. But when the earthquake question came in, the Denver people, who were much more knowledgeable on dam design than I was, suggested that we build a concrete gravity dam that would look pretty much like Shasta Dam–of course considerable more bulk to it than the thin arch there. But even some of the folks in the Denver office still held that maybe a modified thin arch would still work. But going to the public themselves, I think the public is always willing to accept what the people that have been building dams for seventy-five years present to them, that this is the *best*, and certainly you'd put up on the blackboard the alternatives of this versus that. And you want the public aboard, there's just no question about it, you want them in your camp, because they certainly speak to their congressmen, they speak in groups for appropriations to build it.

". . . the worst thing that could happen on a construction job, is to get it started and then have lean years in appropriation. Once you start placing concrete in a dam, why it's a twenty-four-hour, seven days a week, it just continues all year long, rain or shine, you just keep placing concrete. . . ."

That's the worst thing that could happen on a construction job, is to get it started and then have lean years in appropriation. Once you start placing concrete in a dam, why it's a twenty-four-hour, seven days a week, it just continues all year long, rain or shine, you just keep placing concrete. In fact, there's been dams built up in the Northwest where they've put *tents* over the top of it to keep the snow off of it, but you just have one continuous pour, in terms of concrete, so the public I think would be readily acceptable. You would want to get out and talk to them, you'd want to tell them, public meetings. You certainly want to go to the service clubs and tell those folks what you're doing. We were doing that anyway, we were keeping the public pretty well abreast. So I felt that there was no major problem with the public, as far as advising them what we're going to do. In fact, the public has always wanted a big Auburn Dam. In fact, there was an election held here a few years ago, it was just more or less a poll type election, but the people two-to-one wanted a big Auburn Dam. Cost a lot of the local agencies about a quarter of a million dollars to put on that election and advertise and that, but there was a booster group here, and they supported it two-to-one. Now that was just here in Sacramento County. Now in Placer and El Dorado County, you'd probably have ninety-five-to-five percent for Auburn Dam. Here the people that were the beneficiaries of the flood control were two-to-one in favor of it.

Storey: Yeah. Auburn obviously occupied a lot of your time. (Catino: Right.) You were regional director for about three years, I believe (Catino: Right) both acting and as regional director.

Repairing the Slide on the Upstream Face of San Luis Dam

Catino: Well, it was that, and then of course in my career we had the unfortunate situation of the slide on San Luis Dam where the upstream face of the dam slid down. So we had to put a crew together, and another twenty-four-hour operation, tell the folks what was going on, outline the whole hydrologic thing, how we were going to get water to them, how we were going to get the dam built. Within twenty-four hours of that slide we had a contractor out there crushing rock, within a week's time we had a contractor already assigned to rebuild the dam. It turned out there was about a $15 million repair job. So a good part of that was public relations. We had more helicopters flying around that dam, we even got Secretary Watt out, Commissioner Broadbent out. I have pictures of Secretary Watt standing on top of the slide area there, and explaining to him what we were doing. It was an unfortunate situation, but when you look back at it, it was maybe a one-in-five chance of ever happening. It just happened to happen. But I was really *proud* of the *people* that worked with me, all the way from my regional engineer, my construction engineer, office engineer, all the way down to the little girl that took care of the time sheet and kept a pot of coffee on, because it was a twenty-four-hour operation.

". . . not *one acre foot* of water was lost to the farmers. That's what I'm so proud about . . ."

And certainly enough can't be said about the contractors' groups, the two main contractors on that to do the job and not *one acre foot* of water was lost to the farmers. That's what I'm so proud about, and that's what's been cited to me a number of times with the farm folks, all the way from the Delta clear to Bakersfield. San Luis Dam and Reservoir involves the State Water Project and also takes water down to Southern California on that same aqueduct. So there was a very high incentive to do that. Even though Southern California has the capability of getting water out of the Colorado River, *not one acre foot of water* was lost to the farmers, all the way from the Delta . . . See, it has also another effect on the Delta-Mendota Canal, and the San Luis Canal running down the west side of the valley. So people did a tremendous job, there was just no end of accolades that I could give to all the folks that were involved in that.

Ray Willms Helped Deliver Water to the San Joaquin Valley During Repair of the San Luis Dam Slide

I think every two weeks we were in Los Banos with our staff, with our charts–in fact, Ray Willms was the head of Central Valley Project Operations and he was up at the blackboard explaining to them how we were going to reroute the water, how we were going to get it. We had the geology crew that had drill rigs. We had, I think, six drill rigs down there, drilling out this information as fast as we get it. We had Denver people out here on practically a daily basis. So it was not only the region people, the

field people and the engineering fraternity in Denver–we had a real tight ship and a good coordinating effort. I got a lot of good press out of that for the Bureau, and had a hell of a public relations man here in the Bureau. So really, I'd hate to use the pronoun "I," but his efforts, and we kept the public informed all the way. We had meetings in the fairgrounds down in Los Banos and told folks what was doing, told them how we were doing it.

Storey: Who was the public affairs person?

Catino: Gerry King. Have you interviewed him?[5] (Storey: No.) He's up here. Did I have him on the list?

Storey: I don't know, I'll have to check with George Petershagen. Gerry King?

Catino: Gerry King. He lives up in Yuba City, the last I know of. But I think I had him on that list, I'm not sure.

Storey: Well, I want to ask you what may appear to be a dumb question: How did we identify that there'd been a slide at San Luis? (Catino: How did we identify it?) Yeah. Do we have people that go out and inspect everything every day, (Catino: No . . . here . . .) or how does this work?

"We could hear [the slide] in the powerhouse–it's a pump-generator plant–we could hear movement, and we have a certain amount of seismic or movement equipment in there, and then just driving on the road, up on the crest of the dam, you could see where the rock had slipped down into the reservoir area, big piles of rock. I'll tell you, the first time . . . I was there the day after it slid, and I was sick in the stomach. . . ."

Catino: We could hear in the powerhouse–it's a pump-generator plant–we could hear movement, and we have a certain amount of seismic or movement equipment in there, and then just driving on the road, up on the crest of the dam, you could see where the rock had slipped down into the reservoir area, big piles of rock. I'll tell you, the first time . . . I was there the day after it slid, and I was sick in the stomach. And I remember my regional engineer, who was Jim Andrews at the time, he said, "Don't worry, Mikey, we'll fix it up." And I was scared, and I admit, we could have lost that dam. See, what happened there is you had an old hill in there, and we butted the dam up to that old hill. It was just a mound in there, so to speak, and as I look back at it now, and I'm not a dam designer, but I know enough about it, we should have cut a bigger part of that hill away. So it slipped off of that face, and when it started to move rock and slip, it brought other rock along with it. In a way it looked like you see unfurls of lava in Hawaii you know the lava. You could see unfurling of the rock down there in this certain area. And I don't remember the total number of feet, but you could just see this *whole* movement of rock. But we had heard, or the operators . . . See, the San Luis Dam is operated by the State of California,

5. Gerry King was interviewed by George Petershagen on September 1, 1994, for Reclamation's oral history program.

Department of Water Resources. And one of the operators–well, in fact, the chief operator down there–told me you could hear some movement in the penstock area. That's where the water comes from the dam into the pump generator plant, and you could [hear] like somebody was knocking on it, and you could hear some action in there. But they were not sure what that was. And then all of a sudden we had the big slip, so to speak, it all happened. And it was at a time when we drew down the water in the reservoir, so I don't think it's been editorialized in any report that drawing down the water caused it. It was just a natural cause of the way it was built, that the weight of the rock just slipped off of that hill. And we should have done some different kind of excavation work on that hill. But I'm really proud of those people that put that package together, that was just a tremendous thing.

Storey: Who was the man, your chief engineer, who told you "we'll fix it"?

Catino: The regional engineer was Jim Andrews.[6] He retired here a number of years ago, but he was a veteran of CVP for many years.

Storey: They heard this noise in the powerplant/pumping plant, and did they then go look to see what was going on?

Catino: The top of that dam is ridden every day. Every day inspectors go across that dam, and maybe more than that, I don't know the regimen of inspection on that thing, how often the State people drive across that. But I'm sure that somebody drives across that dam every day, if not three or four times a day. You know, that's a pretty big facility, it holds of couple million acre feet of water, you're pumping into it, it has very little drainage from the coast range off of Highway 152, there's very little that comes in there because it doesn't rain there enough, and so it's all pumped in. You fill it up and then you empty it and you make kilowatts. It's one of the few pump-generator facilities in California. But the State has a good inspection program which the Bureau laid out for them originally when it was a cooperative effort as to the inspection process. Then you also have the safety of dams group in your Denver Office that comes out and inspects facilities every year, certain facilities. That's an ongoing program. But the acknowledgment, of course, was by the state operators at the dam.

Storey: Were there any other major issues while you were regional director?

Tried to Work with the Paiute Indians Regarding Pyramid Lake

Issues Regarding the Newlands Project

Catino: Well, I tried to put some things together for the Paiute Indians over in Nevada in terms of the operation of the Truckee River and the filling of Pyramid Lake, and then being concerned with the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District and the farming in Fallon, Nevada. It was a very difficult situation, in fact it got kind of heated at times, although I felt that I had some reasonable success with the Indian Nation, the Paiutes,

6. Interviewed by George Petershagen October 14, 1994, for Reclamation's oral history program.

which really go from Reno clear up to Winnemucca in that whole area there. There's a very strong feeling with the Indian nation to be wary of the white man, of what he's trying to do. So we spent some time with those folks. We wanted to put some legislation through, and there was some secretarial positions taken–I'd like to see more settlement, I'd like to have seen something done in cold black and white. The Indian folks listened to their white lawyer, and as a result, always looking for something more than what the Bureau was trying to do for them. And it was very difficult. I think my successor, Dave Houston, I don't believe he made any great progress. I think maybe there has been some sharing of ideas between the irrigators in Fallon, Nevada, on the water Project, and the Indian folks, but what you have here is the Indian people wanting to keep Pyramid Lake up to the brim, so to speak, and you've got the farmers who are really trying to scratch out a living over there in the Fallon area–very difficult, I think, there's probably about 200,000 acres over there . . .

END SIDE 1, TAPE 2. SEPTEMBER 2, 1994.
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. SEPTEMBER 2, 1994.

Catino: . . . there. It's not a truck farming area, per se, like you have in the San Joaquin Valley. They run cattle, I guess they do have some sugar beets if I remember right, and so it is not a horn of plenty in terms of agriculture. But they have made a living over there for years, and to pull any great amount of water that you have away from them to the Pyramid Lake, which there is some farming done by the Indians down around the Nixon area, along the Truckee River to Pyramid Lake. There isn't any great enterprise, so to speak, there. The Bureau, in concert with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, built a fish hatchery there for the Lahontan cutthroat trout, but I don't know the status of that facility today. And Pyramid Lake could be developed into quite a recreation area, but it hasn't. Maybe with gambling in Nevada, and Indians being involved in gambling, maybe there's some possibilities there. But you have to feel for the farm people in Fallon who are really trying to scratch out a living. They're not millionaires, by any means.

You also have on the other side of Fallon is the Stillwater Wildlife [Refuge] area, and they are the recipients of some of the water that comes through the Project, and the drainage from that. If there's not significant farming and drainage in the area, the wildlife suffers over there. So you've got a tough ball game. The real tough part of Nevada's problem is there's not enough water. There's not enough water to take care of the M&I development in the Reno-Sparks area, and even below Reno. And there's not enough to take care of the Indian needs and the farm needs. And so it's a real tough thing, plus you've got some power facilities which are involved in the Sierra Pacific. You have some long-time water rights decrees on the river.

What I wanted to do when I was regional director, I proposed that we put a package together that would spell out these issues and try to mediate these issues, but I got about that far along and I wanted the Bureau people to put down cold black and white in some kind of a report, the identified problem areas which they would develop with the Indian Nation, and then try to write down some solution to these problems. The way it was, why we ran a number of meetings in Reno, and one meeting that's memorable in my mind out there at the Nixon headquarters of the

Paiute Indians. We just sort of hashed over these things, we never got anything written down to where it was a composition of the problem, and then tried to put a solution to it. But this had been going on for years. I don't think it's any better today. In the meantime, you got the Reno-Sparks area developing and I'm not so sure they've got a guaranteed water supply for all the development that's going on there. But the same is true in the Las Vegas area where they're entitled to 250,000 acre feet of Colorado River water and the development around Las Vegas now is just tremendous. As a result, they're talking about reaching into some of the farm areas over there in the Pahrump Valley, buying the water rights, groundwater, of some of those farmers and bringing it into Las Vegas. Of course, the one advantage to both California and Nevada is the Central Arizona Project is not going to use their full entitlement, the way it looks now, so there might be some water available, more water available for Southern Nevada and maybe a bit more for Southern California. My recollection is there's about 800,000 acre feet that's allocated to Arizona.

You say, "Well, that wasn't in your region." But you can't help talk about the northern part of Nevada, the Indian problems, and also have some knowledge of water in the southern part of the state and the reflections there. And in between, which was part of this region, I mean, still is a part of this region, this Mid-Pacific Region cuts across Tonopah to Ely, Nevada, to the northern part of the state of Nevada, up above Winnemucca and then moves into the Oregon area, Klamath Falls, Oregon, which is an old Bureau Project. So you couldn't help but have a feeling for if you're dealing with the Indians, why you've found quite a few Indians around the state of Nevada and some of their problems. They would reflect upon one another and you just had to be knowledgeable but you never quite got the whole ball of wax. I'm not so sure, I think we keep plowing away at the problem over there on Pyramid Lake, but I'm not so sure that we've got any great solutions over there. I know that the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District has spent a tremendous amount of money for legal fees and engineering support, and the Indian folks have had a private attorney for a good many years. I don't know what the status of that is. So the answer is that there's not enough water to go around, there's not enough facilities that you have the Bureau built Prosser Creek Dam and the Corps built Boca Dam. We have other facilities in the Truckee River area, Sierra Pacific Power Company has some small dams, and you have a Federal watermaster in Reno that sort of takes care of the river. Maybe he's capable of maneuvering the water supplies to try and satisfy all those needs. I wish him well, because there's not enough water to go around, like this year is a drought year, and you look at the Truckee River along Interstate 80 and it's running great sometimes, and sometimes it isn't running. On top of that you've got Lake Tahoe and you've got a political entity there, they want to see Tahoe kept to the brim at 6,272 feet or whatever it is, and they don't like to see too much water leave there. There has been times where they have to open up the gates at Tahoe, but we're not fortunate to have that big snow melt. Now if you could guarantee a big snow melt every year, why then you could take care of a lot of the problems all the way from Lake Tahoe to Pyramid Lake to Fallon, Nevada. But when you only hit, say, two or three years out of ten that are worth a darn, well it's tough. So that took some of my time as regional director. I always kind of hoped for something better, we put a lot of staff time into the thing, but there was always a feeling with the Indian Nation [Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe] that they didn't quite want to settle on anything. But I

thought by putting some kind of a report together and say, "Well, now this is a problem. *You* identified this problem, *we* identified this problem, *we agree* that that's a problem. Now here's a solution from our standpoint, here's a solution from your standpoint, and try to mediate those things." We had some great meetings in Reno, and we got yelled at a bit, but we didn't ignore the Indians. I refused to ignore those folks. I had a feeling that some other people, especially in the department, they could care less about the Indians. But we tried to do a job out here for them. Unfortunately, time ran out for me. I think in time *we* could have maybe come to some solutions on some of the problems. But I think the appointment of the Federal watermaster in Reno is helpful.

Storey: For whom did he work?

Catino: He works for the Federal court. He's been appointed by the judge.

Storey: Okay, so he's not a Reclamation person.

Catino: No, he's being paid by the Department of Justice, and he calls the shots. He listens and he says, "Turn this valve on and turn that valve on," or "shut this one off, or shut that one off." And so he's a very knowledgeable guy. He's lived in the Reno area for years, and it's funny, I can think of his first name, but I can't think of his last name right now. Garry is his first name.[7] I think he's doing a balancing job, and that's what these Federal watermasters are. We have one former Bureau employee here who's doing some work up here on the Orland Project. He's one of our old water rights engineers. He was appointed by a Federal judge and he has Tomes [phonetic spelling] Creek and Stoney Creek and some of these creeks off the western slopes that flow into the Sacramento River, and he tries to monitor that water. Again, it's an "open valve, shut valve" type of job.

Storey: I believe you retired in '83.

Catino: April of '83.

Storey: Why did you decide to retire?

". . . I retired because Mr. Broadbent said, 'They want to move you,' and I said 'Who's "they"?' and he said, 'Well, the department wants to move you out of Sacramento and they want you to become deputy director of the Office of Surface Mining in Washington, D.C.'. . ."

Catino: Well, at that time, the politics got a little bit heavy. I retired because Mr. Broadbent said, "They want to move you," and I said "Who's 'they'?" and he said, "Well, the department wants to move you out of Sacramento and they want you to become deputy director of the Office of Surface Mining in Washington, D.C."

7. Federal Watermaster Garry Stone was interviewed by Donald B. Seney on August 15, 1994, for Reclamation's oral history program.

". . . I decided that the writing was on the wall . . .I'd been told I was too popular with the water district people and the power people. I was too popular with the people that wanted to build Auburn Dam . . . It was politically motivated, and to be perfectly frank, Dave Houston wanted to get out of the Bureau of Reclamation in Washington, and he was Broadbent's man . . . He wanted the job out here in California, and he pulled all the strings in the department and I was removed. . . ."

And having spent my career out here in California and had thirty-eight years with the Bureau, why I decided that the writing was on the wall, Mike Catino–I'd been told I was too popular with the water district people and the power people. I was too popular with the people that wanted to build Auburn Dam, and as I told Commissioner Dominy, after I retired, I said, "All the things that I learned from you and other Commissioners, I've tried to copy. I thought the important thing in my job was water development. So the writing is on the wall, and I'm not taking a job in Washington, D.C." It was politically motivated, and to be perfectly frank, Dave Houston wanted to get out of the Bureau of Reclamation in Washington, and he was Broadbent's man, Broadbent brought him from Las Vegas to Washington. He wanted the job out here in California, and he pulled all the strings in the department and I was removed.

Storey: Now he was a deputy assistant secretary, is that right?

Catino: No, he was an assistant to the commissioner.

Storey: Oh, okay, he had moved by then.

Catino: He did do some work up in the department. See, when Broadbent left the Bureau of Reclamation, he became the assistant secretary for water and power, and Dave did some work there. Then there was any number of people that act[ed] as commissioner of Reclamation: Bob Olson acted for quite a while, and . . .

Storey: Cliff Barrett then, I think, also did.

"Well, let's be perfectly frank, Bill Plummer who was regional director in Boulder City, Joe Marcotte director in Billings, Montana, and myself were told to kind of go down the road. I don't mind putting that on tape. But we were the three that were sort of pushed out, for various reasons. . . ."

Catino: Well, let's be perfectly frank, Bill Plummer who was regional director in Boulder City, Joe Marcotte director in Billings, Montana, and myself were told to kind of go down the road. I don't mind putting that on tape. But we were the three that were sort of pushed out, for various reasons. What I was told, my popularity among the water and power users, and being an advocate of Auburn Dam. There was nothing wrong, in my opinion, with my management style here. In fact, Broadbent had a guy come out and *check* the management here, and he later left the Bureau, so he was free to talk, and things that he found in his review of the management here, I was already taking care of. So there was nothing *basically* wrong, I wasn't failing to carry out this law or that. So I felt pretty comfortable that I was doing a pretty good job. So it

was politically and personnel motivated. When you're an oldtimer–in terms of years, I was probably the *senior* of all of the regional directors. Bill E. Martin was in Denver, and Cliff Barrett already had moved–see, he got pushed out of Washington because he came into–he was there–well, Cliff Barrett moved up there as an assistant commissioner when Gil Stamm was commissioner. So he got pushed out of Washington to Salt Lake City. Billy, of course, was in Denver. Then let's see, Billy left Denver and went to Billings. So then they folded up the Amarillo office, that got closed out. So there was a number of shuffles made here. And you know, when you've had thirty-eight good years at the Bureau, and you've got the respect of the people that you serve, and you've got the respect of the employees that you work with, and you enjoy a popularity with the rank and file in Washington and Denver, you know there's no use to take sort of the sandpapering job from a new political regime that comes in. So you say to yourself, "it's time to get out." I left like other regional directors, they left for some brighter thing. I didn't have any brighter thing on the horizon at the time because it was dumped on me awful fast. But I never got a statement from Mr. Broadbent that I was deficient in any area–I never got that. And he used the same theme that he used with others, is "the Department wants to move you," making it sound like "you can do a better job over here in surface mining than you are doing in Sacramento." And I don't know a damned thing about mining. In fact, I've seen some of the things in terms of their leases that they had. To me, I couldn't stand for it, I'd have to clean up some of the areas. They've got the people down in the Appalachian areas just *suffering* from some of the big mining companies. I could never stand for that. I could never stand for an abuse by, say, a water district in terms of the Reclamation laws–"You carry them out, and you've been told that you can only irrigate so many acres, and that, and if you fall off the line, we're going to crack you." Just like I would be harsh on an employee for drinking on the job, and that was my function. As regional directors, you can't do that. So I felt pretty comfortable about my career.

"You know, when you leave, you wonder what's going to happen next, and I was still a pretty young guy, and bingo, within four months I had an offer to take over four water organizations here in town under one umbrella. . . . the Central Valley Project Water Association . . . the California Flood Control Association . . . the North Delta Water Agency . . . the Sacramento River pumpers, the twenty-one major pumpers on the Sacramento River. . . ."

You know, when you leave, you wonder what's going to happen next, and I was still a pretty young guy, and bingo, within four months I had an offer to take over four water organizations here in town under one umbrella. I took over the Central Valley Project Water Association, I took over the California Flood Control Association, which dates way back to the 1930s. I took over the North Delta Water Agency, which is a State contractor, and I took over the Sacramento River pumpers, the twenty-one major pumpers on the Sacramento River. So here was four organizations that I was familiar with their work. The fellow that was managing those four outfits was a former Bureau engineer that had left the Bureau and he managed, and he wanted to retire. So I walked into the glory job, and the glory job must have been great, because Billy. Martin succeeded me when I retired from there in '89. And so it's kind of been humorous between Billy and myself–I succeeded

him as regional director, and he succeeded me with the . . . Well, there's not four organizations there now, there's three. Billy took over from me. So the Central Valley Project Water Association is a separate organization now and it's run by an individual that used to be with the Bureau here. And so I feel pretty good. So when I retired in '89, and in fact *before* I retired in '89 from *those* organizations, why I had permission from the organizations to work for Harza Engineering in Chicago on water development in the West, and then to work for CH_2M Hill which is a nationally-known, international outfit, just like Harza on engineering problems here in California. And then we mentioned earlier, El Dorado Irrigation District, I had a job with them, and I've done some work for Solano. So I've never been, since I left the Bureau in '83, ever been without work. I've always had an opportunity. And this speaks well for your career in the Bureau. I always said to the young fellow or the young gal walking out the door for whatever reason, "You'll find a job, because you worked for the Bureau of Reclamation. You've got the Bureau on the back of your bowling shirt, so to speak." And everybody that I've known–I don't think I was *off* the Bureau payroll two weeks that I didn't have a call from a water district in Southern California who was putting in pipelines and wanted a *tough* old Bureau inspector, and I could find a *tough* old Bureau inspector for them. In a way, I've been kind of an employment agency for some of the Bureau people. But once you work for the Bureau in the water and power business, somehow or other there's an attraction [to] be hired by an engineering firm, CH_2M Hill here in Sacramento has a number of Bureau people that work for them. Harza has a number of people that came out of your Denver Office that work for them on international stuff. And so water districts, I've done some work for Santa Clara Water District with other Bureau people. So there's never . . . It's sort of traditional, having worked with the Bureau, to find work. And I could find more work today. I had an attorney call me up two months ago that wanted me to do some more work for a water district. I'm at the point in my career that I just take on a *few* little jobs here and there and that's it. So you asked a question how that evolved in terms of my retiring from the Bureau. I've told you highly political association with water and power users, and I was taught to serve the people, and I think I served the people.

Storey: When did you join the SES, the Senior Executive Service?

Catino: Gee, I'd have to look in the files on that. I don't know.

Storey: I believe the system was established under Carter, probably when you were assistant regional director.

Catino: Yeah, I'm thinking when I was assistant regional director. You see, I was an assistant regional director from '72 to '80. Billy left in '80, if I remember right, and then I was director from '80 to '83. Yeah, I think it was probably when I was an assistant director. I was the assistant director for operations, which meant the operation and maintenance of the projects. That's probably right, but I don't remember the exact date.

Storey: Do you remember anything about the training program for the SES?

Management Training Program

Catino: I was on the Bureau's Management Training Program back in 1961, which was a very exciting time to be in Washington, D.C. I spent six months back there on that program, and I worked in various divisions within the Bureau: worked in planning, worked in operation and maintenance, I did some work in the programming field. I worked in a number of areas, and I worked up in the commissioner's office in training. That was a six-month program. The Kennedy people came into Washington in 1961 and it was a very exciting time to be in Washington and to see all that vim and vigor that the Kennedys brought in there. Commissioner Dominy served a number of Presidents, and he still was aboard when the Kennedy Administration was on, and so I found it to be a hell of an education, and an enlightening time to be in Washington. Jimmy Carr, who had worked for the Bureau out here in Sacramento is a good friend of mine, became undersecretary in the Department of Interior under Stewart Udall. And then a few people from California joined the Department, so it was a good time to be in Washington, a good time to be trained. We had different seminars we went to, so I learned a lot. I got mileage out of that training program. Spent some time up on The Hill with the various congressmen, went to various meetings and hearings. So I got an education into the forms of government. Then the *excitement* of the Kennedy Administration added a lot to it. Of course I'd been to Washington a number of times helping out in the program coordination area, but I thought that period of time, I was very fortunate to have been in Washington during that period.

Storey: Good. Well, I hate to say it, but our time is gone again.

Catino: What time do we have now, eleven o'clock?

Storey: It's 11:05.

Catino: My gosh! Time marches on when you get Ol' Mike talking!

Storey: I'd like to ask you again if it's alright for Reclamation researchers and researchers from outside Reclamation to use the cassettes and the transcripts from this interview.

Catino: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Storey: Good, thank you.

Catino: You bet.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. SEPTEMBER 2, 1994.
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 1. APRIL 14, 1995.

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Mike Catino, in the Mid-Pacific regional office of the Bureau of Reclamation, on April the 14th, 1995, at about nine o'clock in the morning. This is Tape 1.

Storey: Last time, Mr. Catino, we were talking about Auburn, and you were just saying you'd like to talk about the modern, right-now situation a little bit maybe.

Catino: Yeah, the Auburn situation is still up in the air, so to speak. There's no firm commitment to build any type of . . . (volume adjusted)

Storey: You were saying that you'd be interested in discussing the modern situation at Auburn now.

Auburn Dam

Catino: Well, the Auburn Dam situation is still up in the air, there's been no major decisions made on what type of facility and how big a facility is to be constructed. There has been an estimate made for a dry dam down from the site the Bureau of Reclamation chose on the American River for building a dam that would contain about a million acre feet, which is about a million-and-a-quarter acre feet less than what was proposed by the Bureau. The Corps' estimate for that type of dry dam–I say "dry" dam, because it wasn't going to hold any water for conservation purposes, it was only to knock off the high flows on the American River , but it would be worth about a billion dollars. In other words, you could equate that billion dollars into that's what the Corps uses for saying the value of the flood control aspect of Auburn Dam.

I bring that up, because when the Bureau was in the process of the authorization of Auburn Dam, and since all of the other manipulations were coming out with a repayment study on Auburn, there was a very minor amount placed on flood control, or an allocation to flood control which under Federal law is non-reimbursable. So today, if that billion dollars that the Corps places on flood control could be interjected into the estimate for building a large Auburn Dam . . . When I say a "large" Auburn Dam, we're talking about 2¼ to 2½ million acre feet in the American River Canyon, just below the city of Auburn. And we could use that as the flood control allocation, then that would leave approximately 1.2-, 1.3 billion dollars to seek for the allocations to irrigation, municipal, industrial, and power that would be developed at the Auburn Dam. So it would lessen the burden for those functions. However, there is only a local interest in the water development: local interest is really Placer, El Dorado, Sacramento, and possibly into Sutter County, for water development out of Auburn. The Bureau of Reclamation is currently studying the needs–I think they're up over a half a million acre feet for those counties. And I failed to mention that San Joaquin County should be included in there too. And looking at long-range peaking in the state of California as such, with all of the new laws on the Delta, taking care of the Delta, the requirements for environmental facilities, why, California's going to be short about another three million acre feet of water. So Auburn, although it doesn't *develop* a tremendous amount of water, would certainly be a facility that would aid any shortages that we have from an environmental standpoint–also irrigation and M&I uses.

The interest from the government standpoint, you can reach clear back to the Carter Administration: there was a lessening in building any big dam facilities. You can take that all the way through Carter, Reagan, Bush, and even the Clinton

administrations: there's no high interest for getting the government into building dams that have been done in the past by both the Bureau and the Corps of Engineers. So another way of looking at it, if you wanted to build a dam up at Auburn at, say, 2¼ million acre feet, probably the best solution today would be to form a joint powers agreement between the counties–Placer and El Dorado County, Sacramento County, and San Joaquin County–and go at it yourself and do it, and take the Federal funds that would be allocated to flood control and place them within the total estimated cost of the proposed facilities. I estimate that it would take about $2½ billion to build an Auburn facility, of which about $300 million has already been spent up at the canyon. There's some talk about building part of a dam now and coming back later and building the rest. Most construction people will tell you that's out of the question because of the facilities that are needed to build a large dam, whether it be earth-filled or concrete, is such as your batch plants for concrete and the roads to get the materials to the dam site. If you were to say, "Later on we'll come back and build the rest of the dam," why, you'd have a tremendous amount of plant facilities, railroad facilities for bringing in cement or gravel or whatever the material needs are, that you have a tremendous amount of investment just sitting there and sitting idle, and probably never would be used–it'd be rusting away.

Mobilization Costs in Building a Dam

It's well to point out that on a $2 billion dam that about ten to fifteen percent of it is dedicated to what we call "mobilization costs." These are the amounts that are used by the contractors to get started–building roads, the office building for his staff, the cableways–all of the facilities for building a dam are up-front costs, which need to be handled at the early part of the job. Years ago, contractors used to put that in their first bid amounts, or first work amounts, and that reflected in their bids. Nowadays, why, you have a separate item for mobilization costs. So I use ten to fifteen percent of the total bid is usually involved in plant facilities and costs of organizing your operation. But the answer is needed.

Flood Control Needs on the American River

In fact, the *Sacramento Bee* has been very good during these floods of '94 and '95 here, to point out that there's a very decided need for additional flood control facilities up on the American River, and that something should be done. It seems like in the past, why we have a flood, we take care of the hardships that were caused by that flood, and then we somehow forget about it for a few years. But here we've had floods in '86 that caused tremendous damage in Sacramento County, and we had some more damage in both Placer and Sacramento County here this year in '95. So you just don't walk away from it.

There's another group of people that say, "Well, we ought to strengthen up the levee system in Sacramento County and all the way down into the Delta." And probably I should include Yolo County on the other side of the Sacramento River. But some of the levees today are in very bad shape, [it would] take a tremendous amount of money to rehabilitate these levees. They were constructed of poor materials in the initial phases, and today it would cost a significant number of

millions of dollars to rehabil the levees around Sacramento. And that's an ongoing program all the time in the various reclamation districts to maintain the levees that protect the city and county of Sacramento. But there's just so much you can do, unless you want to build a double levee system. One of the better ways is to hold water up in the foothills and release it slowly through the present levee system.

Another aspect has come in that's talked about somewhat of raising Folsom Dam. Folsom Dam has *been* raised once: it was originally authorized at about 400,000 acre feet, and got *re*-authorized to the present roughly one million acre feet. Actually, from a *dam* location standpoint, Folsom is a very poor dam site. It's really only tied to an anchoring on the southeast side where it's tied-into the local hills over there by Folsom Prison. The other side, right abutment, is all built-up material which was dredged up from the reservoir area itself. So I would think that trying to raise Folsom Dam, which also includes about eight satellite dams, would be a very poor way of trying to just increase a little bit more for flood control. The real answer in the whole proposition is to build another dam upstream from Folsom at the Auburn Dam site, whether it's the site that's presently being discussed by the Corps, or going back to the Bureau site.

Feels That Now the Private Sector or Other Governmental Entities Would Be More Likely to Build Auburn than Would the Federal Government or the Bureau of Reclamation

To me, that's the answer to funding and machinery as an organizational machinery can be brought together to do it. But the Federal government's interest today is a very small part of building a facility at Auburn. The Bureau of Reclamation's old-time dam designers and construction people are sort of withered away, and they would have to do a tremendous amount of *reorganizing* to bring that about. So probably would be better to have the private sector do that. The private sector has been building dams all over the world and looking at other dams, especially in China and the Far East, they've done quite a bit in the middle Arabian countries as far as dams too. One of the big areas is in South American where they have built a number of big dams and power facilities in Venezuela and Argentina, so there's an *expertise* on the international scene that is capable of coming in and designing and building dams.

Storey: I'm wondering if we could digress a little bit and go back. Last time we discussed Keith Higginson and Bob Broadbent, I think. But what about some of the earlier folks? Did you know Mike Straus, for instance?

Mike Straus

Catino: I didn't know Mike Straus personally, but Mike Straus was the commissioner when I came aboard in the Bureau in 1945 after World War II, and Mike Straus had a background of, I believe, newspapers and journalism, I think was *his* background. Harold Ickes was then Secretary of the Interior. Mike Straus was a very *big* man. I think he was about six-foot-five. I remember when he came to visit our office in Tracy, California, where I was out on construction, working on the Tracy Pumping

Plant on the Delta-Mendota Canal. He came through the door of our little Quonset hut that we had, and he filled the door frame. He was a monumental size man. He really started the Bureau of Reclamation back up from its early traditional days to build facilities out here in the seventeen western states.

". . . [Senator] Sheridan Downey . . . Mike Straus or the regional director . . . Dick Boke–he wouldn't pay them, because they weren't engineers. So for a period of time there, Mike Straus and Dick Boke weren't paid because they weren't 'qualified' according to the senator and some of the other folks. . . ."

He was controversial because he had some senators, especially a senator from California who didn't particularly like him–in fact, one time, why, Sheridan Downey was the senator that I'm speaking of, had a way of pulling his pay back. He wouldn't pay Mike Straus or the regional director in California for Region 2, which it was known, which was Dick Boke–he wouldn't pay them, because they weren't engineers. So for a period of time there, Mike Straus and Dick Boke weren't paid because they weren't "qualified" according to the senator and some of the other folks. But Mike Straus never went hungry.

". . . there was nothing said about them that they couldn't travel and get paid per diem–it was their salary that was being held back. So both Mike Straus and Dick Boke traveled quite a bit during that time . . ."

The Indian folks made sure that he got enough buffalo meat, and there was nothing said about them that they couldn't travel and get paid per diem–it was their salary that was being held back. So both Mike Straus and Dick Boke traveled quite a bit during that time to make sure that their food needs were taken care of. (chuckles) But Straus provided quite an impetus after World War II of getting the Bureau of Reclamation back into building facilities that they had started and were on the boards. And so you found a very energetic guy. And of course he was looking at it as a way of putting people back to work. Public works was not frowned upon, and Mike had that capability and he had that presence in the Congress, even though some congressmen and senators didn't like him. But he managed to move the Reclamation program forward.

Wilbur Dexheimer

Right after Mike Straus came Wilbur Dexheimer. They hired Dexheimer because he was an engineer. In fact, his position before becoming commissioner was the head of the construction division in the office of the chief engineer in Denver. He came to Washington and was to take care of that qualification of being an engineer. He circled himself and Washington staff with a tremendous amount of engineers, good quality people, and he proceeded to move the Bureau forward. The Bureau had a *backlog* of projects, like any number of projects on the Central Valley Project and in the Northwest at Grand Coulee Dam. There was a lot of things on the board, so it made for a fine program–again, you're looking at the post-war era of putting people back to work, putting contractors on the job.

"During the Dexheimer commissioner years, why, a tremendous amount of work was started. . . ."

During the Dexheimer commissioner years, why, a tremendous amount of work was started. I believe the Bureau of Reclamation got up to around 8,000 to 9,000 people,[8] maybe more than that. I know in this region, in Region 2, we had about 2,000 people here right after World War II. He had a nice time there as far as programs went, because there *was* a backlog, and things needed to be fixed up. Farmers also were clamoring for more irrigation water to develop lands. There was a demand for power, and so, after all, World War II took this activity away for about four years there, so just because of the war years there was a void in there to get these projects done which had been authorized and hadn't been funded, of course, because of the money that was needed for World War II.

"But it was a nice time in the Bureau, '45, after World War II, 1945, right up to the '50s, it was a real pleasant construction period. . . ."

But it was a nice time in the Bureau, '45, after World War II, 1945, right up to the '50s, it was a real pleasant construction period.

Storey: What was Dexheimer like? Did you ever meet him?

Catino: Oh yeah. I met him and was on a few tours around California with him at facilities. I wasn't personally involved with him. I went to program meetings which he conducted. He was a personable guy, and he got along very well with the construction industry, having been chief of the construction division in Denver, and he had a great following among the construction companies, which was good, because they needed some assurances after World War II, that programs were going to be developed, and public works were going to move ahead after this so-called four years of void of doing anything. I liked him. I wasn't on a first-name basis with him, but I appreciated his work, and I think he knew who I was, if that means anything. When I knew him, I was on the program staff of the regional directors here, and that was my relationship. I had a good relationship with members of the staff of his assistant commissioners–mainly Al Golzé who was assistant commissioner for administration, who took care of all the programs and budget. He had some assistant commissioners that I knew fairly well that came out here on different trips. But the Bureau started to bubble and really move forward in the late '40s and into the early '50s.

Floyd Dominy

Following Commissioner Dexheimer, we had Commissioner Dominy who was probably the most outstanding commissioner in many ways of getting the Bureau really rolling and building Projects in the seventeen western states. There's no question in my mind that Floyd Dominy was probably the best commissioner that the

8. In the late 1940s Reclamation had almost 19,000 employees. That number was reduced during the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower to a little more than 10,000 employees.

Bureau had. He was well-liked on The Hill, but being well-like also brings some enemies along the line too. But he withstood all of this, and he moved a program of many millions of dollars. I look back at his accomplishments, if I remember right, he came in, it was about the middle '50s he came in, he took over from Commissioner Dexheimer.

Storey: Let's see, '59, I think.

Catino: That's when he took over as Commissioner?

Storey: Um-hmm, '59 to '69.

Catino: Uh-huh. He served under, let's see, I think three presidents if I remember right: Eisenhower, Nixon, Kennedy, and Johnson–so he really served under four.

Storey: That's right, yeah–briefly under Nixon.

". . . he was the most dynamic commissioner we had, and he was out selling Reclamation all the time, and his staff was expected to do that. . . ."

Catino: Yeah. But he was the most dynamic commissioner we had, and he was out selling Reclamation all the time, and his staff was expected to do that. He had a great following with the farming–he *was* a farmer. I believe he was educated at the University of Wyoming and he was a farm extension agent in the state of Wyoming for early in his career. He knew farming. In fact, while he was commissioner, I think he raised cattle over in Virginia. But he had a great feeling for the needs of water in the West, probably. He *demanded* his staff to be knowledgeable in all aspects of Reclamation, which included the water and power development. He was keen in the recreation area. He tried to surround himself with quality people, and I think he did that. They were just top-notch people, and he made sure that the regional directors in the seven regions that he had were all top-notch people and they were working for the Reclamation program as required by the acts of Congress.

"He worked long and hard, and he expected everybody else to work long and hard. There was no lazy people around Commissioner Dominy–the staff–or else you found a new job. . . ."

He worked long and hard, and he expected everybody else to work long and hard. There was no lazy people around Commissioner Dominy–the staff–or else you found a new job. But he ran a dynamic program, he was a dynamic man, and he brought many millions of dollars to the table for building construction, for water and reclamation structures, in the seventeen western states. I have no doubt in my mind that he wasn't the best commissioner of all to have directed the Reclamation program.

Storey: You knew him personally?

Looked to Floyd Dominy for Guidance While on the Management Training

Catino: Oh yes, I knew him personally. I had some discussions one-to-one basis. In fact, in 1961 I went back to Washington, and I spent my six months back there on my Department of Interior Management Training Program, and I looked to him for counsel as to where I should train in the various offices in Washington.

Shadowed Dominy as Part of His Training in D.C.

I went with his entourage up on The Hill before the various appropriations and authorizations committee. In other words, I was kind of a shadow. That part of my training was to shadow him as one of his assistants. So I learned a *lot* in 1961 when I was in Washington for six months, it was during his tenure. He was always very cordial and wanted to know what I was doing back there and how I was being treated. But that was his way. We were trainees back there, and we were going to get as much mileage out of it as we could, and this is a way of getting acquainted with him and his staff. They got to know your qualities, and you certainly got to know their qualities. So it gave you a tremendous way of reacting in the future.

". . . that was an exciting time to *be* in Washington, because the Kennedys had just come into office, and things were bubbling in Washington. Stewart Udall was the secretary of the interior, came from Arizona, had a good feeling for things in the West. And Jimmy Carr who had been a district manager for the Bureau out here in the Mid-Pacific Region was his undersecretary, and so there was a happy home for westerners back there. They were people that had great visions as to what should be done in developing the West. . . ."

So it was six months well-spent in the Washington area, and that was an exciting time to *be* in Washington, because the Kennedys had just come into office, and things were bubbling in Washington. Stewart Udall was the secretary of the interior, came from Arizona, had a good feeling for things in the West. And Jimmy Carr who had been a district manager for the Bureau out here in the Mid-Pacific Region was his undersecretary, and so there was a happy home for westerners back there. They were people that had great visions as to what should be done in developing the West. It was exciting, and I was fortunate to be in Washington at that time, and to learn from some pretty capable people. (Storey: Um-hmm.)

I knew Floyd Dominy real well. In fact, I was pleased to see him out here in California. Oh, about four, five years ago, he came out to visit and wanted to know what . . . I had left the Bureau and he wanted to know what I was doing. So we also played some golf together. I enjoyed my time that he was commissioner of Reclamation. He demanded a lot of everybody in the Bureau, but you look back on it as well worth the midnight oil to get it done.

Storey: Um-hmm. Did you have a career plan?

Catino: Did I have a career plan? (Storey: Yeah.) Yeah, when I was out on construction, I started in the Bureau in 1945 in Antioch, building the Contra Costa Canal and a small

dam. And I was fortunate in those days to work for a fellow by the name of Barney Bellport, who later became chief engineer. He was my boss, and he was the office engineer in Antioch–later became office engineer in Tracy when the Antioch office folded into the Tracy office for building the Delta-Mendota Canal and the Tracy Pumping Plant–the Delta Cross-channel.

"But you asked me if I had a career plan. My intention was to work in construction for about five years, which I did from 1945 to 1950, and then to learn something about the regional organization. . . . But in the back of my mind, my career plan was to be regional director some day–I have to admit that. . . ."

But you asked me if I had a career plan. My intention was to work in construction for about five years, which I did from 1945 to 1950, and then to learn something about the regional organization. I took a job here in Sacramento in 1950 in the program coordination area. Fortunately, I got a promotion to come here. But I always liked Sacramento, and I thought Sacramento would be a nice place to work and have a lot of activities. But my career plan, as you asked, included a period of time in Sacramento. I had not marked out specifically, you know, certain dates and things. Some of the things just happened, and I was fortunate to be in the right spot. I moved up from being a programs engineer up to head of the program coordination for the region. Later on I took on the whole program: coordination and finance, I did that for a good many years. But in the back of my mind, my career plan was to be regional director some day–I have to admit that. That's why I was always willing to move to different areas and visit with people and learn more about their activities. Program coordination gave me that opportunity. People needed money for their programs, but to justify their programs *I* had to learn more about what they were doing. And so this gave me an opportunity to expand in the area of planning, construction, and operation and maintenance, and some of the other activities.

"I had a number of offers to go to Denver, to work in the Denver office; go to Washington. In fact, I had a number of visits from commissioners to be assistant directors in other regions . . . I've always stayed kind of glued to Sacramento . . ."

I had a number of offers to go to Denver, to work in the Denver office; go to Washington. In fact, I had a number of visits from commissioners to be assistant directors in other regions: Denver and down in Amarillo, Texas; and Billings, Montana. I've always stayed kind of glued to Sacramento and part of it I think was my family. My family liked Sacramento, although I think they would have liked a short period of time in Washington, D.C., because it is a tremendous . . .

END SIDE 1, TAPE 1. APRIL 14, 1995.
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. APRIL 14, 1995.

Storey: You were saying that you think your family might have liked to go to Washington for a period of time.

". . . I knew some day I wanted to be up in the so-called 'front office' of the Bureau of Reclamation. So when the opportunity came to be an assistant director, which

was really the operations and maintenance functions of this region, why, I couldn't get to that job fast enough. . . ."

Catino: Yeah, I think they would have. In fact, a number of Bureau people have moved to Washington, taking jobs, taking their families back there. You can do this when your children are *young*. When you find out they're teenagers, they don't want to move, they get pretty well tied to their high school, so to speak. But there's been some very successful moves as far as Bureau people moving from various parts in the West to Washington, but they brought their children along at a very young age, and I think they just molded into the fabric back there. But as time went on, I got my roots down here pretty deep. My career, I knew some day I wanted to be up in the so-called "front office" of the Bureau of Reclamation. So when the opportunity came to be an assistant director, which was really the operations and maintenance functions of this region, why, I couldn't get to that job fast enough. I burned a lot of midnight oil, so to speak, to learn as much as I could on operations and maintenance, having come primarily, *originally* from a construction side of the Bureau into sort of an administrative side of the Bureau, back out to an operation and maintenance side. So I had to work hard for that, but I think I sooner or later gained the respect of those divisions and operations of the Central Valley Project and other projects. So it's all been very well.

Acting Regional Director and Regional Director from 1981 to 1983

Then of course in 1981 I was appointed acting regional director and I served in that until 1983, until I retired. But career-wise, going back to your original question, I felt within me that I had the capability of being a regional director. In fact, I had some people along the way *encourage* me to move in that direction. I loved construction, I loved *that* part of the Bureau, but I also liked the management end of it. In the back of my mind, I guess those are some of the things I learned during Commissioner Dominy and during training back in Washington: You served the people, whether they're water people or power people. And being a regional director, that's your objective, is to serve the water districts or the power districts or whatever they could be. And so it doesn't take an awful lot, but it takes a lot of time to service those entities. But there's a lot of enjoyment of going home and finding out today your water district that you signed a contract with has got 40,000 acres out there and they're growing some quality crops, and they're big on the local market, they're hiring people, they're making money, they're paying taxes, and their kids are going to school, and the whole community benefits by that water district, which is a part of the project, and what they're doing for you. So there's a lot of satisfaction of seeing what Reclamation has *done* in the western states, especially here in California. Without the Central Valley Project, this would be a pretty sad-looking state. Or you could say somebody else might have done it, but I think building Shasta Dam and Folsom and Friant–the various facilities moving water from the north to the south, why, I think tremendous ventures. Well, agriculture is worth about $18 billion to $20 billion a year, and the Federal system adds a good part of that in California.

Storey: Uh-huh. How about your Departmental Management Training Course? How did that come about?

Management Training Course

Catino: Well, you applied for it, to be on that training course. So many names are sent in from each region, and then there's a selection made, say two from Reclamation, two from Fish and Wildlife Service, four from this organization. And so, as a group, why, there's probably, department-wise, oh, in the neighborhood of fifteen to twenty people. So I threw my hat in the ring. I had talked to others that had been on that training program. I thought it would be a good thing to do.

". . . you have an opportunity when you're there to design the program you want. Now, some people have spent time with congressmen up on The Hill, some have worked in other agencies other than the Bureau. I felt I wanted to learn the Bureau inside and out, so I didn't take any outside assignments. All of my assignments were in the various divisions back in Washington: planning, operations and maintenance, contract administration . . . I also went to Financial Management Institute at the war college, I took a series of meetings at Brookings Institute. . . . IBM had various–this was the start of using computers, and IBM ran a series of business management things from the computer aspect. So there was so *many* things. Also, I did some graduate work at George Washington University . . ."

And then you have an opportunity when you're there to design the program you want. Now, some people have spent time with congressmen up on The Hill, some have worked in other agencies other than the Bureau. I felt I wanted to learn the Bureau inside and out, so I didn't take any outside assignments. All of my assignments were in the various divisions back in Washington: planning, operations and maintenance, contract administration, a lot of work within the framework of the Bureau back there. And then I also went to Financial Management Institute at the war college, I took a series of meetings at Brookings Institute. There was always something going on at Brookings which has some people of higher learning, and they have some tremendous international people you could learn from. And IBM had various–this was the start of using computers, and IBM ran a series of business management things from the computer aspect. So there was so *many* things. Also, I did some graduate work at George Washington University, or you could have gone through any school there in Washington that the Bureau or the Interior Department had a contract with. George Washington, so I took a management course there. But the war college had various personnel, management institutes, so there was a whole variety of things to do–whatever you liked–and that's why I use the words "you could design your own training program."

I was asked why didn't I go to some of the other agencies in Interior, but I felt pretty strong about learning what [the Bureau] ~~Interior~~ did in Washington in the various divisional standpoint, that is construction office, power office. I spent some time in the power office. (unclear) mention that. But I think that when you look back, I spent a whole month in planning, and what they did in Washington. Somebody was going on military leave and vacation, so they said, "You go fill his shoes." Well, that's kind of a load, but I worked hard at trying to fill his shoes.

Over in the operation and maintenance area, I helped write a book, sort of a in-house type of book on the various types of contracts that the Bureau has for irrigation water. And some states are different from others, so it was later printed as sort of a Bureau "bible" or instruction type of thing, so I'm kind of proud of that. Other people have worked on it too, and I felt it was . . . The Bureau, I don't know, well, California, I don't know how many contracts they had with water, and it was always some slight difference in these contracts, and other states they have diffferences too. So it was nice to know what went on in, say, the states of Washington and Oregon, compared to California and Wyoming, and so on and so forth. (Storey: Uh-huh.)

So I look back at that, that was probably a pretty smart move, trying to design my own, what I felt I needed to know, designing my own training program, which I had freedom to do, and other people have had the same . . .

Storey: . . . freedom to do. (Catino: Yeah.) How important was the training program in your career?

Catino: Well, I learned a lot of the mechanisms of how the Bureau runs back in Washington in its relationship to the other agencies within Department of the Interior, and the relationship of the Bureau of Reclamation to the congressmen and to the senators up on The Hill. That "machinery," so to speak, is probably the best way, learning how that machinery works, might have added to my ability during career. Certainly meeting all the different people was important–engineers, economists, chemists, fish and wildlife people–just all of the various people that worked for the government agencies that you run across, and listening and absorbing what they have to say. So I found that I was a good listener, and then what I would do is try to run that back through me again the next day or weeks as to what I learned from them. You don't find it in textbooks, you learn it from going to a meeting and how they negotiate, and what's the relationship with the Bureau of Reclamation to the Department of Interior; what is the machinery of the assistant secretaries and all of that. Certainly meeting the people also was important, because take Commissioner Stamm who we haven't talked about. When I went to Washington, he was the head of operation and maintenance, and then better known as the 400 Division in Washington. Later on moved up as an assistant commissioner. So it was that association with people.

Reclamation Staff Generally Are Willing to Explain Things to You

One of the things that I have found through the Bureau, even going back to my days with Barney Bellport as my office engineer in Antioch and Tracy, is I have found that Bureau people when asked to sit down and explain *things* to you, and they're not any . . . Oh, there's probably some degree of snobbishness, "I know something but I'm not telling *you*." But on the whole, Bureau people are *excellent* in their abilities to explain to *other* people what they're doing and what might be of value to you in the future. I can remember going back into–well, when I started with the Bureau in Antioch, I was placed in charge of paying the contractors off for building pieces of the Contra Costa Canal. And here is a very intricate siphon structure, and how do you figure out how to pay the concrete for building on that

structure? I asked Barney Bellport, the office engineer, and he says, "Well, now, over there in the drawer someplace we've got an example of that. And now you get that over there and you come over and you ask Charlie, and Charlie will explain it to you." There was just those kind of folks there. I can remember resident engineers and assistant construction engineers always willing to help somebody. This was a way of getting your work done, is advising people what's going on.

". . . I used to hold staff meetings, and I always found it was important to keep the staff advised on every aspect of what was going on . . . to say, 'Well, we're now delivering "X" number of acre feet of water to this district.' To some of the clerical people, that might not mean anything, but it's nice for them to know that water is being delivered to these various districts. . . ."

Later on as I moved up in the Bureau, I used to hold staff meetings, and I always found it was important to keep the staff advised on every aspect of what was going on–even things that weren't related to the organization, but to say, "Well, we're now delivering 'X' number of acre feet of water to this district." To some of the clerical people, that might not mean anything, but it's nice for them to know that water is being delivered to these various districts. So it was a good part of my career, being able to have that association with people up and down the line, to pass on various aspects. I found that Bureau people were very willing to explain what they were doing to others, and I think that's one of the attributes of the Bureau organization.

Storey: Uh-huh. Before we got off on this career path thing, we were talking about the Commissioners. After Floyd Dominy was Ellis Armstrong.

Ellis Armstrong

Catino: Right. I knew Ellis Armstrong fairly well. He worked with the Bureau of Reclamation, he *was* a construction engineer building a dam, I believe in Utah, and he also was the head of the [Bureau of] Public Roads in the government. Came to his initial love being the Bureau of Reclamation, was appointed as commissioner. I knew him fairly well coming out on trips. In fact, he came out to California a number of times to various program meetings. I met with him personally a couple of times where he wanted me to be assistant director of Bureau of Reclamation in Billings, Montana–later on thought he could twist my arm to be assistant director in Denver, Colorado. But I felt that my opportunities were just as great in the future down the road by staying here in California, but I appreciated his interest in me, and he thought enough to offer me these positions. So I had an appreciation of him. He wasn't a *dynamic* type of commissioner–in fact, he had to depend a lot on his staff more than being a leader, say–quite different, about 180 degrees different than, say, Floyd Dominy, where Floyd was out banging the drum, while Armstrong was not out there banging the drum as much. I don't think Commissioner Armstrong had the overall knowledge of the Bureau of Reclamation compared to Dominy. So you had quite a change in the Bureau from one dynamic leader to one of capable, had some qualities, but a very decided change to the Bureau as far as leadership goes. Quite a let-down in some people's ways of looking at it. (Storey: Um-hmm.) Floyd Dominy was not an engineer, but he'd been around so much construction, he could wear a hard hat as

well as anybody else. But Ellis Armstrong *was* an engineer and so he wore that on his feet quite a bit. But, he was not the dynamic leader that you had, dealing with water users and power developers.

Storey: And then the next commissioner was Gil Stamm.

Gil Stamm

Catino: Right. And Gil Stamm really had the same dynamics as Floyd Dominy. He's a different type of personality, but he had a great following in the Bureau. In fact, he sort of came in on Floyd Dominy's coattails, but he was a very capable commissioner, well known commissioner, and well-liked by not only the staff but the customers or the water and power users. And so I held him in high esteem, as far as being a personal friend–I played golf with him, I visited with him, eaten with him, knew his family fairly well. He kept the Bureau moving along the lines of Floyd Dominy, and he was well-respected, like Floyd was, up on the Hill, being able to present the Bureau's program and what they were doing. So we lost a very good man there when he left office. He had tremendous capabilities.

Storey: Why did he leave office?

Catino: Change of administrations. He was followed by, I believe, Higginson.

Storey: Yeah, Keith Higginson.

Catino: Yeah, change of administration. We went from a Republican administration to a Democratic administration. He wasn't strong enough, I guess, politically, to carry over, like Floyd carried over in a number of administrations. And Gil Stamm wanted to come to California, and a lot of people knew that. And he came out here and he was a consultant for a number of water districts, and he also did some special stuff for the Senate. I believe he worked for Senator [Quentin N.] Burdick from ~~either South Dakota or~~ North Dakota, I don't remember. But he worked on a number of programs *outside* after he retired. That's just kind of a pin point that he had a lot of capabilities, that he was in demand.

I haven't mentioned that a number of these commissioners, including Floyd Dominy and Gil Stamm, also conducted quite a foreign activities area. Now the Bureau is well-known throughout the world, and they kept up foreign affairs pretty well in the Bureau, in loaning their expertise out to build dams throughout the world. I think Floyd has got to have a number of awards from foreign countries. I don't know whether Gil did or not, but I think Floyd did, a number of countries where they worked with Reclamation and his participation in that. (Storey: Um-hmm, yeah.)

Gil Stamm came out and retired out here in California, lives up here in Roseville, so occasionally we played golf together and visited. I was on a fairly friendly basis with him.

Storey: After Gil was Keith Higginson.

Keith Higginson

Catino: Higginson came in during the Democratic reign of Jimmy Carter. I think I said before I have a lot of respect for Mr. Higginson. He put me in the position of being acting regional director here. He wanted to move the Bureau of Reclamation forward, but I'm afraid that some of the people they had in the Department of Interior didn't want to move the Bureau of Reclamation forward, and Higginson had an energetic background, he'd worked up in the State of Idaho as their water resources engineer, and head of that department, and he wanted to move the Bureau forward. We had an assistant secretary by the name of Guy Martin, and some of the other folks were environmentally inclined.

"During the Carter Administration there was a downplay of public works. . . . I think here's a man who had capability, but he got stifled in using those capabilities because of the administration's wish to downplay Reclamation. . . ."

During the Carter Administration there was a downplay of public works. So we had a backlog of work, and we did it well with Commissioner Higginson. I have a lot of respect for him, not only as an engineer, but also as a personal friend. I can call him a personal friend, I've seen him a number of times since he's left office and I've left office, and we always have a very cordial day together. I have a lot of respect for him. I think here's a man who had capability, but he got stifled in using those capabilities because of the administration's wish to downplay Reclamation.

Storey: And then I think the last commissioner that you worked with would have been Bob Broadbent.

Bob Broadbent

Catino: Bob Broadbent, yeah. And I don't hold Mr. Broadbent in too high esteem, because I think he was totally political, political appointee, and had a brief encounter with water development in Southern Nevada, but in another sense, he never managed a big organization. So I don't think he was a very strong Commissioner, and certainly the Reagan people didn't want to push Reclamation development, so it's sort of down pedaling it. During his regime, why, we lost a lot of engineering expertise, what I talked to him about, said, "If you don't move this Project, why you're going to lose these people and they're going to go elsewhere, and so we're going to lose twenty-five-, thirty years of expertise that we can carry from one project to the other." But that didn't seem to phase him. It seemed like he was under other orders. But I don't hold him, from a management standpoint, in a very high regard. And it's really maybe not his fault. I think he was a pharmacist by trade, and a politician, and all of a sudden, running an organization with 6,000-7,000 people and a budget of $500-, $600 million, is a whole new world. It was nothing in his background, in my opinion, that qualified him for this, other than he was a political appointee. He was very high on Senator [Paul] Laxalt's list from the State of Nevada, so that's basically how he got into office. But he was not the dynamic leader that we had in terms of Dominy and Stamm–Higginson–I don't think he could, in my opinion, Broadbent was out of the ballpark. I don't need to really say much more than that. What I've said is I'm

sure shared by other folks that have worked with him in the Bureau. The man just didn't have that . . . There's no use criticizing, he just didn't have the ability coming in–he was a politician, period, that's all.

Storey: Now, if I'm figuring correctly, you must have worked in Mid-Pacific Region under *every* regional director until you retired, from Charles Carey on up.

Catino: When I came here, let's see . . . Charles Carey, I didn't know Charles Carey. I came in 1945, but there's a transition there. I believe Dick Boke, I seem to remember, Carey from '43 to '47. So there must have been some overlap there. My recollection is that Dick Boke was the regional director when I came aboard in 1945. (Storey: In '45?) Right. In fact, I think early in my career I got a letter signed by him for something that I did. I don't remember what it was right now.

Storey: Maybe my years are wrong then.

Catino: I think '45, I thought that Dick Boke came aboard in '44.[9] I came in September of 1945, and Dick Boke was aboard in those days. So I've worked with every regional director after Dick Boke, as I mentioned, came, and Mike Straus got caught up with Sheridan Downey on not being engineers, and so we brought in Clyde Spencer who had been the Construction Engineer on Hungry Horse Dam. He was a real old hard hat construction engineer and came here and brought another viewpoint to management of the front office, because Dick Boke was, I believe, in the soil conservation area, rather than being technically founded.

". . . one thing about Dick Boke, he *was* a manager, and he understood people, and he understood organization, and so I have a lot of respect for Dick Boke as an early-day mover in California. He got a lot of things started. . . ."

But one thing about Dick Boke, he *was* a manager, and he understood people, and he understood organization, and so I have a lot of respect for Dick Boke as an early-day mover in California. He got a lot of things started.

". . . in 1945 . . . Shasta Dam was pretty well completed . . . and Friant Dam . . . But the Friant-Kern Canal and the Delta-Mendota Canal, and the delivery facilities really came after 1945. And so Dick Boke was in charge . . . to get the Central Valley Project back on course after World War II. . . ."

You see, right in 1945, why, you had Shasta Dam was pretty well completed, other than spit and polish here and there, and Friant Dam was pretty well. But the Friant-Kern Canal and the Delta-Mendota Canal, and the delivery facilities really came after 1945. And so Dick Boke was in charge, so to speak, to get the Central Valley Project back on course after World War II. So he was here 'til '53, I think he got here. That sounds about right, because when I came to the regional office in 1950, Dick Boke was the regional director, and Clyde Spencer came in at the same time that

9. Charles E. Carey was regional director from 1943 to 1947, and Dick (Richard L.) Boke served in that capacity 1947-1953. Clyde H. Spencer was regional director from 1953 until 1958.

Dexheimer came in as commissioner of Reclamation.

Barney Bellport

And of course Barney Bellport, I mentioned him before. He was my office engineer when I started with the Bureau in 1945, and he had an illustrious career in California, being assistant construction engineer on a lot of the early-day facilities, and went over and built the Solano Project–namely Monticello Dam, (unclear) South Canal and came here as regional director, and you have it here in 1958. But he also was a man that wanted to go to the Denver Office and someday be chief engineer. So he had a career . . . he never told me that, but I could see the writing that he wanted to go to Denver and become chief engineer, and he became chief engineer under Floyd Dominy. He left here in 1960, I believe.

Storey: I believe you said on the Contra Costa Canal he was the office engineer. (Catino: Right.) What was he like then?

Catino: Well, he was very knowledgeable. He had a little physical problem in terms of his arms and shoulders, so he wasn't taken up during World War II. In other words, he was not part of the military, so he stayed in Antioch during the war years, and he gained a lot of knowledge of that area, and close to the Contra Costa area and San Joaquin area, and the area before the Delta-Mendota Canal.

"Expected eight good hours a day out of you. He didn't like goof offs, and if you did goof off, why, he found you another job someplace. . . ."

But he was a very pleasant guy to work with, always willing to help you. Expected eight good hours a day out of you. He didn't like goof offs, and if you did goof off, why, he found you another job someplace. But he always was capable of attracting good people to work with him, and I look back at some of the staff that he put together, and of course Oscar Boden [phonetic spelling] was the construction [engineer] . . .

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. APRIL 14, 1995.
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. APRIL 14, 1995.

Storey: This is tape 2 of an interview by Brit Storey with Mike Catino on April the 14th, 1995.

Oscar Boden was the construction engineer?

Catino: Yeah, he was the construction engineer there in Antioch, and him and Bellport and a number of others who were not a part of the military during World War II, they were highly intelligent people and knew how to manage construction jobs. Then when we moved to Tracy, why, we brought in some very high-quality people. In fact, I was talking to a newspaperman many years ago who ran the *Tracy Press*, and he kept asking me, "Where did this fellow go? Where did this fellow go? Now you guys all worked here in Tracy." So I went down the line on maybe a dozen people that worked in Tracy, and they all moved to higher jobs. For example, Roscoe Granger,

great construction man: he was the resident engineer on the Tracy Pumping Plant, and he worked on dams, but later in his career he became the construction engineer for the enlargement of Coulee Dam, which included the third powerplant, the biggest powerplant that the Bureau has. And other people, like Max Johnson, who worked as a design engineer, later became construction engineer over on projects in Nevada, and then came back to California to work on the San Luis Dam and projects down in the San Joaquin Valley. Any number of people that worked in that so-called Bowden-Bellport group, all came out later on holding pretty impressive jobs later on. They moved up from field engineers, all the way up to construction engineers, which was a pretty proud group that worked there at Tracy. I was telling the newspaper fellow about all these people that worked in his town but went on to greater heights within the Bureau. It had been a great association, and you learn from those folks that had moved up the line.

But Bellport was a very capable guy and he understood the construction industry about as well as anybody: how big organizations like Morrison Knudson and Bechtel and Guy F. Atkinson–the big names in the construction business. Later on when Bellport became chief engineer, he was on a one-to-one basis with all those big construction companies who built many of the Bureau facilities. But he was a very capable guy and willing to teach, whoever you were, way down the line, whether you were a draftsman or a hot shot engineer, why, he was always willing to teach you.

Storey: Uh-huh. Then he became regional director.

Catino: Yeah, he followed Clyde Spencer. As I mentioned, his career goal was to go to Denver someday, and he went there as an understudy–left here as regional director. He didn't stay here too long, only a couple of years, if I remember right.

Storey: Yeah, '58 to '60.

Grant Bloodgood

Catino: But his goal was to go to Denver, so he left Sacramento and went to Denver as assistant chief engineer under Grant Bloodgood who was another tremendous guy in the Bureau and worked all over on big projects and was now in Denver. He was a very knowledgeable guy of the construction industry, and Bellport went back there as his understudy, and then when Grant Bloodgood decided to retire, why, Dominy was then commissioner and he promoted Bellport into that position. But you knew that Barney Bellport someday was going to be in a high position. And one thing, here he was an office engineer back in the late '40s, moved up as assistant construction engineer, later construction engineer, later regional director, later assistant chief engineer, then chief engineer. You knew of his qualities and his capabilities, that he had that ability to move forward.

Storey: Do you know where he retired to?

Catino: He left Denver and retired over here at Walnut Creek. He did some consulting work, and he passed away here probably about four years ago. I think my timing might be

off on that, but I think four or five years ago he passed away. But he came back out to California. He liked the area here, but he worked for a number of organizations as a consultant–probably could have consulted more, but didn't want to occupy too much of his time with that.

Storey: Yeah. His successor was Pat Dugan. (Catino: Yeah.) You don't happen to know where Mr. Dugan is living, do you?

Pat Dugan

Catino: Well, I thought he was living up here in . . . I haven't seen him in quite a while. I thought he was living up here in Cameron Park. But I don't know where he . . . You haven't ever been able to make a contact with him?

Storey: No, I've never been able to find him.

Catino: Then I heard that maybe he moved to Hawaii, but I'm not sure.

Storey: Do you know if he had any children?

Catino: He had one daughter, as I remember, but I don't know anything about her.

Storey: What was he like as a regional director?

Catino: Very fair, fair guy, knowledgeable. He'd come up through the Bureau ranks and he had worked in Denver in the planning area, and I thought he was very knowledgeable, very strong in having started in, his forte was in planning. He was very knowledgeable of the Bureau and I enjoyed working with him. In fact, I think he appreciated my abilities as well as I appreciated his.

"He offered me a couple of jobs here in the region, and I reneged on them, because I didn't think that was in my career plan. But it was nice to have somebody think well enough of you to offer you a project manager's job, or another job, specialty kind of a job. . . ."

He offered me a couple of jobs here in the region, and I reneged on them, because I didn't think that was in my career plan. But it was nice to have somebody think well enough of you to offer you a project manager's job, or another job, specialty kind of a job. I enjoyed working with Pat Dugan. He had a good feeling for the economic side. He was an engineer, but he had a good feeling for the economic side of projects and how they would pay out. But that came through in his planning effort. He didn't stay here too long, if I remember right. He was here for, what, about three years I think.

Storey: Yeah, two or three years.

Catino: And he left here and went back as regional director in Denver, and then later moved over to the head of planning under the chief engineer's office. He worked for Barney

Bellport in the chief engineer's office there in planning. He retired from there and he was in demand on a number of consulting jobs. I know one that he was involved with, which he talked to me about: it was bringing power from the Missouri River Basin into California by way of Utah and Nevada. And he was working for some power folks up in that particular area, and this was all long-range planning. Really, what it was doing was trying to tie the Missouri River power into California, also by way of tying-in the Pacific Northwest and Montana Power and Light, across the Canadian part of the country. I believe he was also doing some studies with the Canadians, too, in terms of power development. But he was a highly respected planner. He was a good manager. I hold him in high regard.

Storey: After Pat Dugan came Bob Pafford.

Bob Pafford

Catino: Bob Pafford, who you have spent some time with I believe.

Storey: I spent a couple of hours with him, yeah.

". . . this was during the Kennedy Administration, and . . . the commissioner and the undersecretary were at odds as to who should be regional director in California. So the assistant secretary . . . says, 'I know a fellow down in Omaha with the Corps of Engineers who I think would be a good compromise candidate for regional director. He's a man who knows water, he's got good organizational abilities.' And so the compromise candidate was Bob Pafford . . ."

Catino: Dynamic guy. He was a compromise regional director. What I mean by that is this was during the Kennedy Administration, and Jimmy Carr, who was undersecretary of interior, wanted to place a certain person out here as regional director; Floyd Dominy wanted to place a certain person out here as regional director; so the commissioner and the undersecretary were at odds as to who should be regional director in California. So the assistant secretary, whose name escapes me right at the present time, who was from up in South Dakota, says, "I know a fellow down in Omaha with the Corps of Engineers who I think would be a good compromise candidate for regional director. He's a man who knows water, he's got good organizational abilities." And so the compromise candidate was Bob Pafford, and that's how Bob Pafford came here. He was kind of an oddity, because there'd always been some feeling that the Bureau of Reclamation and the Corps of Engineers were at odds with one another. So here's a man who spent a lot of time on the Missouri River and Mississippi in that area there with the Corps–and he was top civilian in the Omaha Office–coming out to California as the regional director. And I have great admiration for Bob Pafford, because he came in with kind of a stripe on his sleeve that he was a Corps man rather than being a Bureau man. But in time, we all learned to respect him for his ability. He worked hard: fourteen-, sixteen-hour day was not uncommon for Bob Pafford. I remember one day he said to me, "Do you know how many Deer Creeks there are in California?" I said, "No, but probably every county's got one." And he used to do his homework on weekends to learn California geography, just like *I* had learned California geography as a young fellow. He'd tour up and down the

state to get a good feeling of where the certain crops are grown, which are some 250 different crops in California. He got to know the country, and he learned California about as *fast* as anybody else. He'd also had a good feeling for Nevada and the Southern part of Oregon, which was in his region. But he learned.

"He probably rolled more money in California from a program standpoint than any of the other regional directors . . . But I believe while he was regional director he holds the record for the *most* money used on construction, planning, and operation and maintenance–probably a quarter of a billion dollars in some years. . . ."

Well, as I say, he was a Corps man, so he had to kind of show, so he showed. He had ability, he was rough as hell, he was demanding as hell on the staff: if you can't get it done in eight hours, you *should* get it done in seven hours. He's kind of one of those guys. But he was a joy in a way to work for, because you had to admire his ability. He talked to you kind of rough, but I always felt there was something to learn from him, and I went on a number of program conferences with him, and a number of meetings up and down the state, so I think in the long run he appreciated my ability and I appreciated his abilities. He probably rolled more money in California from a program standpoint than any of the other regional directors, because of the value of the dollar going up and down. But I believe while he was regional director he holds the record for the *most* money used on construction, planning, and operation and maintenance–probably a quarter of a billion dollars in some years. While he was here, we finished up the Trinity River Project and started on the joint venture with the State of California for building the San Luis Unit. He was right there for the authorization of other projects, and tried to reach some settlement with the Indians in Nevada, which is still *today* unsettled. I think Bob Pafford–I like him personally. I see him once or twice a year now. He always comes to our retirement parties. When you look back at his career, which I believe, let's see, from (Storey: From '63 to '73.) '63 to '73, so he was, when you look here, he was regional director the longest of anybody, right?

Storey: Yeah, probably pretty close.

Catino: Yeah, regional director the longest. Right!

Storey: Do you know the names of the people that Carr and Dominy were supporting for the regional director's position by chance?

Catino: No, it never really got opened. I have my *suspicions* who they were, but I never did really know who they were. It never came up on the table. I remember . . . Pat Dugan left, Bob Pafford showed up, that's the way it was.

Storey: And who was Ed Horton, the person who was *acting* between Pafford and Bill Martin?

Ed Horton

Catino: Ed Horton worked, again, in this Bellport group that I told you about down in Tracy. Ed Horton, during World War II, was holding down the fort in Tracy, and he was the office engineer down there. When we put the Antioch and Tracy offices together, why, Bellport was made the assistant construction engineer and Ed Horton was made office engineer. So while the Delta-Mendota, Tracy Pumping Plant, Delta Cross-channel facilities were being built, Ed Horton was named the office engineer. He was my boss for a part of the time in Tracy until I left to come here to Sacramento. Very, very capable individual. Had no enemies in the Bureau of Reclamation *whatsoever*, well-liked, competent, capable, and could handle just about any situation that could arise. So you have Ed Horton coming out of that same group. Later he left there and went to Winters and was the office engineer for Bellport in Winters, if I remember correctly. Left there and went to build the El Dorado Irrigation District system, Sly Park Dam. Left there and went to Willows, and was the construction engineer, started the Tehama-Colusa Canal. Then that, then Bob Pafford [was] looking for an assistant who had strong construction capabilities and picked up Ed Horton out of Willows and brought him here to Sacramento as an assistant director. When Bob Pafford retired, if Ed Horton really wanted that job, he probably could have been the regional director, but Ed Horton *did not* want to rise above assistant regional director. He made that very clear, that he had reached his "goal," so to speak, and he served Bob Pafford as assistant regional director and made no move to try to become regional director, and Billy Martin was appointed to succeed Bob Pafford. But he was a great interim type to have around. He was, in a way, a second regional director. When Bob Pafford left and we had the period of time, Ed Horton served well. And then when Billy Martin left, he left California to be regional director in *Denver*, Ed Horton acted for a short period of time, and he had no ambition to become regional director. When Ed Horton left, then *I* became the acting regional director under Keith Higginson. But construction people all admired Ed Horton. He had a hell of a lot of knowledge. He was tremendous, when you think back of all the facilities of setting up the design data and shipping it off to Denver, to get canals and pipelines and other facilities into the hands of the Denver people so they could complete the final designs and specifications. He was held in high regard by the Denver design and construction people. So Ed Horton will always have a warm spot in a lot of people's hearts, because he was a very fair guy and did a tremendous job for Bob Pafford and Billy Martin and the Bureau as an assistant director.

Storey: Is he still around?

Catino: Ed Horton passed away a number of years ago. He retired, and I believe within a year of his retirement, he passed away. It's too bad, because he was a registered engineer and could probably–he didn't *want* to, but he could have worked for any construction firm. He had worked on the Central Valley Project and had done a considerable amount of the early-day planning on it. I don't remember when he came to the Bureau, but he was down in Tracy in 1945 when I came to the Bureau at the same time. Super guy to work for, just super.

Storey: Tell me more about Bill Martin and his position. How did he get the job and what was he like as a regional director?

Billy Martin

Catino: Bill Martin was in the planning division in Washington, having served out in Colorado before, I believe–Colorado and Nebraska. He went to school in Arkansas. He worked for the Bureau out in the Midwest there and then went to Washington and was in the planning there. He got appointed regional director while Gil Stamm was commissioner. I think that's correct. And came out here to California, let's see . . . He has a number of years too.

Storey: He came in '74.

Catino: In '74, so he was here for seven years, yeah. He has a strong planning background–I mean Billy–a strong planning background, and good organizational knowledge. He tried to surround himself, and was capable of surrounding himself, with some capable people, and he was well-liked in the building, so that added a lot to it. You know, you say, "What's the strengths and weaknesses of the people?" Where he *was* weak, he'd look to his staff to supply answers to that side of the thing.

". . . I said, 'Why did you appoint me your assistant?' He says, 'I appointed you my assistant because you cover my weak spots.' And that's pretty good for a manager to say that, that a manager would say, 'I've got some weak spots,' but this guy was a tremendous guy. . . ."

And I remember an individual that I worked for, I said, "Why did you appoint me your assistant?" He says, "I appointed you my assistant because you cover my weak spots." And that's pretty good for a manager to say that, that a manager would say, "I've got some weak spots," but this guy was a tremendous guy. In fact, his name was Tom Basey [phonetic spelling] and he ran program coordination and finance, and he promoted me to be his assistant division chief. So one day we were having a cup of coffee, and I asked him that question, "Why'd you appoint me?" "Well, you cover my weak spots." And that to me has always stuck in my memory. I think, in a way, Billy Martin recognized that he'd never been in the construction area, but he had some strong construction people around him. Certainly having Ed Horton up there was a hell of an arm for the construction side of the business. So you have to give him an "A" for being a good man to put an organization together. Billy, like all of us here in the regional director's spot, every one that I've talked to, including myself, has come under some fire politically, or from within the organization politically. Billy's problems with Guy Martin who was an assistant secretary, and Billy got moved out of California and got moved to Denver. But Denver was really *home* to him, having worked in that area. He hated to leave California. So he went off to Denver, and Billy's done a very well, moving up to assistant commissioner in the Denver office, and now is retired, and it's interesting that I succeeded Billy as regional director, and he succeeded me downtown in Sacramento as the Head of the four water organizations. Between him and I have a real good rapport about jobs, so to speak.

Organizations He Managed in Retirement between 1983 and 1989: Central Valley Project Water Association, the North Delta Water Agency, the California Central

Valley Flood Control Association, and the Sacramento River Water Contractors Association

I might mention that the four organizations that I took over after retiring here was the Central Valley Project Water Association, the North Delta Water Agency, the California Central Valley Flood Control Association, which dates way back to about 1925, and the Sacramento River Contractor, those are the twenty-one big pumpers on the Sacramento River who had prior rights on the river before the Central Valley eight projects were built. So those four organizations *I* took over. But when Billy took over from me, he only had three of them, because the Central Valley Project Water Association had broken off into a singular outfit downtown. So, I had kind of a nice setup, moving out of regional director. I went to work for them in 1983, four months after I left regional director, and I took over those four outfits, and I worked up 'til '89. The directors of those organizations were very good to me. They also let me do consulting work on the side. Had an office downtown, paid me well, gave me some fringe benefits that I didn't have here at the Bureau, and so I enjoyed six years of working for water users. But I also went to work for some engineering organizations, as well as some of the districts out there.

Storey: What did each of those organizations–what was their purpose?

North Delta Water Agency

Catino: The North Delta Water Agency is an organization that formed under state law that is able to contract with the state for keeping good water quality in the Delta. Now the Bureau is not a party to that contract. The State makes sure that the water quality in Yolo, Solano, San Joaquin, and Sacramento Counties, for the area below the city of Sacramento, all the way to the Delta, just below Rio Vista–North Delta Agency signed a contract, pays the State $170,000-$175,000 a year to keep good water quality in the Delta Islands, and that the farmers down there could have . . . In other words, the inflows of the bay would bring saltwater into the Delta, and they don't want to pump saltwater for their crops. So the state has an obligation to release enough water from Oroville Dam to keep a good quality of water for these people. So they signed that contract to do that. A big part of that is meeting with the state to make sure that water quality is maintained, also includes the collection of tax money to pay the state as well as the staff for administering the contract.

Sacramento River Water Contractors Association

The other organization, the twenty-one major pumpers on the Sacramento River I mentioned had prior water rights before the State [Water] Project (unclear). Each one of those twenty-one pumpers has a water right capable of pumping "X" number of acre feet from out of the Sacramento River. They also have a contract with the Bureau of Reclamation to maintain that. In other words, the Bureau can't drop the Sacramento River down, say, out of Hamilton City up there outside of Willows, they wouldn't be able to pump, they have to maintain the river at a certain level. They signed a contract with the Bureau. And so what you do there is make sure that the interests of those twenty-one pumpers are maintained both Federally and

state, so that's part of that job.

Central Valley Project Water Association

The Central Valley Project Water Association, which I managed for a period of time there, represents practically all of the water districts within the Central Valley service area, which is from Shasta Dam down to the Tehachapi Mountains in Kern County. Part of it is a lobbying organization at the Federal and state level. Part of it is to support the Bureau of Reclamation's program another part of it is to look into legislation that could have an effect on the Central Valley Project water users. And a big part of it while *I* was there was the various lawsuits that involving Delta water rights, making presentations before the State Water Rights Board to maintain those water rights for the project.

California Central Valley Flood Control Association

And that's the four. Let's see, I touched the river contract, the CVP, the north Delta, and what you'd call the Association, which is the *original* outfit that dates back to the '20s. They are folks that have been instrumental in supporting the Corps of Engineers and the State Reclamation Board for building levees throughout the whole area–levees all the way from, you might say, Tehama County, all the way down through the Delta. And they are an old-time outfit, very politically involved, go back to Washington as the manager of that organization to support appropriations for the Corps and Bureau, keep them abreast. But it's composed of about ninety reclamation districts and cities and counties are members of that Association. But it's purely flood control interests, and you . . .

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BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. APRIL 14, 1995.

Storey: You were saying that it's purely a flood control function for that one.

Catino: Yeah, flood control funds, and any other projects that would enhance the flood control capabilities. I mean, the flood control association has always been behind building a big Auburn Dam, 2½ million acre foot Auburn Dam. They supported the original legislation back in 1965, stand that way today, there's no other answer as far as the flood control people, other than building a big Auburn Dam. They know the value of what Shasta Dam has done, they know the value of what Oroville Dam has done, and Folsom has done. They've been in the forefront every year, for multi-purpose water development. I don't think they've changed their viewpoints in damn near seventy years–they've always been the same.

Storey: How large a staff was it when you were there working?

Catino: You mean downtown?

Storey: Yeah.

Catino: Two people. You're the manager and you have a secretary, a capable young lady who used to work for me here in the Bureau. You had to also turn out a newsletter to keep everybody informed. You do a lot of paperwork, but the secretary, of course, does a lot of it–have to set up the assessment goals for collecting taxes. There's just two of you that do all of this, but on the legislative side, why, you have–on the legislative side, you have good lawyers like George Basey [phonetic spelling] who's a lawyer, had been a lawyer for the flood control and the river contractors for years, so he knows all the ins and outs. So a lot of the legal stuff is taken care of by the attorney's downtown. Engineering-wise, you have the firm of Murray, Burns, and Kienlen who go back to day one as far as flood control. Basically, they're the best experts around for flood control and working with the reclamation districts. So they were your engineering arm. So if you're asking about staff, there's only two of you in the office, but you have some very capable engineering and legal people to help you out on a lot of this. Very interesting job. You also can hire–I hired some Bureau people to help write up material, like the floods of '86, you know. Or you can reach out, I hired an economist to do certain things. So you have that capability to hire other folks.

Storey: So they have some budget to go with this.

Catino: Oh yeah, they're not poor. No, in terms of the Central Valley Project Water Association, we got into discussing the water rights decisions and that were made by the State Board, and what the engineers and the lawyers, participate, we're talking about raising close to a million dollars out of the various water organizations to pay for that effort. In other words, lawyers and engineers don't come cheap. There's a lot of paperwork involved in putting together various exhibits on water rights and the effects of what are the economic impacts and so on and so forth. This is a big ball game, when you start talking about the water rights tied into certain projects.

Storey: Yeah. Let's see, going back to people in Reclamation, I believe Walker Young would have been the first chief engineer when you came to Reclamation. Did you ever meet him?

Driving Piles under the Tracy Pumping Plant

General Comments on Expertise at Reclamation

Catino: No, I didn't meet him. The first chief engineer I met was McClellan. Bloodgood was his assistant. That's the first chief engineer I met. But I think back of all the competent people that came out of that chief engineer's office, I guess I could mention tales and tales and certain people talking about drainage from irrigation. But I remember one guy. We were building the Tracy Pumping Plant, and underneath the Tracy Pumping Plant we put a tremendous amount of piles, wood piling, underneath that plant. And we were driving this piling in hard, blue clay. And we were required to push these piles down anywhere from eighteen to twenty-four feet in there. And we weren't getting that penetration in there in that darned heavy, blue clay. So a design man came out from Denver, and I remember him watching those pile drivers

bang away at those piles. We were getting the tests on the top of the pile–you have to hit it with a hammer and get so much penetration–but we weren't getting the depth on the (unclear). It took that man just fifteen minutes, just looking at that deal, and so knowledgeable, because he'd worked on other big plants over on the Tennessee Valley Authority before coming to the Bureau, so he knew within fifteen to twenty minutes what we were doing with that pile driver was absolutely perfect, as far as putting a big pumping plant on that base. *Those* kind of people were in the Bureau of Reclamation in those days.

I remember people come out and just take a look at the piece of land out there and say, "You're going to have a big drainage problem. You need to get water users out there. If they put water at this end, this type of soil, you're not going to get the penetration, but it's good soil, you can grow tomatoes and peppers on it and so on. But you're going to have a drainage problem, so you need to encourage the water user districts to put some drainage facilities in." We had these people that could come out and see these problems and construction-wise they had all these tests, and they used to run a lot of data back to the Denver concrete tests, drainage tests. Well, we had scientists back there in those days. Those people could pick up the phone and tell you what to do, you could get answers.

". . . we had those kind of people in the Bureau. I don't think you've got those kind of people today, the Bureau hasn't staffed for that activity. They're moving more towards an operation and maintenance organization, rather than anything to do with construction activities. . . ."

We had a slide, when I was regional director, we had a slide on San Luis Dam, we had to fix up San Luis Dam. And we had people out from Denver in twenty-four hours, and we knew within two days exactly what the hell we needed to do. So knowledgeable–we had those kind of people in the Bureau. I don't think you've got those kind of people today, the Bureau hasn't staffed for that activity. They're moving more towards an operation and maintenance organization, rather than anything to do with construction activities.

But you look back at your career, and you can think of certain people, the contribution they had. I remember when we had trouble with the pumps down at Tracy, getting a vibration on some of them. A fellow came out from Denver and looked at them for a day and recommended that certain kinds of shims be put in on them. The pumps weren't vibrating, it was the damned motors that were vibrating. So just within a short period of time, you got an answer. You had people on the airplane, (unclear) coming out and answering your questions, any kind of damages needed to be taken care of.

Storey: So you saw the Denver Office as serving a useful function?

". . . trips to Denver and you'd have to be there for a program review for all week. I always kept *time* out so I could go down to the lab and watch the model makers, get somebody in the lab to explain to me the *models* they made. . . ."

Catino: Oh, tremendous. Tremendous organization. We had people in the labs in Denver, highly interesting. I remember when I used to go back to trips to Denver and you'd have to be there for a program review for all week. I always kept *time* out so I could go down to the lab and watch the model makers, get somebody in the lab to explain to me the *models* they made. I remember the model being made for the addition of the third powerplant at Coulee. They had the models, they run the water through the models, and out the turbines and the generators. What was going to be the effect of running all this water on the downstream side of Coulee Dam? But they had just a tremendous amount of people there that were scientific . . . It was just a *pleasure* to deal with those people. Again, you learned from them. And construction problems were handled in no time at all, you know. But I always felt that the Denver Office was a great adjunct to the Bureau of Reclamation, there was just no question about it. And highly respected throughout the world. They (unclear). A number of foreign engineers had come to the Denver Office to learn and train there. We used to have a whole series of foreign trainees here. I don't know, sometimes we'd have as many as a dozen in this region alone, from India and Pakistan: all kinds of foreign countries would come work in the Denver Office and work here in the field. I remember having two Thailand engineers here: one trained in my division here and wanted to know something about how to put a construction estimate together and how to program it and get it all built out on paper. We had any number of foreign activities going on.

But I always hold the Denver Office–and always will–hold it in high esteem. They had some real quality people. Some people look at it as another layer in the organization, but I think some of that came from the planning side, the planning people would like to deal directly with Washington, but you had this technical competency in Denver. A lot of the things had to be run through the Denver Office before they ever got to Washington on a planning thing. A lot of the local planners felt that it was kind of a bottleneck or something.

Storey: What was McClellan like?

Leslie McClellan and Grant Bloodgood

Catino: I didn't know him too well. His strong suit, as I remember correctly, was in designs. He'd come from the design side. There again, you see, you're organized pretty well, you had Grant Bloodgood, who was his assistant, who came from the construction side. So you always seemed to have that kind of a thing in the Bureau: you'd have, again, the strengths on one, and maybe he had some weaknesses, but picked up by another individual on the other side. But I didn't know McClellan very well. I knew Grant Bloodgood pretty well, having visited with him in the Denver office and out here in the field when he came out here. I remember discussing programs with him as to what . . .

Program reviews in the Denver office to "figure out how much manpower they needed to design a section of canal or a dam or something like that. Before you left them that week, you had a total amount of money that the Denver people were going to charge you during the year for various activities, whether it was

planning, construction, or operation and maintenance. . . ."

We used to have these annual program reviews: the regional people would come into Denver and tell them what their programs were, and then the Denver people would look at the program and figure out how much manpower they needed to design a section of canal or a dam or something like that. Before you left them that week, you had a total amount of money that the Denver people were going to charge you during the year for various activities, whether it was planning, construction, or operation and maintenance. So you had a great bonding between the regional people and the Denver people. I had some great associations in the Denver Office there. But you always came to Denver to tell your story of what your program was. And the regional directors came along and we used to spell out we're ready for designs of this, this, this, and this, and if this doesn't happen, why, we don't get any money. You're talking long-range, you're talking about designing a piece of canal that'd maybe take a *year* to design and then two years to build.

"So you're always talking anywhere from one to five years in advance on how you were going to fund this, and when you're going to program this . . ."

So you're always talking anywhere from one to five years in advance on how you were going to fund this, and when you're going to program this, and what's the politics on this thing and that. So you had an awful [lot of] bonding, as I say, between the field people and the Denver office. And when Bellport was chief engineer, all the top designers sat in the room, and all the division chiefs, and heard the discussions about what the program of this region or other regions were. But, as I say, when you left there, you had a tag on you, how many millions of dollars you were going to need for designs and specifications. I enjoyed that aspect of dealing with the Denver people and learned a lot from that. As you might tell them it was going to be a simple design job, you find out from the Denver people that it *isn't* a simple design job. You also find out that your field people needed to turn in more design data, or create a continuity between the field construction people and the Denver Office. I (unclear) Denver Office. I regard it as a tremendous organization, and it's not there today.

Storey: These program sessions: are they the so-called "skull sessions"?

Skull Sessions

Catino: The skull session really refers to the *Washington* skull session. The program session in Denver was to develop the program and could it be done from a designs and specification standpoint, as well as what it was going to cost. The skull session was always done at the Washington level with the region and Denver people there before the commissioner, develop a number of witness statements, and the skull session was to brief the Commissioner and his staff of the programs of the seven regions that we had in those days, so when he went up on The Hill to appear before the House and Senate Appropriations Committee, he had the best knowledge (unclear), and sometimes we'd have as many as a hundred witness statements, just written on certain things in California, that he felt should be on those.

". . . it was quite an exercise to see Dominy perform before the Appropriations Committee. . . . he would be flanked by his assistant commissioners and program coordination people, and they say, 'Now, Mr. Commissioner, what about this project?' Pretty soon a witness statement thing would come up and he'd look down at that, see . . . what was going on with the project, where we are, where we're going, where we hope to be when we get done here in a couple of years or whatever. . . ."

The witness statement program business started really, it started with the Dexheimer commissionership, but really was enhanced during Dominy's commissionership. And Dominy relied on these witness statements and studied them from "A" to "Z," and he'd be reading them before he'd go up to The Hill and he'd call the regional director and get a little bit more information on this and information on that. But it was quite an exercise to see Dominy perform before the Appropriations Committee. Of course he would be flanked by his assistant commissioners and program coordination people, and they say, "Now, Mr. Commissioner, what about this project?" Pretty soon a witness statement thing would come up and he'd look down at that, see all the (unclear) congressmen or senators what was going on with the project, where we are, where we're going, where we hope to be when we get done here in a couple of years or whatever. So the skull session was a week's show back in Washington. All the regions were there, including the chief engineer's office, and you went over every program from "A" to "Z." And the commissioner got briefed.

Storey: Now, when you got money out of the program sessions, first of all were the Denver Office's estimates pretty accurate?

Catino: Oh, yeah, you mean as far as building something?

Storey: Yeah, in terms of money.

Catino: Yeah. Well, actually, you develop an estimate here from past experience, you know, you have a pretty good feeling what a reach of canal, say a ten-mile reach of canal, (unclear) what that's going to be, and so you work up your own estimate. But you also have a group in Denver that took a look at those estimates for you. So you're talking about two estimates: one for building the job, and that's important to have down, because that's the basis. If you're talking about a ten-mile canal, you're talking about, say, $10 million, a million dollars a mile, just to use that. Ten miles of canal here might not be the same as ten miles of canal over there. It might have different structures and that. So you've got maybe a different design load here, in terms of a different design load over here. So this might take more money than the Denver office, Project "A" compared to Project "B" to design and get the specifications out for that. But the Denver office, the charges from the Denver Office was always, "Oh, you're charging me too much." You know, it's like talking to a lawyer today. "You're charging me too much."

". . . the Denver office would float on the work program. They had a big work program. Why then they had a good opportunity to spread their–called their unidentified costs or your overhead costs, on a bigger base. But if the work

programs of all the regions squeezed in, why then the costs went up, you see, and so you had to be able to supply enough money out of the appropriations that you got every year to get the design work *done*, so you could get the specs out, so you could build the job. . . ."

But the Denver office would float on the work program. They had a big work program. Why then they had a good opportunity to spread their–called their unidentified costs or your overhead costs, on a bigger base. But if the work programs of all the regions squeezed in, why then the costs went up, you see, and so you had to be able to supply enough money out of the appropriations that you got every year to get the design work *done*, so you could get the specs out, so you could build the job. Just a tremendous amount of coordination that was involved. But your primary Denver estimates pretty good. On the whole, you'd say they were *damned* good. Of course you always relished at the fact that you had an estimate here in California, you had it looked at in Denver, and it pretty well agreed with the ten million–ten miles of canal was $10 million. Then when you got the bid, say it came in at *nine* million dollars, a million dollars less, you felt pretty damned good, because that gave you a little bit to float. You worried when you got *eleven* million, and you only had *ten* million, so that meant that some other project had to be slowed up for that million.

". . . program coordination, it wasn't a one-time deal: it is a *constant* day-in and day-out. We've had it here in California, building the San Luis Unit: contractors ate up the money faster than we could get it. Fortunately we had the machinery in the Bureau that we could move money out of the Missouri River Basin, which had snow all over it that particular year. Move money from there to California. And the Third Powerplant had some delays up there so we could move money to California. But during the *next* year, you got to get the money *back* to them . . ."

So you talk about program coordination, it wasn't a one-time deal: it is a *constant* day-in and day-out. We've had it here in California, building the San Luis Unit: contractors ate up the money faster than we could get it. Fortunately we had the machinery in the Bureau that we could move money out of the Missouri River Basin, which had snow all over it that particular year. Move money from there to California. And the Third Powerplant had some delays up there so we could move money to California. But during the *next* year, you got to get the money *back* to them . . . It's kind of an interesting show to be coordinated with the *other* regions, as well as Denver and Washington and yourself out here. We were rolling some pretty big programs, and I say that Bob Pafford rolled better than a quarter of billion dollars a year here. That's a lot of dough, and the Bureau's program is up to maybe $700 million. I don't know what the Bureau program is today.

Storey: Do you remember who coordinated moving that money around?

Catino: Well, it was done out of the Washington office. We had, of course, the assistant commissioner for administration. We had Stan Crosthwait way back when Dexheimer was Commissioner. Then you had Al Golzé who was there during Dominy some of the other assistant commissioners. Don Anderson was assistant commissioner, originally ran programs in finance. All those assistant commissioners

back there that are in charge of administration got involved in programs and budgets. Of course the staff down below is the guys that plan plus and minus. You know, he's got "X" number of dollars. The idea is always to get the money moving around where you can use it. And if it's snowing in the Missouri River Basin and you can't use it, you'd better get it out to California where the contractor *can* use it.

Storey: From what I'm understanding you to say, Denver did the design work?

Denver Delegated Some Design Work to the Region

Catino: Oh yeah, we did some out here. We had what we called "*delegated* design." Fortunately we had a regional engineer here by the name of Bill Crystal [phonetic spelling]. He came from building at Shasta. Been back in Denver years ago. So each region had its own regional engineer and he was held in high regard by the Denver office, so they would delegate certain work out here to Sacramento. We had a design and construction division that handled regional contracts. Denver people would say, "We're too busy," or "That's too small of a job for us to get involved with. It's only four or five million, you do it out in California." And so they would delegate. You know, we had certain design criteria, the regional people would do it. Yeah, we had quite a bit done here. Bill Crystal was a very capable regional engineer and Denver held him in high respect. So they were willing to delegate work to him. Some other regions, I don't think enjoyed that. We were fortunate and had a number of regional jobs ourselves.

Storey: When design work went to Denver, did the Mid-Pacific Region have trouble getting the work back on time? How did the scheduling work?

Felt On-time Completion of Work by Denver Was Good

Catino: I forget. We had some pretty damned good percentages of on-time completion. I think that's what you're driving at, to say the specifications were coming out the first of the year, and did they hit the first of the year, or did they get over, delayed three months or four months. I think our on-time stuff was pretty good. There's some stuff that just fell behind because we didn't get–they needed more data, or we didn't send them enough data, or coordination was kind of sloppy. But on the whole, I'd say we've had it pretty damned good–my experience in this region. We had a pretty good rapport with the Denver Office. There's always a little bit of delay, but most of the time it was close to it. Sometimes we would schedule stuff up ahead, and then we'd go back to the program review, they said, "We can't get that out in twelve months, it's going to take us fourteen months." So there it created some delay. But most of the time they came pretty close. You know, they have their *own* list there. They would go to Washington too and say, "We're going to turn out 200 sets of specs this year." So they were being kept track of the stuff. "Two hundred specs? How many did you hit? How many did you miss?" And so that's the basis of their staffing, "We've got 200 specs to get out this year, and we don't have enough staff." "Okay," the commissioner says, "I'll give you more staff." Then at the end of the year, "Well, you came in here and said you had 200 specs, you needed more people, I gave you more people, now did you get them out on time, or what did you do?" So,

you know, they were under the same kind of scrutiny. We have a lot of statistical information going on. We were trying to meet our deadlines, Denver's meeting their deadlines, Washington's supervising us.

Storey: We're right at the end of our time–actually a little over. I'd like to ask you a couple more questions that I think you can answer fairly quickly maybe. When you were traveling long distances, do you remember the evolution of your mode of transportation?

Travelling on Reclamation Business

Catino: Well, most of the time, by airplane.

Storey: Even back in the '40s and '50s?

Catino: Well, yeah, we had a lot of puddle-jumper airlines. We used to have one here in California–you rode on it, and you come up with the automobile parts and the chickens. If you went from Sacramento to Redding, why . . . But I can remember going to Denver–in fact, I was telling somebody the other day, we'd ride the two-engine DC-3 out of Sacramento to Reno, Reno to Elko, or Ely, Nevada, to Ogden, Utah, and then to Salt Lake and we'd sit and cool our heels in Salt Lake for two or three hours to get a four-engine job that came from Seattle-Portland-Boise to Salt Lake, and then we'd go to Denver. It was an all-day trip. We left at seven o'clock in the morning and got to Denver about five o'clock in the afternoon. So in the early days, why, we rode some slow airplanes. Or there wasn't that much traffic, and you *waited* in airports for hours for connecting planes.

We drove a lot in here. We also rode trains. Used to grab a train here in Sacramento, go to Fresno and get there at noon, do a half-a-day's work, get on the train and come back and get home at eight or nine o'clock at night over there. The highway system was something, you know. In the summertime, a lot of it was still two-lane highways in the '40s and in the '50s. So some of that was kind of nerve-wracking, driving these freeways. They weren't freeways, they were two-lane highways south of Stockton. I can remember two lanes all the way to Fresno.

So talk about transportation, as time went on, why we improved. One of the things we did here in the regional Office, we found it was cheaper in the first part of the '80s, if we had three or four people going someplace, was to charter an airplane, and we would charter an airplane to go to, say, Bakersfield or someplace like that. It was cheaper, when you figure in the cost of chartering and the per diem and all that, why, you were a hell of a lot better off.

But we burned a lot of rubber in this region, a lot of mileage on cars. We had quite a car pool out in back here. We drove a lot, and a lot of us got home pretty late at night many times.

Storey: What about the use of long distance telephone?

Catino: Yeah, we did a lot of that. I forget what year it was the Feds came in with their telephone system. What'd they call it?

Storey: Oh, the . . . Now I can't think.

Catino: Federal Telephone System?

Storey: F-T-S, yeah.

Catino: Yeah. That really opened up the door. Another thing, we got a little fancy around here, and had these speaker telephones and had conference calls, a lot of conference calls, some of that. Well, that would knock down on some of the travel. You'd get three or four people in the room, talking to three or four people in Denver, or three or four people in Washington, why bingo, you could do a lot of that on the telephone.

Storey: Do you ever remember having to get special permission or anything like that to use the long distance?

Catino: Well, when I first started with the Bureau, it seemed like a big thing to make a phone call from, say, Tracy or Antioch to Denver. The boss man was calling the chief engineer. But I never had a big problem getting permission to make a phone call. (Storey: Okay.) But the Federal Telephone System really enhanced the operations of the Bureau, I'm sure. I guess in the early days, there must have been something about getting permission to make a phone call.

Storey: Well, I'd like to ask you now if you're willing for the tapes and transcripts from this interview to be used by researchers both inside and outside Reclamation.

Catino: Yeah, fine and dandy.

Storey: Good. Thank you very much.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. APRIL 14, 1995.
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 1. OCTOBER 25, 1995.

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, senior historian at the Bureau of Reclamation, and Donald Seney, an oral history interviewer for the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Mike Catino in the regional office in Sacramento, California, on October the 25th, 1995, at about two o'clock in the afternoon. This is tape one. [Tape is blank for one minute.]

Newlands Project

Catino: Number one or number two, I forget, and that's on the Truckee River, and it diverts water into just this side of Fernley, and then diverts it over into Fallon there. I was talking to this person over–oh, I know who it was, it was a bellboy over at the Reno Hilton. He wanted to go duck hunting. I said, "Why don't you go up to Pyramid Lake?"

He says, "I can't get into Pyramid Lake," he says, "that's all tribal country."

I said, "Yeah, I know all about the tribe. I've had a lot of meetings with the council and one up at Nixon that I'll always remember, just below Pyramid Lake." But that's an interesting old project there at Newlands.

Storey: Yeah. This is Derby Dam you were talking about at first.

Catino: Yeah.

Storey: Well, we're on, so why don't you two go ahead.

Catino: Go ahead.

Seney: Shall I say, "This is Donald Seney?" I spoke–

Storey: Now we know this is Donald Seney.

Seney: Now we know. I suppose Barb's [Jardee] going to do this–

Storey: Yeah, Barb will do the tape.

Seney: –so she knows my voice.

When did you come here to the Mid-Pacific Region?

Catino: Oh, I came to the Mid-Pacific Region right after World War II, at Antioch, in 1945, but I didn't come to Sacramento until 1950.

Seney: So that's probably when you would have first had some contact with the Newlands Project, in 1950.

Nevada Areas Transfered from the Salt Lake City Regional Office to the Region in Sacramento

Catino: Yeah. We had an office in–the Bureau had an office in Carson City, Nevada. It was under the jurisdiction of the Salt Lake City office, that regional office. It was transferred to– then we were called Region Two. So Region Two was expanded to include that portion of Nevada, and actually, what it did is–

Seney: Do you remember when that was, Mike, the year that was done?

Catino: No, it was done in the early fifties, because I can still see these people from Carson City coming to Sacramento to meet the regional director and the regional staff to get acquainted. So that had to be in the early fifties. We were opposite Town and Country Village in those days. I can remember looking out the window and seeing these guys, four of them, I think, in all dark suits, to come to meet the regional director. I can't remember all the individuals' names, but that was the introduction,

"You're now a part of Region Two," which later became the Mid-Pacific Region, as you know it today. But it added–

Storey: Who was the regional director, do you remember?

Catino: Pardon?

Storey: Do you remember who the regional director was?

Dick Boke and Mike Straus

Catino: The regional director then probably was Dick Boke. Of course, Dick Boke went out the window as regional director in, let's see, I guess it was the '52 election, and Clyde Spencer took over. That's when Dick Boke and Mike Straus, who was then commissioner of Reclamation, neither one of them were engineers. So Sheridan Downey was on their tail for, got to have engineers in those positions. So I'm pretty sure it was Dick Boke was regional director, because he was followed then by Clyde Spencer. Then also *Dexheimer* took over from Mike Straus as commissioner of Reclamation.

Seney: Why would the '52 election have made a difference? Sheridan Downey was put in by [Dwight D.] Eisenhower?

Catino: No, I just use that as a kind of a marker more than anything there. A lot of your regional directors were changed with politics, and changes of that, even though they were not political figures in a sense. In fact, my road up as regional director was really–it was one, about two years into the [Ronald] Reagan Administration.

"Of course . . . there's people or water-user groups that throughout the Bureau says, 'Well, when we have a change in administration, we're going to get that guy out of there. We don't like him,'. . ."

Of course, that's another story, but there's people or water-user groups that throughout the Bureau says, "Well, when we have a change in administration, we're going to get that guy out of there. We don't like him," so to speak.

Harold Nelson,[10] for example, who was regional director in Boise, he had so much political clout that they had a hell of a hard time ever getting him out of there. I don't know how many administrations he served, but he was there for a long time. They even put him on a foreign assignment and still came back as regional director. So I mean, some of them were changed.

The Denver region, they've had a lot of changes in that over the years. Some of them are pretty stable as far as that goes. I'd have to look at an organization book and see how they changed. But there was a tie politically, even though the regional director is not a political position. But they wanted to get you out, they could get you

10. Harold T. Nelson served as regional director in Boise from 1949 to 1972.

out. And the commissioner, of course, was tied politically. Now, a guy like Floyd Dominy, of course, he served under a number of administrations, three or four, if I remember right.

Seney: Let me take you back to the Newlands Project. Did you have any responsibilities? How early did you have responsibilities over the Newlands Project?

In his early career his involvement with the Newlands Project was programming, budgeting, and financing work on the project "it was pretty much an operation and maintenance-type activity. There was no new construction to speak of until the Washoe Project got started. . . ."

Catino: The only responsibilities I had with the Newlands Project was, in terms of my early days here at the Bureau, was the programming and budgeting and financing of the project works over there.

Actually, the old Newlands Project, as such, pretty much was turned over to the water users; the water users operated it. The Bureau kind of overseed it, overseen the operation, but the Bureau had, in the early fifties, it was pretty much an operation and maintenance-type activity. There was no *new* construction to speak of until the Washoe Project got started. So there is a dovetailing of the Washoe Project and the old Newlands Project.

Seney: Right. That begins in '56 and is finished about '65, something like that?

Catino: Yeah, somewhere in there. You have the Prosser Creek Dam, then you had Stampede Dam in the California side, but they both feed the Truckee River, which, as you know, the Truckee River terminates in Pyramid Lake, and it also at Derby Dam diverts water out of the Truckee into the Fallon area, and it goes to Lahontan Dam. Actually, Lahontan Dam gets water from two sources, the Truckee and the Carson River.

Seney: Marble Bluff was built then on the Lower Truckee during that same period, wasn't it?

Catino: Marble Bluff?

Seney: Which is on the Lower Truckee. There's a picture of it right up here behind us, the far left on the top. It regulates the flows into the Lower Truckee.

Catino: Well, it regulates the flows into Pyramid Lake.

Seney: Right.

Catino: Yeah. It was built–tried to tie it to some fishing and environmental improvements and also some river regulations as such. It wasn't a very, well, *expensive*-type job. It's more of a diversion dam than anything else. But it became river control, and it does form a nice little lake there. Let's see, I'm trying to think. I think Don Anderson was the construction engineer on that, as I remember it. It was

administered out of the Carson City office, that construction work.

Seney: I've been told by people in the Carson City office that that office is fairly autonomous within the Mid-Pacific Region, that the Mid-Pacific Region office here kind of focuses on the Central Valley Project. That leaves a lot of latitude over there in Carson City. Would that be your general impression, too?

Catino: Yeah. In fact, fortunately, we had some good people running that office. Ed Momstrom [phonetic] was one; and Bob Whitney; Vern Hanson [phonetic], who later became regional planning officer here in Sacramento, administered that office, supervised it; Max Johnson, who was a premier construction engineer, was the construction engineer on Prosser Creek Dam. So we've had some awful good people over there.

It's true that the Nevada problems in themselves totally related to Pyramid Lake and the agriculture, and fish and wildlife extent around Fallon, Nevada, sort of says, "Get some good people to run it over there," and that's what we did. We put good people over there to run it, and they understood the Nevada problems probably better than the California people did.

The Federal Watermaster

The connection there, of course, is the Truckee River, but you have a federal watermaster now on the Truckee, and so he is concerned with the flows of the Truckees and the tributaries, Donner Lake, and what comes out of Lake Tahoe, also, what comes out of the Carson River and, let's see, I think it also goes into Walker.

Seney: Right. One has all three, right.

Catino: Yeah. Walker River, which is a beautiful stream, and has some great recreation, as well as it feeds the agricultural area around Yerington, Nevada, which grows some of the best hay in the country. It's true, that what you said is absolutely right. We looked for the Carson City office to tie–and it was a stronghold with Paul Laxalt, who was senator, and I got to know the people in Paul Laxalt's office pretty well when I was regional director.

Meetings with Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and Farmers from the Newlands Project

I ran a number of meetings with the Pyramid Lake Indian's council to try and get some consensus between them and the farmers out there in Fallon, Nevada, and in between, you had all the fish and wildlife problems.

Seney: Let me stop you for a minute. How did those meetings go between the tribe? Did you actually bring the tribe and the farmers together at any point for discussions?

Catino: Yeah, I had a few meetings there at Reno at the Ramada Inn, and tried awful hard to bring them together. In fact, I even ran a meeting with the Indian nation out at Nixon, Nevada, and some people thought that I was a little bit off my rocker to go meet with

the Indians, but I felt an obligation, that Pyramid Lake and the tying of the Newlands Project was important to go meet with them. When we'd have meetings in Reno, not all of the Indian council people were there. That Paiute Indian group extends all the way to Winnemucca, and nearly up to Elko, if I remember right.

Seney: And down to Walker. The Walker Indians are Paiutes.

Catino: Yeah. So I'm glad you mentioned that, because that's a pretty big Indian nation there. You don't realize how big it is. But I went to meet with those people. I brought a lot of the good people from Carson City there to explain the hydrology, which was important. Some of those people hadn't got the slightest idea of the amount, and when, and times of the year the water would come past the Derby Dam of the Newlands Project. So it was an educational thing more than anything else.

". . . some of the younger members of the Indian council group were wide awake, and I felt that, in time, if you dealt with them, why, you could probably get some consensus between them and the folks around that farmed in the Fallon area. But there was some elderly Indian people that just sort of felt that the United States owed them something, and they were going to get it all, so to speak. . . ."

But some of the younger members of the Indian council group were wide awake, and I felt that, in time, if you dealt with them, why, you could probably get some consensus between them and the folks around that farmed in the Fallon area. But there was some elderly Indian people that just sort of felt that the United States owed them something, and they were going to get it all, so to speak.

Seney: Do you remember what year this was that you were fostering these meetings?

Catino: In the early eighties. Yeah, in the early eighties we tried to do that. You'd come away from those meetings with some frustrations that you figure that maybe you never could settle this thing. But I understand there's been some progress made over there between the Indian folks and the Fallon folk.

Another thing to know is that there's some Indian council people that farm in the Fallon, Nevada, area. They would like to have their share of water there–

Seney: You mean the Fallon Indians, in this case.

Catino: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Seney: On the Stillwater Reservation. Yeah.

Catino: Yeah.

Seney: Let me ask you about the Pyramid Lake Indians, because I think most people who have observed the Newlands Project problems now would say the primary problems are really between the Pyramid Lake Indians and the project itself. Sierra Pacific Power [Company] is pretty happy. The Fallon Indians, actually, are fairly happy,

now, too. The state of Nevada and the state of California are happy. There's been that interstate allocation of water in Public Law 101-618.

So the real rub is between the tribe, the Pyramid Lake Tribe, and the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District (TCID). In 1973, was when the Federal District Court in Washington, D.C.–I'm sure you remember Judge Gesell–laid out the OCAP [Operating Criteria and Procedures] in 1973. Were you here in the Mid-Pacific Region then when that happened?

Catino: Yeah. Yeah. But OCAP was before–there was an earlier one. Bob Pafford was regional director in those days, and, let's see, then later Billy Martin inherited some of that over there. Bob Pafford spent a lot of time in Nevada on OCAP and meetings with the Indian nations, a pretty tough ball game. There was a certain amount of suspicion when this–I thought the–well, one of my objectives was to set out with the Indian people on one side of the ledger, their wants and needs–their wants and needs are two different things–and where the federal government was coming from, and to get this pretty well documented.

It seemed like we were meeting a lot, but we were never getting things documented. I felt that we weren't making enough progress on this. In fact, I had recommended to the project manager, who was–his first name escapes me, Nelson was his last name–anyway, to draw up this kind of a memorandum or some kind of a report. A few of the Indian people didn't think that that was necessary, but we were meeting and not getting anything down as to what was of value, or we were just talking, you know. But I understand later on that there was some points written down, and there was some discussion, and some of them were problem-solving type of things, so they have made some progress.

Seney: Let me ask you the question this way. The Newlands Project goes on from 1902, really, I suppose, 1913, when the diversions began from the Truckee River, to 1964, without much change.

Catino: Right.

Seney: The farmers really were the primary players over there. The interests of Nevada were oriented in the direction of the farmers. The Bureau was certainly regarded as the farmer's friend, a minimum presence, the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District runs things. In '64, Secretary Udall appoints the committee which begins to look into the diversions from the Truckee, and it's very clear that the farmers are just taking everything they can take. Remember the winter power generation that they were generating power in the winter that they were diverting from–they weren't irrigating with it, they were running it right through Lahontan and through the penstocks, and generating power, and paying off the project with that. Remember, that stopped in 1967. There was an OCAP then, a kind of mild one. Then Judge Gesell's OCAP in '73.

I would think from the headquarters here things must have really looked like they were changing out there in Fallon. Can you kind of remember the feeling here

in headquarters as these things are developing and as the relationships are changing towards–

Catino: Yeah, I think–going back to Bob Pafford's time, and Ed Price was the principal engineer that we had here in this office, and the people that we had over in Carson City, I think there was a feeling of progress was just over the horizon, and that we were going to settle it without going to court. But that seemed to change a lot, and we went to court just about every darn turn of the way. I don't know how many court suits. I know I testified in federal court in Reno, and I know the U.S. Attorney got mad at me for what I said, but I tried to bring into focus the Washoe Project relationship to the Newlands Project, that the Washoe additions of Stampede and Prosser conserved water and tried to bring it into Pyramid Lake, to enhance their fisheries. In fact, the federal government put up money for fisheries at Sutcliffe up there at Pyramid Lake.

There is this Lahontan cutthroat trout, which was at that time being touted as, and I guess it is, one of the best trout around. It was a delicacy type of thing and it was going to be developed in Pyramid Lake and you would sell it to some of the Nevada casino resorts as a top-quality fish. It was also going to be reared and catched and frozen and shipped, and it was going to be a commercial endeavor there. So here's an industry that we were trying to develop with the Indian people. There's a small hatchery at Sutcliffe, and I don't know to this day what has ever happened to that.

Seney: There is still a hatchery there. It's bigger.

Catino: We even talked about–remember Ed Price was developing with the Fish and Wildlife people various netting kind of arrangements so that we could spawn fish in Pyramid Lake and capture them. So we were doing some things. There was some happiness as to what the federal government was doing.

Seney: I'm trying–what I really want you to talk about is–let me tell you what I'm thinking here. I'm thinking that probably a lot of people in the Bureau probably weren't very happy with this change of, shall we say, political alignment here, where the tribe now becomes more influential.

Catino: Right.

Seney: The normal natural historic ally and friend of the Bureau, the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District, is beginning to go down in terms of its influence.

Catino: Right. I would say that your vision on this is correct.

Seney: Now, let me comment on the spawning in the lake itself and the fish hatcheries were suggestions that could maintain the fishery without necessarily pumping a lot more water into the lake.

Catino: That's correct.

Seney: That was the basis for those suggestions.

Catino: Yeah. Right.

Seney: So from the Indian point of view, this was kind of more business as usual from the Bureau and the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District. What the tribe really wanted was more water, the lake level back up, the natural spawning run, and I know you've heard them describe this as *very* important to them culturally as they all gather to harvest as the fish are running up the Truckee River. So I'd like you to kind of–see, I would think if I were here in the Bureau in 1967 and I see these changes, 1970, 1973, I'd say, "What the hell is going on out there?"

Catino: Yeah. You've got the right perspective here. You're now moving from an established agricultural economy around the city of Fallon, the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District. You've got farmers there that have certain acreage. They're growing various crops. One of the crops that they grow over there is a very fine cantaloupe, and it's considered a gourmet-type cantaloupe. I think they call it Nevada Gold or something.

Seney: Heart of Gold?

Catino: Yeah, Heart of Gold cantaloupe. Other types of crops. They have cattle over there. So this was a economic base for the city of Fallon and the surrounding area. Now, there's a military–the Navy has a place there, and that employs them. But agriculture around Fallon was pretty big, and it was supported. The Bureau thinking supported that.

But over on the other side, and I compliment you that you've got the right vision on this thing, is now you have the Indian nation saying, "We want more. We want more water, and we want more water into Pyramid." In fact, there was some discussion that the Indians would develop casinos along Pyramid Lake. The fishery thing was a business that was aided by Fish and Wildlife and the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Congress was supporting it to develop this fishery industry to employ Paiute Indian members.

So here is this nice–and Pyramid Lake is a nice lake, there's no question about it, and its capacity was being reduced because a certain amount of water was being diverted, so as a result, the Indian people say, "They're taking too much over here at Fallon." And Fallon people say, "Well, they don't need all this water over there. They got nothing going for them over there." So you had a pretty tough problem trying to fight it. I think his name is Garry Stone, is the federal watermaster.

Seney: That's right.

Catino: I think he's done a very good job. I haven't kept track over the last ten years or so, but I hear fine things about him as to mediating the water from the California side into Nevada. That's where Nevada gets its water. It comes out of Lake Tahoe and Stampede and Donner Lake, and also Walker Lake, and the Carson River, which has

no storage on it to speak of at all.

Seney: Let me ask you. You mentioned the Congress. Do you remember when Senator [Edward M.] Kennedy and Senator Tunney came out to the Pyramid Lake Reservation in 1968?

Catino: I believe so. I don't remember the exact circumstances. I wasn't that involved in the thing.

Seney: I was just curious, because some people regard that as kind of a turning point in terms of the political support for the Indians, when they came out and said, "We'll never let this lake die. We'll look after you," and so forth.

Catino: Well, politically, why, it was fashionable for some of these congressional people who had *ignored* the Indian people for years, and now it looks like maybe we ought to do something for them. We can't let them starve, or we can't–when you look back, the Indians haven't been treated all that bad. There's been opportunities for Indians to do things. I admire those that have set up businesses and got into various industries to support themselves and their families, but there's opportunities there.

Seney: One of the factors that we haven't really mentioned, kind of alluded to, is the Endangered Species Act, which was passed in 1967. The cui-cui was one of the first listed fish as an endangered species. Do you recall that? Again, I'm thinking in terms that I mentioned a few moments ago, and that is how things are changing, and now the kind of spot the Bureau finds itself in, instead of being a good guy here, it's now looking as though it's maybe–

Endangered Species Act and the Newlands Project

Catino: Yeah, I think the endangered species put another focus, so to speak, on what is involved. You had the Lahontan cutthroat trout and the cui-ui, and you now have a recreation area or an environmental area that needs attention, and some of these things are brought out.

". . . the Newlands Project per se was really . . . the authorization . . . focused agriculturally. . . . So you now have taken . . . this farming economic base over here, and you're now going to tamper with it to take care of this over here, which is Pyramid Lake and the Indians . . ."

Now, it's true, the Newlands Project per se was really, when you look at the authorization of it, and I haven't looked at it for a good many years, it's focused agriculturally. These other things were over here on the side. So you now have taken, again, this farming economic base over here, and you're now going to tamper with it to take care of this over here, which is Pyramid Lake and the Indians, and you don't readily see the results over here, but you do see this farming economy over here.

"It's just like you're in California when you start saying, 'We're going to take a

whole big block of water away from the farmers to support fish in the Delta.' What does that do to the economy, if you say, 'We're going to take water out of Sacramento Valley and we're going to have to cut back on the rice agriculture in Tehama, Colusa, and Yolo Counties?' You're taking money away from the school districts to support the kids to go to school, or the deputy sheriff, or the county health, or so on and so forth. . . ."

It's just like you're in California when you start saying, "We're going to take a whole big block of water away from the farmers to support fish in the Delta." What does that do to the economy, if you say, "We're going to take water out of Sacramento Valley and we're going to have to cut back on the rice agriculture in Tehama, Colusa, and Yolo Counties?" You're taking money away from the school districts to support the kids to go to school, or the deputy sheriff, or the county health, or so on and so forth.

Some of these counties do not have a–I kind of relate some of these northern Sacramento Valley counties with those over there in Nevada. They don't have a big economic base. There isn't a Packard Bell or an Intel or a Ford Motor Company, where they could lean back. Now, it's true, there are some small lumber industries in Tehama County, and let's see, there's a–

Seney: I'm going to have to stop you here, because Dr. [Brit Allan] Storey has forbidden me to talk about the Central Valley Project. I can only talk about the Newlands Project. (laughter)

Catino: All right.

Seney: Let me ask you. I take it when a person becomes regional director, you go back to the commissioner's office, and he has a chat with you and says, "Now, Mike, when you get out there, I want you to do certain things, and this is what we're interested in." Do you remember what he told you about the Newlands Project? Did he talk to you about the Newlands Project?

Catino: No, actually, I had to tell him, bring him up to date. Bob Broadbent was the commissioner, and although he was a Nevada fellow–

Seney: That's right. That's right.

Catino: –he was raised in Ely, Nevada, and his life was really Boulder City, Nevada, I have to admit that the southern part of Nevada doesn't always worry too much about the northern part of Nevada, although he had a feeling for this project. In fact, I was in a meeting with Bob Broadbent and the attorney for the Indian nation–

Seney: Bob Pelcygar?

"I had a hard time finding what the agenda was from Commissioner Broadbent as to what he wanted to do in Nevada. . . ."

Catino: Yeah, that's right. We didn't really knock it off too well, to tell you the truth. I had a hard time finding what the agenda was from Commissioner Broadbent as to what he wanted to do in Nevada. That's putting it kind of mildly, but I had a hard time getting that out on the table as to which way he wanted to go with the things in Nevada.

Seney: Did he ever give you any signals finally, or did he pretty much leave you on your own?

Catino: No. No. He left me on my own, and a lot of times I felt I was on my own with not an awful lot of help. I could sense from meetings between Broadbent and Pelcygar that it was like plus and minus on a battery and it was going to be a hard road. So what you do as a regional director, you try to stay aboard of the facts, and you report them, and you tell your people in Carson City, "Keep working and see if there's some areas that you can find consensus on."

Seney: Did you deal with the Nevada congressional delegation on these matters, do you recall?

Paul Laxalt, Barbara Vucanovich, and the Newlands Project

Catino: Well, let's see. The congressional people that I dealt with on Nevada problems was through Laxalt's office. I had good rapport with Laxalt's people in Carson City.

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Storey: . . . mostly with Bill somebody who was Laxalt's administrator?

Catino: Yeah, he was the administrator officer in Carson City. I can't think of his last name right now. He had a very capable gal there in the office, too, and her name escapes me. But they were competent people that Laxalt had there.

Seney: Laxalt was very interested in the Newlands Project, was he not?

Catino: Oh, yes.

Seney: Were you kind of on notice from his office to keep them informed? Did they make it clear they wanted to know?

Catino: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Well, we actually kept Laxalt people informed through our office in Carson City. In fact, the senator's office was downstairs and our office was up on the next floor, if I remember right, so all of the project managers in Carson City kept Laxalt's office very well informed.

Now, later on, you have a congresswoman by the name of Barbara Vucanovich. But she came in after I–

Seney: And she's still there.

Catino: Yeah. After I left here. We tried to do a good PR job around. I met with the mayor of Reno, a gal, and I met with, well, some of the water district folks in Nevada, but the main focus was through Laxalt's office.

Seney: Did you deal with Roland Westergaard at all?

Roland Westergaard

Catino: Yeah. Roland Westergaard was the state engineer there, and they also had a very competent water-rights guy there, Morros.

Seney: Pete Morros?

Pete Morros

Catino: Pete Morros. Yeah. Very competent people. Nevada's got some good engineers, and understand the water problems. Water is so small in the northern part of Nevada, you know. You mentioned the Newlands Project, but you've got other small projects around. One of the things in Nevada engineers are all pretty well alert to is the last drop of water around there. So you had good feelings with Roland Westergaard and Pete Morros.

Desert Research Institute

Another thing we had there to keep people informed is the Desert Research Institute out of the University of Nevada. We always had, let's see, I think two or three meetings a year. We had a very sizeable agenda. It wasn't intended to be a problem-solving group, because it had no political base, but it did bring together the Fish and Wildlife people, state people, and the federal people. It was an awful good forum, and I hope they still continue that today. I don't know whether it's still in business or not. But we'd have one meeting in the southern part of the state a year, and one in the northern part of the state.

Senator William Pittman

You know, it's interesting. You're on this Newlands Project. I believe Senator [William A.] Pittman goes back into this thing. His home base was Tonopah, Nevada. I was in the hotel dining room there in Mizpah Hotel dining room in Tonopah, and here's–they have a Pittman Room, and there's a plaque up there. He was one of the early senators, but he was involved in the Newlands Project. If you go back into Nevada history, why, you can appreciate some of these early political people had a viewpoint, "We need some water. We need to develop some water," and it's also true, of course, in California, but here's a pretty dry state.

"You know, Nevada's pretty dry. When you get below the Walker River, why, you've got to go all the way to Las Vegas to get a drop of water, really. Most of

it's on wells or small streams . . ."

You know, Nevada's pretty dry. When you get below the Walker River, why, you've got to go all the way to Las Vegas to get a drop of water, really. Most of it's on wells or small streams or–

Seney: Yeah. Let me ask you–I guess I do have permission to talk about California politics with Mr. Catino. Let's shift gears a little, can we, to California?

Catino: Yeah.

Seney: Because if you remember when we first met, we were just chatting generally about this and that and the other thing, and we began to talk about the congressional delegation here in California, and you were relating some of your experiences with the California congressional delegation. I'm assuming that as regional director you're not really involved intimately with the day-to-day operations of the office. You've got subordinates and adjutants who look after that, and you're casting your gaze out at the community and the political problems and that sort of thing. Of course, necessarily, the congressional delegation comes into view there, we talked about some of the people, John [E.] Moss and Congressman [John J.] McFall and [Harold T.] "Bizz" Johnson. Why don't you give me a just a kind of general view of how you saw your relationship with the members of Congress.

Relationships with Members of Congress

Catino: The relationships varied with each member of Congress.

Bizz Johnson and Clair Engle

Bizz Johnson is a good example, but he succeeded Clair Engle, who was a sort of mountain states congressman. Clair Engle goes way back into the, oh, the fifties, and he was out of Red Bluff, and later became a senator. It's kind of amazing that this little pipsqueak of a guy out of Red Bluff, California, becomes a senator in California.

Jimmy Carr

But I asked Jimmy Carr one day. Jimmy Carr was one of our employees. He was the district manager for the Bureau in Chico, and later came to work for Sacramento Municipal Utilities District, and also the–

Seney: He was the manager for many years there, was he not?

Catino: Yes. Yeah. And also he headed the airport in San Francisco, became under secretary under Stuart Udall. I just bring Jimmy Carr's name up because it's important to know, well, how did this little congressman out of Red Bluff, California, become a senator? How does an unknown? Well, it's true that Clair Engle never let any grass grow underneath his feet, but he got involved with the Chandler people in Los

Angeles, the newspaper people, and the movie people. They were the people that supported him and he was pro-development. So he's one of the early-day congressmen that you look to, and he was in on the Trinity River authorizations and he was always there for the Bureau of Reclamation. He knew the *value* of water and power, and what it meant to the economy of the state, as well as to the nation. But the same viewpoint was also shared with Congressman Bizz Johnson. But when Bizz Johnson first went to office, I believe that was around '54, '55, somewhere in there.

Seney: He succeeded Engle?

Catino: Yeah. He succeeded--

Seney: That would have been '58, then, when Engle was elected to the Senate.

Catino: '58. Yeah. Okay. All right. Then you had some pretty powerful guys in Bizz Johnson.

Johnny Moss

Johnny Moss here in Sacramento, who was always looking out for this particular area, especially the power development, he was a friend of SMUD's [Sacramento Municipal Utility District]. He got SMUD to be a preference customer of the CVP.

John McFall

Then you had John McFall out of the Manteca area, San Joaquin, the upper part of the San Joaquin Valley.

Bernie Sisk and other Members of Congress

You had Bernie [F.] Sisk out of the Fresno area, who was there for the joint authorization of the San Luis unit between the state and the feds. Well, you still have Thomas from out of Bakersfield, has always been pro-water development. You had some people in, let's see, one is Paulson [phonetic], he was a congressman out of the southern part of the state. Don Clausen, who was over here on the West Coast, the redwood empire area, which included the Monticello area, Berryessa Project, and the Solano Project.

Tony Coelho

But as a regional director, and even the guys that I succeeded, we all had a political tie, especially with the staff. One congressman I didn't mention was Tony Coelho, who was very influential in San Joaquin Valley, and later became what, the number-one guy right below the speaker. What do they call him, the Whip, because, course, he was an administrative assistant to Bernie Sisk, and he succeeded Bernie.

". . . John Moss, Bizz Johnson, Bernie Sisk, John McFall, those were the big gunners. They looked out for the Central Valley from Redding all the way to

Bakersfield. . . ."

You've got a number of congressmen in here that were always on the phone somewhere or other with them on some problem or another. But you look back at the so-called big guys of John Moss, Bizz Johnson, Bernie Sisk, John McFall, those were the big gunners. They looked out for the Central Valley from Redding all the way to Bakersfield.

Seney: Can you recall any instances when you would appeal to them for support, when you give them a call and say, "Listen, we need this"?

"Regional directors, you really didn't go ring their [members of congress's] bell. . . . I always played the game according to the rules. . . . the rules are you work with the commissioner of Reclamation. He's a political guy. So you can always tell the commissioner that you been talking to Bizz Johnson's office, or whoever's office, and they seem interested in it, they will support this, and that we need some help out of the commissioner and the secretary of the interior, especially in appropriations. . . ."

Catino: Regional directors, you really didn't go ring their bell. If you wanted to bring that attention, I always played the game according to the rules.

Seney: Tell us what the rules are.

Catino: Well, the rules are you work with the commissioner of Reclamation. He's a political guy. So you can always tell the commissioner that you been talking to Bizz Johnson's office, or whoever's office, and they seem interested in it, they will support this, and that we need some help out of the commissioner and the secretary of the interior, especially in appropriations. That's where the help is.

Leo Panetta

I failed to mention that Leo Panetta, who is now [Bill] Clinton's right-hand man, who was very influential in the San Felipe Project, as well as Norm Mineta, who has left the Congress in and San Jose, was also involved in there. Those were a couple of pretty big guys, and they were influential in the San Benito County area in getting water into that agricultural area. So on the whole, there's been some very good congressmen.

Vic Fazio

Now, I always appreciated the fact that Vic Fazio, who is a congressman from this area, his district has kind of changed quite a bit. He's solid over in Solano and Yolo County, and now his district moves up more up to Redding. Vic took time out and we chartered an airplane, and we did sessions up and down the valley, and we also would include the Corps of Engineers, so the Corps of Engineers could go over their project. But you see, Vic was on the–he still is on the appropriations committee, and very influential. I guess he's the ranking Democrat now in the appropriations

committee. But Vic, even the first day he went to the Congress, was always interested in water development. I'd like to see him more interested, but he had a constituent to worry about. He had some friends on the environmental side, so he had to pay attention to them, too. I would say that Vic was a very *capable–was* and *is* still–very capable as far as water development.

Seney: Let me get you to talk about politics, kind of in a specific way, and that has to do with the Auburn Dam. I'm sure you've been involved with the Auburn Dam for years and years.

Auburn Dam

Catino: Yeah. Yeah. I can remember when it was a dream in Bizz Johnson's eye. We were just finishing Folsom Dam.

"I was back in Washington at the time with Barney Bellport, who was the regional director here. We went up for a meeting up in Bizz's office. . . . Bizz was telling Barney that we now were finishing up on Folsom, we need to get started on Auburn, and 'I'm going to introduce the bill and get it authorized.'. . ."

I was back in Washington at the time with Barney Bellport, who was the regional director here. We went up for a meeting up in Bizz's office. It was more of a courtesy type of meeting. Bizz was telling Barney that we now were finishing up on Folsom, we need to get started on Auburn, and "I'm going to introduce the bill and get it authorized." Let's see, I think it was authorized in '65, if I remember right. So that was a preview to this.

Now, Bizz had been talking about Auburn for years, and the Bureau had been studying it, the state had been studying it. You know the history of Folsom, for example, which was built by the Corps. The dam was built by the Corps, and the Bureau built the powerhouse, and they also built Nimbus Dam down below. But Bizz had a lot of focus on Auburn Dam, and it's unfortunate that here's a man that worked so hard in the Congress, going around playing his chips, so to speak, to–"I'll take care of your project, you take care of mine." I'm not talking out of school; that's the way the things are done.

Seney: Sure. Absolutely.

Catino: "You take care of something down in Louisiana, and I'll take care of something in Red Bluff, California."

Seney: I'd like you to talk a little bit about that, how those coalitions are built and what, if any, role did you play, or the Bureau play, to your knowledge, in that?

Many Project Studies Are Caused by Interested Members of Congress

Catino: We try just presenting the facts, and that this is a project which has a proper benefit cost ratio of three to one. It's surprising that when you study these projects, of

course, a lot of these studies are instigated by the congressional members, where there's a group of people out here, water users saying, "You know, we got a live stream out here, congressman. Maybe we ought to get the Bureau or the Corps to make a study on putting a dam on that stream, and some pipes, and we think we've got a project here." So the local constituency will work on the congressman to get an authorization for that particular study.

Seney: Did that happen with the Auburn Dam, do you know?

Catino: Oh, yeah. The Auburn people, the Placer and El Dorado county people, have been interested in Auburn Dam since *way* back in the fifties. I think those two counties, their water resources people have always felt that Folsom was inadequate before that.

". . . Folsom was authorized originally at 400,000 acre feet and later was built up to 1,000,000 acre feet, and one of the individuals that was influential . . . was one congressman Clair Engle. . . ."

In fact, if you go back in history, Folsom was authorized originally at 400,000 acre feet and later was built up to 1,000,000 acre feet, and one of the individuals that was influential in moving it from 400,000 to 1,000,000 acre feet was one congressman Clair Engle. If you go back into the hearings of it, you'll see where Engle was explaining the original authorization, and he's telling the–I forget which congressman it was, "We're now going to build it to 1,000,000 acre feet." Well, the congressman said, "Don't you [need to] come back and get a new authorization for that," and that's when Engle says, "That's what I'm trying to tell you. We're getting a new authorization to make it 1,000,000 acre feet."

Seney: Why would Engle be interested in a dam out of his project? Was that a trade-off for the Trinity, do you think?

Catino: No, Engle covered that area.

Seney: Oh, he did at that time. Ahh.

Catino: Oh, yeah. You know, it's very interesting to look at the district alignment.

Seney: Of course. What am I thinking. Of course, Bizz Johnson covered that area, too.

Catino: Bizz Johnson covered all the way from the Oregon border clear down to Indio (sic) County, all along that. Poor old Bizz just wore out transmissions on Buicks running up and down those mountain counties off of Highway 49, and Clair Engle did the same thing. There wasn't much votes in the Inyo County or over there near Bishop, and Lee Vining, over on that side of the mountain, but Bizz would cover those folks. I can remember George Campbell, who was his administrative assistant, he says, "I drive part of the time and Bizz drives part of the time, but we're going to see all those folks on the eastern slope, all the way up the line."

You see, Auburn was of interest to the two counties, it was Placer and El

Dorado County, but Clair Engle knew that, and the folks up there. You had two strong–you had the Placer County and El Dorado County water agencies who were an advocate of Auburn Dam.

John Doolittle

The area today is covered by Congressman [John] Doolittle, who's got a well-oriented mind. He was a state senator here, he's been involved in water development, and he comes from the area and knows the value of a water project.

Seney: And is now chairman of an important subcommittee.

Catino: Yeah. With the Republicans in, he's the head of the authorizing committee for projects.

Seney: Let me go back to the Auburn Dam, and Bizz Johnson wants the Auburn Dam. Obviously, he's not going to do it alone, as you said. Somebody wants something in Louisiana, somebody wants something somewhere else. Do you remember any of that kind of goings-on?

Catino: Yes. Yes.

Seney: Tell us about that.

The Way Members of Congress Assist One Another with Pet Projects

Catino: I can remember that–I'm trying to think of the chairman's name of the appropriations committee, good lawyer from down in Alabama. Gosh, I don't know why his name skips me right now, but he was chairman of the appropriations committee, and Bizz Johnson had him out here for a tour of Auburn, and we took–oh, why can't I think of his name? But anyway, his statement was that, "Bizz has helped me out down here in Alabama, and when Bizz says it's time to go with Auburn, we go with Auburn." This has been payoffs.

I can remember when Commissioner Dominy was in office and he would speak in high terms of Congressman [Wayne] Aspinall, who was very influential in Colorado on Animus LaPlata, and some of those projects up there in the mountains. You'd find that a congressman from California says, "Wayne, when you're ready in Colorado, we'll be there to help you, and don't forget our project out in California."

So as a regional director and assistant regional director, before that I was in the programs and finance area and making budgets, and you had a great feel for the politics. You knew when these projects were going to move.

". . . you couldn't ask for a better situation than building on the San Luis Unit where you had state and federal. It was a joint project. You had all the state people behind it, and all the federal. You had the state putting up 55 percent of the money and the feds putting up 45. . . ."

When you just look at tiers, you couldn't ask for a better situation than building on the San Luis Unit where you had state and federal. It was a joint project. You had all the state people behind it, and all the federal. You had the state putting up 55 percent of the money and the feds putting up 45. You could ask for no better combination than that. There was never a problem on appropriations, because you could always say to the appropriations committee, the state was putting up 55 and the feds can't be chintzy for their 45.

". . . as a result, the San Luis Unit of CVP was built ahead of time. It has the lowest engineering costs of any of the CVP projects, because it moved so fast. Then we had awful good weather. . . . we assumed we would be down maybe two months out of the year, but it never rained on the west side of the valley. . . . *way* ahead of their time . . . we finished the project in good shape and the state got to deliver its water to Kettleman City by 1968, and on into Bakersfield, and over the hill. . . ."

So as a result, the San Luis Unit of CVP was built ahead of time. It has the lowest engineering costs of any of the CVP projects, because it moved so fast. Then we had awful good weather. When we programmed it, we assumed we would be down maybe two months out of the year, but it never rained on the west side of the valley. So we had contractors that were working *way* ahead of their time, and as a result, well, we finished the project in good shape and the state got to deliver its water to Kettleman City by 1968, and on into Bakersfield, and over the hill.

Seney: Did you ever find yourself in this period before the state legislature, or observing, maybe, a committee hearing where federal people are saying to the state committee, "Listen, we're putting in 45 percent, and all it's going to cost you guys is 55 percent"?

Catino: Well, it's pretty much the theme all along. I can tell you this, that the other regions of the Bureau of Reclamation, like the Northwest and the Utahs and the Colorados, and the people down in New Mexico, says, "You've got quite a *deal* going out there. You've got all this *state* help. You're moving so damn fast, you're taking money away from New Mexico."

There's some projects you *can't* move money from one to the other, like Boulder Canyon or the Central Arizona Project. You couldn't move money from them, but you *could* move money out of Columbia Basin, if their contractors would slow it up, you could move money into California. So you had this good tradeoff, but the next year, of course, you had to give it back to the Northwest, because they had the third power plant of [Grand] Coulee going up there in construction.

Seney: You know, one thing the tape can't see is you're kind of smiling when you're telling us this.

Catino: Yeah. I'm glad you bring it up.

Seney: You're kind of pleased.

Catino: I enjoyed some of my best moments as being the banker, so to speak. In fact, I'm affectionately known as the "money bags." But we really rolled a lot of money. Of course, I was the programs engineer and budget man and finance man with Bob Pafford, who was regional director.

Seney: How did you cook–I don't want to say cook, that doesn't sound right.

Catino: That's all right.

Seney: Okay. How did you cook this idea up with the state to do this 55-, 45 percent? Do you remember what went into that?

The State Water Project and Reclamation Served Different Areas of the San Joaquin Valley

Catino: Yeah. The State [Water] Project, as envisioned, had a dam at Los Banos. The feds had a project over on the west side, too, which included a dam at Los Banos or one of these other streams. We, the Bureau, had already built the Delta-Mendota Canal, so we had a leg up, so to speak. But there was a whole series of meetings on this and said, "We ought to go at this together. The state can't build in that federal service area."

Now, the federal service area was really, you might say, Los Banos to Kettleman City. That is the county line of Kern County. But the Bureau is in the eastern side of Kern County, but not in the western side of Kern County. So because of legislation, we had service areas. We also had the State Water Rights Board, which we haven't mentioned much about. We have water rights from hell to breakfast that says, "You can take water from A and take it over to B, but with the blessing of the State Water Rights Board."

So you have this all coupled in a very coordinated type of operation putting together that San Luis thing, and when they got all the numbers massaged, well, they came up with 55-, 45 percent as the percentage. You probably could find in the files someplace, maybe it was 44.8 or something like that, or 55.2, or something. A number of meetings produced that.

But the key, of course, was San Luis Reservoir. The state needed about half of it and the Bureau needed the other half. From Los Banos south, you have San Luis Water District, a whole bunch of little ones, but you had the big Westlands Water District, which commands 600,000 acres on both the east side and west side of now Interstate 5. So there was a big federal service area. So that was in the picture, too.

But on top of that, you also had some political clout from Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito counties *over the hill* from Los Banos, to bring water over in that area. So as a result today, why, San Jose and the Santa Clara Water District is a fairly large water district getting both state and federal water.

Seney: It draws on the San Luis Reservoir, too?

"IBM went in south of San Jose and took over a nice prune orchard, and that was the start of busting up farming in the San Jose area, Santa Clara area, and became Silicon Valley. . . ."

Catino: Yes. Yes. You have a tunnel through there, and we have some storage. Well, they had some existing storage, ~~Anderson Ridge Dam in Anderson Ridge~~ Anderson Dam– and some other smaller reservoirs in that area. See, that whole San Jose area, if you would go back and when we were very young, that was farmland. They grew some of the best prunes and walnuts and almonds in the area. But the day that IBM came to San Jose, that changed the whole picture. That was the start. In fact, IBM went in south of San Jose and took over a nice prune orchard, and that was the start of busting up farming in the San Jose area, Santa Clara area, and became Silicon Valley.

Storey: In that area served by the San Felipe Project out there, which comes out of San Luis Reservoir.

Catino: Yeah. Right. But this whole political thing, you know, "I want my project; you want your project," and there's a whole–I guess if you could look back, there's coalitions between congressmen in various states. Well, I'll give you an example. Maybe you even got coalitions between western congressmen and congressmen on the other side of the Missouri River, or the Mississippi River, in Ohio.

" . . . Congressman [Michael J.] Kirwan, came from Ohio, and you say, 'Well, why are you, a congressman in Ohio, interested in water projects in California?' He says, 'They don't make heavy equipment out in California to dig those ditches or build those dams. So here at Lima, Ohio, we make Caterpillar tractors or draglines and that.'. . ."

I remember, I believe his name is Congressman [Michael J.] Kirwan, came from Ohio, and you say, "Well, why are you, a congressman in Ohio, interested in water projects in California?"

He says, "They don't make heavy equipment out in California to dig those ditches or build those dams. So here at Lima, Ohio, we make Caterpillar tractors or draglines and that." So you can see that kind of a philosophy, economic philosophy, being transmitted between one and another.

But you've also had some that says, "Over my dead body you're going to ever get any water out of the Northwest," for example. X has water in the [Columbia] ~~Colorado~~ River, and the feeling is up there is that, "You get some of our power from the Northwest down in California on the intertie line, but you're not going to get any of our water into California from the Columbia River," or the Snake River, or any of that. You've probably have picked that up along in your travels.[11]

11. This is likely a reference to Henry M. ("Scoop") Jackson.

Storey: You said earlier, now, there was excess water in the Colorado River. I think you meant the Columbia?

Catino: In the Columbia River. Yeah.

Storey: Right. Okay.

Seney: Of course, they don't think up there it's excess water at all.

Storey: No.

Seney: And I know you've operated up there and I'm familiar with that. Nothing will kill a politician faster in the Northwest than the accusation that they're willing to ship some of that water down to California.

Catino: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I always remember riding an airplane to Seattle one morning, with a fellow that's sitting next to me who sold hot chocolate in these vending machines. He says, "You know, it'll be over my dead body. You got some of our power in California, but it'll be over my dead body you'll get any water out of the Northwest." (laughter) I thought that was kind of interesting, coming from a Nestle Chocolate man. There's a feeling of–in–probably more–well, I don't know, it's probably equal in Washington and Oregon. They don't want to see any massive water transfers, but there's been some profound studies made in that area by some pretty sizeable engineering organizations, of bringing water down from the Northwest.

When you think of it, what does California have for the future? Unless you go back and sort of retrofit some of this, why, we don't have much opportunity. Now, *Auburn* is a good addition. Now, we're having a lot of discussions on flood control, but sometimes we're overlooking the water needs. There is a study going on right here in the Bureau which will be out here in another month, which shows that just in this area here, of Placer, Sacramento, El Dorado, San Joaquin and Sutter Counties, there's probably a need for a half a million acre feet more. That's really tied to development, and it's pretty hard to knock down this development. What we do is we punch more holes in the ground, and we start tapping the groundwater, and sooner or later the groundwater runs out, and we start pumping in greater depths. But this is what happened in the San Joaquin Valley.

The reason for building the Friant-Kern Canal from Fresno to Bakersfield is because there was an established farm economy there, and we start putting wells down 800, 900, 1,000, 1,200 feet, and start to get saltwater with it, then we're not doing a very good job. We need to bring in a surface supply.

Seney: You mentioned the unwillingness of the Pacific Northwest to ship water to California. We have those conflicts *within* California, the Delta people not wanting to ship any water south, and of course, that brings to mind Congressman–

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. OCTOBER 25, 1995.

BEGIN OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2. OCTOBER 25, 1995.

Storey: This is tape two of an interview by Brit Storey and Donald Seney with Mike Catino, on October the 25th, 1995.

Seney: There was a little runout on the tape. I was saying that not only are these conflicts over transferring water in the Northwest, but they're here in California, the Delta not wanting to ship water south, and I mentioned Congressman George Miller.

"I didn't include Congressman George Miller in my array of congressmen who bang away for projects. To be perfectly honest, and I'm sure this is shared by water users throughout California, Congressman Miller holds more to the environmental side, and his favorite water district is Contra Costa Water District, which he'll never mention in the same breath, but they've been getting water at seventeen and a half dollars an acre foot, but he thinks that the farmers ought to pay more. That's M&I water. . . ."

Catino: I didn't include Congressman George Miller in my array of congressmen who bang away for projects. To be perfectly honest, and I'm sure this is shared by water users throughout California, Congressman Miller holds more to the environmental side, and his favorite water district is Contra Costa Water District, which he'll never mention in the same breath, but they've been getting water at seventeen and a half dollars an acre foot, but he thinks that the farmers ought to pay more. That's M&I water.[12] The growth of Contra Costa County is phenomenal, and they have enjoyed the benefits of the Central Valley Project.

But Congressman Miller, number one, looks out for the environmental scene and the so-called improvements to the Delta, and don't touch his Contra Costa water district. He has *not* been favorable up and down the valley with other congressmen, and he's held a high position as head of the authorizing committee. When I was regional director, my predecessors never had very much mix with Congressman Miller's office. He had his viewpoints and his argument base was never with the regional directors, his argument base was really with commissioners. So he never dropped down into this level, although I'll admit that we had some good exchanges with staff members in Congressman Miller's office.

Seney: He's unusual, though, in terms of California congressmen, isn't he?

Catino: Yes, he is. He's very unusual. Well, I've heard him make this kind of a statement that, "These farmers are getting rich out here on subsidized water, and they're all driving Mercedes and they send their kids to Stanford [University]." But a lot of the kids go to Sac [Sacramento] State and Fresno State and Cal Aggies, and they don't drive all Mercedes, some have an old pickup truck. So I don't share the same thing. And they owe money in the bank. I know farmers that go in the first of the year and loan a million dollars at the Bank of America, and they hope that when Christmas

12. As explained subsequently, this refers to the fact the under Reclamation law M&I water is required to repay costs–including interest. Agricultural water is repaid–but without interest. Both are required to pay for current operation and maintenance (O&M) costs.

comes around there's something left for toys. But that's what it costs to run a farm economy. It's a big show.

". . . there is no more $3.50 water in CVP. You've got people in Orange Cove and the early people of CVP, they're all paying $20 or more for their water. So he [Congressman Miller] doesn't bring that out, but he's always talking about the subsidy. But that's the law. See, if you don't like the law, *change* the law. If you don't want subsidized water to irrigation, change it. But he never changed it. He insisted that they pay the operation and maintenance costs, which they're doing, see. . . ."

Congressman Miller's been in a position to, and he has–there is no more $3.50 water in CVP. You've got people in Orange Cove and the early people of CVP, they're all paying $20 or more for their water. So he doesn't bring that out, but he's always talking about the subsidy. But that's the law. See, if you don't like the law, *change* the law. If you don't want subsidized water to irrigation, change it. But he never changed it. He insisted that they pay the operation and maintenance costs, which they're doing, see. But he never brings out the fact that in these developments, the costs are allocated to irrigation, but in M&I water and power, there's the interest component as authorized by the Congress. None of it's going down to the Bank of America. Whatever the interest at the time the project was authorized, that is what's accumulated on the books, better known as interest during construction, interest on the unpaid investment.

Economics of the Central Valley Project

So we talk about subsidies, why, their subsidy is only to *ag* in the sense that it's interest-free. But when you start thinking about the many billions of dollars that have been given to other countries for water development, social development, God knows what else, and here is the Bureau of Reclamation, which has helped support an $18 ~~million~~ [billion] industry in agriculture in California, that's what, it's about 18 to 20 billion. I think tourism is the only thing that's bigger, and we've only spent $3.5 billion on CVP. I'm going to just go out on the limb. I think in the total of the whole Bureau of Reclamation, since its history since 1902, probably has never spent more than *$20* billion for all the development west of the Mississippi River. So we talk about social programs, helping people, helping communities out. I don't think we've done too bad. Even though the ag water is subsidized. But if you don't like it, Mr. Miller, you should have changed it, see.

Seney: Did you ever deal with his father, state Senator Miller?[13]

Catino: He's a different guy altogether.

Seney: Right.

Catino: A different guy. I didn't know him personally. I've appeared before Congressman

13. These two George Millers are not related, though it is commonly believed that they are father and son.

George Miller's committee before, then even after I left the Bureau I was doing some consulting work for El Dorado County, and I appeared before his committee, and others have, too. But his father was a lot different guy than him, as I understand it.

Seney: Yes, a very influential man.

Catino: Very influential. In fact, his father was very influential in terms of Tulare Lake and with the Boswell Companies, as far as I know, helping them get started in the state as an agricultural empire.

Thomas Kuchel

Seney: Let's talk a little bit about the senators. You mentioned Clair Engle, who, of course, was a senator, but there were others that you must have known. Senator [Thomas H.] Kuchel, who served for a time.

Catino: Yeah. Senator Kuchel was a good friend of the Bureau. Of course, he had had a state basis here. Bob Pafford and him probably got along as well as anybody that I know of. I think they were on a pretty much first-name-basis kind of thing, and when Bob Pafford was here as regional director, Dominy was the commissioner, so they would have some three-cornered discussions, Dominy, Kuchel, and Bob Pafford.

Seney: And the Bureau could count on Kuchel, generally.

Catino: Yeah. Yeah. You could count on Kuchel, pretty much supportive of the Bureau's activities. But Kuchel's a pretty straight kind of a guy. I got to know his administrative people here in Sacramento, as well as Washington. So I would say he's been pretty good.

Seney: We had a succession of senators. I don't know, some of them were very influential.

Alan Cranston

Catino: [Alan] Cranston was of no account to the–

Seney: Oh, really?

Catino: No. His staff would seem interested, but Cranston would hear you out, but he never would come out and rack you up, so to speak, but he was never out in the forefront supporting. As a senator, why, you don't see any project moving with his name or anything, but I think he supported what the congressmen in the area supported. He was a Democrat. I think if Bizz Johnson went to him, or John McFall went to him, or Bernie Sisk went to him, why, they get his support. But I don't think--

Seney: Cranston was from the Peninsula, wasn't he? Do you remember?

Catino: Yeah. Yeah.

Seney: And Kuchel was from Southern California.

Catino: Right. Yeah. Yeah.

Seney: Yeah. Right. What about George Murphy? Did he count for much? He was a one-term senator.

Catino: No, he was in there a short period of time. I don't recall–

Seney: You ticked off all the congressmen, and you didn't really mention the senators. Do you see a difference between them? Weren't the senators as helpful?

". . . you find that you do most of your legwork with the congressmen and their people. I can remember sitting on the phone here until seven o'clock at night talking to Congressmen Coelho's people . . . you find that as a regional director, you don't work too much with the senators per se, you'll work with their staffs. But congressmen, you work with them a lot. . . ."

Catino: Yeah. From my viewpoint in the Bureau of Reclamation, you find that you do most of your legwork with the congressmen and their people. I can remember sitting on the phone here until seven o'clock at night talking to Congressmen Coelho's people, or spending hours with them on the telephone. It's seven o'clock here, it's ten o'clock in Washington. So they don't have anybody bugging them, and I'm waiting to go home for dinner, but that's immaterial, I'm here to serve. But you find that as a regional director, you don't work too much with the senators per se, you'll work with their staffs. But congressmen, you work with them a lot. When Congressman [Eugene A.] Chappie took over from Bizz Johnson–he succeeded Bizz–

Seney: Defeated him?

"Eugene A. Chappie took over from Bizz Johnson . . . defeated him . . . But Chappie would call me up and say, 'What have you done for me?' . . ."

Catino: Yeah, he defeated him, and it was a loss as far as the Bureau of Reclamation's concerned.

But Chappie would call me up and say, "What have you done for me?"

I said, "Well, you didn't ask me to do anything for you, so what do you want me to do?"

"Well, I'd like you to look into this," or "I'd like you to look into that."

It was always, well, he was interested in Auburn, but not all that interested in Auburn.

Seney: Did you ever deal with Phil Burton, even though he was from San Francisco? He was certainly probably the most powerful member of the California congressional

delegation for many years.

Norm Mineta, Leon Panetta, and Charlie Gubser

Catino: No. It's kind of interesting, and you bring that up, is that the congressmen over in the San Francisco area, San Francisco, San Mateo, until you got San Felipe going with Santa Clara Water District and San Benito, which is Norm Mineta and Leon Panetta's area, those folks never–well, Charlie Gubser was a congressman from over there, and he–and San Felipe, he moved that through authorization. I have to say that for Charlie. I think that was his name, Charlie Gubser.

Seney: Right. I take it, what you sort of alluded to before, obviously Bizz Johnson's going to be supporting Auburn, and that would be the key thing. It would be in his district, the rest of them, the senators, would go along with him from California, and the other members of the House would go along with him as well, maybe not including Congressman–

Catino: Well, they would go along if they weren't crossing over on party lines.

Seney: Right.

Bizz Johnson, John Doolittle, and Auburn Dam

Catino: Yeah. Now, you take today, if Bizz Johnson was in office and he had all his seniority, and he says, "I want Auburn real bad," and he went to [Senator] Diane Feinstein and [Senator] Barbara Boxer who are both Democrats, I think you'd find big, tall Bizz twisting their arm pretty hard and getting their support. I think he'd get one of them for sure, and maybe two. "I'm ready to move on this."

Seney: Is John Doolittle going to go to them for support on Auburn?

Catino: John Doolittle is going to go to them, but I'm not so sure he's going to get their support, because, see, every Congress changes, not that I'm trying to say I'm a student of political science, or anything like that–

Seney: Well, don't you have to be, to be a–

Catino: Yeah, you have to be in this area here.

Seney: –I mean, in the position you've been in?

Catino: In fact, I've sat in this room and run staff meetings, and we just going over, "Well, what do you hear? What does your congressman hear?" Even like my people out in the field, the superintendents out there, "What's the *San Jose Mercury* got on there? I can't read all these newspapers. What are they talking about?" Or, "What is in the *Fresno Bee*?" Or, "What is in the *Redding Searchlight*?" So you ask your staff people.

Doolittle will go to them. Of course, you've got a big flood control issue here, and you're talking about 350,000 people are in the way of the flood, and you've got an investment of probably $30 to $35 billion dollars, and these are solid *facts*. We know where the population is. We know where the monies is. Look at the infrastructure you've got, and the sewers, the electric, the telephone, and all of this stuff, and the houses in here.

Seney: And that's the kind of argument you're going to make, right?

Catino: You bet. That's what he's going to say. Doolittle, even though he's a Republican, he's going to say this to his Democratic senator, "You going to let the state capitol drown?" That's what you got.

Seney: If he calls the Bureau down here, is the Bureau going to be able to help him out with some of that information?

". . . the Bureau has the authorization today for Auburn, but we're looking at a new authorization to authorize it primarily to the Corps of Engineers. The Bureau is really off of Auburn Dam altogether. The Corps is the one who's doing the study for that, and will more than likely take the study to seek an authorization . . ."

Catino: Actually, the Bureau has the authorization today for Auburn, but we're looking at a new authorization to authorize it primarily to the Corps of Engineers. The Bureau is really off of Auburn Dam altogether. The Corps is the one who's doing the study for that, and will more than likely take the study to seek an authorization with the help of the local people here.

Seney: Because at this point it's been scaled back just to a flood control project.

"Now, they talk about a flood control project for later to expand it [Auburn Dam]. It'll never get done. I will guarantee you, it'll be cost prohibitive. . . ."

Catino: Yes. Now, they talk about a flood control project for later to expand it. It'll never get done. I will guarantee you, it'll be cost prohibitive.

Seney: And you can't build it as a flood control and then retrofit it for an irrigation hydro–

Catino: Well, what are you going to do with the highways? What are you going to do with the borrow pit areas? What are you going to do with the contractor's plant? I'm talking about the batching up of cement. Or what are you going to do with the earth-moving equipment and all of that? You see, it's a *tremendous job*.

Seney: So once it's flooded, where are you going to put all that stuff, you're saying.

Catino: Yeah. Now, you see, Auburn Dam, on the books today as presently authorized, is a concrete dam. All of the aggregate for that dam was to come out of the reservoir area, and it would be built up high enough so you could take Highway 49 across the

top of the dam. Now, what happens if you build a so-called flood control dam, where does Highway 49 go? Forty-nine is down in the bottom of the reservoir. You're going to have to build another bridge across there. Now, I don't know what their plans are.

A Large Construction Project like Auburn Is Quite Complicated and Building a Lower Dam and Raising it Later Would Pose All Sorts of Issues and Unforseen Costs

See, people that talk about, "Well, we'll expand it later." Now, do you put the penstocks in now for a powerplant in the future? What kind of a gate structure do you build in there so they can be put into the future? So you don't realize that the construction business per se, of building something, is a hell of an involvement. For example, in building Auburn Dam as contemplated, that's the 2.25 million acre foot concrete dam, would take seventy carloads of cement a day. The cement was to be brought to Roseville and brought up on a track to what we call a service area, up near Auburn Dam. Now, that's a tremendous amount of facilities to be built: railroad tracks, storage, aggregate plants, a lot of rock taken up from the reservoir area, stock piled. Now, if you build a dam there, and you flood that area, now you're flooding it for flood control purposes, and you want to get *more* rock out of there, you've got to empty the reservoir, so you lose the flood control. Right? *Or* you stockpile all this aggregate in big mountains up there and the environmentalists would go crazy with all of this rock up there. So there's a lot of things to think about.

Another thing to think about is that construction is highly automated today. If you were to build a concrete dam, you'd have a tower on each side of the reservoir and cables going across the reservoir, with these concrete buckets taken out there, dropped in. Once you start placing concrete, it's a twenty-four-hour-a-day job, rain or shine, keeps on going. Takes you three and a half years to build it. This is what it takes. So a tremendous amount of investment into building a dam and the facilities.

". . . about 10 percent of the bid price is involved in what we call mobilization. In other words, if you build a billion-dollar dam, you've got to have about $100 million upfront for the contractor's roads, his equipment, for staff. You've got to get that all moved in there. Batch plants, geological facilities, all kinds of stuff that goes with building a dam, towers across there, cableways, rock facilities. It's just a big show. . . . "

I'll give you an example of the investment involved. You have about 10 percent of the bid price is involved in what we call mobilization. In other words, if you build a billion-dollar dam, you've got to have about $100 million upfront for the contractor's roads, his equipment, for staff. You've got to get that all moved in there. Batch plants, geological facilities, all kinds of stuff that goes with building a dam, towers across there, cableways, rock facilities. It's just a big show.

You see, years ago, the contractors used to take that 10 percent and they'd put it in the first few items of work, like excavation. You've got to excavate to get started. So the price would go up tremendously. Well, then the Bureau and the

Corps got smart. They put a mobilization figure in there, but it's usually about 10 percent of the bid, is that. Now, what are you going to do with all this plant facilities after? You know, concrete plant, if you build a concrete dam. Or if you build what we call a roller-compacted concrete dam, you've got to have cement facilities. You build an earth-filled dam, you have different zones of material. You'll have clays, you'll have sand, you'll have rock, riprap, all kinds of, maybe five different zones of materials, that all segregated, all put into place. And where do you keep all of this stuff in case you want to expand it later? So I say it'll never be built if you–it's just going to be prohibitive as hell.

Then you're saying, "Well, this will be M&I water and power," and you're going to put that in later. So the cost would be so damn high, you'd never get a SMUD or a city to say–well, unless you're really thirsty, I guess–to buy in on the thing. But you need to do it all at one time.

". . . a good many years ago . . . the guys that preceded me, studied the enlargement of Shasta Dam. Shasta Dam holds 4.5 million acre feet, we're going to take it up to maybe about 12 million acre feet. Big study. But the costs were so prohibitive to take it up there. . . . But to raise the dam, now, you don't raise Shasta Dam, you go downstream and build a new dam and inundate the existing dam. That's usually what you would do. . . ."

We never built anything in California big enough. No. We've had a study in here, for example, a good many years ago, and we–Bob Pafford–who was it, Bob Pafford, Billy Martin, the guys that preceded me, studied the enlargement of Shasta Dam. Shasta Dam holds 4.5 million acre feet, we're going to take it up to maybe about 12 million acre feet. Big study. But the costs were so prohibitive to take it up there. Just think of Shasta Dam. You have to move the SP Railroad out of there. You've got to build a new railroad bridge. You've got Interstate 5 that goes right through the heart of the reservoir. You've got to buy new lands. You've got to relocate *all* of the recreation facilities around there. There's about seven great recreation areas there. You'd have to move that. A lot of the land is federal land, so you'd transfer it from one jurisdiction to the other, so you wouldn't have too much there.

But to raise the dam, now, you don't raise Shasta Dam, you go downstream and build a new dam and inundate the existing dam. That's usually what you would do. Now, I don't know if that was the precise construction plan, but when you hear them say, "Well, we're going to raise the dam," why, they don't build on top of it. You've got to unwater the whole damn thing, because you've got to widen out the base of the dam, see. But that was in the billions of dollars, to do that.

Seney: Let me ask you about working with the state. You mentioned the business with San Luis Reservoir and the 55-, 45.

Catino: Right.

Seney: Would you deal much with the governor's office here as regional director?

Reclamation Has a Lot of Contact with the California Department of Water Resources, but Not with the Governor's Office

Catino: We do not with the governor's officer per se. We deal a lot with the Department of Water Resources–Dave Kennedy, who's the present director. When I was director, why, Ron Robie was the director down there, and so I dealt quite a bit with his office, although he had a group of people in there that didn't share the enthusiasm I had. Huey Johnson was the director of water resources for the state, and he's a–

Seney: This is under Governor Brown, Pat Brown–Jerry Brown, rather.

Catino: Jerry Brown's group. He was driving his little blue Plymouth all around town. But they weren't for water development.

Ron Robie I hold in high regard, who is now a judge in town. Why, he'd like to give me support for Auburn Dam, but Huey Johnson was his boss, and young Jerry Brown was the governor, and they were not interested in building dams. They were founded in the environmental area. Surprising as it may seem, but that's the attitude when you have a change in administration.

Now, his *father* was a different *duck*. Pat Brown was a hell of a good man for the Central Valley Project. Ronald Reagan, when he was governor of California, was also supportive of water development. Of course, he had one Mr. Bill Gianelli, who I hold in high regard, as his head of director of water resources, who later became assistant secretary for the Army in Corps of Engineer work. Bill Gianelli and Bob Pafford worked very close together. We had a number of meetings. So we've always had good rapport with the state Department of Water Resources.

Seney: No real problems between the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project?

Catino: Well, no, I think you get the rumbles every so often. I guess what's-his-name is there now. He once in a while throws out that maybe the federal project ought to be turned over to the state and let the state run it.

Seney: You mean Governor [Pete] Wilson or his appointee?

Catino: Yeah. What's his name, his resource guy?

Seney: I can't think of it myself, now.

Catino: Yeah, anyway. Dave Kennedy has not been out–Wheeler.

Seney: Yeah.

Issues Involved in Either Combining the State Water Project and the Central Valley Project or California Buying the Central Valley Project

Catino: He's made that statement at some meetings I've been there, that maybe it ought to be

all under one jurisdiction. They don't realize how complicated CVP is, financially and operationally. Operationally, I think you could do it, but to take care of the financial end of it, and then you also still have the acreage limitation under 960 acres, which is an offspring of the old 160-acre thing. Does the acreage limitation still hold if it was under state jurisdiction? So there's a whole mess of laws that needs to be analyzed.

Now, here's a group a people that have formed the Central Valley Water Authority. There's a group of them that say, well, they ought to take over CVP. You've seen that in the paper. In fact, they were hoping to get a bill through the Congress. The numbers run something like this: there's 3.4 billion has been spent on CVP, the water users and power people have paid about 1.2, that leaves 2.2 billion left. They're willing to put up about 834 million now, this sort of thing. A dollar's worth so much down the line. You're going to pay out in year 2020. Well, we'll give you the money now. You take the money and go and invest it, and you'd have your money. But that's been tabled. George Miller's already said, "Well, it's going to be a long day in hell before you get to take over CVP." There's some people that are skeptical about it, but there is a group that's going to keep coming back.

Seney: You don't see much future for that, though?

Catino: Well, the future really is, what is the attitude at the time of the people that are in office. If the Republicans say, "Well, let's get rid of that project, and we'll take our money and run. Yeah, that's a good deal," and the congressmen are not hearing the *flak* from their constituents. In other words, there's the Sacramento Valley people afraid of the San Joaquin Valley. What kind of law is written when you transfer from one to the other? Because the farmers are going to take over again, is the acreage limitation going to go out the window? What is the farmer's obligation in terms of the Delta? Are they going to have to put that 800,000 acre feet of water in there and take care of the salmon as under the Miller bill now? What kind of stipulations?

You need to have all of this documented when you take it over, and it's like a divorce action. You get to see the kids on Sunday, and it's a wonder. You've got to have it all written out ahead of time. It's just not a flip thing.

Then a certain amount of cost that's allocated to flood control, for example. That's non-reimbursable. But do the farmers have to pay for the flood control operation, or who pays for that?

There's a hell of a lot of work to this, you know. CVP, the backbone system, was authorized in the thirties, and you've had all these additions put onto it–Trinity, San Felipe, San Luis, joint facilities [Corps of Engineers projects operated by Reclamation]. What is the relationship between a water-user outfit in the state of California, for example, in operating San Luis unit? What happens to the Tehama-Colusa Canal? What happens at Red Bluff?

Storey: You might run into issues such as the variation between the state project water cost and Reclamation water cost.

Catino: Yeah.

Storey: So that the water users would say, "No way."

Catino: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Well, you got two prices of water in Kern County. On the west side of Kern County you got the state project, on the east side you got the federal project, the Friant-Kern Canal.

Storey: You've been talking about some of the additions to the Central Valley Project. From your experience, can you talk about where those additions came from? Those additions, how were they thought up, and who began to sponsor them, and then how did they move through the political process?

California's Marshall Plan Contemplated Much of the Central Valley Project and Its Accretions over the Years

Catino: Well, a good part of this was in the original study by the state and the feds for water development in California. It goes back to the Marshall Plan in California. There's words to the extent that we ought to build a dam here and take the water here via canal. A lot of this was laid out way back in the twenties and the thirties, if you'll take the time and go back and review the history of it.

But then as time went on, the backbone of CVP was Shasta, Keswick, coming down from north to south, the Sacramento facilities like Red Bluff Diversion Dam wasn't in the original authorization. You came down all the way through the Delta, you put in the Delta Cross Channel, which is down here by Walnut Grove, cross from the Sacramento River to the Mokelumne River. Okay, the Tracy Pumping Plant was the original CVP, as well as Contra Costa Canal. Okay, you built the Delta-Mendota Canal. The Delta-Mendota Canal went into Mendota Pool. That freed up water from Friant to Bakersfield. In other words, Friant Dam on the San Joaquin River, the Friant-Kern Canal. Then Madera Canal was a part of that. Then the power as an adjunct to the whole thing. But there was the original CVP authorization that I'll outline for you.

Then as time went on, you had things like Folsom came into the picture. Red Bluff Diversion Dam, and the Tehama-Colusa Canal and the Corning Canal, that was another authorization. We've talked about the San Luis Unit with the state, to be followed by the San Felipe Unit. Also, when Folsom was authorized, you had a small unit put in up here at Sly Park–

Storey: Sly Park.

Corps of Engineers Built Facilities Added to the Central Valley Project

Catino: Placerville. So you've had these augmentations to CVP. Of course, on top of that, you've had some core facilities like New Hogan Dam and Kern River dams, Kings River Dam, Pine Flat, and some of these other things. Some of them are added to CVP financially and operationally, but built by the Corps of Engineers. So you've

had a lot of these little things that've been added on in there.

Storey: Let's take a couple of examples, say, San Felipe and Sly Park. Who had the idea to do these, and how did it work through the political process?

San Felipe and Sly Park Units of the Central Valley Project

Catino: Well, take Sly Park, was really pushed by El Dorado County, and congressman–he was congressmen then–Engle, was influential in having that added to the American River division of CVP, which includes Folsom Dam and powerplant and Nimbus, you see. So he had that added in there. Okay. San–

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Catino: –Felipe was discussed in the early days between the people in Santa Clara and Santa Cruz county, and Monterey County, that whole area in there, and San Benito County. Charlie Gubser was the instigator of getting *that* authorized.

Storey: The pattern, basically, is the local people.

Reclamation, Members of Congress, and Local Residents Interacted in Development of Water Studies

Catino: The local people, you'll find, and the Bureau hasn't been sitting on you know what. The Bureau's been out there saying, "Look, here's a chance for some water development. We're spending $2 million a year in investigating various projects." The local people, they see one to the other. You might just look at it this way. In the early days the CVP was getting water into the Fresno-Bakersfield area at $3.5 an acre foot. These people said, "Why can't we get some of that water?" The Tehama-Colusa people saying, "We would like to see you put that dam in at Red Bluff and put a canal up there, and then we won't have to pump it out of the river," although there's considerable amount of pumping out of the Sacramento River.

I represented those people after I left the Bureau. There's twenty-four major pumpers on the Sacramento River, which was a water-rights settlement with the Bureau. The Bureau enhances their pumping, in the sense that they make water available at certain times out of Shasta, and they *pay* the Bureau for that service on the river. But it's their pumps that pump the water. It was a great settlement in terms of–

Storey: This is the settlement of the riparian water rights along the Sacramento River.

Catino: Along the Sacramento River. Right.

Seney: Well, I think you've described the process, and I'm familiar with the report from the 1920s that you mentioned. It was kind of a smorgasbord, really–

Catino: Oh, yeah.

Seney: –of potential water projects in the state, and it becomes a kind of list of and a stimulus to water projects. As various areas develop–well, you go ahead and say.

California Is Looking at New Water Projects

Catino: Well, we have that today, again. The state turned out a bulletin here just recently, and I don't remember the number of it. It includes a number of projects out in the future.

". . . been associated . . . after I left the Bureau, with Harza Engineering . . . to put an enlargement into the Trinity River Project and pump water from Shasta, over the hill to Trinity, and drop it in there and make power, and then drop it back to Shasta and make power. You can develop about another million acre feet of water by doing this, you know, as pump-back storage. . . ."

One of them that comes to mind is down there on the west side of Interstate 5, down near–oh, down near Patterson, another project up in the hills up in there. There's another one down around Coalinga, there's some projects. One that I've been associated with, that the state included in there, I was involved with it with, after I left the Bureau, with Harza Engineering–they're the people that started it up–is to put an enlargement into the Trinity River Project and pump water from Shasta, over the hill to Trinity, and drop it in there and make power, and then drop it back to Shasta and make power. You can develop about another million acre feet of water by doing this, you know, as pump-back storage. It's a very sizeable project.

But it's again, a whole list of things that the state has in this bulletin. I don't remember the number, but they've had their dreamers working on the thing. Of course, these are very costly items now, because it's so late in the game. But this Trinity River diversion, which working with Harza people, we have never had the state people or the Bureau people. We've explained the project to them, but they've never put any money behind it. They sort of did a reconnaissance-type look-see on it. But that's about a $3-, $3.5 billion development up there.

Seney: Putting out this bulletin would be one of the steps in building the political support for these projects.

Catino: Right. Right. You see, these bulletins end up in the hands of the assemblymen and the state senators, and they end up in the hands of the feds and the water districts, certainly. It comes to mind, people say, "Boy, our groundwater is going down, down. We've got to think of some way of getting some import water, or develop the X, Y, Z stream out here."

Seney: It would also end up in the hands of maybe local newspapers who might put together a favorable editorial.

Catino: Yeah. Right. Right. Yeah.

Seney: You never did anything like that, did you, to leak a little something to the press or try to influence?

Catino: No, I'll tell you, I never leaked anything to the press, but I certainly had a lot of people in the press talking to me. "What about this?"

Seney: Did you return their calls?

Catino: Pardon?

Seney: They didn't have to wait a long time.

Catino: No, they didn't have to wait a long time. When you run an operation like you run here at the Bureau, which is a multi-million-dollar operation, you have a good public relations outfit. I had one of the best guys in Jerry King work for me here, who had rapport with reporters all the way from Seattle, Washington, to the Mexican border, and over as far as Utah. Jerry was a super operator.

Seney: Can you give us an example of something that might have pleased you a lot, that kind of worked out, that you were able to get into the press and help build support for something that you looked at and said, "I think that's going to work?"

Slide at San Luis Dam

Catino: Well, I tell you, it sort of ties to the–we had a slide on San Luis Dam. The upstream face slid down on it. It looked like a very tough problem, but we put people together in this room right here, of public relations, engineering-wise, geology, Denver people there, they developed a team that put that dam back in shape.

Within twenty-four hours, we had a contractor breaking up rock down there for a new rock supply. Within a week's time, we had Peter Kiewit people out on the job removing the old facilities. We drained the reservoir, rebuilt that dam in a short period of time, and the farmers from Los Banos to Bakersfield, on the state side, we never lost an acre foot of water. They got their water. But it was all a whole bunch of teamwork. I was proud of all the way from the little girl that kept the beans and the coffee hot in the shack down there for twenty-four hours a day, all the way up to the support that we got. Funding-wise, there was no problem.

In the end, it all went together very nicely. We had helicopters flying all over checking us out. We got a tremendous amount of press, TV, had all the TV places, big slide on San Luis Dam. "State and federal water jeopardized," and all of that stuff. We put it all back together and rebuilt it.

I'm very happy to say that the [*Engineering-News Record*] ~~*Engineers News Record*~~, which is like going before the Academy Awards, gave me their plaque. It *honored* me, but I share that with all the other ninety people or so involved on that. To me that's a piece of my career, of looking at an emergency, but formulating a team all the way through. We ran public meetings in Los Banos, explained to the

farmers exactly where we were at the time, what we were going to do the next week, the next week, the next week, the next week, and then we'd be back in a month to give another update.

Seney: So you feel like you turned what could have been a public relations disaster into a success maybe?

Catino: A success. Even got Jim Watt out to stand up at the dam and run a session up there. We had Bob Broadbent, who was commissioner. We had other people, high dignitaries there. It was a Bureau-built job, but it was being operated by the state, and the state turned it, says, "You're the contractor. You did it. You originally built it and we didn't." I'm really proud. Of all the things in my career, and I've had a lot of things to–build this or build that or build San Luis or get this off–I'm the proudest of that. Not because I got the trophy or the plaque hanging on my wall, but I think it was around ninety people that were directly involved in it. We had people on the airplane out of Denver, technical people that were out there gave us the real support, right off the bat. I look back at that as one of my best achievements.

Seney: Can we shift a little bit and talk a little bit about the politics of the Peripheral Canal? Describe, maybe, what the Peripheral Canal is all about, some of the politics of that.

Peripheral Canal

Catino: Well, first of all you have to go back.

"There was a joint study made between the Bureau and the state. . . . It meant a lot to the Delta, but it meant a lot more to the state contractors than it did to the federals. But the Bureau could have then worked another one of these 55, 45 percent arrangements . . . improve the quality of water . . . in the Delta-Mendota Canal. . . . improve fisheries in the Delta. . . . this canal would take out down here by Walnut Grove and swing out towards Stockton and come back in and tie in between the federal Tracy Pumping Plant and the state pumping plant [Harvey O. Banks Pumping Plant] there. It would bring in a better quality of water. It would have a number of outlets along its path . . . and it would put fresh Sacramento [River] water into a lot of those sloughs there. . . ."

There was a joint study made between the Bureau and the state. The Bureau looked at it in a very positive way. It meant a lot to the Delta, but it meant a lot more to the state contractors than it did to the federals. But the Bureau could have then worked another one of these 55, 45 percent arrangements, or whatever percentage it would be, and it would improve the quality of water to the federal facilities in the Delta-Mendota Canal. It would improve fisheries in the Delta.

As envisioned by the Bureau, this canal would take out down here by Walnut Grove and swing out towards Stockton and come back in and tie in between the federal Tracy Pumping Plant and the state pumping plant [Harvey O. Banks Pumping Plant] there. It would bring in a better quality of water. It would have a number of outlets along its path, the Peripheral Canal over in the Stockton, and it would put

fresh Sacramento [River] water into a lot of those sloughs there. So from an operating standpoint, it was looked upon pretty healthy.

". . . when the Reagan people came in, I remember I was making a speech over in West Sacramento, sort of a water forum, and, by God, the Reagan people had my speech edited by two attorneys, to make sure that I didn't sound anyway supporting–the Bureau of Reclamation supporting–the Peripheral Canal. But in my heart, I've said it then and I'll say it now, I think it's a proper facility for the Delta. . . . they didn't want any feeling for federal support of the Peripheral Canal. . . ."

But when the Reagan people came in, I remember I was making a speech over in West Sacramento, sort of a water forum, and, by God, the Reagan people had my speech edited by two attorneys, to make sure that I didn't sound anyway supporting–the Bureau of Reclamation supporting–the Peripheral Canal. But in my heart, I've said it then and I'll say it now, I think it's a proper facility for the Delta. But I was monitored, but the Reagan people were suspicious that we might put the federal government in there as supporting it and going to put money behind it. That was farthest from the truth. It takes an authorization to do it, not only an authorization of the project, but an authorization for funding it. But they didn't want *any* feeling for federal support of the Peripheral Canal.

Seney: But might a speech like the one you were giving, if they hadn't come and looked at your draft, been an occasion to kind of help build a little grass-roots support for an authorization and appropriation?

Catino: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. You'd go to these forums, just like you go down and talk down in Kern County, and the guy says, "Is there any way to get more water into Kern County?" and says, "Yeah, you can get more water into Kern County. You could build a Peripheral Canal, or you could build a mid-valley canal, or you take water out of here." "Do you have water available?"

"Yeah, we have some water available. We got to build these facilities to move it from A to B."

"You know, as administrator of an operation like this, you just don't go around saying, 'No, you can't do anything.' Your job is to try and find answers. You're going to give it the college try and put it out there. Now, I don't think you had a lot of people in the Bureau over my career out there beating for one project or another, but I think when they found a project of value and they could see the local support, they were there to *aid* the local people and the congressman and the state senators . . ."

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they were there to *aid* the local people and the congressman and the state senators, to say, "Hey, you've got a good project here. It's got an economic base of three to one, it looks good, it's going to do this, it's going to do that." So you need to tell the story.

". . . the Peripheral Canal is really something that's needed today. It would probably save some water in the Delta in terms of the fishery. I still think it would be a good thing to do. . . ."

But the Peripheral Canal is really something that's needed today. It would probably save some water in the Delta in terms of the fishery. I still think it would be a good thing to do.

Seney: You were here when the referendum was defeated on the Peripheral Canal.

Catino: Yes. Yeah.

Seney: That was 19-what?

Catino: Oh, I forget what year that was.

Seney: '78, maybe.

Catino: Yeah. It wasn't '80, I don't believe.

Seney: No, it was a little before that.

Catino: In fact, let's see. Robie's people, Robie was the head of water resources then, and Ron's people were–he had Jerry Merrill in there and Jerry Merrill, he's still a big pusher today, even though he represents the Planning and Conservation League. He still thinks very highly of a Peripheral Canal. He's outspoken to that extent.

Seney: What was the Jerry Brown Administration's view of the Peripheral Canal?

Catino: Oh, I think the water resources staff itself, who had all the technical knowledge and support for it, stayed pretty firm, that this was a good addition to the state water project. But I have a kind of a feeling that there was some environmentalists, as well as Jerry Brown himself, that this was going to rock the boat; they didn't quite see how that was to fit in.

". . . when you have one of these things, everybody wants to tag something on. I think you had some San Joaquin people say, 'Well, you're going to build that Peripheral Canal' around then, 'we want to make sure you got an outlet that gives us some water, too.' . . . 'Well, we want a piece of the action. . . .' You try to find a consensus to see if you can give them a piece of the action. You don't throw ice cubes because the guy comes in the door and says, 'I want 10,000 acre feet,' and you got 200,000. . . ."

Then when you have one of these things, everybody wants to tag something on. I think you had some San Joaquin people say, "Well, you're going to build that Peripheral Canal around then, we want to make sure you got an outlet that gives us some water, too." That's the trouble with some of these, "Well, we want a piece of the action. We want a piece of the action." You try to find a consensus to see if you can give them a piece of the action. You don't throw ice cubes because the guy comes in the door and says, "I want 10,000 acre feet," and you got 200,000. You try to solve it.

Seney: Well, it was Southern California votes that really defeated it, if you recall.

Catino: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Seney: They voted *overwhelmingly* against it.

Catino: Yeah. That was hard to understand, because here was a group of people that could benefit, and probably in the long run they would be getting a better quality of water. They're getting water out of the Delta now, and really at the bottom of the Delta. A Peripheral Canal would take water out. As I say, it's a kind of a horseshoe arrangement around there, and would get a better quality of water to the Tracy pumps of the state.

Storey: Was it the southern people who voted against it?

Seney: Oh, I'm sorry, it was the northern people who defeated it, right, voted overwhelmingly against it. I'm sorry.

Catino: Yeah. There was some opposition in Southern California, too. There's some "birds and bees" people down there that don't want to see any development. In fact, they don't want to see anything. They're a status quo people, unfortunately.

Seney: Would it have had negative impacts on the Delta, do you think?

Catino: I don't think so. I don't think so. Our people here, I remember Archie Hanson [phonetic], he's long gone to his reward, was the principal planning engineer, and he spoke very highly of it, and not because it was a project he studied, but he made a number of talks around explaining the values of such a thing.

I think the fact that this canal would have traversed under or close by a number of Delta streams–now, there's 1,200 miles of Delta streams down there. Some of them are kind of dead-end sloughs, but this would traverse that Delta where at various outlets in there you could put some fresh water in it. Of course, it all flows back towards the Delta; that water isn't lost. But this is a way of sort of commingling some good water, good Sacramento water, with what's in the Delta.

New Melones Dam

Now, you take the San Joaquin River, when it gets to Stockton, it's not in very

good shape. That's not very good water. It's been enhanced somewhat, with New Melones [water]. There's a project we haven't talked about, but that's in addition to CVP, is New Melones, built by the Corps but added on to the Bureau, and it does carry a water-quality function, so it has improved the San Joaquin River where it used to be pretty putrid down there from Vernalis to Stockton in there. It does put some good, clean water in there.

If I was to have a vote today, I'd say, "Vote for the Peripheral Canal." I'd support it. I know it's probably pretty damn expensive, and you'd have to pretty well lay out–see, when you talk about big bucks, and that's what it's going to be today, *big bucks*, they're going to say, "Well, who's paying for it?" Well, water users are going to pay for it. It's going to be a state project. State's going to build it. Now, there going to be any federal money involved in it? Is the irrigation component going to carry a subsidy for the interest component? Are they going to sell bonds, or how they going to do it? You've got to lay this all out to people.

Reagan Administration Attitude Toward Water Development Projects

See, the financing of projects today is considerably different than it was in the thirties, the forties, or the fifties, when I came to work for the Bureau. It's entirely a different ball game. You've got today–well, the Reagan Administration didn't want to build water projects. They just said, "Finish up what you got and get out." That's basically their–then he came out with, "If you're going to build a project, why, if it's got some flood control in there, or if it's got some water quality, environmental enhancement, we're willing to put up a percentage, but the rest better fall on the back of the water users or the people that are going to benefit."

There was an attitude in the Reagan Administration, "Well, if California wants these kind of things, why, let them build them themselves. They built a big state water project, they can build any other thing on there." So that's what made it tough for, say, the Bureau going ahead with the Mid-Valley Project, or being a *partner* on the Peripheral Canal, or any other project.

Seney: There was one senator I should have asked you about. He's our current governor, Senator [Pete] Wilson. What was he like to work with?

Pete Wilson

Catino: Well, his staff–worked with his staff somewhat, but he was like probably a little more active than, say, Cranston was, but nothing real outstanding where he's out there banging the drum. You go back and you measure him with Kuchel. See, you got a different ball game. I wouldn't say that Wilson was anything outstanding, as far as that goes. Even today, why, he's made a statement or two–well, in fact, he made a statement that maybe they ought to turn the fed project over to the state. That was made at the–they have this host breakfast here every year downtown, and I'm fortunate to get an invite to it, and he made that statement this year, "Some of our water problems would be solved if the feds would just turn the CVP over to us." But that was kind of thrown half out in jest, but I think there was a little bit of meaning in

there. Maybe Wheeler gave him a line. You always have to think about these things when they come out of the cold blue, as to why was that put in there to the speech.

Seney: Maybe fund-raising for his presidential campaign.

Catino: Yeah. We didn't touch on fund-raising. We could probably go on that, who's putting up money for this guy and that guy.

Seney: Well, let's do that.

Political Activity in Various Water User Groups

Catino: Well, I don't know an awful lot about it, but I know that there's farmer groups that put up some pretty big dough for their congressmen, and they're out there supporting them with barbecues and parties and that, but it's no different than the city folks, you know.

There's these agricultural, there's the PACs, political action committees, there's the Association of California Water Agencies [ACWA]. Those people are out there beating the drum because their members want these projects. There's a lot of things going on in terms of environmental-type legislation.

Water and Environmental Issues

Endangered species, you see that in the paper. They want to change some of these laws here. I think we need to–they're saying, I think, "People come ahead of birds, bees, and bunny rabbits." We want to make damn sure that–"There's enough garter snakes in California, why do we have to buy a special preserve of a thousand acres to take care of a garter snake?" They want to develop up here in the Natomas area out by the airport. Well, they want to say, "Well, there's a bunch of snakes been out there," so we've got to and buy a new piece of property take care of the snakes. How do we know the snakes are going to stay on that piece of property? You've got a lot of these environmental concerns.

When I find ~~that~~ people talking about all these environmental concerns, say, in the terms of an Auburn reservoir, they're worried about the birds. The birds aren't going to be hurt by an Auburn reservoir, they're going to just get on some trees that are higher. I don't think you're going to lose any birds up there. As far as the rattlesnakes, why, there's a lot of rattlesnakes. We got rattlesnakes down at Folsom Reservoir. When you fill the reservoir, the rattlesnakes will get out of the way. But we make a big deal out of this environmental stuff in terms of endangered species.

I think we're doing some pretty good stuff about the fish. They're cleaning it up, putting more water in the Delta. The salmon run's terrific this year. But people don't read the fish report in the [*Sacramento*] *Bee*. You read Matt Peters's [phonetic] column in the *Bee*, the fishing isn't all that bad. We're doing a lot of fishing off the coast. You've got the Russians, the Vietnamese, and the Japanese have been catching salmon off the coast for years. I'm sure they're the same salmon that they should

have been going up the Sacramento River, but we're not doing all that bad. We got a lot more fishermen out there than we had twenty years ago. You got more Oriental people sitting on the banks down here at Walnut Creek and Rio Vista fishing every day. I don't think we're doing too bad in terms of the environment. We've got a lot more people. And we got to take care of them, so to speak.

Seney: Well, thank you very much. We appreciate your talking to us again. I know you've spoken to Brit already, and I appreciate you talking to me about the Newlands Project.

Catino: I don't think we–maybe we didn't repeat too much of what–

Storey: No, we haven't repeated.

Catino: I didn't think we repeated too much. I'm glad we spent some time on the Newlands Project. Brit said, well, you wanted to talk about the politicos, but it's nice that we spent a little time on Newlands, because it is an old project of the Bureau. And Derby Dam over there, kind of an interesting story.

Seney: Well, thanks again.

Storey: We appreciate it.

Catino: You bet.

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END OF INTERVIEWS.