ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

Franklin (Frank) E. Dimick

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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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Interviews conducted–1994-1995
Interviews edited and published–2011

Oral History Program
Bureau of Reclamation
Denver, Colorado

SUGGESTED CITATION:

DIMICK,, FRANKLIN (FRANK) E.,
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS.
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1. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms, conditions, and restrictions set forth in this instrument, I, Franklin E. Dimick, (hereinafter referred to as "the Donor"), of Sacramento, California, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter referred to as "the National Archives), acting for and on behalf of the United States of America, all of my rights and title to, and interest in the information and responses (hereinafter referred to as "the Donated Materials") provided during interviews conducted on March 22, 1994, and on April 12 and 14, 1995, at the regional office of the Bureau of Reclamation in Sacramento, California, and prepared for deposit with the National Archives and Records Administration in the following format: cassette tape(s) and transcript(s). This donation includes, but is not limited to, all copyright interests I now possess in the Donated Materials.

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Date:_____ Signed:_____
Archivist of the United States

Brief Chronology of Career

194 –Born in North Las Vegas, Nevada, and raised in Oregon after the age of four.

1958–Graduated from Albany Union High School in Oregon.

1962-1964–Worked summers for the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

June 6, 1966–Went to work as a rotation engineer for Reclamation doing construction inspection out of the Los Banos Office

December 1966–Moved to Sacramento in the budget office.

February 1967–Moved to various short term assignments in the area of San Luis Dam.

March 1967–Moved to Grand Coulee Dam in order to be in Reclamation's O&M program.

1967–Moved to Grand Coulee Dam in the O&M functions there.

1976–Spent five and one-half months in Rexburg, Idaho, supervising the office that paid claims resulting from the failure of Teton Dam

August 1977–Moved to Provo as the head of the Operation and Maintenance Branch

April 1987–Moved to Carson City to become project manager of the Lahontan Basin Project Office

February 1991–Moved to Washington, D.C., as regional liaison for the Mid-Pacific Region

Late 1992–Started working on implementation of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, spending about half time in Carson City and half time in Sacramento.

January 1993–Acting assistant regional director for administration in Sacramento

March 1993–Made assistant regional director in the Mid-Pacific Region in Sacramento.

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

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Oral History Interviews
Franklin (Frank) E. Dimick

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Frank Dimick, an assistant regional director of the Mid-Pacific Region, in the regional offices of the Bureau of Reclamation in Sacramento, California, on March the 22nd, 1994, beginning at about ten o'clock in the morning. This is Tape 1.

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

Born in North Las Vegas, Nevada

Dimick: Sure. I was born in North Las Vegas, Nevada, on July 31st , 1940.

Moved to Portland, Oregon

About four years later my family moved from the Las Vegas area to Portland, Oregon, where my father worked in the shipyards during the Second World War.

Moved to a Farm Outside Albany, Oregon

Shortly after that we moved to Albany, Oregon, and I was raised on a small farm outside of Albany, Oregon, between the towns of Corvallis and Albany, Oregon.

Graduated from Albany Union High School in 1958

I was educated in a small country school for the first eight grades, and then graduated from Albany Union High School in 1958.

Graduated from Brigham Young University in 1966 with a Bachelor of Engineering Science Degree

I went to Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, and received a Bachelor of Engineering Science degree there in 1966.

Summer Work for the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) in 1963, 1964, and 1965

During my last three college years, I worked during the summers for the Department of Agriculture, with the Soil Conservation Service, working on drainage of fields for crop production. Something that you almost don't want to hear now, but one of my jobs was to drain wetlands, which is kind of a bad word in today's language. But in those days, it was a major component of the A-S-C-S program and that is that we actually cost-shared for a farmer to go out and put tile through a wetlands and drain that wetlands and make it into a productive field for crops.

Storey: Let's see, A-S-C-S is Agricultural Stabilization [and][1] Conservation Service, as I recall.

Dimick: Yes, right.

Storey: That would have been about 1959?

Dimick: That was about 1962 to '63. I dropped out of college for about a year-and-a-half in the middle of that. But, it was about 1962, '63, '64, somewhere in that period of time, which I worked for them on the A-S-C-S program. I also helped in realigning small streams and repairing flood damage. In 1965 I worked on repair of flood damage on the Santiam River in

1. A note on editorial conventions. In the text of these interviews, information in parentheses, ( ), is actually on the tape. Information in brackets, [ ], has been added to the tape either by the editor to clarify meaning or at the request of the interviewee in order to correct, enlarge, or clarify the interview as it was originally spoken. Words have sometimes been struck out by editor or interviewee in order to clarify meaning or eliminate repetition. In the case of strikeouts, that material has been printed at 50% density to aid in reading the interviews but assuring that the struckout material is readable.

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

In an effort to conform to standard academic rules of usage (see *The Chicago Manual of Style*), individual's titles are only capitalized in the text when they are specifically used as a title connected to a name, e.g., Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton as opposed to Gale Norton, secretary of the interior; Commissioner John Keys as opposed to John Keys, commissioner. Likewise formal titles of acts and offices are capitalized but abbreviated usages are not, e.g., Division of Planning as opposed to "planning;" the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992, as opposed to "the 1992 act."

Oregon. But that kind of got me interested in government service.

". . . when I became ready to graduate in '66, I began interviewing on campus, and when I interviewed with the Bureau of Reclamation I was very interested, because the type of work that they offered me, which was a hands-on, *doing* organization . . ."

However, when I became ready to graduate in '66, I began interviewing on campus, and when I interviewed with the Bureau of Reclamation I was very interested, because the type of work that they offered me, which was a hands-on, ***doing*** organization–in other words, ***accomplishing*** a major activity–I was very interested in that.

Accepted a Job with Reclamation in Sacramento

So when I interviewed with them, I learned a little bit more about them, became very interested, and was offered a job in Sacramento, California, as a matter of fact, where we're at now, and took that job. I chose Reclamation over the Soil Conservation Service primarily because I felt Reclamation was a more aggressive and upcoming organization than the Soil Conservation Service.

Came to Reclamation in Sacramento on June 6, 1966, as a Rotation Engineer

I went to work for the Bureau of Reclamation on the sixth day of the sixth month of 1966, so it was all sixes, in Sacramento, California, as a rotation engineer.

Worked in Construction Inspection on Reach 1 of the San Luis Canal for the Los Banos Office

I started my career actually assigned to the Los Banos Field Office where the construction was being made on the San Luis Dam and the San Luis Canal. I was assigned as a construction inspector for my first rotation assignment on the first eighteen miles of Reach 1 of the San Luis Canal, now called the California Aqueduct.

". . . putting a polysulfide sealant in the contraction joints on the canal . . . my job, was to oversee that activity. . . . a very simple operation, but . . . something that had not been tried in those days . . . and the Bureau was just trying it"

The work I was doing there was they had a test going on at that time. They were actually putting a polysulfide sealant in the contraction joints on the canal after the concrete had been placed, and that was my job, was to oversee that activity.

Storey: The sealant?

Dimick: Placing the sealant in the contraction joints.

Storey: What did that involve?

Dimick: Well, probably the hardest part of it was removing the forms that had been placed in to form the groves the sealant would be placed in later. That involved removing the plastic forms from the concrete, and then placing a rubber rod in the bottom of the grove to provide a "bond breaker," if you would, for the sealant that would be placed in later. And then the sealant was placed on top of this rubber rod. The sealant was a polysulfide material, it actually had to be mixed at the point that it was applied. The components had to be kept separate until they were mixed, because they set up in about something like a minute or something like that. So they had to be mixed right at the point of application, and they applied this sealant to it and that was it. It was just a very simple operation, but was something that had not been tried in those days and was new, and the Bureau was just trying it as a test section for this first eighteen miles.

Storey: Do you know how it worked out?

Dimick: Well, it worked out pretty good. We found a lot of problems, the rubber rotted in the bottom of the groove. We found that in placing it in, the contractor was stretching it and after a few days it broke because it did not have much tensile strength to it. The polysulfide itself worked very well. In fact, it was used for years in other applications, and is still used today, a form of it. But it worked fairly well. The final outcome, I don't know whether they've replaced it now with other sealants or not. I haven't kept track of it.

Storey: What specifically did you do as an inspector or a supervisor of this process?

What the Inspection Process Involved

Dimick: Well, although I was just fresh out of college, they kind of left me in charge of that because at this point the government was shutting down its construction forces, because most of the construction was completed, and this was just kind of a wrap-up contract. And so I was in charge of this responsibility. I had a summer engineering technician who helped me, a college student that helped me on this, and so it was just the two of us on this. And our job was just to make sure, number one, that the form material was removed properly, that the joint was properly cleaned by sand blasting, and then air blowing to keep it clean, and then that the rubber rod was placed in properly, and then that the sealant was placed in. The specs had a requirement on the ***depth*** of this sealant. If the sealant was too shallow, in other words, if there wasn't ***enough*** sealant placed in, then it didn't have enough tensile strength, so that as the concrete contracted and expanded, it would tear the material. And if it had ***too much***, then it tended to create an economics problem for the contractor ***as well as*** a problem with the strength of the material. It tended to cause problems with the material in that it would not elongate properly, let me put it that way–that's what they thought in those days at least. So consequently there was a requirement for the contractor to be very careful on how deep he put this material in. So we just made sure that

he cleaned it first and put the rubber rod in, and then they put this polysulfide sealant in at a proper depth.

Storey: How did you make sure of that? Were you ***there*** while they were doing all of this work?

". . . we worked seven days a week, daylight to dark. The contractor did not have facilities to put in at nighttime, . . . but he did work from daylight to dark, . . . and we actually had to be at the site . . . when he was actually applying the polysulfide . . ."

Dimick: Yeah, actually we worked seven days a week, daylight to dark. The contractor did not have facilities to put in at nighttime, so he didn't work after dark, but he did work from daylight to dark, and it was during the summertime, and we actually had to be at the site and ***measuring*** the material–when he was actually applying the polysulfide, we actually had to be measuring that material every few feet or every twenty or thirty feet we would take a measurement to ensure that it was the proper depth.

Storey: So did the contractor have more than one crew doing this?

Dimick: No, he only had one crew. He had two crews, but one crew would be removing forms, and the other crew would be placing the polysulfide, so that's why I had two inspectors: one to watch the removal of the forms and the clean-up of the joints, and then the other

inspector did the follow-up and the inspection on the application of materials.

Storey: Now, let's see, if I'm recalling correctly, the San Luis Canal, as Reclamation knows it, is the California Aqueduct as California knows it.

Dimick: That's correct, it's a joint use facility.

Storey: And it's concrete lined, even in those days it was concrete lined.

Dimick: It was built with a concrete lining, yeah. Very large canal.

Storey: How far apart were the expansion joints?

Dimick: I think they were about fifteen feet apart, if I'm not mistaken, something like that.

Storey: And there was sixteen miles? Do I recall you saying that?

Dimick: Yes, sixteen to eighteen.

Storey: There were a ***lot*** of expansion joints that you had to supervise the work on.

Dimick: Oh yes. I think there was something–on each slope there was something like four longitudinal expansion joints, or maybe six, I can't remember which–four or six longitudinal joints on ***each slope***. So across there, there were, say, ten or twelve expansion joints longitudinally, just on the slopes. So there would be basically ten times sixteen, or 160

miles of <u>those</u> joints. And then transverse-wise I think it was maybe every twenty feet or something like that, so take sixteen miles, divide it by twenty feet, and you've got a lot of joints transverse-wise.

Storey: Yes. How long did it keep you busy?

Transferred to the Regional Office in Sacramento for His Second Rotation

Dimick: Well, the project was going before I arrived and went after I left. In fact, after I left, they finally went to just using a mastic filler. The experimental phase was finished on the mastic material. I was there from the 6th of June until about December, and then I was transferred from that job. As a rotation engineer, you're only there for a few months anyway, and I was transferred up to the regional office in Sacramento, California.

Storey: How many of the sixteen miles do you suppose were finished while you were there? That would have been about six months or so.

Dimick: We finished most of the slopes. We had not done the bottom. They waited to do the bottom, obviously, because everything seemed to collect on the bottom. So they did the two sides of the canal, and we did almost all of those in that six months.

Storey: The whole sixteen miles?

Dimick: Yeah. We were working on the bottom when I left.

Storey: Tell me what it means to be a rotation engineer.

Rotation Engineer Program

Dimick: Okay. Rotation engineer was a program designed to bring engineers in out of college and expose them to various engineering activities within the Bureau of Reclamation–partially to give them a chance to select the area that they most likely wanted to be in. You know, whether you wanted to be an engineer in construction or an engineer in design, or an engineer in operation and maintenance [O&M], or an engineer in budgets. They gave you all those different opportunities and gave you exposure to the work to see how you liked it as well as how well you performed in those areas. It's kind of the idea–and we still use rotation assignments today–engineers as well as other disciplines now. But the concept being it gave you an idea of what the work was like, and how well adapted you were to that work. I found out, for instance, I did not like construction activities.

". . . at the end of that assignment . . . I knew that I did not want to go into the construction side of the Bureau of Reclamation. . . ."

In fact, at the end of that assignment, I began requesting different assignments because I knew that I did not want to go into the construction side of the Bureau of Reclamation.

I didn't like the idea of working seven days a week from daylight to dark, and then on a day that it rained you didn't have much to do.

Storey: Tell me about this seven days a week, dawn to dusk. Were you earning overtime, for instance?

Dimick: Yes, in fact, coming right out of college, that was great, because it helped me pay off some of the bills that I'd gotten during college.

". . . my overtime was actually more than my regular pay . . ."

In fact, my overtime was actually more than my regular pay, because you get time-and-a-half for overtime. I'd leave my house–and this was during the summertime when it doesn't get dark until almost ten o'clock at night–I'd leave my house in the dark in the morning and I would come home after dark at night. Carried two meals, for instance. You had to carry your lunch plus your supper, because you had to eat two meals while you was working. [I] did this the majority of the summer. The contractor was behind and he worked his crews that many hours, and so we had that responsibility to be with them. But the pay was great for a young engineer out of college with a lot of bills, and I had a wife and child to support at that time, so it worked very well.

Storey: What did it do to your family life?

Dimick: (chuckles) That's one of the reasons I decided that I didn't like that kind of a life, because my son at that time was two years old, and I never saw him for a month long. When I left in the morning, he was still asleep. And when I'd come home at night he'd be in bed. The only time you got to see your family is when you specifically took off from work–either took annual leave or just plain refused to work on the weekend. And I didn't like that.

Storey: From what you know, is that fairly typical of construction work at that time in Reclamation?

Characterization of Hours Worked on Construction Inspection at Reclamation

Dimick: No, it varied. Some inspection jobs are that way, yes. When the contractor gets behind, he starts working twelve-hour days or ten-hour days or whatever, and works through the weekends, but not as a typical thing, it was not. A typical one was five days a week and maybe ten-hour days, but usually just five days a week or maybe six days a week. But if a contractor gets in a bind, then he'll do what he has to to get finished. So it varies. You know, in those days, in contract work, as I say, for instance when it rained, or because the concrete had to be totally dry when you applied this material–if it rained, the contractor shut down. And the question is, what do you do with a government employee who's supposed to be inspecting the contractor who is now shut down? You can't send the government employee home, and you can't force him to take annual leave, so the

word was, “Find something to do, or get lost and don’t get caught” kind of a concept. But that’s why I didn’t like it, because I didn’t like to go get lost and find something to do all day to keep out of somebody’s way. It’s logical that you have to do that, because when the contractor shuts down, there’s just nothing for the inspector to do. I mean, there’s a certain amount of reports and stuff you can get caught up on, and you can clean out your vehicle, and you can do a few of these things. But if it rains three days in a row, by the second day you just plain haven’t got anything to do.

Storey: One of the things that some folks have told me is that they identified different types of personalities among engineers, and that those types of personalities make them better suited to ***one*** kind of work than to another kind of work. Do you identify types of personalities like that?

What the Rotation Program Helps New Engineers Determine

Dimick: Oh yeah, very definitely. And I think that’s why the rotation program is good, because a person can come on the job and cycle through several different types of activities, and their personality will adapt to a certain one and they’ll realize that. As I say, I realized I ***did not*** like construction work, because my family life suffered, I didn’t like either working myself to death or sitting around twiddling my thumbs. I didn’t like that.

". . . second rotation assignment I went into was working in the budget side of it. . . . that's been very *beneficial* to me, because I understand budgets a little bit better, but I hated it . . ."

The second rotation assignment I went into was working in the budget side of it. I've now found that that's been very ***beneficial*** to me, because I understand budgets a little bit better, but I hated it, I hated that assignment, it was just one that I did not like at all. It just didn't fit my personality.

"The last [rotation] assignment I got into was operation and maintenance and I loved it. . . ."

The last assignment I got into was operation and maintenance and I loved it. It was something that had a steadiness to it as far as the work is concerned.

"You always had a problem in front of you, you never had a day in which you didn't have anything to do. . . ."

You always had a problem in front of you, you never had a day in which you didn't have anything to do. It was always something going on.

And it's the same with design. There are some people who just ***love*** the concept of design. Now, I designed things in my younger years when I was a young engineer, and I enjoyed it, but I didn't want to do it for a livelihood all the time, because it was too

tedious. I wasn't getting the job done fast enough for me, I guess.

Storey: So the O&M, after the design had been done, and you were implementing, is that what I'm hearing here?

Dimick: Well, you know, O&M is a whole breed in itself, in the way that ***I*** see it and the way I've done it, and that is that you have to use your design knowledge, but you don't have the time to do the design. Now what I mean by that is, if you have a canal break, for instance, you have to use your design knowledge on soils in order to choose the right soils to plug that hole and to solve the problem, but you don't have the six months that it would take to sit down and design that canal prism and how much compaction to give it and everything else–you just go out in the field and you say, "Here's how you do it," and you design as you build, and so you don't have the luxury of doing that kind of thing. Or if a gate fails, you don't have the chance to sit down and design an all-new gate and an all-new guides for it to fit in. You just ***do*** it. But you have to use your design knowledge in order to do that. So it's a different ball game. It's one of those things where you use your knowledge, but it's an instantaneous thing, rather than sitting down and laboriously designing something out on paper. I mean, there are times in O&M when you still have to sit down and design a building or a slab or something, and that's okay, but there are a lot of times when you have to be put on the spot to make a decision based on your

knowledge and go with it, without having the luxury of making sure that every little thing is just right.

Storey: So in December of '66 you moved up to Sacramento and worked in budgeting for how long?

Dimick: Let's see, I worked there until about February, just three months. I was brought in because in those days that was the budget cycle, it had to be in by February, and so I worked on getting the budget in to the commissioner's office. Still is the same cycle.

February 1967 Moved into Temporary Assignments, Including Work on the Pacheco Tunnel

And got the budget in, and then in March of that year, I did some temporary assignments, again, out on construction, and a little bit on O&M. I worked a little bit on the Pacheco Tunnel, which is a tunnel which was started way back in the 1960s, wasn't completed until 1986, wasn't even holed through, I should say, until 1986, twenty years later. But they built part of it so that they could fill the reservoir. It was the part that would have been underwater in the reservoir, they built that early on, and I worked on that for a few weeks. Spent a few weeks out in Contra Loma Dam, which is over on Contra Costa County on a small off-stream reservoir there, and filled the latter part of February and the first part of March in there.

". . . about January of that year, I had applied for a job in Coulee Dam, Washington, at the Grand Coulee Dam, because I was dissatisfied with the assignments they were giving me in my rotation program. I tried to get them to let me do O&M work, and they wouldn't do it. . . ."

And about January of that year, I had applied for a job in Coulee Dam, Washington, at the Grand Coulee Dam, because I was dissatisfied with the assignments they were giving me in my rotation program. I tried to get them to let me do O&M work, and they wouldn't do it. The Bureau at that time was a pretty rigid organization as far as you did what they wanted you to do, or you didn't do it–that's about what it boiled down to. I had no say in what I wanted to do in my rotation. ***Now*** our rotation programs, you sit down with a mentor, an advisor, and they work with you and you lay out your career path. Unless it's something absolutely impossible, they work to meet ***your*** desires.

But in those days, when I came on, they didn't give us a choice, they just said, "Here's where you'll be." And then they would call you up one day and say, "Okay, now we're transferring you to this other point." And a few months later they'd say, "Okay, now we're moving you into ***this*** job," and so forth. Didn't give you that choice of laying out your path.

"I kept requesting an O&M assignment and kept getting turned down. . . ."

I kept requesting an O&M assignment and kept getting turned down. So I said, "To heck with this," so I applied in January of that year for a job up in the Coulee Dam, Washington, in the O&M Department up there.

Moved to Grand Coulee Dam in March of 1967 in the O&M Program

And I got that job in March of '67. I moved to Coulee Dam, Washington, with the agreement that I would finish my rotation in a permanent assignment.

". . . the last three months of my rotation assignment I was actually at a permanent assignment in Coulee Dam, Washington. . . ."

So the last three months of my rotation assignment I was actually at a permanent assignment in Coulee Dam, Washington.

Storey: In O&M?

Dimick: In O&M.

Storey: Do you know who was making the decisions about where you would be assigned?

Dimick: No, I had no idea. I had no idea who was making those.

Storey: Was there a contact?

Dimick: I had a meeting once with the office engineer in Los Banos, California, to talk about my

rotation program, that was all, that I can remember.

Storey: So basically just sort of out of the blue, somebody was contacting you. Who? Your then current supervisor?

Dimick: Yeah.

Storey: And saying, "You've been transferred to 'X.'"

Dimick: Right.

Storey: Okay.

Dimick: And I guess that's because in the 60s there, we were in our heyday of construction, and there was a lot of people employed with the Bureau, and a lot of people in that program, and they were picking up engineers quite frequently.

". . . you almost felt like a sheep being herded around. I kept asking for an assignment, they wouldn't do it, so that's why I left this region . . ."

And so it was kind of–you almost felt like a sheep being herded around. I kept asking for an assignment, they wouldn't do it, so that's why I left this region, was because I could not get the assignment that I wanted to get.

Storey: Uh-huh, and you went up to Grand Coulee.

Dimick: I went to Grand Coulee.

Storey: Where did you live up there?

". . . I had a mobile home . . . in the little town of Coulee Dam, . . . called the "Engineers' Town" . . . and I lived on the east side of the river. . . ."

Dimick: Well, I had a mobile home at the time, and so I lived in a mobile home park directly below the dam. I was about a half-mile downstream of the dam in the little town of Coulee Dam, which was the old called the "Engineers' Town" during the construction of the dam. It was owned by the government until–I was going to say until about the 60s–but it was called the Engineers' Town and I lived on the east side of the river.

Storey: And what specifically were you doing at Coulee?

". . . I went into the O&M. I went into the Engineering Branch there and did everything . . ."

Dimick: Well, at Coulee I went into the O&M. I went into the Engineering Branch there and did everything, had a total variety of assignments.

"One of the first assignments . . . was to design a bulkhead door . . . so that in case the dam were to flood, the door would hold the water out from the elevator shaft, so it wouldn't go down the elevator shaft and then into the powerhouse. . . ."

One of the first assignments I had, for instance, was to design a bulkhead door that would be mounted around the elevator shafts, so that in case the dam were to flood, the door would hold the water out from the elevator shaft, so it

wouldn't go down the elevator shaft and then into the powerhouse. Other assignments I had was to oversee land activities, leases and licenses, do any civil engineering work related to operation and maintenance of the structure.

Assigned a Variety of Activities in the O&M Program

I designed a sand bunker to hold sand for the roads, so they could sand the roads in the wintertime. I designed a carpenter building for a carpenter shop when they had a mechanic shop–we had a combined building for that. I designed the slab and the building for that at Grand Coulee. I installed a reservoir level gauge type thing. Just about everything involved with the operation and maintenance of the facility. That was originally my job. Like I say, I did do some design work (chuckles) early on in my life.

Storey: I believe you said it's the engineering division that you were in?

At Grand Coulee Worked in the General Engineering Branch in the Maintenance Division

Dimick: It was the Engineering Branch of the Maintenance Division up there. It was called the General Engineering Branch.

Storey: How large was the Branch?

Dimick: Let's see, at that time there was about ten people in there. There was five engineers, and

then there was a couple of technicians, and about two or three draftsmen who did the drafting work.

Storey: How many folks in the division?

Dimick: Well, the division included all of the wage grade employees at the dam. I couldn't even remember, probably in a division there was probably, oh, a hundred people.

Storey: So we're talking about a big office at Coulee.

". . . right at that time, they were staffing up for the construction work on the Third Powerplant at Grand Coulee, so they had an operation and maintenance site, and then they had a whole 'nother office that was a construction site . . ."

Dimick: Yeah, but at that time, the Grand Coulee Dam Office, right at that time, they were staffing up for the construction work on the Third Powerplant at Grand Coulee, so they had an operation and maintenance site, and then they had a whole 'nother office that was a construction site, and they just started staffing up in 1967 for that. I think at that time, the staff of the ***maintenance*** side was about 300 people, totally, counting the operators, as well as the maintenance crews.

Other Branches and Divisions at Grand Coulee

They had electrical divisions, ours was the General Engineering, which is primarily civil engineers; they had a Mechanical Engineering

Branch; an Electrical Engineering Branch; and then they had actually their maintenance crews. Then they had another division, which was the Operations Division.

Storey: Were you involved at all with the Third Powerplant part?

Involvement with the Third Powerhouse and the Pacific Northwest Region's Scuba Team

Dimick: Well, yes, because obviously as you construct a addition to a dam, then you have to work with the people who maintain that existing dam. And so we got involved in it, not an awful lot. I probably got involved in it more than others because I ended up being on the Bureau of Reclamation scuba diving team for the Pacific Northwest Region. I was trained and put on that team in about 1968, I think, '69, somewhere in there. I don't remember the exact date.

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Storey: So they formed this team to inspect the underwater portions of the dam?

Work of the Scuba Team

Dimick: Yes, and also underwater portion of canals and so forth. So as they were building the dam, because they were building onto the existing dam, there was a lot of underwater activities, and we did the ***inspection*** for the underwater

construction at the dam. So I did get involved with it, for instance, inspecting the underwater portions of the coffer dams and stuff like that, that were being built by the construction people. So I got involved in that aspect, somewhat in coordinating the activities of the construction.

Supervised Operation of the Water Treatment Plant and Sewage Disposal Plant Built for the Third Powerplant

For example, one of the things they built in the new Third Powerplant was a water treatment plant and a sewage disposal plant. Being in the position I was in the General Engineering, that was my responsibility to supervise the operation of those two facilities, and to get them up and running. And so I had to work with them as they were being constructed, so that when they were ready to be taken over, I went ahead and assumed the responsibility on operating those facilities.

Storey: Why did we need a water treatment plant and a sewage treatment plant– a wastewater treatment plant?

Dimick: Well, up until that time, the government had relied upon the local towns for their sewage treatment systems, and with the addition of the Third Powerplant, it was just more than what the cities wanted to take, ***plus*** the Bureau felt it was more appropriate to start treating their own sewage. The only treatment we did at that time was chlorination and filtration, and so we just

used some sand filters and chlorination was all you needed for ***that*** water. The sewage facilities only handled a portion of the dam, it did not handle all of it. It was just for the new portion of the dam. But that's where all the tourists were, and the facilities for the main tourists' visit was at that side of the dam, and so there was a concern there that we needed that for the impact on the city. So there's a treatment plant put in there.

Managing the Sewage Treatment Plant to Deal with Seasonal Visitation Fluctuations

We found out, very interesting, that we were not prepared the first time the tourists really showed up at the dam, and our sewage treatment plant went what we call "turned over"–it went belly up, so as to speak. So from then on, we bought dog food and fed the sewage plant dog food. A sewage plant that was designed there was designed to handle a fairly steady flow. Well, in the springtime there, all that we were handling was the sewage or the waste products from the maintenance people and the operations people in the dam itself. And then on Memorial Day Weekend, all of a sudden you have 300,000 visitors come to the dam, and obviously since you're ninety miles from the nearest major city, the first thing that people do when they reach the dam is to use the restrooms. The sewage treatment plant could not ***handle*** that influx of waste products in that short of a time, so what we did was, for about a week before that, we built the plant up by feeding it dry dog food to "feed" it things so

it thought it was handling the heavier load. So then on the day that the visitors came, we quit feeding it dog food and it got the real stuff. (chuckles) You would ***fool*** it into thinking it was a bigger plant than it was.

Storey: So this would be a design problem that hadn't been foreseen, I guess.

Dimick: Well, yeah, the only design problem is the plant was an aeration plant and was designed to handle a fairly steady flow, and they had forgot about the fact that on that first day of spring . . . Now, after that, it was okay because during the summer we had a fairly constant string of visitors coming in from that day on. But that first day in spring, that Memorial Day Weekend, was a shock to the system. It was rather interesting that we sent in an order for a ton of dry dog food.

Storey: Each year?

Dimick: Each year. Yeah, we'd take about a ton. By the time you handled . . . We'd feed it before each . . . I don't remember how much we actually used, but it seems like it was about a ton was our first order. You'd feed it during the week before each major weekend that you knew you was going to have a lot of people coming. Consequently, it worked properly from then on. It's a good little plant. Some of the things you learned, and some of the unique things that you did.

Storey: In a former incarnation, I had business out at Chief Joe, not at Grand Coulee, but I thought I was remembering that the visitors' center was on one side of the dam and the Third Powerplant was on the ***opposite*** side. Am I not remembering correctly?

visitor's center at grand coulee

Dimick: No, you're remembering correctly, except that there was a period of time there, during the construction of the Third Powerplant, that there actually was no visitors' center on that left bank, that one downstream. They built that, it was completed probably in about 1978-, '79. But in the early 70s, when the powerplant itself was being completed, there was no visitors' center on that side. The only visitors' center was actually the elevator and the tour on the Third Powerplant. There was actually no visitors' center there for a while.

Storey: I have no engineering background, and I also lack a lot of background in how Reclamation interacts within itself. I would presume, though, that an engineer or a branch of Grand Coulee that was interested in O&M would be interested in the general maintenance, upkeep, safety, and overall health of Grand Coulee and its related systems. (Dimick: Uh-huh.) What kinds of concerns would your branch and division have had about them, if you will, "remodeling" Grand Coulee Dam and adding the Third Powerplant? What kinds of engineering issues and safety issues and all the other kinds of things ***came up*** for you all as

you were confronting this major construction activity?

Issues for the O&M Staff Because of Construction of the Third Powerplant

Dimick: Well, of course the first issue was the safety of the dam itself. In other words, the stability of the dam. You have what they call uplift pressure, wells in the base of the dam that measure the pressure of the water in the rock underneath the dam. Obviously, if it gets too high, it can literally lift the dam off the rock, or cause it to overturn. So you're interested in that, and the concept of blasting rock at the end of the dam, and ***literally***, they ended up blasting some of the concrete off the end of the dam, fifty-foot blocks of concrete off the end of the dam, how that would affect the uplift pressures underneath the dam–in other words, the stability of the dam itself. Also, whenever they set off a blast, how would that affect the generators in vibrations, because the generators had automatic devices that would shut them down if they started vibrating. So we had those kind of concerns. Probably the safety of the dam was the primary one. Also, when they built the coffer dams, what you basically had is a temporary dam, and now when you raise the reservoir against that temporary dam, how does that affect the safety and the operation of the dam?

Kind of a side thing of that, as soon as you cut off the end of the dam, you cut off one of the major roads through that area, you cut

off the tourist route, you cut off the access that our own maintenance people had to certain areas, and we had everything from relocating the bust of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who the lake was named after–there was a bust of him overlooking the lake in a little overlook area. Well, that was to be removed and destroyed, so you had to design a new pedestal for him to sit on, and a new arrival area on the ***other*** side of the dam. So those kind of little things went along with the major activities. How do you reroute the traffic? How do you reroute the tourists? And then how do you provide for the safety of the tourists and at the same time accomplish the work that has to be done with all of this other activities?

The tourists at Grand Coulee Dam are a major concern, because you have I-don't-know-how-many people, say in the neighborhood of 800,000 people or something like that, come to the dam every year–maybe it's even more than that–just to look. And if they can't see the dam, or even get close to it, they're going to be very upset, because some of them may have driven thousands of miles just to see the dam. So trying to keep people in the area without causing disruption, and having our own people having to buck that kind of a congestion, made it a challenge in itself, just to keep those kind of things going.

Storey: How did you resolve some of these issues? How ***were*** they resolved?

How Dealing with Projects at Reclamation Has Changed over the Years

Dimick: Well, you know, that's kind of a change that's occurred in the Bureau. In those days, you just gave the problem to an engineer and he went off in the corner and solved it. Nowadays we can't do that because there's too many other people involved, and they would get too much complaint. Nowadays you got to form a team and get an advisory group and go through a lot of other effort to get something done, but in those days . . . For instance, the moving of the bust, they says, "Frank, solve it," so I went ahead and designed a new area for the bust and the new pedestal and actually went back to our regional office on a detail and wrote the specifications of the contract to do that, and then I oversaw the contract to make sure that it was done right. So it was basically a one-man show, whereas now you couldn't do that, you'd have to have a citizens' advisory group formed to see which way he looked, when he looked out, which way the pedestal faced, now; and whether or not the pedestal was made of white granite or a darker concrete. Those kind of questions would have to be considered now, compared with the way they were in those days.

Storey: What about rerouting traffic across the dam?

Dimick: Well, we just basically shut the dam off. They cut the end of the dam off so we just shut the end of the dam off and prohibited people from getting on top of the dam, which caused a lot of

problems, because people like to get out and look over the spillway when it was spilling. But we allowed them onto what we called our pumping plant back there, which gave them an opportunity and a place to park, and then they were allowed to walk partway out onto the dam and look over. So we kind of compromised that situation.

Storey: Did we make provision for them to be able to oversee the construction area?

Dimick: No. Well, we actually took an area that was on the left bank where the visitors' center eventually ended up at, and we made that into a large parking area, and they could stand over there and watch the construction from that side over there. But it was not a very elaborate arrival center or anything like that, it was just a parking area.

Storey: Now, the top of Coulee wasn't ever a highway or anything like that, was it?

Dimick: Well, yeah, there used to be a road there that went across the dam and then came down into the east side of Coulee Dam. There's a bridge across the river right below, but you could actually go across the dam and down that side of town, and actually that was a safer route than the bridge, because the bridge was narrow and had a very sharp turn at each end of it.

Storey: So that was a customary travel route then.

Dimick: Yes, for the locals who lived there. The tourists, it was part of the tour route, if you would. But yeah, if you wanted to get from Grand Coulee down into the ***business part*** of Coulee Dam, you actually went across the top of the dam. It was a little bit better road than it was to go down the side of the hill. But that was cut off. It's now opened up again, but because the Third Powerplant, the way it's built, the road is an awkward way to go now, and so it's not as easily accessible. So it never did turn back into a main thoroughfare like the original one.

Storey: I take it this uplift monitoring, is that a constant thing that goes on under dams?

Monitoring Dams

Dimick: Yeah, those are pressure readings that are taken on a regular basis, part of the standard maintenance. Technicians will go out and read those usually, say, monthly or quarterly–some of them maybe every six months, depending upon any changes that may occur. Or for instance, if you have an earthquake in the area, you'll go down and read those immediately after the earthquake to assure that nothing has been disturbed. So yeah, the structural readings on a dam are a regular process of maintenance and operation of that dam.

Storey: Tell me about those readings. What is there besides these uplift monitoring wells?

Dimick: Well, you have uplift pressure readings, you have drains that actually come into the inside of the dam to drain any water that might be leaking through. So you measure the ***amount*** of water in the drains inside the dam. Inside the dam you have what they call a gutter system.

"In a gallery . . . what you have is a sidewalk, and alongside the sidewalk you have a gutter. You always know that the gutter's on the upstream side of the sidewalk, by the way. If the lights ever go out, you know which way you're headed inside a dam . . ."

In a gallery–a gallery is like a horseshoe shape, and what you have is a sidewalk, and alongside the sidewalk you have a gutter. You always know that the gutter's on the upstream side of the sidewalk, by the way. If the lights ever go out, you know which way you're headed inside a dam by knowing that the gutter is always on the upstream side. But the water is funneled to those gutters through drain systems that are actually in the face of the dam, and the flow of the water ***in*** the gutters is measured–the flow of that water– to determine if it's increasing, decreasing, or staying constant.

You have what they call ***plumb*** lines inside of concrete dams. These plumb lines are nothing more than hanging a weighted line down an elevator shaft, for instance, or a plumb line shaft, some kind of a shaft, to determine whether or not the dam is still standing straight up, or whether it's starting to tilt a little. You

have survey points inside and outside the dam to determine if the dam is ***deforming*** in any way. In other words, is it still perfectly straight, if it's supposed to be straight; or is it still curved the proper curvature if it's a curved dam. Is it moving upstream or downstream, or is it moving a little bit to the left or a little bit to the right. These are all taken, probably the curvature ones may only be taken maybe every six years, or maybe every three years. But some of the more critical ones are taken maybe monthly or semiannually–as well as just the elevations. You take elevations across the tops of dams and across downstream face of dams–not just concrete, either, by the way. Some of these measurements are taken on earthfill dams too.

Storey: Am I hearing that dams move?

Dimick: Yeah, dams will move. In fact, an earth-filled dam, for instance, actually the design has it, you place a ***thicker*** portion in the center of the dam because you know it's going to continue to settle after it's built, and so it will continue to settle after the dam is built. And so you actually build it with a camber in it already, so that as it settles, it finally ends up as level as it can be. But they do move, and they'll move a little bit downstream, even. There is some slight movement in all dams, but it eventually stops. But during the initial filling, there will be some movement inside of dams, yes.

Storey: Am I also hearing you say that dams leak?

"Every dam leaks. If somebody says that a dam doesn't leak, they haven't looked at it. . . ."

Dimick: Every dam leaks. If somebody says that a dam doesn't leak, they haven't looked at it. (chuckles) Every dam that you ever see, leaks. Interestingly enough, at Grand Coulee, as an example, the blocks were like fifty foot wide, and they were built in five-foot lifts. That means that you brought five feet of concrete up, and then you let that concrete harden, and then you poured five more feet of concrete on top of that.

". . . a cold joint. That's a joint between two pieces of concrete. . . . water *will* come through those lifts. . . . at Grand Coulee, we had one that was leaking enough that the tourists asked so many questions . . . that we finally went inside and drilled from inside the dam to tap that where it was leaking and capture the water inside the dam so it didn't show up downstream, so the tourists didn't get worried about it anymore. . . ."

Well, in between those lifts is what you call a cold joint. That's a joint between two pieces of concrete. It is hardened, and then you pour fresh concrete on top. Well, you can't get a perfect bond there, and so water ***will*** come through those lifts. Under high enough pressure, water will come through those lifts, so it ***does leak***.

And at Grand Coulee, we had one that was leaking enough that the tourists asked so many questions, were so concerned about it,

that we finally went inside and drilled from inside the dam to tap that where it was leaking and capture the water inside the dam so it didn't show up downstream, so the tourists didn't get worried about it anymore. It was one of those issues where you just get tired of answering questions, "No, the dam is still safe, even though it's leaking," because people have the concept that a dam shouldn't leak. But all dams leak–some a lot more than others.

Storey: So that's a normal engineering ***issue*** that has to be dealt with in dam construction.

Drains in Earthen Dams

Dimick: Sure. There're actually drains are placed in earthen dams, for instance, called toe drains. And those toe drains run water almost constantly. Those are actually drain lines that are put in the downstream toe of the dam to capture the water so it doesn't come to the surface and begin piping away material. It's actually a controlled seepage, yes.

Storey: Underneath the dam?

Dimick: Underneath the dam. And in many cases, down the sides of the dam where it joins up with the rocks too. Yeah, you can go into some dams.

"Glen Canyon Dam, when it was originally built, had quite a crack in one of the abutments, . . . water was leaking so fast the gutters couldn't handle it. . . . people need to understand that *dams do leak*. That's okay, as long as it's

controlled leakage. When it's out of control, that's when you've got a problem. . . ."

Glen Canyon Dam, when it was originally built, had quite a crack in one of the abutments, and in fact the water was leaking so fast the gutters couldn't handle it. I was in there when you got wet feet because the gutters couldn't handle all the water that was leaking through–but it's okay. That's just something that happens, and people need to understand that ***dams do leak***. That's okay, as long as it's controlled leakage. When it's out of control, that's when you've got a problem.

Storey: Now the galleries, you said they were horseshoe shaped. Does that mean cross-section, floor to ceiling?

Dimick: Yeah, they're rounded at the ceiling and square on the bottom. It's just a hallway that's rounded on the ceiling.

Storey: Basically a tunnel through the concrete?

Dimick: Yes. In Grand Coulee, for instance, I think before they added the Third Powerplant, there was over eight miles of tunnels in Grand Coulee.

Storey: And now there are more.

Dimick: Now there's more, yeah. They've probably added another mile or two to that.

Storey: What kind of issues would have been of concern in terms of the concrete mixture that was being used to build the Third Powerhouse and that extension on the dam over there?

Cooling the Concrete During Construction of Grand Coulee Dam

Dimick: Well, the biggest issue was cooling. In the original dam they physically cooled the concrete by pumping ice water through it. Concrete, when it hardens, has a chemical reaction which creates heat, and so the concrete would get too hot if you didn't physically cool it. So in Grand Coulee there's a lot of copper pipe inside the concrete. Of course you don't see it now, but it was run through there, and they pumped cold water through those pipes to cool the concrete so it didn't get too hot. The reason is, if it gets too hot, then it expands and then when it contracts, it cracks, because concrete is very poor in tensile strength. So you want to keep it cool.

". . . at the Third Powerplant . . . they had new concrete mixtures and mixed the concrete in such a way that they did not generate all that heat. And so it didn't have to have a cooling system . . ."

Well, at the Third Powerplant, they didn't ***have*** to do that, because they had new concrete mixtures and mixed the concrete in such a way that they did not generate all that heat. And so it didn't have to have a cooling system like the original dam did.

The other thing is that concrete tends to react sometimes with the aggregate that's placed in it. You have what they call alkali-aggregate reaction, in which the concrete deteriorates because of the reaction between the cement and the rock or the aggregate that's placed in the concrete. In some of the early dams the Bureau of Reclamation built, that became a real problem. In Utah, for instance, there was a dam called the Spanish Fork Diversion Dam that when I was in ***that*** area, I moved to Utah in 1977, but in that area you could actually dig through the concrete with a pocket knife–dig a hole in the concrete with a pocket knife–because of this alkali-aggregate reaction that had taken place. So those are the kinds of things they have to design for. They have to know what their aggregate is like, in other words what the rock is like, and the chemical makeup of the rock, and then you adjust your concrete mix, your cement mix, if you would, to account for those kind of conditions, to make sure you don't have any kind of a reaction between the two.

Storey: And would there have been similar issues between the old concrete and the new concrete?

Dimick: No, I don't think that was the issue, because usually if you put a cold joint, it doesn't react. Old concrete doesn't react very much with new concrete.

Storey: You mentioned they poured Coulee, I think it was, in five-foot rises. (Dimick: Yes.) Did

they stagger those, so that the lifts were at different levels in the different blocks?

Dimick: Yeah, they'd raise alternate blocks. Every other block would be raised, and then they'd go back and raise the blocks in between to the same level, so that the level all the way across might be the same at any point, but they were brought up in ***alternate*** blocks, so that every other block . . . And that was so that the shrinkage issue . . . If you do every other block, then those can, as they cure, they shrink a little bit, and then you fill in between them, if you would, with the fresh concrete.

Storey: Did you just do one thing while you were at Coulee?

Evolution of the Job at Grand Coulee

Dimick: Well, I stayed in the General Engineering Branch, and did I do one thing? No, I started out, as I said, doing a lot of design work and those kind of activities. As time went on, I slowly changed my job and worked into other activities. I was there for ten years, and towards the end of the ten-year period, I was involved primarily in overseeing the lands, leases, and activities on the lake: landslides, logging leases, access to the reservoir, and things like that, which I very much enjoyed. We ended up with a fleet of about three or four boats, and I spent about two months out of the year up on the lake, driving a boat around. So it was a rather enjoyable time.

Storey: Why were you concerned about those kinds of things?

Dimick: Well, as an example, when they drew the lake down to install a coffer dam on the Third Powerplant, they created a landslide on the Spokane River, which is one of the main tributaries to Lake Roosevelt that blocked the river. It was such a huge landslide it blocked the river for about two days, and backed the river up, and then it broke through that and washed out that blockage. It was a real threat to human life. When the landslide occurred, for example, they were about three miles downstream. They were giving a boating instructor's course, a course on how to instruct people to operate boats. And when the landslide occurred, it sent a wave down the river and got all the people that were standing on the dock, wet. It didn't drown them, but it got them wet up to about their waist, because they were out there standing on the dock and all of a sudden the lake started rising around them, so they kind of got wet. But those kind of things, it was mainly a safety issue, plus the fact that a landslide exceeded our land, the boundary of the government land. If a landslide would encroach upon private property, then we had an obligation to go and try to acquire that property from the private individual who we were now encroaching upon.

Storey: I think I put my question incorrectly. Were you in the same position all the time you were at Coulee?

"I worked my way up from a GS-7 to a GS-12 there. . . . the job, the complexity and the responsibilities of the job changed as I became more experienced. . . ."

Dimick: No, the position changed. I worked my way up from a GS-7 to a GS-12 there. It's hard to say whether I was in the same position or not. I sat at the same desk, basically, the entire ten years, but the job, the complexity and the responsibilities of the job changed as I became more experienced. (Storey: Uh-huh.) So to say did I change jobs? No, I didn't really change jobs. I basically worked for the same person, although my boss changed, but I worked for the same ***position*** for the entire ten years.

Storey: Uh-huh, but it evolved, and so when you left, what were you doing that was different than when you arrived?

Dimick: When I first came in, like I said, I was basically doing the detail work for other engineers of higher grade. When I left, I was the supervisor of those lower-graded engineers and technicians. When I left, for instance, I had the responsibility of all the drafting departments, I had the responsibility for all the lands and leases, as well as all the structural behavioral readings I was talking about, making sure that the structure remained safe–I had those responsibilities. So I ***oversaw*** all those activities, rather than actually doing the work myself.

Storey: What kinds of lands issues did you have?

Dimick: Well, primarily, as I say, one was just making sure that we didn't encroach. See, we had over 160 registered landslides on Lake Roosevelt itself. Those are landslides that were of sufficient size to be . . . Make sure that they were catalogued and the size of them determined and whether or not they were going to continue or slow down or whatever. We had access; we had recreation activities. The National Park Service handled the recreation, but they did it by contract under us. So we worked with them to make sure that activity . . . A lot of logging outfits that wanted to float logs on the reservoir. And encroachments, people wanting to build a nice home site on the lakeshore, or a summer cabin on the lakeshore, or just cutting timber along the lakeshore–saying it was theirs, and cutting timber and selling it–those kind of activities.

Storey: How did we monitor that kind of thing? How did we monitor timbering encroachments or construction encroachments?

Dimick: Well, we had two ways: one was the National Park Service who handled all of the shoreline forests under contract, and their rangers would patrol the lake, as well as the shoreline around their areas. Plus we had our own crews, survey crews, in the field a lot. Plus twice a year we just did a shoreline, from the boat, we would go up the lake in the boats and examine the shorelines ourselves.

Storey: We started out mentioning the scuba diving, and you mentioned Third Powerplant and that got me off on another tack. Let's talk a little more about what the scuba team did. Did you just operate at Coulee, for instance?

Pacific Northwest Region Scuba Team

Dimick: No, the scuba team that I was on was actually a regional scuba team. It was ***based*** at Coulee, but we did diving throughout the Pacific Northwest Region, which included Oregon, Washington, Idaho, part of Montana. And we . . .

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. MAY 22, 1994.
BEGIN OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2. MAY 22, 1994.

Storey: This is Tape 2 of an interview by Brit Storey with Frank Dimick on March the 22nd, 1994.

So the government inspected every three years?

Dimick: Yeah, the government inspected their facilities every three years, so every three years we would do an underwater inspection of the underwater portions of the dams in the region as well as doing other jobs such as finding out why a gate wouldn't operate, or doing emergency repairs to a gate, or something like that. We were all engineers, and so our main purpose was inspections, to make sure that the underwater portions of the dam were as safe as the above portions that we were looking at visually. We became the "eyes," in other

words, of the inspectors that were inspecting for the safety of the dams.

Storey: What would you be looking for?

Dimick: Oh, on the underwater, you look for everything from holes in concrete to unusual currents that would indicate a leak, or missing . . . in spillways of dams, for instance, you have what we call "dentates." They are dragons' teeth or concrete blocks that help dissipate the energy, and would those be completely gone, if they were, then they would pose a threat to undercutting of the dam. We would look for undercuts underneath the ends of the spillways to see if the dirt underneath the concrete had been eroded or the rock. There were times in which there would be big caverns formed. At Grand Coulee, for instance, they had a major problem with the spillway at Grand Coulee in which huge chunks of concrete were eroded out when they spilled originally. I mean, you'd be looking at a hole ten feet deep in concrete that had actually been eroded out by the water. So we were looking for those kind of things: holes in concrete, eroded areas that should not be there, missing parts of the dam, rock in the wrong place. If rock gets in a spillway, it sits and churns and erodes or eats away the concrete. And so you look for those kind of things and try to make sure that they're corrected.

Storey: For instance, the upper face of Grand Coulee must be pretty deep. Did you actually get clear to the bottom of there, or how was that done?

Dimick: Well, we were limited to about a hundred feet of depth when we did our diving. The downstream spillway of Grand Coulee is just a hundred feet deep, almost exactly. So we inspected it. But the upstream face we only inspected down to about a hundred feet. Below that we used underwater TV cameras.

Storey: So you do have a way to actually, physically, look?

Dimick: Yeah, in those days we were pretty limited. What we had was a TV camera on a cable. Now they have available remote control mini-submarines and stuff like that to maneuver around. But in those days we lowered a TV camera down on a cable.

Storey: How long were you on P-N's [Pacific Northwest's] scuba team?

Dimick: Oh, about eight years, I think, something like that, until I left in 1977.

Storey: How much of your time was used on that?

Dimick: Well, we were ***required*** to maintain proficiency in diving. Diving is one of those things that if you don't practice it, you tend to goof up, and that can be very costly, particularly in your life. But we were required to maintain proficiency. We never had to worry about that, because we always did diving enough to maintain our proficiency. But probably in the neighborhood of four weeks a year, we was actually out on diving–about four weeks out of the year.

Storey: Did you ever find any interesting problems while you were doing that?

Dimick: Well, interesting to some people, but maybe not to others. Interesting to us, yes. We found problems of stuck gates that were inoperable and from an engineer's point [of view], they were interesting because they would create problems if they weren't solved, like rocks in the spillway and things like that. But beyond that, no, probably not interesting to the average person.

Storey: Nothing that would endanger any dams or anything like that?

Dimick: Well, we found, as I said, we found undercut sections of spillways and stuff that if they didn't correct them fairly quickly, they'd be in trouble.

"We entered one spillway in Anderson Ranch Dam . . . the concrete was almost totally gone. In fact, the metal rebar was just like a maze of tentacles down there. It was just twisted and bent and intertwined and the concrete had literally been worn away . . ."

We entered one spillway in Anderson Ranch Dam in Idaho, for instance, and got under there and found the best piles of rock, and then we found out what happened, that rock came out of the concrete, because the concrete was almost totally gone. In fact, the metal rebar was just like a maze of tentacles down there. It was just twisted and bent and intertwined and the

concrete had literally been worn away and all that was left was the metal rebar–and in fact, ***it*** had been worn on the ends by the rock in such a way that the ends of that rebar were sharp points, almost like ice picks. So yes, we found some very interesting things like that, that they had to then quit using that and go in and do some major repair work.

Storey: So really, the scuba team sounds to me as if it's really very ***directly*** related to the O&M function also.

Dimick: It did. It was almost strictly O&M. We just helped out. The scuba team was set up and designed for an O&M function, but we did help the construction side out in doing these inspections. But it was designed, set up almost completely around the O&M program.

Storey: How many folks were on the scuba team?

Dimick: We had about eight on the team. You have to have three minimum to dive, you had to have a buddy pair in the water and an emergency surface diver, so you had to have three as a minimum team. So we had about eight that would be available at any one time.

Storey: And do you remember any names of any of those folks?

Dimick: Oh yeah, we had Tom Spiker, who is now retired from the Bureau of Reclamation. He was a mechanical engineer. He was the team leader on the team. Fred Johnson, who now

works down in the Boulder City Office–well, actually works out at Hoover Dam–he was on the team. He happened to be an electrical engineer, interestingly enough. We had Ken Flake who has since left the Bureau of Reclamation, and Dave Huss. Dave is now down in Arizona on the Arizona Projects Office down there. And I don't know who else. Roger Patterson was on a dive team at one time, I believe, in a different region . That's primarily the people that we had on our team up there, for a long time. I mean, there was others, but they were not on there as long as these people were.

Storey: You've just glanced off my next question in passing, and that was, How was all this organized?

How the Scuba Function Was Organized in Reclamation

Dimick: Well, you had a regional team, and then at that time we had seven regions, and five of the seven regions had teams. And then they were organized under a general team advisory group, if you would, out of the Denver Office. So you had an overall Bureau advisory group, and then you had a regional advisory committee, and then you had the teams organized under those.

Storey: And then you had a team leader in Mr. Spiker.

Dimick: Tom Spiker was the regional team leader for the P-N Region.

Storey: What did that mean? What were his responsibilities?

Dimick: Well, his responsibility was to coordinate all the activities of the scuba team– everything from making sure they had the proper training, to the proper equipment, to organizing any ***dive*** that we were requested to do, to determine whether or not the dive was safe to do. And making sure that when the dives were made that a dive master was assigned, and that everybody performed their job in a safe manner.

Storey: Did you ever see any interesting fish when you were diving?

Dimick: Probably the most interesting I saw was a shark. That was when we happened to be in the ocean on a training dive. I saw a shark, and although it was a little dog shark, which is not going to hurt anybody, it scared ***me*** to death (chuckles) because it was the first time I'd ever seen one.

Storey: I've heard stories of divers going into Granby for instance, where they have mackinaws [Lake Trout]. (Dimick: Great big fish.) And not liking sharing the water with these big fish.

". . . much of our diving was done in what we call black water, zero visibility water: because of the mud and the dirt in the water . . . fish would literally bump into you, because they couldn't see either. . . ."

Dimick: Well, you know, working on a team for the Bureau of Reclamation, much of our diving was done in what we call black water, zero visibility water: because of the mud and the dirt in the water, a lot of times you couldn't see anything, and you would do everything by feel. In other words, you would feel the texture of the concrete to see if it was eroded or not. You can tell whether concrete is eroded by feel, and if you can feel rebar and all the other things. But during those kind of dives, the fish would literally bump into you, because they couldn't see either. And you you'd be swimming along, and you could feel fish bumping into you. You get kind of used to that, I guess. The first few times it's kind of unnerving, but after that, you get used to it and you don't notice it so much. The fish can't see any better than you can in that kind of water.

Storey: It doesn't sound like it's very safe to me.

Dimick: Well, it's safe, if you do it in a controlled environment with the proper safety precautions worked out ahead of time, and the two divers in the water know exactly what they're doing, it can be okay. We didn't ever have any real problems, safety-wise, particularly in dark water, that I remember. Of course you always have concerns, but we never got ourselves in any problem areas.

Storey: Good. Do you know of any other teams that did get themselves into problems?

"The Bureau is just now getting out of the scuba diving teams. They're using private contractors now. . . ."

Dimick: No. The Bureau is just now getting out of the scuba diving teams. They're using private contractors now. The teams filled a void in the Bureau back in those days, but now they're not needed, I guess, as much. But no, there's always a concern that something would happen, but I don't know of any in the scuba diving teams in any of the regions, there was anybody ever hurt on there. There were times in which a person would get into kind of a scary situation, but as long as you worked yourself out of it, you was okay. But you just had to be prepared for most anything. I once got tangled up in a rope from a boat anchor in some dirty water. But you always carried a knife with you, and that's what the knife is for, to cut yourself loose. But that was diving on a dam in Utah. The Upper Colorado Region did not have their team, so we would go into that region and dive on some of their reservoirs also. Somebody had hooked their anchor on the trashrack of the upstream side of the dam, and then since they couldn't pull the anchor up, they just cut the rope and let it fall down. And so when we dove, we was working on the bottom in zero visibility, and obviously the hundred feet of coiled rope at the bottom of this trashrack, I end up getting tangled up in it. But you just remain calm and just cut yourself loose. It's not a big deal.

Storey: What kind of training did Reclamation require of people who participated on the dive teams.

Dive Team Training

Dimick: Well, everybody had to go through the basic course for scuba divers that anybody would go through, for instance. I went through a YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] course. They have a N-A-U-I course, which is National Association of Underwater Instructors. They had other types of courses, but you had to go through the basic course, and then the Bureau required a refresher course every year, in more advanced type of diving activities. Like I say, we usually go out to the ocean or in a lake somewhere and have a week of solid classroom as well as in-water type diving instruction.

Storey: You mentioned that you figured you spent about four weeks a year on that, on average. (Dimick: Yeah.) Would that include your week of instruction, or was that in addition?

Dimick: No, that'd be in addition. If you took all told time, including training and everything–because we also had to take extensive first aid training–probably six weeks a year.

Storey: So now, a function that was filled by, say, eight folks, six weeks a year on average, each–what's that, forty-eight weeks is it? (Dimick: Yeah.) So its basically a full-time job. We're contracting that out to other folks?

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: OK. At Coulee, one of the characteristics of that project that's different than we have on most projects is that a major portion of the dam and reservoir, depending on how you look at it, are either on Indian land or abut Indian land. (Dimick: Sure.) Could you talk about what that meant to the project and to you specifically, if anything at all?

Indian Tribes at Grand Coulee

Dimick: Yeah, actually there's ***two*** reservations there, there's the Spokane [Tribe of Indians] Reservation and the [Confederated Tribes of the] Colville Reservation. One's on one side of the river and one's on the other side of the river. During the time that I was at Grand Coulee, is when there was a general movement of Indian tribes to become more assertive of their rights. What it meant to us is that we began working more with the Indian tribes to let them be more aware of what our activities were, what we were doing on the lake, what we were doing with the operation of the lake. Two incidents, just as an example–well, three. One that I mentioned, this landslide that blocked the Spokane River for a couple of days. That particular landslide was on the Spokane Indian Reservation. It took about forty acres of land that was on the reservation, belonged to the tribe, and now it was down in the river. And so one of the issues we had to deal with was how do you go about reimbursing the tribe for that loss of land into the river.

". . . when we drew the lake down for the Third Powerplant, it exposed an Indian burial site, and we had to go out and remove the remains of these Indians and reinter them . . ."

Another issue was that when we drew the lake down for the Third Powerplant, it exposed an Indian burial site, and we had to go out and remove the remains of these Indians and reinter them in a cemetery somewhere. Rather interestingly, the tribe wanted us to do that, which we did, and then it was my job to have the headstone made, after we had it reinterred. Took the tribe almost two years to decide what words to put on the headstone, but we finally got them to put the words on the headstone.

Indian Assertion of Rights at Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake

Another, during the time which they became very–I don't want to say the word "militant," but very aggressive in the claiming of their rights, the Indians took over an island that was out in the middle of the lake and claimed that for Indian jurisdiction and Indian control. I was sent out by the project manager to purposely go out. They indicated they would arrest anybody who came on that island, and I was sent out with a specific purpose of going out and walking on that island as a test case to see if they would actually arrest me, which they did not do, but that was a rather interesting day of my life (chuckles) to go out and see if I could get arrested.

And also, then they began indicating that they were going to patrol their half of the lake and arrest any boaters that came on their half of the lake, and again I was sent out with a government boat to purposely go out into that side of the lake to see if I could get arrested, which I did not do.

The concept in those days was just kind of feeling each other out, I guess, and making sure to try to resolve these cases, whereas now that isn't the way those things occur. Nowadays they sit down and talk around the table more, but in those days it was kind of a "you make your claim and then I'll see how far you carry your claim, and I'll call your bluff on it type activity."

Storey: Did this kind of activity go on with one group more than another group?

The Evolving Relationship Between Tribes and the Government

Dimick: No. That was the only two times that I recall us ever calling their bluff, so as to speak. Shortly thereafter, as an example, the Indians let their boat sink and never bothered to pull it up again. So they were just trying to start to express themselves and were trying to find ways to do that. Obviously, we were ***not*** keeping them informed, and we were ***not*** doing the things that they needed to do in order to have self-government. And so it was something they ***needed*** to do, it's just they weren't sure how they were going to do that.

We weren't sure how to react to them. It was a learning process, and I think we've evolved a ***long*** way since then, particularly as it relates to how I work with the tribes in Nevada, for instance, when I moved to Nevada.

But no, the Colville Tribe seemed to be more aggressive than the Spokane Tribe as far as claiming their rights and trying to aggressively get somewhere in some kind of a leadership position. The Spokane Tribe seemed to be more of one that was willing to work things out, on a "sit down and talk to you" basis rather than stating claims and then backing those claims up.

Storey: If I'm recalling correctly, there's a controversy about who actually owns the land underneath the reservoir.

Dimick: The way that the law reads up there is that the land between the shoreline of the old river, that used to flow ***under*** the lake, and the shoreline of the lake, that land there, there's a question on the ownership of that land, yes.

Storey: Did that ever have an effect on the project that you're aware of?

Indian Assertion of Rights to Power Generated at Grand Coulee

Dimick: While I was still there–and I haven't followed that close since then–but when I was still there, there was a thought by some of the Indian tribes there that what they ought to do–well, the

two Indian tribes–is that they should perhaps have a right for the power that was generated by the water that was stored in the reservoir ***above*** those lands. And I know that there's been some thought ever since then as to how to compensate the tribes, or to help them secure some portion of that power produced by Grand Coulee Dam, as a result of the water being backed up on the lands that they claim. But other than the fact where they claimed ownership and control of that one island, that was the only time we got involved. But other than that, no, it did not affect our operations.

Storey: So am I understanding this correctly then, it appears, or they at least claim, that there's a right to a portion of the electricity?

Dimick: At that time, they were indicating that that was the case, that because the water was stored ***above*** lands which they ***claimed***, which were from the shoreline of the old river to the shoreline of the new lake, that the water stored above those lands created electricity and they should be entitled to that portion of the electricity that would be created by that water.

Storey: Did you ever have any Indian religious issues or ceremonial issues that came up that you remember?

Dimick: No. No, actually, I lived on the reservation. I went to some of their ceremonies that they had that were open to the public, but no, other than the burial, that one issue. What happened is, the lake came down and began to erode an area

that was not known as a burial site, but when it began to erode the area, then it exposed some bones, and so we dug up the rest of them and relocated them.

Storey: Who did that?

Dimick: We actually hired a contractor, a mortuary that came out and actually did it, dug them up and put them in a casket and actually buried them properly.

Storey: So archaeologists weren't involved?

Dimick: We had an archaeologist who came and assisted. It was a case where the Spokane Tribe wanted to get them buried quickly, and didn't want the archaeologist spending a lot of time on them. They just wanted them reinterred. So an archaeologist out of one of the Idaho universities, came out and spent part of the day and his main purpose was just to identify the type of people that had been buried there, whether they were male of female and perhaps what the historical time was, and perhaps try to guess maybe their ages and so on like that.

Storey: There's one person up there who did a lot of that, and I've forgotten his name right now–Dick . . . .

Dimick: This guy was a tall, slender guy, (Storey: Yeah.) probably the same one.

Storey: At the University of Idaho in Moscow.

Dimick: That's who it was, yeah. May not be exact, but that's where the university was. But there was not much desire at that time to collect a lot of archaeological data about those sites, they just wanted them taken care of.

Storey: The Indians?

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: Well, in addition to sharing with the Indians, we share that reservoir with the National Park Service. What kinds of issues does the National Park Service's operation of a recreation area on the reservoir raise, as far as Reclamation is concerned

The National Park Service at Grand Coulee

Dimick: Well, we didn't really have a lot of issues with them. The only real issues came about, for instance, in quality of the water in some cases, because they actually pump out of the lake. At that time, they pumped out of the lake for some of their water supplies for their drinking water in the campgrounds, and sometimes you might get an algae bloom or something that caused some problems there. The issues were primarily for ***access*** to the reservoir. The National Park Service would want to issue a license for a logger to build a log dump along the river. That particular lake had a lot of logging operations along it. And those were more the issues than the recreation itself. The recreation, we didn't really have any real issues

on–we got along very well with the Park Service, as far as the recreation was concerned.

Storey: What about lake level fluctuations?

Issues Related to Lowering the Lake Level to Construct the Coffer Dam for Construction of the Third Powerplant

Dimick: The fluctuations, obviously the Park Service wasn't happy when we lowered the lake, but they understood why we did. The only time I remember that there was a lot of problems on the lake fluctuations was when we lowered the lake way down to install a coffer dam for the construction of Third Powerplant. We lowered the lake way down to do that, and although it was lowered down to an elevation that was ***not*** lower than what was originally anticipated in the operation of the reservoir, it did lower it down to the point where a lot of people who had rights to pump water out of the lake for irrigation of crops and so forth couldn't pump with their existing pumps. So the government came out with a plan where we placed booster pumps for them along the lake and actually pumped water up to their pumps, and then the government bought the booster pump and paid for the diesel fuel that went in them, so they could pump.

Storey: Did you mention that we constructed the recreation facilities for the Park Service? Did I understand that correctly?

Dimick: No, I don't think we did. I don't know. The improvements to the facilities were being done by the Park Service while I was there. We didn't actually construct any, but any improvements that needed to be done were done by the Park Service.

Storey: How did Reclamation relate to the Park Service in terms of approving construction and those sorts of things?

Dimick: We had a contract with them that said that they would operate the recreation facilities, and when they wanted to do something, they would come and talk to us and we would take a look at what they wanted to do and sometimes we did the design work for them, as a matter of fact. So it was kind of a very cooperative effort between us and them to operate and maintain and improve the recreation facilities.

Storey: Let's go ***way back*** in what we were talking about. You said you were educated in a small country school. (Dimick: Yes.) How small?

Educated in a One Room Schoolhouse

Dimick: Well, when I went into the first grade, there was twenty-six students in all eight grades. We met in a one-room schoolhouse with a bell on the steeple, had no indoor plumbing, had a wood stove in the center of the building for heating, and had one teacher for all eight grades. She taught one grade at a time, and the other seven grades would do their work while she was teaching the other grades. When I

graduated eight years later, there was fifty-six kids in all eight grades, so we had more than doubled in those eight years.

Storey: With still one teacher?

Dimick: No, by that time they had three–they had divided into three rooms. We actually had a new school. When I went into the fourth grade, they built a new school. It had two rooms, and then a cafeteria. By the time I got to the eighth grade, they had done away with the cafeteria and made that into a third classroom. So they had a little school that had three classrooms.

Storey: Roger Patterson was educated in a one-room schoolhouse also.

Dimick: Is that right?! I didn't know that.

Storey: How did that work? How did one teacher deal with eight different levels of performance in one room?

How the One Room School Worked

Dimick: Well, I'll tell you, in those days the teacher had the complete concentration of the students, because if you didn't, you got rapped on the knuckles, or else you got disciplined somehow. Consequently, what would happen is the teacher would call up–the teacher had her desk at the front of the room, and beside the desk was a semi-circle of six or eight chairs–and she would bring up, say, the fourth grade, and they would do their lesson on reading, for instance,

or English. At that point she would go through and teach them that subject while the other seven grades sat back and quietly did their assignments. They were not allowed to talk or anything, it was just done. You couldn't get up and wander around like you can in schools today. You sat at your desk and you studied while the other people were getting their instruction. When it was your turn for your class to go up for arithmetic, for instance, you went up. So I don't remember how long, but, say, every half an hour or something, during the day, a new group was sitting at her desk, getting instruction on a different subject. Some subjects were taught through the whole group, for instance when the four grades were together, she might teach reading to all four grades at once. That was in the days, for instance, when the teacher at the end of your lunch hour, always read to you, out of a story, and for fifteen minutes she would read to you, and every day it would be a continuation of the same story. It might be Tom Sawyer, it might be Huckleberry Finn, it might be something like that, but you were read to out of a book by the teacher.

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Your class got individual attention, and then you did too. There were times during the day when the teacher gave you individual attention, but the atmosphere was such that the other kids quietly sat and did their homework. I mean, there was discipline problems, obviously. I

mean, the teacher had to interrupt occasionally, but she only had to do that once, because the second time, you knew that you were going to be disciplined. And so you didn't horse around. That's how they could do it. They couldn't do it in today's atmosphere where the kids are allowed to get up and walk around and to do the other things in class they're allowed to do now.

Storey: You went into then a high school, and I've forgotten, was it in Albany?

Albany High School

Dimick: Yes, it was Albany High School. I went from a grade school that had fifty-six kids in eight classes, to a high school that had about 1,200 kids in four grades in the four years of high school. So I had a little cultural shock, but basically the farming community that I came from bused everybody into one main high school. So I went into town to high school, entered as a freshman, and stayed all four years in the same school.

Storey: And what inclined you to study engineering?

Why He Decided to Go into Engineering

Dimick: (chuckles) Interestingly enough, what encouraged me to study engineering . . . Well, my father was an engineer, and my brother was in engineering, but I think the thing that inclined me most was that when I was in my senior year I took the aptitude tests–you know,

they used to give aptitude tests to kids–and my counselor told me that I should go into secretarial work. And I said, "No thanks, I'm going into engineering." He said, "You'll never make it," and so I went into engineering, probably just to prove him wrong!

Storey: But you didn't have any inclination to math or science or anything?

Dimick: I enjoyed science and math, and that's why. I enjoyed science and math, but I enjoyed more the things that had logic in them. My parents say I was always a logical person, I always wanted to think things out and see how things were in an ***orderly*** fashion, so engineering just kind of fit that kind of a mindset that I had. But I enjoyed building things and putting things together–not mechanic-wise, I did mechanics works on my own cars and stuff, and still do–but it was more of a sense of putting a pencil to paper and designing something and then building it. I enjoyed my drafting classes and my shop classes. I was always wanting to design something a little bit harder to build in a shop class, for instance, than everybody else. So I wasn't interested except for the woodworking as much as I would the design and see if it worked type thing.

Storey: And then you went to Brigham Young?

Brigham Young University

Dimick: Brigham Young University back in Provo, Utah.

Storey: Specifically what kind of engineering did you graduate with a degree in?

Dimick: I graduated with a Bachelor of Engineering Science degree in civil engineering.

Storey: In civil engineering. (Dimick: Yes.) Had you inclined toward water or anything in that course, or was that still wide open?

Dropping out of College and Then Returning after a Year and One-half

Dimick: Well, I actually started out in electrical engineering. I went two years to college in electrical engineering, and then I went to work for the Soil Conservation Service, kind of as a . . . I was doing electrical drafting for a company, and I said I dropped out of school for a year-and-a-half. I actually failed the first two years of college. Went in and, I got engaged, and I thought it was more fun to run around than it was to study. And so I failed, and so I dropped out of college for a year-and-a-half, thinking I didn't need to go to college. I got a job in an electrical firm, doing electrical work, drafting for them, and then ended up getting a job with the Soil Conservation Service, and I found out that I ***loved*** that work, I loved to get out and work and do the engineering side of it. And so I decided to go back to college, so I went back to college, went into civil engineering, and went primarily into the

concepts of the water side of it, yes, rather than the steel design. I enjoyed steel design, but I enjoyed the water, the hydrology and the water bacteriology, and water itself, designing pipelines and stuff like that–much more than I did the other side. When I went back to college, I had been married by that time and realized that I needed to do something with my life. So I went back into college, the first semester I was back in college I got straight "A's" and graduated about fifth in my class.

Storey: Uh-huh. In spite of two years of not very sterling performance.

Dimick: Yeah, I probably would have graduated near the top of my class if I would have done better in the first two years. (chuckles)

Storey: Could we talk more specifically about what you did with the A-S-C-S, when you were out doing the drainage and so on?

Working for the ASCS

Dimick: Well, what our goal was there, a farmer would sign up with the A-S-C-S and say, "I would like cost-sharing to make this particular field perform better." I was in Oregon where it was very wet, heavy clay soils. We would go out and we would actually design a tile drain system for his field to make that field function better as a producer of crops. In some cases, it would be a wetlands, in other words, a marshy area that we'd want to drain–in other areas it was just the fact that the field had some wet

areas in it that he couldn't get in it to plow until a little bit later in the year, and we would drain those and try to make them a better soil for him to grow his crop on.

The second part of that was I also did some flood repair work along stream channels where we tried to riprap banks and keep the stream from getting worse, eating into farmers' fields. And also I did some minor dam work where we did survey work for realignment of streams and also for some small stock watering dams, these kind of activities.

Storey: Okay, you said "we." Were you working with somebody else?

Dimick: Oh, yeah. At first I was always working ***with*** somebody, because I didn't know the ropes, but in about the third year, then I was on my own most of the time, because the people knew me and I had gained enough experience that I could do it on my own. But at first it was primarily a responsibility of two of us to go out, and I was just kind of a helper. The second year I did a little bit more on my own, and the third year I was pretty much on my own. But part of it was done as a team, a survey team. One year we just did realignment of a stream down through some farmland in Oregon. In those days, if you could realign a stream and make it better, then it made the fields better, and the stream didn't flood as often, and you did away with the natural course of the stream and tried to make it better. And we're finding out now, of course, that we

shouldn't have done those kind of things, but in those days it was thought that's what you should do.

Storey: When you say A-S-C-S would do this, do you mean that you designed it and the farmer constructed it, or you designed it and constructed it, or how did that work?

Dimick: Well, actually what happened was that the A--S-C-S would come in. The farmer would request help, we would go out and do the engineering on it, and then the farmer would contract with a contractor to do the work, and then we would actually come out and make sure that the contractor did it in a proper manner. So we did the inspection on the work as the farmer had hired the contractor to do. And then the government would usually pay fifty percent of the cost in most cases, for the work to be done. So the farmer asked for the help, was approved, and the government paid half the cost of having it done.

Storey: Okay. Well, I would like to go on, however we've used up our two hours.

Dimick: Okay. (chuckles) Time does go fast!

Storey: I appreciate you taking the time to do this interview. What I'd like to ask you now is, whether or not it's all right for Reclamation researchers and researchers from outside Reclamation, to use these tapes and any resulting transcripts to do research or not.

Dimick: Sure, I have no problem with that.

Storey: Good. I appreciate it. Thank you very much.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. MAY 22, 1994.
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 1. APRIL 14, 1995.

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing assistant regional director Frank Dimick in his office at the Mid-Pacific Regional Office in Sacramento, California, on April the 14th, 1995, at about noon. This is tape one.

Last time when we talked, Mr. Dimick, you were at Grand Coulee, and I was wondering if the Third Powerplant was being put in while you were there.

Dimick: Yes. I was moved to Grand Coulee in 1967, just a few months actually prior to the point where they started moving in the construction forces. The Bureau had not officially set up their construction office there yet, but they were just in the process of doing that. So I got there just as it started and left about ten years later as they were starting to wind it down.

Storey: Did the construction of the Third Powerplant have any effect on the rest of the project?

How Construction of the Third Powerplant and Operation and Maintenance at Grand Coulee Dam Interacted

Dimick: Oh, yeah, a lot it. I was in the operation and maintenance side of it, and it primarily affected us because it increased our workload significantly. In accommodating construction, it's amazing how much operation and maintenance activities can be impacted by construction. We had to relocate facilities, some tourist facilities. We had to redesign our tour, actually the tour routes for the tourists. We relocated rest areas that the tourists had.

For instance, one of the things we had to do was relocate the bust of Franklin D. Roosevelt. There was a bust that sat above a little reflecting pond on the east side of the dam, and that is the side that the powerplant was going to be built on. So that had to be relocated over on the west side. Just activities like that.

Plus, in the construction they cut off one end of the dam, and that actually required a lot of changes in the maintenance side of it as far as access and everything else. So, yeah, there was a lot of activities that were done in support of the construction, but it was done by the maintenance people.

Storey: And you weren't in maintenance, as I recall.

Dimick: I was in engineering, on the engineering side, but it was the engineering side ***for*** the operation and maintenance activities.

Storey: When I was out there recently, they were showing me the–let's see, I think it's an oil-

encased cable that they had had some trouble with because it stretched. Were you there at that time, by chance?

Dimick: No. I was at Grand Coulee when they were putting them in and watched them actually–in fact, my office sat above one of the windows where I could see them actually install the casing for the oil-filled cable, and then actually threaded it into the pipeline, how they pulled it through the pipeline. They ran, of course, a rope down through and then pulled the cable through. The stretching started occurring shortly after they installed it, and then they even had a fire in one of the tunnels after I moved. I moved in 1977 and it was after that they had the fire.

The stretching problem started immediately, but I was not involved with that at all. I don't know how bad it became or, you know, what the problems were. But I know it has a terrific force, because one day while they were trying to pull the cable through, the pulling rope broke and it came shooting out the lower end of that pipe like a big long snake and really caused basically a rat's nest of cable and rope right at the bottom of the pipeline. So, yeah, it had a lot of head on it, so it could very easily have stretched.

Storey: Part of your experience had been at Soil Conservation Service in drainage issues, as I recall.

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: And I was wondering, up at Grand Coulee I've heard some stories about drainage problems. Did you get involved in any of that while you were up there?

Dimick: We did have on the left abutment at Grand Coulee there's a drainage problem that was created–not created, but they discovered during the original construction, and I worked a little bit on that drainage on the left abutment. But I think the drainage you're probably talking about is downstream of the dam because of the high fluctuations of the river. Is that what you're–

Storey: I was thinking more on the farms.

Dimick: No. I didn't get into the farms at Grand Coulee. That was handled by the Ephrata office, and I didn't get into that at all.

Storey: What stands out most for you at Grand Coulee? What one incident or a series of incidents?

Dimick: Well, I don't know. My experience at Grand Coulee, I would say, is all positive. I really enjoyed that job there and working there. There were so many different aspects of it, it's hard to pick out anything that stands out. I just really don't know. I mean, there were so many things going on with the construction.

". . . one of the most significant events was the day that they literally did blow the end of the dam off, the original dam. . . ."

Maybe one of the most significant events was the day that they literally did blow the end of the dam off, the original dam. They had to remove some of that concrete on the east abutment, and to do that they literally did blow it away. They loaded it with dynamite and blew it away. I mean, from the operations and maintenance side, of course, we were afraid that all the generators would trip off the line and everything else. So it was a major event. But as it turned out, nothing adverse happened. It was a very gentle thump that went through the dam, but the whole end of the dam came tumbling down. So maybe that was it. I don't know.

There's a lot of instances like that. I remember the first bucket being placed on the Third Powerplant. I was there when the first bucket of concrete was placed. When they first put water into the new units. So there was a lot of events taking place. I would be hard-pressed to pick ***one*** that was significant . . .

Storey: Who was the Construction Engineer?

Dimick: W. W. Granger was the construction engineer. I didn't work for the construction side, but W. W. Granger was. And then he left and I don't remember the fellow who came after him. I don't remember.

Storey: Who was the project manager while you were there?

Dimick: Oh, you'd ask that. Seeley. R. K. Seeley [phonetic] was the project manager.

Storey: What was he like?

Dimick: Well, I didn't really get to know him very well, but he seemed like a real nice guy. I really enjoyed working. I mean, he was always very positive and seemed to be very well liked by everybody. I was just a very junior engineer at that point, so I didn't really have much contact with Mr. Seeley. But what contact I did was very positive. What I felt, anyway, he was very liked by most of his people.

Storey: Can you tell me anything about how the staff was organized at that time there?

Organization of the Office at Grand Coulee

Dimick: Yeah. They had an Operations Division that took care of all of the operators and the physical operation of the dam. They had a Maintenance Division that took care of the maintenance. Then they had an Engineering Division that had all of the electrical, mechanical, and civil engineering groups in it. And then they had an Administrative Division which handled administrative activities for all of the other divisions.

Storey: And you were in?

Dimick: I was in the Engineering.

Storey: And were there then branches and sections in those?

Dimick: Yeah. We had Electrical, Mechanical, and the Civil Engineering Branches under those.

Storey: And were there sections within the branches?

Dimick: We had the work divided up, but I don't remember that there was actually anything like a section as such. We did have the work divided up. I was responsible, for instance, for the drafting and the monitoring technicians and the surveying. But then the others were responsible like for the major design activities and so forth. Just before I left, they started getting into the branch concept. In fact, I believe that's when I got my GS-12. But that was just about a year before I left.

Storey: Where did you live while you were there?

Lived at 1111 Camas Street in Coulee Dam

Dimick: I lived on Camas Street, which is just downstream of the dam, about a block away from the big sand pile. Actually, the address was 1111 Camas. I can still remember that address. 1111 Camas.

Storey: This was which side of the river?

Dimick: It was on the north side just downstream on the north side, actually on the Indian reservation but in town.

Storey: It wasn't Reclamation housing then?

Dimick: No. It ***had*** been. In fact, the first home that I bought there was an old Vanport demountable house that the Bureau had brought in for the housing. I built a new home after that. But that house was located on 1113 Camas. Then I built a house on 1111 Camas.

Storey: Was that a pretty big office at that time?

Dimick: I think we had about 300 employees at that time.

Storey: Yeah, I think it's 350 now. It still seems large.

Dimick: It is. I don't remember what the maximum size was, Brit, at the height of construction. But it seems like we had about 300 employees. That was just for the operation and maintenance. Then the construction was on top of that.

Storey: Who was your immediate supervisor?

Supervisors at Grand Coulee

Dimick: Faeye Eaton was my immediate supervisor for about the last eight years that I was there. The first two years I was there was Dave Coleman, who later went to work for Western Area Power Administration, and ended up here in Sacramento with the Western Area Power Administration. Then Faeye took over for Dave Coleman and was my supervisor for the last eight years.

Storey: And Faeye was a man?

Dimick: Faeye was a man. F-A-E-Y-E, yes.

Storey: What was he like as a supervisor?

Dimick: As a supervisor? Faeye was very willing to allow his employees to take risks and to develop innovative ideas. He did not try to restrain or control, if you would, the way in which we did things. He had definite standards that we had to meet in our products and made sure that we got our job done. But in the way we got to that point, he was very willing to let us try different ways. So I actually credit Faeye and Dave Coleman with the fact that I was able to broaden my career and get where I'm at today, because they gave me some real great opportunities early in my career to get a broader perspective with what I'm doing rather than just stick with the tried-and-true methods.

Storey: Do you have any particular examples of that that you remember?

". . . we were one of the first offices of the Bureau of Reclamation that microfilmed drawings and get rid of the stack after stack after stack of drawings . . . We developed our own index for the drawings and found it to be very usable. . . ."

Dimick: More on the day-to-day stuff that, yeah, as an example, we were one of the first offices of the Bureau of Reclamation that microfilmed drawings and get rid of the stack after stack after stack of drawings that were there and put

them all on microfilm. The Bureau had a standard for putting them on microfilm at that time, which we used, but the index that was available was a very poor index. We developed our own index for the drawings and found it to be very usable.

His supervisor ". . . allowed me the ability . . . to go out and establish a technical data center to pull all of that data together in one location . . . could go to this technical data center and the data was available there, and we computerized the index of all of that data. . . ."

Another example was the establishment of a technical data center. With Grand Coulee, when I moved there, there was a lot of data on everything, you know, from the fan motors on some of the cooling units to the generators themselves to what bearing goes in what motor, but it was scattered throughout the project. Some was in the mechanical engineering office in their bookcases, and some was in the civil engineering office in their bookcases, and some in electrical. Faeye allowed me the ability, I guess, to go out and establish a technical data center to pull all of that data together in one location so that anytime that somebody needed anything from a "project history" to what kind of a bearing goes in this particular unit, they could go to this technical data center and the data was available there, and we computerized the index of all of that data.

Now, that doesn't seem much here in 1995, but back in 1970, about 1975, when we

set that up, computers, of course, were not very well known. Well, they were known, but they weren't really as abundant as they are now. So we had one of the few computers on the project in those days and used them in our technical data center. But it was a very good process.

Storey: Good. [Tape recorder turned off]

Grand Coulee, of course, is one of the most unionized, I guess, of our projects. Did you have any interrelation, interaction with the unions? And, what did you think?

Had Limited Experience with the Unions at Grand Coulee

Dimick: I didn't work real closely with unions. But, yeah, we had instances with the unions. Some of them are a little funny. Some were frustrating.

I can remember we used a boat on the lake to check out landslides along the lake. And I went into the warehouse one day and asked to get a little tool kit put together to take out on the boat, because I didn't want to get stranded out there. You know, if something went wrong on the boat when you were a hundred miles up the river, it was pretty hard to get help. The union heard that I had a box of tools, and they were ready to lodge a complaint against me, because I was an engineer that was using tools. It took a little finagling, but we got that straightened out, and they finally allowed me to have a little toolbox on the boat with me

to do emergency repairs on the river. That kind of thing, I mean, that just gives you the idea of how strong that union was. They definitely did not want anybody encroaching on their area of concern.

Some funny things occurred. In fact, the first time we used metal studs in a wall, that's an era of time when metal studs was just starting to be used. The unions were not familiar with those. I designed a room that was to be built in one of the powerhouses, and I used metal studs because of the need for fire protection in that area. And the unions had quite a hassle as to who was going to put the drywall up on those metal studs. Normally, the carpenters did that, because they drilled nails in them. But now with this metal, they used sheet metal screws to put up a drywall. So maybe they thought that ought to go to the machinists union. I can remember they had a terrific time trying to figure out who was going to put the drywall up on the walls in that little room. So there was some comical sides to it. But, yes, the union was very strong.

Storey: Did it cause Reclamation problems or was it an advantage? Where do you suppose that would work out?

Dimick: Well, there were some times, I don't know that it would cause what I would call problems. I think it caused some frustration at times. You know, the feeling that the union created was more of a frustration or an unhappy feeling rather than a problem, a real problem. We

never had any real problems with the union that I can remember. As I said, I didn't deal directly with them.

There were times when I felt the union rules were a little bit inappropriate. An example was we were out on the barge doing some hard hat diving to install some gates on the upstream face of the dam. When the diver is in the water, the rigging crew that manipulated the barge for us didn't have anything to do, and it would be two or three hours. And so they'd go out in the morning and we'd get the divers in the water, and then the rigging crew would play pinochle, because there wasn't anything else to do. They had all their work done. They'd sit there and play pinochle. And I can remember that they had sat and played pinochle for several hours, and then when the divers would come up out of the water, then they'd have to work. The divers came up out of the water right at lunchtime, and the union put in for double time during their lunch hours, because we made them work through their lunch hour, even though they had sat and played pinochle for the previous two hours. Under the union rules, that's what we had to do, even though, you know, it just didn't seem quite right.

So those were the kind of things that I ran into. That wasn't real serious. It was just kind of an annoyance. Other times the union, obviously because there was the union organization, made some jobs go smoother, because you knew what crew would be doing a

job, and they could move in do it quickly, and they had the people trained to do the job. So other times it made it a little more smooth, I thought. So I don't recall any real problems.

Storey: If I'm getting a correct ***sense*** of this, there's an office at Ephrata and then there's the office at Coulee itself.

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: Did the office at Ephrata do the O&M out on the project, or was that done out of Coulee?

"The Coulee office only handled Grand Coulee Dam *and* the North Dam out on the Banks Lake. The *South* Dam itself and anything beyond was handled out of the Ephrata office. . . ."

Dimick: No. The Coulee office only handled Grand Coulee Dam ***and*** the North Dam out on the Banks Lake. The ***South*** Dam itself and anything beyond was handled out of the Ephrata office. So all of the distribution system, the water distribution system, was handled out of the Ephrata office. We only took care of the North Dam and Banks Lake itself and the Grand Coulee Dam.

Storey: So they had their own O&M facility?

Dimick: They had their own O&M facilities, and they worked with all of the water users and the farmers and districts in the basin. We did not work with them at all.

Storey: So the project manager had a right-hand person out there at Ephrata?

Dimick: No, they were actually two separate offices. Actually, they were two project managers. They had a project manager at Grand Coulee and a project manager at Ephrata. They were two separate state offices. I understand they're combined now, but at that time they were two separate entities. W. E. Rawlings, I think, was the project manager in Ephrata.

Storey: Yeah.

Dimick: I mean, we worked with each other because of land issues. They helped us on our land issues and stuff like that and we utilized them, but they were separate offices.

Storey: So how did you view what Grand Coulee's major business was?

Dimick: Our major business was to operate and maintain the Grand Coulee Dam and North Dam. I mean, North Dam is in there, too. The pumping plant and the powerplants and the dam itself, and did not get involved in the sale of water or anything. Well, we did locally with the cities. We sold water and power to the cities, but beyond that our job was to operate and maintain the dam.

Storey: And generate the electricity.

Dimick: Yes. Now, when I moved to Grand Coulee, if I remember correctly–and, boy, that's going

back a long time now. But if I remember correctly, Grand Coulee, the office of the Bureau of Reclamation ***was*** a suboffice of the Ephrata office. But then during the time that I was there, it actually became its own Grand Coulee Projects Office. I think when I moved there it was called the Grand Coulee Field Office or something like that. But, you know, during the time I was there, they actually made the split and made it two separate offices. So we were just kind of a ***support*** for the Ephrata office, but then later we became our own independent [entity].

Storey: And once again, when did you move to Coulee?

Dimick: I moved to Coulee in 1967, March of 1967.

Storey: And you left–

Dimick: I left in, I think it was, August of 1977, ten years later.

Storey: Had you been promoted while you were there?

Promotion at Grand Coulee

Dimick: Yes. While I was at Grand Coulee, I came to Grand Coulee as a GS–I believe I was a GS-5. Maybe a 7. I can't remember whether 5 or 7 when I got to Grand Coulee. And when I left, I was a GS-12.

Storey: Oh, that's a nice movement.

Dimick: Yes. I moved up.

Storey: At that time, did you have a career plan?

Career Plans

Dimick: I had a ***goal*** and that was I wanted to be the project manager at Klamath Falls, Oregon. That was just because I had been raised in Oregon, and I knew about Klamath Falls, and I thought that was a really nice place to live.

Wanted to Be Involved in O&M and Not Design

Yeah, I did have a career plan, and that was I wanted to be involved in the operation and maintenance of the projects. I didn't want to get heavily into design. I wanted to actually help operate and maintain facilities and so on. So that's where I headed my career.

Storey: You had made a conscious decision that you wanted to be in O&M rather than in design. Can you explain why you made that conscious decision?

Dimick: Yes. It was based a ***lot*** on the fact that I did not want to live in a metropolitan city. As I went through college and I saw other entities, and as I interviewed for jobs, and as I started working for the Bureau of Reclamation, I recognized that to get anywhere in the Bureau of Reclamation career ladder, that if I went into design, I'd end up in one of the major regional offices or in Denver. And I didn't want to live in Sacramento or Denver or Boise or Salt Lake.

I wanted to live in a small, rural area. And I knew that the only way I could do that would be actually be in the operations and maintenance side.

Storey: Where did you go when you left Coulee then?

Moved to Provo, Utah, in 1977 to Head the Project Office's Operation and Maintenance Branch

Dimick: I went to the Provo, Utah, area. At that time, it was called the Provo–let's see, the Central Utah Project Office, or something like that. I don't remember the exact name of it–because we changed it while we were there. But now it's the office in Provo, Utah. It handled the projects in the state of Utah south of the Salt Lake City area.

Storey: And what were you doing there?

Dimick: I headed up the Operation and Maintenance Branch and the O&M Division of that office.

Storey: What were you working on, largely?

Dimick: Well, again, we were responsible for making sure that the physical facilities, the dams, canals, the tunnels, pipelines, etc., in that area where operated and maintained properly, either by the district, in most cases, or by the Bureau of Reclamation, in a few cases.

Storey: Now, are we talking about, for instance, Strawberry Valley?

Dimick: Yes. We're talking about Strawberry Dam. We're talking about the Vernal unit of the Central Utah Project. That had been built by that time. About the Moon Lake Project over in Utah. Down in southern, we're talking about Joe's Valley Dam, down on the Sanpete Project, some tunnels up along the Spring Creek Tunnel, Ephraim Tunnel, the Scofield Reservoir, down by Price, Utah. And Provo, Deer Creek Reservoir there on the Provo River. Those are the major facilities.

Storey: Who hired you for that job?

Dimick: Let's see. Howard Pearson [phonetic] was my supervisor.

Storey: What was he like as a manager and a supervisor?

Dimick: Howard was a pretty laid back supervisor and kind of the supervisor that as long as I did my job and didn't cause ***him*** any problems, everything was fine. Again, pretty freely allowed us to do our job the way that we felt should be done, and as long as it met the goals, the same goals that he had in mind, we were pretty well given our freedom.

Storey: Did you have any major projects come up while you were there?

Dimick: Oh, yeah. It sounds like I follow construction. I really don't. But while I was there they completed many features of the Central Utah Project. They completed Tyzack Dam, now

called Red Fleet Dam. They completed the tunnel that brings water from the east slope of the Uinta Mountains or the mountains there, the Wasatch Mountains to the Strawberry Valley now, that aqueduct. Completed the Currant Creek Tunnel, the Currant Creek Dam, and Soldier Creek Dam. All of those were completed, and we actually initiated filling of those and placed all those into operation. Pumping, the Tyzack Pumping Plant, put it into operation and the aqueduct. That was on the [unclear].

Storey: You moved to Provo just after Teton had failed.

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: Do you remember where you were and how you learned about the failure of Teton?

Failure of Teton Dam

Dimick: Yes. I was in my house. I was out mowing the law, in fact, in the backyard of my house in Coulee Dam when my wife hollered at me and says, "Come look what's on the TV." And I went in and watched on TV the events that took place there. So, yeah, I remember that very clearly. In fact, I can remember, because I belong to the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints, and we had a missionary, a young man, in our town there, and he was from Rexburg, Idaho. We got a hold of him and he came over and watched it on TV with us, because his family still lived there, and he was

very concerned about his family. So I can remember very clearly.

Storey: How did people react at Coulee when they heard that–

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

Storey: I had just asked you how people in Reclamation reacted.

Dimick: I said that the people in Coulee Dam were pretty well devastated, because ***that*** town is made up, I mean the whole town of Coulee is connected somehow with the Bureau of Reclamation. And so the majority of the people there were very sympathetic to what was happening. We could ***relate*** to the fact that here was a dam that had just been constructed and now it has failed. I mean, that day we didn't know the death toll or anything like that, but we knew there must have been terrific destruction, and so we were very concerned about it.

I know the next Monday there was a lot of activity to see what we could do to help with the recovery and immediately began sending people and equipment into that area to help. We didn't wait until Monday, actually. ***I*** did not get started, and I didn't get involved until the next Monday. But I'm sure, you know, that the project manager and others were working, getting everything lined out before Monday.

Storey: I think I'm correct in thinking that we beefed up our safety of dams program rather substantially after that.

Safety of Dams in Reclamation

". . . Tyzack Dam or Red Fleet Dam, as they renamed it, was built while I was at Grand Coulee. The cost of that dam went up significantly. In fact, it more than doubled, I believe, because as they recognized what had happened at Teton, they began adding in all kinds of instrumentation and monitoring to make sure that that didn't happen again. . . ."

Dimick: Oh, yeah. In fact, I mentioned the Tyzack Dam or Red Fleet Dam, as they renamed it, was built while I was at Grand Coulee. The cost of that dam went up significantly. In fact, it more than doubled, I believe, because as they recognized what had happened at Teton, they began adding in all kinds of instrumentation and monitoring to make sure that that didn't happen again. In fact, the filling of the dams was changed to where you could only fill so many feet a day, and they had to be monitored twenty-four hours a day, observed for any leaks, any seeps, or anything like that. And then you had full contact with somebody on a twenty-four-hour-a-day basis. And we still do that when we fill a new dam, and that is as a result of the Teton Dam.

Storey: Did they establish a safety of dams program that would have affected your office in Ogden?

Dimick: You mean at Provo?

Storey: Yes, excuse me. In Provo, yeah.

Activities in Provo Because of the Failure of Teton Dam

Dimick: Well, yeah. When you say we beefed it up, they reviewed and we began having more training sessions on safety of dams, and we all became more aware of the problems we should look at as we go out and inspect the dams, primarily to make sure that we were doing everything that we possibly could in inspecting and maintaining the dams to assure that they didn't fail. There was a whole safety of dams program implemented and a bunch of reports completed and recommendations. We put a lot of monitoring devices in dams that did not have monitoring devices. Joe's Valley, for instance, put piezometer tubes down and in and started monitoring them. We began monitoring all of the toe drains on all of the dams. We couldn't even find them because they had been overgrown with brush and so forth. Well, now we had to go out and actually monitor and measure. So a ***lot*** of our time and effort went into monitoring the conditions or the way in which a dam functioned to make sure that we avoided any potential failures as much as possible.

Storey: How was the safety of dams responsibility split up in Reclamation? Who had responsibilities where? I presume the project office would be

different than the regional office, different than the Denver office.

Dimick: Well, the Denver office was the ***technical*** resource, and they were the ones that determined, you know, what monitoring occurred at a dam and how frequently the monitoring devices should be read and what reports should be done. The regional office, of course, oversaw all of the field offices and made sure that the field offices carried out the field work necessary to accomplish that. In other words, the regional office made sure that the Bureau crews put the piezometers in and made sure that all these actions got done. Then the field office had to take up the responsibility of doing the actual monitoring. I guess the overall design was in Denver, the coordination was in the region, and the field office did the work.

Storey: Now, did the field offices do that work out of O&M?

Dimick: Yes. Well, the monitoring and stuff, yes. In Provo I had one technician that that's all he did was he monitored the dams' structure on a full-time basis.

Storey: That meant he had to go out and visit the dams?

Dimick: He spent about 75 percent of his time ***in*** the field monitoring, yes.

Storey: Who was the project manager when you went there?

Dimick: A man named Larson. I can't remember his first–John Larson. John Larson was the project manager, and then Kurt Carpenter followed him.

Storey: What was their style as managers?

Dimick: I think John Larson, I would say he was kind of a distant person. I never got to know him very well. Even though I was a Branch Chief and sat in on staff meetings and stuff, I just didn't get very well acquainted with him. And so he was kind of a ***distant*** person. So I really can't say what his style was. I just never got to know him very well.

Kurt Carpenter had a fairly laid-back style, but Kurt kind of wanted things to go his way. He knew what he wanted done. He didn't get involved in our daily activities at all. He let us have our own head. But this only came out when he wanted it done.

Storey: So how did you guys figure out how he wanted it done?

Dimick: Well, he usually let us know sooner or later. Not how he wanted it done, but what results he wanted. He was very emphatic about results.

Storey: How large was the Provo office at that time?

Dimick: I think we had about 140, 150 people, something like that. Well, when I moved there, it wasn't quite that large, because we were the Utah Projects Office, or Central Utah Project

Office, but in about 1980, I think it was, somewhere around there, they expanded our office and moved responsibilities that had been in the region for the ***rest*** of Utah, the projects in western Utah, to our office. So our office took over all of the northern half of the state also and began administering that. Because of that, we did increase in size, and also because of the construction activities and our support of those construction activities, we got to be a larger office.

Storey: And how long were you in Provo?

Worked in Provo for Ten Years

Dimick: I was in Provo, again, just exactly ten years. I came in '77 and left in '87. I arrived in, I think, August of '77 and left in, I believe it was April of '87.

Storey: Now, did you move with a promotion?

"I did not move from Coulee to Utah for a promotion. I wanted to broaden my experience. And then when I moved from Provo to Carson City, Nevada, I did have a promotion. . . ."

Dimick: I did not move from Coulee to Utah for a promotion. I wanted to broaden my experience. And then when I moved from Provo to Carson City, Nevada, I did have a promotion there.

Storey: To a 13?

Dimick: From a 12 to a 13. It was a 12 with the full ten years I was in Provo. That was my choice. I wanted to do something ***different***, and I wanted to broaden my experience. While I was at Grand Coulee, I progressed very rapidly. Because I had all kinds of this learning to do and all kinds of new things happening all the time, but towards the end of the ten years I was starting to realize the same things were happening. I was doing the same things over and over again. I wasn't learning as much as I wanted to learn.

". . . Teton Dam failure, I was assigned down there for about five months to Teton, and I ran the Rexburg Claims Office, where we took care of the claims for people for the damage they incurred. . . ."

Then the Teton Dam failure, I was assigned down there for about five months to Teton, and I ran the Rexburg Claims Office, where we took care of the claims for people for the damage they incurred.

". . . I recognized that there was more to the world than I was getting at Grand Coulee. So that's why I applied for and got the job in Provo, and that was to broaden out from where I was. . . ."

And after that five months down there, I recognized that there was more to the world than I was getting at Grand Coulee. So that's why I applied for and got the job in Provo, and that was to broaden out from where I was. Rather than having just ***one*** project to operate

and maintain, I wanted to see that there were dams other than Grand Coulee in the world. So that's why I went to Provo.

Storey: Tell me more about your Rexburg experience. How soon were you there?

Working Claims for the Teton Dam Failure in Rexburg, Idaho

Dimick: Well, let's see. The flood occurred on June 6th, and I think I rolled into town on about June 20th, about two weeks later. Maybe it was the twenty-fifth of June, somewhere in there.

"All offices of the Bureau of Reclamation were being contacted to send people down to help recover . . . to rebuild the irrigation facilities that were destroyed . . . to help clean up out at the dam . . . They called me one day and asked if I would go down for a thirty-day detail to Rexburg. . . . Went into the meeting and was politely informed that I was to head up the Rexburg claims office. . . ."

All offices of the Bureau of Reclamation were being contacted to send people down to help recover, number one, to rebuild the irrigation facilities that were destroyed so that we could get on with irrigating the crops in that area so the farmers could survive, but also to help clean up out at the dam and do other things.

They called me one day and asked if I would go down for a thirty-day detail to

Rexburg. And I said, "Well, sure. I would like to do that, go down and help." So several others from my office also went down, and so two vanloads of us took off and went down there. I got there on a Sunday night and they says, "Okay, we have a meeting." The Bureau had rented an entire motel in Idaho Falls, and that's where our headquarters were. Went into the meeting and was politely informed that I was to head up the Rexburg claims office.

To that point, I did not know. I thought I was just going to go down and help restore irrigation ditches or something. I thought I was going go do survey work or something. And they said I was going to head up the Rexburg claims office, and that I should start making plans to see what I was going to do. That was a baptism by fire, if you would. So for the next five and a half months, I served as the Rexburg claims officer. My thirty-day detail extended to five and a half months.

Storey: What size staff was there in Rexburg?

Dimick: We varied in size, but usually between sixty and a hundred people in there. I think there was only three full-time employees. The rest were all detailed in from the various field offices and also the SBA had verifiers there and FHA had some verifiers there, Farm Home Administration. All of those people added in, I don't know, we may have totaled 100 or 120 sometimes. I don't remember. It was a long . . .

Storey: What were you doing?

"Our *first* role was to develop the rules and regulations. . . ."

Dimick: Our ***first*** role was to develop the rules and regulations. Congress had just passed a law that said that the government would ***reimburse*** the people for their damages, and that's about as simple as the law said. They set up a fund of, I think it was like, $500 million or something like that. Maybe it was $300 [million]. So the first few weeks we were set just getting the rules and regulations as to ***how*** we would reimburse these people with this fund, how they would apply for it, how we would determine what their losses were, and then how did we get them their money when we finally determined it. So we spent the first few weeks doing that. Once we got that all done and the rules and regulations out, then we just began the process of having people apply for, fill out their losses, and then we would send people out and verify their losses, and then we would write them a check.

Storey: What kind of problems did you run into?

Dimick: I could spend all day on that, Brit. (laughter)

Storey: Good. I'd like that.

Logistics of the Claims Office

Dimick: The first one, just the logistics problem. The fact that you were trying to work in an area that

had been totally flooded out and destroyed. We first had to find a place to set up an office. The Ricks College, which is owned by the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints, they gave us an old gymnasium that they were going to tear down that had not been in the flood. It was just up on the hill above the flooded area. They said, "Well, we're going to tear this down anyway, so you can have this gymnasium." They gave it to us rent free for our offices. We had telephones installed and partitions, portable partitions and stuff. In fact, I remember my office was in the coach's office down by the locker rooms. That's where my office was. It was one of the old coach's offices. We divided up the gymnasium floor, and that's where we had all of our land records and stuff. So we used every bit of that gymnasium.

Informing the Public about the Claims Process

We got that started. Then trying to get information out to people. We started some public meetings and let people know ***what*** we were doing and how we were going to do it. That became a little bit of a problem, because nobody was living in their homes. They were all living in dormitories or with friends.

In fact, the favorite Sunday pastime for people was going out and looking for their house. Their house was no longer there. All they had was the foundation, and they'd go out. Looking back on it, it's kind of comical now, but back then it was rather serious. People would get excited when they found their front

door, for instance, or they found a screen door that had their initial on it or something, or they found their car. A lot of cars got washed away and buried. So the favorite joke was that you'd go out on Sunday afternoon looking for your house.

The other thing is the LDS church has what they call family home meetings on Monday night, where the family is supposed to get together and just be together as a family, and they would sometimes talk about their family home meeting was where they burned the rubble from their house and roasted hot dogs on their house. At that point, the people kept their sense of humor, and that was the only thing that made it survivable.

But the problems came primarily in just the logistics, the actual filing of the claims and the people and getting their money back. It actually went fairly smoothly, once the process was set up and people saw that it was there. We had a few people that wanted to defraud the government, but very, very few. Unhappily, those are the people you remember the most going in there. We ended up with a few people that ended up in jail over it, but again a very few. We did have one man that was in the state penitentiary over by Boise that filed and received reimbursement on a car. He had been in a crime and his car had been impounded, and the impound lot that the sheriff had happened to be flooded and his car was destroyed and he filed a claim and was paid for his car that was lost while he was in prison.

". . . the government paid a replacement cost, not used cost, what it would cost to replace that item. Except for cars . . ."

So, you know, those kind of things were the unusual things that went on. But basically it was people filled out a form, listed everything they lost, and the cost to replace that item, because the government paid a replacement cost, not used cost, what it would cost to replace that item. Except for cars, because people could go out and buy another car that was much the same as what they had, a used one. Other than that, we paid replacement cost. A verifier would check the list and if there was anything on it that looked out of place, he would do a little questioning of the person to make sure or check a neighbor or whatever. If it was reasonable, they would approve the loss and people were paid.

Storey: How long do you suppose it took to process things?

"We had the . . . whole process, down to about three weeks by the time that I left. . . . But the time a person turned a claim in until they got their check in their hand was about three weeks. . . ."

Dimick: We had the process, the whole process, down to about three weeks by the time that I left. When we first started, it was a little longer. But the time a person turned a claim in until they got their check in their hand was about three weeks. Just to give you an example, from the time that the claim was approved, when I

signed off on it, until they got their check was twenty-four hours. We had a twenty-four hour turnaround on the check. We literally had a arrangement made where we flew the claims to Denver and the checks were printed that night and flown back to us the next morning. And we had an office set up in one of the local banks where the people came in and we handed them their check the next morning at the bank. So very short term.

Storey: That's pretty good turnaround for the government, I would think. (laughter)

Dimick: Short turnaround. It is. It is. And there was a lot of red tape cut in this process, because these people were totally without anything. They had nothing except the clothes on their back and maybe a car. Maybe they got . . . escaped with their car. But a lot of them didn't. We tried to get it to them as fast as we could.

Storey: Did we have . . . What kind of effort did Reclamation make to explain to these folks what their rights were, how they should go about doing this, all that kind of thing?

Getting Information out to the Public

Dimick: Well, we did several things. As I say, we had public meetings. Once we determined what we had to do, then we had public meetings. We provided written materials. We actually worked with the county. The county commissioners actually took over control of all the area, because it was a disaster area, and in a

disaster the county commission becomes ***the law of*** the land, and they take control of everything–the cities, the county, the whole counties. So we would meet with them on a regular basis and work through them to make sure that information was distributed. They helped us distribute. Since all the houses were gone, there was no mail service, and so the local churches actually helped us distribute flyers when they needed to distribute flyers at a public meeting or of any written instructions for these people.

We actually prepared a regular ***packet*** of materials that had everything in it from what the law said to the claim form that they had to file and had a very good explanation of what the law said and what the requirements were, and how they were to fill out the claim form. Then we went out to the public meetings and met with the people on a as-they-wanted basis. We'd go out to any meeting that they asked us to come to and go through it in detail with them as to what they had to do and what their ***rights*** were and what they ***couldn't*** do. And then I had a weekly call-in radio show that I sat in on. The local radio station there, as soon as they got back up operating, called me and I would go out there once a week and take calls on the air and answer people's questions on the radio.

So we hit them with about every source of media that we could to make sure that they had an understanding of what they couldn't do. Plus, when they came in to fill a claim or just to pick up a packet of information, they could

come in and pick up a claim form, we had people that were trained to just sit down with them, one on one, go through the whole thing and explain it very thoroughly and answer any questions they had.

Storey: What do you suppose the smoothest area was for all of this?

Dimick: The smoothest?

Storey: Yeah. The thing that went the best?

Dimick: You know, all of the areas had some rough spots that we had to work out. But in looking back on it now, I guess the check thing was probably the smoothest thing that worked, because we got that thing down to, like I say, a twenty-four-hour turnaround, and that's almost unheard of. But everything actually started going fairly smooth once we got the bugs worked out of it. So everybody cooperated and basically cut the red tape.

For instance, one of the first things we had to do when we got there was get with the county assessor and get ***all*** of the records of the county assessor into our files so that when somebody came with a claim for a house we knew how many square feet they had in the house, what the house was like before it got destroyed, because all you have left is the foundation. So, you know, we went down to the county and said, "Well, how can we get copies of all of your records?" We went down and rented two Xerox machines and put them

in the county assessor's office and put three people down there. We actually burned up two copy machines copying every record of that area. You know, it's things like that that just everybody cooperated to get things done.

Storey: Where would the areas be that caused the most difficulty?

Dimick: Well, probably just the fact that there's some government red tape that you can't cut. The most difficulty came in the way the law was written and ***then*** the way the regulations were written. An example is when we wrote the regulations, there was some real desire on a lot of people's part to make sure that people couldn't file more than one claim. So they wrote the regulations in such a way that you could only file one claim. What that did, you know, if you were to be asked tomorrow to sit down and list everything that you own that's in your house, because you're going to put it down on a claim, and once you file that claim that's the only time you would have, and if you forgot something that would be tough because we're not going to let you file a second claim or amend your claim, it makes it very difficult.

That's the way the regulations were written so that people were required to file a claim, and they could only file ***one*** claim and they couldn't amend it. And that was hard, because you're asking people to sit down and basically we told them sit down and get a Sears and Roebuck or Montgomery Wards catalog or a J. C. Penney catalog and go through the

catalog and see what you lost and then put down the price it cost to replace that. And a lot of people, that's the only way they could do. You know, did you remember that you had a camera or you may forget your barbecue that was out back. Maybe you had a basketball hoop that you forgot or something. There's always something you'll forget, and that became a very difficult thing.

They ***finally*** went in after about a year and changed that, maybe about nine months, they went back in and changed that to ***allow*** for a second claim to be filed or you could amend the claim, if in fact you have legitimately forgotten something, overlooked it. Because that was tough trying to make people remember and saying, "You know, when you turn this in, make sure it's exactly perfect, because you can't change it."

Storey: So people who had turned in a claim were then able to amend them?

Dimick: Yeah, they were able to come back and file an amendment or a second claim.

Storey: Did we compensate for things like erosion of farm land?

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: And, gee, I don't know what all to ask about here.

Dimick: Well, yeah, we paid people for any physical loss that they suffered, whether it be erosion of farm land. We had the FHA, Farm Home Administration, verifiers came out and could help estimate the cost of what they had lost. In some cases, the silt came down and came on the land and took away the ability to grow crops for X number of years. That was compensated to the farmer. Loss of their equipment. Again, we originally thought we could buy used farm equipment, but found out that there was just so much destroyed that we couldn't. So we ended up buying new farm equipment for most of the people, unless we could find through sources a comparable used piece of equipment.

"We compensated people for a loss of anything physical. We did not compensate them for stress or emotional loss or anything like this. . . ."

We compensated people for a loss of anything physical. We did not compensate them for ~~loss or~~ stress or emotional loss or anything like this. In other words, you can pay to have a new roll of film taken, but you can't pay because you lost Aunt Myrtle's picture. Aunt Myrtle's picture may be worth $1,000 to you, but it's only worth the cost of the film and to print it to the Federal government. That's the only way you could do it. I mean, there's just no way that you could try to figure the emotional loss or the loss of personal value. You could only pay for the loss of actual cash value.

Storey: And that gets into some pretty tense moments, I would expect, maybe.

Dimick: Yes. We paid for loss of life. We paid for loss of property. We paid for loss of income to business people who had lost their income. We would pay for that. And sometimes the emotions of a loss of a life became very serious and was not a pleasant experience to deal with. I don't blame the people at all, because they were going through a very terrible experience. It's just a very ***hard*** thing to have to deal with. But when you're given a law and certain guidelines, it has to be done that way. When you can't pay for an emotional loss or sentimental value, then it becomes a real serious problem.

Storey: I heard you talking about regulations. Did we actually publish regulations specifically for this?

Dimick: Yes. Yeah.

Storey: How long did that take us?

Dimick: I think we had the regulations published–well, if you want to stop the tape, I can tell you really exactly.

Storey: No, I don't think it needs to be really exact, because anybody can look it up.

Dimick: I've got it in my desk drawer. But I think it was about three weeks, something like that.

Storey: Three weeks. And I would also sort of presume that there had to be forms.

Dimick: Yes, there were forms. But, again, as I said, everybody cooperated and recognized that we had to get this thing moving very fast. And so, you know, the regulations were written in a very short time. The forms were written and bought off on. I know we kept ***waiting*** for the final approval of everything, but it was done very rapidly. I'm guessing three weeks. It may have been four or something like that. It seems like it was about the end of July when we actually had it ready to start receiving applications.

Storey: Back in those days, even now, I suppose, that's a fairly substantial amount of money that we were going to be giving out.

Dimick: I think in the five and a half months I was there–and I only ran the Rexburg office. There was another office in Idaho Falls and another one in Blackfoot, Idaho. But Rexburg had suffered the most damage. I think that I signed vouchers for something like $160 million or something like that in the five months I was there.

Storey: Who was looking over your shoulder? Who was supervising you?

Dimick: Lloyd Erickson was the head claims verifier, and he was from the Boise, Idaho, office, the regional office in Boise, Idaho.

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

Storey: This is tape two of an interview by Brit Storey with Frank Dimick on April the14th, 1995.

Dimick: . . . published July 14.

Storey: July 14, about five weeks, maybe.

Dimick: Three.

Storey: Three?

Dimick: We started on June 25, I think, or June 20. July 14 is just about three weeks.

Storey: But the dam failed–was it June the 6th?

Dimick: Oh, the dam failed. The dam failed June 6, but we didn't start working on the regulations until about the twentieth. So Congress had to pass the act.

Storey: When you were over there then?

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: So about three weeks after you actually got the relief effort into place.

Dimick: Yeah. Yeah, see, and that's why Congress actually didn't pass the act until July 12th, 1976, two days before these were published. So Congress actually passed the act two days

before, and then we published regulations two days later.

Storey: You were anticipating a little bit in your preparations.

Dimick: Were we ever. Were we ever.

Storey: What kind of housing arrangements were made for you all?

Housing Arrangements for Reclamation in Rexburg

Dimick: Well, the housing arrangements, when I first arrived there, I mentioned the Bureau had actually contracted with an entire motel. So we had the whole motel that was just Bureau of Reclamation employees there on detail. But at Rexburg we had a little bit different situation, because that had been flooded. So we lived both in Idaho Falls and in–all of a sudden I lost the name. It was a little town just north of Rexburg that did not get flooded out, and commuted by vans for the first while. And they finally got a motel opened up in Rexburg, and so we rented that motel for all the employees there. So basically the government contracted with the motel for the Federal workers to live there.

Until we got the office space, I actually went back to Washington and picked up my travel trailer and parked it. Ricks College, again, gave me free rent in their student housing trailer park. I parked my trailer there

and that became my office for the first about three weeks or so that I was there. I had a phone installed. That became my office that I worked out of until we got office space set up for the employees and then I moved down to that office. It was whatever we could improvise, whatever we could get into.

There was no places to eat, no eating establishments. So Ricks College, their cafeteria fed people twice a day, hot meals twice a day, and then once a day hot meals were taken out from their cafeteria to central sites throughout the city to feed the people that could not eat. The meals were free to those that had suffered damage. The rest of us paid for our meals. The college gave the free meals to the people who had suffered the damage. But housing was a problem, but it was solved very . . .

Storey: And from Rexburg you went back to Coulee, is that right?

Dimick: Yeah. I went back to Coulee in December of ‘96.

Storey: Of ‘76.

Dimick: Of ‘76, yeah. ‘96 isn’t even here yet. I went back to Coulee in December of ‘76. This job opportunity came up in Utah, and I recognized that I was not content anymore to stay in Coulee Dam. So I applied for and got the job in Provo, Utah.

Storey: And you were there ten years again.

Dimick: Ten years. Not quite ten years. Almost.

Storey: Doing the same job throughout that period?

Dimick: Yeah. In that one I did the same job. It expanded and took on the rest of the state of Utah and a couple of projects up in Wyoming. But just basically doing the same type work. The first few years was primarily operation and maintenance, and then the last few years was not just operation and maintenance but bringing on the new facilities of the Central Utah Project. While we were bringing those on, it was very interesting. Towards the end of that I got, again, wanting to do something more.

Storey: What prompted you to move on then?

Dimick: Well, as I say, I just got to the point where, okay, now I've got these new facilities on line. I've got everything under control, and I don't want to just sit and do the same thing tomorrow that I did today. So I started looking for something different to do.

Storey: And you found?

Became Project Manager of the Lahontan Basin Projects Office in Carson City in 1987

Dimick: That's when I applied for the job in Carson City, Nevada, and got a job as a project manager of the Lahontan Basin Projects Office in Carson City as a GS-13.

Storey: Was that the first job you had applied for?

Dimick: No. I'd applied for the job in Washington and the job in Utah also. Oh, you mean . . .

Storey: I didn't ask the question properly.

Dimick: The first job I'd applied for . . .

Storey: That round.

Dimick: Right, that round. No, actually it was the second job. I had received a call and asked to apply for a job down in Arizona. It was for a GS-14, and I told them I wasn't eligible. And they said, "Well, apply anyway, because we might be able to consider you." I applied for that and was turned down because I wasn't eligible. I was only a GS-12 and it was a 14, which I hadn't expected to. But that was the only other job.

Storey: So then you went to Carson City as the project manager?

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: It's a little bit different country.

Dimick: It's different country. But since I was born in Las Vegas, it was moving back home, if you would, in that degree. But the country really isn't that much different than Utah desert and mountains. The Lahontan Basin Project Office covers almost all of the state of Nevada except for the Las Vegas area and the mountains of

California up to the summit of the Sierra Nevada, and north to the Oregon border.

It wasn't all that much different. It was a little bit different than I'd been used to, because in Utah you have the green valley because you've got so much irrigation going on. But if you get over around Vernal and that area, the desert is much like the desert in Nevada. So it's about the same that way. So it wasn't all that much different. About the same elevation even. Provo and Carson City are probably within a couple of hundred feet elevation.

Storey: Well, in moving into this new job, what was it that took the most adjustment on your part?

". . . the biggest adjustment . . . up until this time I had not been . . . totally accountable . . . the boss always signs the letter. . . . When I moved to Nevada . . . I *was* the boss. So I *had* to be sure everything was right before I put my name on it. . . . I couldn't sit back and just do my job and blame somebody else for something going wrong. . . ."

Dimick: I think the biggest adjustment was the fact that up until this time I had not been–you're not totally accountable for what you do. When I say that, what I mean is you don't have to sign a letter that somebody will ask you about later on. You know, the boss always signs the letter. You can write anything you want, because the boss will make sure it's right before he sends it out. And everything you do has to be checked with the boss. When I moved to Nevada, I

found out that I couldn't do that any more. I ***was*** the boss. So I ***had*** to be sure everything was right before I put my name on it. That was probably the biggest adjustment was recognizing that now I ***had*** to be the person that was responsible for what that office is doing, and I couldn't sit back and just do my job and blame somebody else for something going wrong.

Storey: Uh-huh. Did you like it?

"The job of a project manager, now called area manager, is probably the best job in the Bureau of Reclamation, because you have the ability to make things happen. You can make decisions that get things done, and you can actually accomplish things that need to be done and get a good feeling out of it. . . ."

Dimick: Oh, I loved it there. The job of a project manager, now called area manager, is probably the best job in the Bureau of Reclamation, because you have the ability to make things happen. You can make decisions that get things done, and you can actually ***accomplish*** things that need to be done and get a good feeling out of it. So I loved it there. It was very enjoyable. I mean, the issues are complicated and the issues are really tough to deal with. But that's okay, because you're working with a good bunch of people. You have a good staff, and the accomplishments that you get done are good, too.

Storey: Who would have hired you for that job?

David Houston Was Regional Director

Dimick: Dave Houston was the regional director at the time that I was hired for that.

Storey: How did you get to know Dave, or did you?

Dimick: I didn't know Dave Houston until I came for the job interview.

Storey: What was he like as a regional director? What was your interview like?

Dimick: What was my interview like? Well, I had no idea about what the project was like when I applied for it. I knew where it was, and I'd been to Carson City a few times, but I didn't know much about the project. So when I was notified I was going to be interviewed, I hurried up and got the project data book and Xeroxed some pages out of it, everything that was in that project, studied those, and then came down for my interview. The interview, I don't remember too much about it other than I was very thankful that I had looked up that project data book and had some information about it. (laughter)

The interview was a lot of it Dave looked at–I think he looked at the trust factor more than anything. He was looking for somebody that could be trusted to be honest and deal with the people up there on a straightforward basis. So I can remember a lot of my interview was more on my ethical position and what my history of ethical

conduct–not ethical conduct. That's not really the word I want to use, but just the fact of whether or not I'd been open with people and honest with people in dealing with them. I guess I convinced him I was, because they gave me the job.

Storey: Well, he probably didn't tell you-- [Tape recorder turned off]

. . . about Lahontan Basin. What were the major issues you had to deal with out there?

Issues in the Lahontan Basin Project Office

Dimick: Well, the major issues out there are just like a lot of other places. You have endangered species. We have in the Lake Pyramid there's the cui-ui, which is a large sucker fish, and the Lahontan Cutthroat trout, which is a threatened species. And you have two Indian tribes that you're dealing with. You have two different states. You have the state of California and the state of Nevada. All of the water in that part of Nevada on the Truckee and Carson and Walker rivers originates in California and then flows into Nevada. So you have the two states at each others' throat. And the competition between municipal needs for water and agriculture needs.

That's the major issues, all those entities over a very limited supply of water. Nevada is the driest state in the United States and has an average rainfall of less than ten inches for the entire state. The Fallon area,

where we have our largest irrigation system, the Newlands Project, only gets five inches of precipitation a year. So anything you grow there has to be supplemented with water. That's the basic issues. The Pyramid Tribe wanting water for its endangered species, the farmers needing the water for agriculture, and the city of Reno desperately needing water to grow, to continue to grow.

Storey: And wanting to grow, I'll bet.

". . . I came in 1987 and that was the first year of what turned out to be a six-year drought. . . ."

Dimick: And wanting to grow, very definitely. The other problem is I came in 1987 and that was the first year of what turned out to be a six-year drought. All four years I spent ***in*** Nevada were all drought years and, consequently, the water supply was very limited. So it was just one of the issues was the drought.

Storey: How did this manifest itself to you? How did these issues manifest themselves to you as the project manager?

Dimick: What do you mean by manifest?

Storey: Well, you had to ***manage*** it, right?

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: Okay. What were the things that ***came*** to you as a result of all of these issues?

Dimick: Well, of course, those issues, almost every one of them, are in court actions and through litigation. So part of it was just the fact that I got involved in the litigation. But mostly what came to me and what I got involved with was trying to negotiate between all of the parties settlements to the issues that would come up, everything from how much water to divert to efficiency of irrigation on the projects. And so my job was then trying to quell the uproar of fires, if you would, between the different entities on the issues and try to get the entities together and trying to resolve some of the issues so that we can continue to operate the irrigation projects without adversely affecting the environment or taking the water away from municipal supplies.

Storey: Well, we obviously didn't have any surplus water to hand around.

Dimick: No. We didn't have any surplus water to hand around, that was for sure.

Storey: What kinds of negotiations were you involved in?

Operating Criteria and Procedures (OCAP) for the Newlands Project to Improve the Efficiency of the Irrigation District's Delivery System

Dimick: Well, when I first arrived there, Senator [Harry] Reid had just been elected as a senator from Nevada in 1986, and his promise was that he would solve the water problems in northern Nevada. We entered into negotiations

immediately to try to see if could do some of that. What we ended up with is in 1988 we published what we called an ***OCAP***, Operating Criteria and Procedures for the Newlands Project, which ***required*** the district to improve the efficiency of their delivery system–to conserve water. The water conserved would be left in the Truckee River to benefit the endangered species.

Storey: In Pyramid Lake.

Dimick: So that came out in May of 1988. So the first year most of my time was spent in those negotiations trying to come to an agreement on that OCAP as such. Then the next step was to work with Senator Reid on his commitment to each issue. His efforts resulted in negotiations over the ***next*** two years after 1988, resulted in 1990 in the passage of Public Law 101-618,[2] which was the Truckee-Carson River Settlement Act, which set the framework for trying to resolve the remaining issues out there. And that's been worked on ever since then. The last five years have been spent trying to implement that act, without full success, but in an effort to try to implement that act.

So all four years that I was there were just basically negotiation between these parties

2. Public Law 101-618, sponsored by Nevada Senator Harry Reid, passed Congress in 1990 and was signed by President George Bush. It contained two main sections: Title I–Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribal Settlement Act, and Title II–Truckee-Carson-Pyramid Lake Water Rights Settlement Act. Senator Reid has been interviewed by the Newlands Project Series oral history program.

and trying to work with them to try to come up with solutions on those issues.

Storey: And who were the parties?

"The parties are . . . the state of California and the state of Nevada, the Sierra Pacific Power Company . . . the Pyramid tribe . . . the Fallon tribe out on the Newlands Project, and you have the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District . . ."

Dimick: The parties are, as I said, the state of California and the state of Nevada, the Sierra Pacific Power Company, which is the main ***water*** purveyor for the city of Reno and Sparks. Washoe County, which is also a water purveyor for the county of Washoe County, where Reno and Sparks are located, they handle everything outside of the Sierra Pacific Power Company boundaries. You have the Pyramid tribe, which has the Pyramid Lake, which is the end of the Truckee River, the ***terminus*** of the Truckee River. You have the Fallon tribe out on the Newlands Project, and you have the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District, which is the district that operates the system. [Tape recorder turned off]

Storey: Truckee-Carson Irrigation District. You know, I've had a person doing oral history over there for–well, he worked last summer and fall. My impression is that Truckee-Carson Irrigation District is sort of a conservative group of folks.

Fallon, the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District, and the Naval Air Station

Dimick: Yeah. The Truckee-Carson Irrigation District is considered to be the ***heart*** of the Fallon community. What you have is a district or a irrigation system that was one of the first five irrigation systems authorized when the Reclamation Service was formed in 1902, and the Newlands Project was one of those, named after a Senator named [Francis G.] Newlands. They developed that area as a farming community, reliant upon the Truckee and Carson Rivers. And that area has stayed very conservative, and what the people, in their minds, think is still a farming community, although they now have that Navy air fighter training base there where they train pilots for the Navy. That has added a lot of income and a lot of stability to the community. They still look at farming that they are still a farming community. So, you're right. It's an old small town farming community atmosphere that they want to maintain.

Storey: One of the reasons I asked about that is you mentioned earlier an act of Congress, I believe, that required water conservation out there. And what I keep seeing–let's start over. What I seem to keep running into is that western water law is not really designed to encourage water conservation. I'm wondering how that's been working.

Dimick: Well, Public Law 101-618 does not, in itself, require water conservation. The OCAP that was formed prior to the law is what requires the

conservation and the public law just confirms that OCAP.

You're exactly right, because western water law, first-in-line, first-in-right concept, plus a concept if I don't use it than somebody junior to me gets it. In Nevada in the Newlands Project, for instance, there's a court decree that guarantees the users three and a half acre-feet per acre for bottom land and four and a half acre-feet per acre for bench land. Now, you know, if we fail to deliver that, I mean, if we have it available and fail to deliver that, than we're in violation of a Federal court order. And so it even gets more complicated on that front.

". . . the OCAP that we developed actually is aimed at increased efficiency of the delivery system to get the water *to* the farmers. We didn't take any steps to try to make the farmer himself or herself be more efficient. . . ."

Therefore, the OCAP that we developed actually is aimed at increased efficiency of the delivery system to get the water ***to*** the farmers. We didn't take any steps to try to make the farmer himself or herself be more efficient. All we did was take a look at the irrigation district, and we have T-C-I-D that we have the contract with and say, "You have to improve the efficiency of getting the water from the dam to the head gate of the farm in order to conserve water."

So you're right. There are many aspects of the laws as now written that ***don't*** lend themselves very well to water conservation.

"By the way, I don't like to use the word water conservation too much. I like to use the word water management. There really isn't any such thing as water conservation. You don't *save* water. You just make water available for another use. . . ."

By the way, I don't like to use the word water conservation too much. I like to use the word water management. There really isn't any such thing as water conservation. You don't ***save*** water. You just make water available for another use. You might save it from one use, but then it just becomes available for another use. So it's water management, is the way I like to use it.

Storey: Okay. So this isn't really pushing them. But I haven't looked at Newlands specifically. I think the one that stands out in my mind may be the Milk River Project, where about 50 percent of the water is lost in the conveyance system and the storage system.

Dimick: Yeah. In the T-C-I-D we figure the loss is about 35 percent, a 35 percent loss.

Storey: So it's that where you're trying to have better water management techniques.

Dimick: There you go. Now you're getting– (laughter) That's right. What you do is you take a look and saying, "Okay. Do you really need water in your irrigation ditches as long as you have it?" In other words, can you shorten your irrigation season and still produce the same crop? If you can, then you've eliminated some seepage losses, you've eliminated evaporation losses. Do you really need to carry your reservoir at the same elevation? In other words, why always carry your reservoir completely full? Because if you can carry it half full and still meet the needs of the users, then you save all the evaporation losses on that larger lake area. How do you make your spills, your operational spills, go to zero so that you don't spill any into the wasteway that then just disappears down the system?

". . . we anticipated a savings about 40,000 acre-feet of water, and that 40,000 acre-feet of water savings on the Newlands Project resulted in a drying up of about 8,000 acres of wetlands. . . ."

The problem is that if you just look at that aspect of it only, it sounds pretty good. But what happens, and it happened on the Newlands Project, we anticipated a savings about 40,000 acre-feet of water, and that 40,000 acre-feet of water savings on the Newlands Project resulted in a drying up of about 8,000 acres of wetlands. So what you do is you save water. In that aspect, you don't use that much water. But now you have 8,000 acres of wetlands that you've dried up. So now you have to mitigate for those wetlands. So

you do that by going in and buying water and giving it to the wetlands, whereas, they got the water through seepage and other losses and spills before. So that's why I say you don't really conserve water as such, you just make it available for other purposes.

Storey: If you did make the 40,000 acre-feet available, where would it go?

"That 40,000 acre-feet stayed in the Truckee River and goes for the cui-ui fish. . . ."

Dimick: That 40,000 acre-feet stayed in the Truckee River and goes for the cui-ui fish.

Storey: Goes downstream to Pyramid Lake then?

Dimick: I shouldn't say it really goes to the cui-ui fish, but it just stays in the river and adds to the [unclear] transfer the water. It stays in the river and sits in the river and ends up in Pyramid Lake.

Storey: But I understood that T-C-I-D felt it was entitled to more water than it was entitled to, so it was diverting the water when it shouldn't have been?

Disagreement Between Reclamation and TCID about How Much Water They Are Entitled to Divert

Dimick: Between 1973, when the first OCAP was issued, and 1988, when the final OCAP, was issued, there was a lot of legal discussions. In fact, we actually canceled T-C-I-D's repayment

contract. The Federal government ***canceled*** the repayment contract and took the project back, if you would, from operation by T-C-I-D, because T-C-I-D continued to divert water when we told them they shouldn't be doing it. So, yes, they feel they're entitled to the water and we have been telling them, "No, you don't need to divert that much water." The Federal courts, all the way up through appeals to the point where the Supreme Court refused to hear it, refused to hear an appeal, determined that the Federal government had that right to tell the district how much water they could and could not divert out of the Truckee River.

Storey: Sounds like you were on a hot seat for four years.

Dimick: Yeah. You know, the hot seat, if you want to call it that. I looked at it more rather than being on the hot seat to kind of the mediator among the disputing parties. So I don't know [unclear]. You're in the middle of a lot of controversy and a lot of issues that have a lot of different viewpoints, viewpoint from an Indian tribe, which has a government position. They are a government unto themselves, and they have a certain position. You have the environmental groups that want certain things, and you have a heavily populated municipal area that carries a lot of voting power They have desires. So you're in the middle of all those groups.

Storey: Now, Reclamation, by its nature, does not mediate water rights disputes, right?

Dimick: That's correct.

Storey: So who is doing that? Who's telling who that they can get water out of the Truckee-Carson system?

A Federal Watermaster Controls the Truckee River

Dimick: Well, on the Truckee system there's a Federal watermaster that actually directs how much and when water can be diverted. ***But*** since the Newlands Project is, in essence, owned by the Federal government, ~~the courts determined that the Federal government, the secretary, did have the right to determine when and where water was diverted out of the Truckee River for that in the project.~~ So even though the watermaster–I shouldn't say it quite that way, Brit.

"The Federal government doesn't have the right to say when and where you can divert water. Rather it has the right to say how the project should be operated in order to divert that water. And, therefore, if the district is operating the project in a manner that's less efficient than we think it should be, we have the right to tell them that they have to improve the efficiency, or they cannot divert any more water. . . ."

The Federal government doesn't have the right to say when and where you can divert water. Rather it has the right to say how the project should be operated in order to divert that water. And, therefore, if the district is operating the project in a manner that's less efficient than we

think it should be, we have the right to tell them that they have to improve the efficiency, or they cannot divert any more water. And that's what the court determined. We're not really affecting their water rights as much as we are their ability to divert water because they are our agent, they are our contractor.

Storey: Yeah, and I understand that we took the project over last fall.

"Last fall there was a situation where the Fallon Indian tribe wanted some water after the irrigation season had ended, and the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District had indicated that they were to be treated like any of their water users and the season was over and there was no water available. So our area manager in that area went out and actually had his people go out and open a gate and allow water to flow down the canal to the Indian reservation out of the equalizing reservoir. . . ."

Dimick: No. Last fall there was a situation where the Fallon Indian tribe[3] wanted some water after the irrigation season had ended, and the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District had indicated that they were to be treated like any of their water users and the season was over and there was no water available. So our area manager in that area went out and actually had his people go out and open a gate and allow water to flow down the canal to the Indian reservation out of the equalizing reservoir. The

3. Referring to the Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe which has lands on the Newlands Project.

district had moved the water to the equalizing reservoir, but they would not make the final link and open that last gate to deliver the water. So the . . .

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

Storey: I guess I don't characterize this very well. But it sounds like, if you're interested in this kind of thing, a very interesting and ***complex*** situation to deal with.

". . . issues in northern Nevada probably encompass every issue that's available in the western United States. . . . It just concentrates in that one area. But you have everything from endangered species to water rights to trust responsibility for tribes, municipal, to agricultural, to groundwater issues, to they have a Superfund problem because the Carson River is saturated with mercury. . . . All of these things are concentrated into a river system that's a hundred miles long. . . ."

Dimick: You know, the Nevada issues in northern Nevada probably encompass every issue that's available in the western United States. It just does it on a hundred mile river. That's one way of looking at it. It just concentrates in that one area. But you have everything from endangered species to water rights to trust responsibility for tribes, municipal, to agricultural, to groundwater issues, to they have a Superfund problem because the Carson River is saturated with mercury. For instance,

if you're pregnant or older than fifty-five or something like that, you're not suppose to eat any fish that come out of Lahontan Reservoir. All of these things are concentrated into a river system that's a hundred miles long.

Storey: That's quite a concentration, isn't it?

Dimick: It sure is.

Storey: Tell me more about the watermaster and our relationship to this person. Is this a Reclamation employee?

Federal Watermaster for the Truckee River under the Orr Ditch Decree

Dimick: No. Actually, the watermaster is an employee of the Federal court. His boss is the judge, the Federal judge in Reno. He was appointed by the courts under the Alpine–Orr Ditch Decree, I believe it is, maybe it's the Alpine Decree. I can't remember which one. Either the Alpine or Orr Ditch Decree. And his job is to assure that the decree or the water rights decreed in that settlement–it's got to be the Orr Ditch, because that's the Truckee River decree. Under the Orr Ditch Decree that everybody who is entitled to water rights gets their water rights. His position is ***funded*** by ***all*** of the users on the river. Therefore, ***we*** pay into his funds. We are assessed each year an amount of money that is our proportionate share for the amount of water we have on that system, our water rights. T-C-I-D pays in and Sierra Pacific Power Company pays in, and all the

other users pay in a share, too. Everybody on the river system pays into his funding and than he carries out responsibilities as Federal watermaster.

Storey: Is this a one-person office?

Dimick: No. The watermaster has a staff of–I'm trying to remember now. But I think it's something like six people, five-, six people.

Storey: To take care of a hundred miles of river.

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: A lot of water rights, I suppose, along there.

Dimick: A lot of water rights in the Truckee Meadows area. He handles everything from–well, he actually handles Lake Tahoe and the dams up in California. Lake Tahoe is a reservoir. We have about six feet of reservoir on top of the lake, and he handles ***that***. He is the one that determines what flows are to occur in the river. We receive our direction on which valves to turn in the dam, when to turn the valves on the dam, and how much water to release from the Federal watermaster. So he controls the river–the flowing river. So he has a hydrologist on his staff. He has a secretary and some others that just are people that do the day-to-day work of seeing where the water is and how much water is–who is and is not getting their water supply or their water rights.

Storey: I know down in Las Vegas, Las Vegas is water hungry and looking at all different kinds of alternatives.

Dimick: Sure.

Storey: Is it a comparable situation with Reno?

Sierra Pacific Power Company Supplies Water to Reno and They Buy Water Rights When They Can–Mostly Converting Agricultural to Urban Use

Dimick: Yes, very definitely. Sierra Pacific Power Company is looking for water everywhere it can. It just came out not too long ago with a plan, a long-term plan, as to ~~how~~ different alternatives for water supplies. We just negotiated a contract with them to store an emergency supply of water, some of their ***private*** water. We would store that in our reservoirs so that they could have emergency supply during the drought period. So they're looking for water where they can. They're primarily buying up agricultural rights around the Truckee Meadows area. As farms go out of business, then they buy up the water rights, and then they convert them over to municipal water supply. That's their main source.

Storey: Were they doing anything at the time you were project manager that was affecting Reclamation?

Sierra Pacific Power Company Was Heavily Involved in Negotiations Around Public Law 101-618

Dimick: Well, yeah. They own two dams on the river systems. So their operation of those affect us. But also they were heavily involved in the negotiations for the Public Law 101-618. When we were negotiating that, back in 1990, their demand on the river system was about 60,000 acre-feet a year, but it's projected to go to about 116,000 acre feet a year, almost double in the next twenty years. And so they were looking for additional water supply and about 60,000 acre-feet of water.

Sierra Pacific Power Company Is Looking at Ways to Store Their Agricultural Water Rights Which must Be Stored During Specific Time Periods

Anything that they do, just about anything they do, has to interrelate to our reservoirs, because they need our reservoirs to firm up that supply of water. The groundwater in that basin is totally used up. They have all the wells that they can put down. So they can't use additional groundwater. These agricultural rights have to be ***stored*** in order to be used, and so they obviously are looking at ways to increase the storage capacity so they can use these agricultural rights through the wintertime. Agricultural rights are generally limited to, say, a March 15th to October 15th, or something like that, time period. So they need to store the water to use it during the wintertime.

Storey: You're saying that not only do you have a priority, but you have a time when you can use your water?

Dimick: Oh, yeah.

Storey: That's part of your water right?

"Most water rights have a time period associated with it that you own. You only have a right to divert that water during certain times of the year. . . ."

Dimick: Most water rights have a time period associated with it that you own. You only have a right to divert that water during certain times of the year.

Storey: I didn't know that. That's interesting.

Dimick: Yeah. All of our water rights, I think, in Nevada have time limits on them. For instance, our Sanpete Reservoir, we can only divert water, I think, from April 15 to July 15, or something like that. It's a very limited time.

Storey: Of course, that's the runoff.

Dimick: That's the runoff.

Storey: But that makes life rather complicated.

Dimick: Oh, yes.

Storey: Especially when you're converting from agricultural to M&I.

Dimick: That's correct. Most water rights have some limitations on them. Not all. There are some

that are year round. But a lot of water rights, particularly agricultural, have limits.

Storey: That's interesting. Now, why did you decide to leave Carson City?

Dimick: Well–

Storey: Maybe before we do that I should ask you if there's anything else we should discuss about Carson City.

Dimick: No, it's just a great place. I enjoyed that four years.

Storey: What about the politics? Is this the first time you began to deal with politicians more?

". . . Carson City was really the first time. Up until that time, I'd been shielded, if you would, but this is the first time I really began dealing with the political side of issues . . ."

Dimick: Yes. Yeah. And Carson City was really the first time. Up until that time, I'd been shielded, if you would, but this is the first time I really began dealing with the political side of issues, and that was because everything we did ended up being political.

Storey: Well, tell me what that's like. How do you deal with politicians? How do they influence Reclamation and so on?

Politicians and How They Interact with Reclamation

Dimick: Well, politicians, I don't know if they influence–the way they influence Reclamation, obviously, is through the laws that they can pass and the appropriations that they can provide. But other than that, I don't know that they really influence us too much, from ***my*** point of view. Maybe on another level or another place they might have more influence.

But when they get involved, they are trying to represent a general population that we have not been used to representing. For instance, in the northern Nevada area, one of the major constituents of the politicians there will represent is the city of Reno, because Washoe County is the main population center for northern Nevada.

I was not there, but my understanding there is, for instance, when Senator Reid won the election in 1986 in Nevada, as Senator he carried only two of the seventeen counties in Nevada. But that was Clark County in Las Vegas and Washoe County in Reno. But all the rural counties did not vote for him. I mean, they did not want him. So when you get in the political side of something, trying to deal with the Fallon area, for instance, the Newlands Project, and it gets in the political arena, you now have a group of people that you're trying to work with that do not have a favorite son in the slot of the politician, and the politician knows that, but he also has to be representative to the people to got him into office, which is the metropolitan areas. So the politician is

caught in the cross-fire in trying to work this thing out the best way he can to make sure that the people are satisfied. It just increases the battle line, if you will.

Storey: Did you find that the politicians were contacting you trying to get you to do things-, to influence things?

Dimick: No. No, they didn't do that. Senator Reid, for instance, his role has been when his people would contact me or when I would talk to him personally, it was, "How can we get these people together to solve this, and what can we do to solve it?" It was not, "I want you to do this, or this is what I what done." When he would say, "I want something done," it was more in line of, "What I want to have happen is for you guys to get together and work this out." There was no direction on this is what the outcome should be or anything like that.

So the politicians, the problem, as I said, is kind of like they want the problem solved. They have to try to do it in such a way that they satisfy the largest [constituency.] ~~constituent.~~ But I don't recall any pressure being brought to say, "It has to be solved in this way." I don't think that ever happened.

Storey: Okay. Well, I had asked you–

Dimick: Why did I leave Nevada?

Storey: What was going on and how it happened?

Establishing Regional Liaison Positions in the Washington Office

Dimick: Well, how it happened was as a project manager dealing with these kind of issues in Nevada, I had frequent trips to Washington, D.C., to work with the Justice Department and solicitor's office and the assistant secretary's office and the commissioner's office, because these issues were political. While back there on several of these trips, they began questioning me about the need to set up a regional liaison office back in Washington. In other words, a position that was a regional employee but worked in the Washington office to be the go-between between our issues out there in Nevada and California and the Washington office. We had quite a few discussions with Don Glaser and the commissioner at that time, Dennis Underwood, on that. They were using me as a sounding board, because I was having to come back to Washington to brief people and let them know what was going on and everything, and it was kind of one of those things that they could see might be a benefit.

Asked to Become Regional Liaison for the Mid-Pacific Region

So when they got that set up, then they asked me if I would be willing to go back and be the first regional liaison, be willing to apply for the job to go back and be the first regional liaison. And that intrigued me. It was just a situation where I saw an opportunity that I

could see how our government worked, I could see how the more political side of it worked, as well as get to see the East Coast. It was only a two-year assignment with a guarantee that I could come back out here for a job after it was over. It just seemed like an ideal thing for me. Plus, it was a promotion.

Storey: So you went there in '91?

Dimick: I went there in December of–no, I went there in February of '91. Yes, February of '91.

Storey: So you became Mid-Pacific's regional liaison.

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: In Washington. And you actually moved there for that?

Dimick: No. Well, I kept my house in Carson City. My kids were all grown and gone from home, so my wife and I packed up our truck and our RV and headed back to Washington. So we lived back there, but we never moved back there officially, no. We just took our wash towels and our clothes with us and our dishes and went back.

Storey: And that was under Commissioner Underwood?

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: And what does a regional liaison–oh, I'm sorry. We're overtime. (laughter)

Dimick: I don't think I have anything to until 2:30.

Storey: I don't know, but we can–[Tape Interruption]

Tell me what a regional liaison officer does, then.

". . . the primary role of the regional liaison is to make sure that the commissioner and his staff are kept up to date on all of the activities going on in the region that might be elevated to the commissioner level. . . . to be almost the advocate of the regional director in Washington, D.C. . . ."

Dimick: Well, the primary role of the regional liaison is to make sure that the commissioner and his staff are kept up to date on all of the activities going on in the region that might be elevated to the commissioner level. In other words, any controversial things or anything that's going on that might be something that he might have to respond to, the regional liaison person would keep the commissioner updated on all of those activities, and also, in reverse of that, keep the regional office informed of anything that's going on in the Washington level that the region needs to be aware of that might be coming down the pipeline or that might affect what's going on out in the region. That can vary from everything from briefing the commissioner to briefing somebody up on Capital Hill, working with O-M-B or any of those kind of groups, E-P-A, the Fish and Wildlife Service, anybody back there.

It was really to be almost the advocate of the regional director in Washington, D.C. I don't know if advocate is the exact word, but kind of to be the alter ego of the regional director back there and, I guess, to let people know what our position was on certain things, let people know what we were doing, what we were trying to get done, to help ***convince*** people of something that was going on out here. So really a broad basis, what you do.

Storey: So who would you be working with in the region?

Dimick: The region you worked primarily with the regional director. But you have to be in constant contact–well, I'll say frequent contact with every area manager, with every division chief, and with every project leader of every major project, whether it be the American River Study or whether it be the Red Bluff fish facility or whatever. You have to be in contact with any of these things that might be elevated.

Storey: It sounds like a fairly complex job, because you're constantly having to anticipate where the questions are going to come up.

Dimick: Correct.

Storey: And while you aren't the regional director, you're really sort of ***speaking*** for the regional director.

Dimick: That's correct. Yeah. But a lot of the times you have the opportunity as a regional liaison

to get the regional director's input before you have to speak or before you have to answer a question.

The regional liaison, for instance, let's say that the president of the United States is going to come to California, and he's going to come out to California and conduct a press conference. Well, the White House would send down to the commissioner and say, "What's he going to be asked for water issues out in California?" And the commissioner would just turn to the regional liaison and say, "Get us some briefing papers that we can give to the president that he will be able to respond to questions that might be asked of him by the press." So then the regional liaison has to determine what are the issues that could possibly come up during a press conference, then get together with the region and say, "Okay, now, give me the latest information on these," and then they would send that on to the president or the secretary of interior or the commissioner. If any of those are coming out here, then that's the process that goes on.

". . . a congressman or a senator's staff or even the congressman himself might call you and say, 'What's going on out there with your subsidies?' Because, amazingly, congressmen do not understand the concept of subsidies within Reclamation. . . ."

So, in that case, you see, you have time to do it. The other case would be a congressman or a senator's staff or even the

congressman himself might call you and say, "What's going on out there with your subsidies?" Because, amazingly, congressmen do not understand the concept of subsidies within Reclamation. They think that we send them a check every year, send the farmers a check every year, subsidy payments.

Storey: They don't understand ***our*** form of subsidy.

Dimick: That's correct. Yeah. It's a different form. Or it could be just that the commissioner is all of a sudden asked to meet with a group of lobbyists for some group or, say, the Sierra Pacific Power Company. So he gets the regional liaison and says, "What's the issues that they're going to talk to me about? What do you I need to be ready to respond to, so that I can talk to them like I am very knowledgeable about what's going on?" And the regional liaison will get him up to speed, so that when he talked to them he will be ready to know what's going on.

Storey: Could be fun, couldn't it?

"It was fun. It was a good two years. I enjoyed it very much. I really had an opportunity to get to know the region . . ."

Dimick: It was. It was. It was fun. It was a good two years. I enjoyed it very much. I really had an opportunity to get to know the region, for one thing. You learn all of the issues of the region is working on–of any major significance. The other side of it is you get to learn that some

things go on in government that you didn't know or you didn't know the reason. You knew they went on, but you didn't know the ***reason*** for them going on. It's very helpful to me now to come back out here and work in the field after being back there. I have a different perspective on quite a few things.

Storey: I asked somebody the other day, "What's the job of the issues managers?" And the response was, "To represent the commissioner and to make sure that the commissioner's needs are filled, because they aren't the same as the regions' needs and the area offices' needs." And I think that's what you're talking about sort of.

"The regional liaison was a system set up under . . . Commissioner Underwood. The issue managers were set up under Ed Osann and this commissioner's [Dan Beard] staff. . . ."

Dimick: Yeah. The regional liaison was a system set up under the last commissioner, Commissioner Underwood. The issue managers were set up under Ed Osann and this commissioner's staff. I have not been familiar with how they exactly operate. So I really can't address it. But based on what I've seen and hearing from them, some of that activity seems to overlap with the regional liaison.

Storey: Now, if I understand, if I understood you earlier, you got a promotion when you moved to Washington.

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: So that would have been a 14?

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: What kinds of special projects do you remember that sort of stand out for you while you were in Washington? Were there any?

Working on the Central Valley Project Improvement Act in Washington, D.C.

Dimick: Well, probably the most outstanding was the process of following and providing assistance to the Washington and regional office on Public Law 102-575,[4] which is the Central Valley Project Improvement Act that was passed in 1992. As that went through Congress, there was a lot of activities on that. Well, Title 34 of that law dealt strictly with California and the Central Valley Project and, consequently, we had an awful lot of activity and input to that as far as keeping the commissioner's staff informed as to how it affected this region, how it would affect the water users out here and the power users and municipal users, how it would affect the operation of the project, and then, in turn, keeping the region informed as to what the new versions were in Congress and what they might

4. The Central Valley Project Improvement Act of 1992 is included in the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of October 30, 1992 as Title XXXIV. (Public Law 102-575; 43 U.S.C. 371; 106 Stat. 4706-4731).

be interpreted to mean. That's ***probably one*** of the major tasks that we did.

Storey: Did you, for instance, attend all the hearings?

Dimick: I attended the hearings that dealt with this region, yes. When the commissioner would testify or the secretary, either one, would testify. Anything that dealt with this region, then I would attend.

Storey: And how did you know that was going to happen?

Working on Testimony Before the Congress

Dimick: Well, we were always notified ahead of time, because the secretary or commissioner would be invited to attend, and then we helped prepare the testimony that he'd be giving. That was another one of our jobs, to work with the region to make sure that the testimony he would be giving, as it pertained to our region, was accurate, and it covered the issues. So we helped prepare that and get that ready for him. So we knew about it usually several weeks before it occurred and sometimes months before it occurred.

Storey: That kind of a job sounds to me like it would be fun and exciting, and I would always be worried that I was going to miss something.

Dimick: That's exactly right. Well, not miss a hearing or something. What you're going to miss is that you forgot to put into the document one

little thing that became very important, or that you forgot to put in a briefing paper something that they would be asked.

Storey: Or that you were caught flat-footed on an issue that had not floated into your line of sight, you know, that kind of thing.

Dimick: That's exactly right. That's exactly right. That was one of the biggest fears. And it did happen occasionally. You know, you pick up the phone and somebody would say, "Well, what about this?" And you'd say, "I don't know a thing about that." You'd have to be honest with them. It was something you didn't know anything about.

Storey: But you can find out.

". . . the other advantage of having a regional liaison is that we generally knew *who* to call if we didn't know the answer. . . ."

Dimick: We'd get on the phone and find out very quickly, yeah. That was the other advantage of having a regional liaison is that we generally knew ***who*** to call if we didn't know the answer. You didn't have by saying, "Well, now, who out there might know this." You usually knew immediately. Instead of calling ten different people, you could make one call and get the information.

Storey: What do you think the most interesting and advantageous thing was to going to Washington for those two years?

". . . the most advantageous thing was learning, having a *better* insight into how our government operates, and seeing why some things were done. . . ."

Dimick: I think probably the most advantageous thing was learning, having a ***better*** insight into how our government operates, and seeing why some things were done. You know, you work out here in the regions and in the field, and you're required to do certain things. You do them, but you don't really understand ***why*** you have to do them. You know, ***why*** do I have to meet this deadline? Or ***why*** do they give me such a short time to respond to these questions? Or ***why*** do I have to fill this form out? You get back to Washington and you finally see it from a different perspective and you see ***why*** those deadlines are there, and you see ***why*** those forms are needed, and you see ***why*** that information is required.

"As a project manager over in Carson City, issue papers were just a nuisance that I had to take care of. So you just hurry up and do them . . . When you get back to Washington . . . you *realize* that that issue paper is your lifeblood to knowing what's going on out in the field. . . . you see it totally from a different perspective. . . ."

Just like an issue paper. As a project manager over in Carson City, issue papers were just a nuisance that I had to take care of. So you just hurry up and do them to get them out of your office and get them sent to whoever you knew is going to take care of them. When

you get back to Washington and you ***realize*** that that issue paper is your lifeblood to knowing what's going on out in the field. We suddenly see the ***value*** of that particular issue paper. So you start hounding people to make them better. In other words, you see it totally from a different perspective. So I ***gained*** that when I was back there. That's probably the biggest advantage of going back there.

Storey: Well, when you left Lahontan, I presume that was when Ed Solbus was put in that job.

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: So that meant that though they had said you had a job, you didn't know what it was going to be.

When he took the regional liaison job, "They said I had a job somewhere in the seventeen western United States . . ."

Dimick: That's correct. They said I had a job somewhere in the seventeen western United States is what they told me.

Storey: Oh, that's what they told you? They didn't even tell you you could come back to M-P?

Dimick: No. No, I didn't have any idea whether I'd come even come back to M-P [Mid-Pacific Region]. They just said, "You will have a job again in two years somewhere in Reclamation."

Storey: Did you do anything to try to influence where that job was going to be?

As the Job Neared its End, He Began to Look at Available Positions

Dimick: Well, yes. Obviously, as the end of the two years approached, I began working with our regional director here and others to see, "Okay, now where are you going to put me and where is a job opening and what can I apply for?" I also started watching the vacancy notices that came out to see if I could apply for any of those jobs.

Storey: Now, who was the regional director at that time? Was that Larry then?

Dimick: No. Roger Patterson. Larry Hancock had come in while I was in Carson City, and I went back to Washington, and while I was back there Roger Patterson became regional director here.

Storey: So Larry came to Washington as the deputy commissioner.

Dimick: Larry came to Washington to be deputy commissioner while I was back there, yes.

Storey: So what was it you and Roger worked out?

There Wasn't a Job Available in the Mid- Pacific Region That He Was Interested in Taking

Dimick: Well, interesting. Roger didn't really have a position for me, you know, indicating that he would work something out. There were several positions I could go into, a couple of division chief's jobs had become available. But I wasn't too interested in moving to Sacramento to fulfill a division chief's job. And as we talked, it became apparent that there wasn't really anything available right then. So the thought was, well, just bring me back as a special projects officer or something until something came open that fit what I wanted to do and what they had available. As I said, they had offered me a couple of positions that I just didn't feel that that was what I wanted to do.

Was Interested in the Assistant Regional Director Job in Billings

The position of assistant regional director came open in the Great Plains Region in Billings, Montana. One of the things I had always wanted to do was move to Montana. So that was a great opportunity for me. So I went ahead and applied for that job and was hoping that I would get that. I definitely wanted to go to Montana. You know, the vision of a little cattle farm in Montana that you can retire on, you know. I had visions in my mind. But anyway, in the meantime, I applied for that job and then my duties . . .

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. APRIL 14, 1995.
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 3. APRIL 14, 1995.

Storey: This is tape three of an interview by Brit Storey with Frank Dimick on April the 14th, 1995. You were talking about the Central Valley Project Improvement Act having been passed.

Regional Director Roger Patterson Asked Him to Come Back to Sacramento and Work on Implementation of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act

Dimick: Yeah, it was passed, and because I'd had such an involvement in Washington, Roger wanted me to come back here and help implement that act back here in this region as soon as it was passed. So I came back to Carson City and began working on the implementation of that act,[5] working out of Carson City and Sacramento, about half week here and a half a week in Carson City, and started on an implementation.

About January of 1993 Was Made Acting Assistant Regional Director of Administration

And then about–I don't remember the exact time, but it was about January or so, I was temporarily moved into the position of assistant regional director of administration here, because the assistant regional director here had taken an area manager's job in Folsom. That was Tom Aiken. And so I moved into that position temporarily. So I was over here full time on that.

5. See footnote on page 150.

Storey: That would have been in ‘93?

Dimick: That was in ‘93, yes. Early January or so of ‘93.

Storey: Okay.

“What they finally did was I was hired for the assistant regional job in Montana but told not to report to that duty station, and then two weeks later I was transferred to this job here in Sacramento. . . .”

Dimick: And then Neil Shield [phonetic], the assistant regional director, the position that I now hold, he indicated that he was going to retire and indicated the retirement date was in March, I believe it was, February or March. Still nothing. You know, I thought, “Well, I can apply for that job, because I haven’t heard anything from the Montana job.” So I thought, “Well, I’ll apply for that job that’s vacant.” What they finally did was I was hired for the assistant regional job in Montana but told not to report to that duty station, and then two weeks later I was transferred to this job here in Sacramento. So I was hired as an assistant regional director in Montana and then transferred to assistant regional director in Sacramento.

Storey: Let me ask why it was done that way.

Dimick: Well, the reason it was done that way is the job is the same in both regions. It was the same job. So the position description is basically the

same, responsibility is the same, the grade level is the same. The concept was that if you applied for assistant regional director of Montana, you could perform the assistant regional director in Sacramento. And it saved having to go out and advertise again for the same job. They just made the selection off the same list of candidates.

Storey: For ***both*** Billings and Sacramento.

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: But you had applied for Billings.

Dimick: I had applied for Billings.

Storey: And you wanted to go to Billings.

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: Let me ask why you didn't go to Billings. That wasn't an option?

"I never *did* want to live in a major metropolitan area, and Billings, you know, Billings is not a major metropolitan area compared to Sacramento. . . ."

Dimick: Well, it wasn't really an option. I wanted to go to Billings because, for one thing, the cost of living is much less than it is in Sacramento, and I wasn't really wanting to move to Sacramento. I never ***did*** want to live in a major metropolitan area, and Billings, you know, Billings is not a major metropolitan area compared to

Sacramento. But when Roger expressed to me that they wanted to transfer me down here from the Billings job, the purpose was, number one, to implement the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, because of my knowledge on that, and also that maybe there wasn't another option. So I thought, you know, a job in the hand is worth two in the bush, or something like that effect. ***I*** just felt that at this point–and it appealed to me because I would be having full responsibility for implementing the Central Valley Project Improvement Act. I saw that that was a real opportunity. So it intrigued me. There was not much hesitation in me saying, "Yeah, that's a good deal." I thought it would be a good deal, and it has turned out to be that.

Storey: And so you became the assistant regional director in March or April of–

Dimick: In March of '93.

Storey: Of '93. And you've been implementing the Central Valley Project Improvement Act ever since?

Dimick: Well, that's one of my major jobs, yeah.

Storey: So part of that deals with the delta?

Dimick: Yeah. The delta is–actually, there's not much of the C-V-P-I-A dealing with the delta itself. The CALFED organization of the Bay-Delta Agreement has not been a direct part of the C-V-P-I-A. So I haven't gotten involved inside

of it, only as it relates to C-V-P-I-A. Dan Fults, the other assistant regional director, has taken that responsibility.

Storey: So what are you doing? What have to been doing with the Central Valley Project Improvement Act?

Implementation of CVPIA

Dimick: Well, the C-V-P-I-A has somewhat over a hundred different actions required in it that the we have to take, the Bureau has to take, everything from installing a temperature control device at Shasta Dam, which we did just let the contract for, to doing studies to determine whether we need to make releases down the San Joaquin River for improving fishery habitat, and everything in between that.

"What I have been involved with is setting up the organization necessary to implement this and to make sure that each of these actions are carried out in whatever priority we determine they need to be carried out. Some we don't need to do right away. Others have to be done immediately. . . ."

One of my main jobs is to coordinate with the other entities, primarily the Fish and Wildlife Service, who is our sister agency, in implementing this act, because it is a fish and wildlife act that we're actually working on. I mean, it's friendly to fish and wildlife. So one of my major roles is to coordinate with them and make sure that both of us agree on the policies that our two agencies will take in

implementing this act. A lot of meetings. A lot of coordination with Fish and Wildlife Service, but also the EPA, the state of California, water users, environmental groups, Indian tribes, just about everything that is involved in this act at some point or another.

Storey: What kind of staff do we have devoted to implementing the C-V-P-I-A?

Dimick: We only have right now two full-time people to implement it. But we have a staff of about 800 people. In fact, one of the things we want to do is do an audit as to how we're implementing it. When the auditors came in, they said, "Well, we want to talk to people implementing this. How many are there?" And I mentioned about 800, and they suddenly realized. I don't know that there's hardly anybody in this region that has not, at one time or another in the last year, been involved in working on the C-V-P-I-A. The two full-time staff members are just to coordinate and keep things going on a day-to-day basis. We have project leaders that spend much of their time, if not all of their time, on these hundred different activities. We have a project leader for each activity. Sometimes a project leader might be a Fish and Wildlife Service person, and our person then would be just a co-lead on that. But we have these project managers for each of the activities. They are responsible for their own budgeting and carrying out of activities. The two staff persons that we have just make sure that all that is coordinated and put together properly so that

we're not running in different directions obviously.

Storey: That's still a major effort, still and all.

The Act Established annual Funding for CVPIA of $35,000,000

Dimick: Last year our costs were about, I think, in the neighborhood of $35 million last year implementing these activities. We were buying water for fish, for instance. Last year I think we spent about $6 million on water for fish in the river during a real drought year. We have a fund that was established through the act of about $35 million a year for a lot of these activities. So with this fund we can get a lot of these things accomplished that we probably couldn't have if we had to go through the congressional appropriations.

Storey: When we buy water for fish, are we buying a permanent supply or are we buying a one-year fix or what?

Dimick: Since we started the implementation of this in '92, fall of '92, really in '93, we've just been buying a one-year supply at a time. That got us through the drought. But now that we've got a year in which we have some extra water available and we don't have to worry about buying water to get us through the drought, we have now turned our attention to long term, and we'll be buying a permanent supply for fish.

Storey: What are we predicting an acre-foot is going to cost us, permanent supply?

Dimick: I haven't seen the numbers written, but I would suspect it's probably in the neighborhood of $1,000 an acre-foot.

Storey: A lot of money involved.

Dimick: Well, yeah. When you figure that, for instance, on the Stanislaus River, we're looking at we need about 200,000 acre-feet on that river alone. Of course, that's one of our major rivers that we'll need water on. But, you know, take 200,000 acre-feet times $1,000 an acre-foot, that's just $200 million.

Storey: Yeah.

Dimick: The first estimate of number was something like $9 ***b***illion worth of water. That's–

Storey: Hard to come up with right now.

Dimick: Yeah. I mean, you could say $90 billion. It wouldn't make any difference, because $9 billion is such a huge number. But it's going to be very expensive, yes. We anticipate expending about $20 million a year for an unlimited number of years for water acquisition.

Storey: For now are we talking anadromous fish here?

Dimick: Primarily for anadromous fish, yes. It doesn't ***have*** to be, but that's what we're looking at is anadromous fish.

Storey: What are some of the other features besides the anadromous fish?

New Water User Contracts Need to Be Changed from a Term of Forty Years to Twenty-five Years

Dimick: There's a requirement for changing the contracts of our water users from a forty-year contracts to twenty-five year contracts and putting a lot more restrictions in the contracts. Until we get a programmatic E-I-S done for the modern contracting, we can only enter into two-year contracts. So two or three-year, pardon me. Three-year for the first time and then any renewal of that three year can only be a two-year term. If a contract expires, like some did this last year, we can enter into a three-year contract. Three years from now we can only enter in a two-year contract. And then it's two years from then on until the programmatic environmental impact statement is done, at which time then we can enter into a twenty-five year contract.

"But cutting back on the length of contracts and *changing* some of the requirements of contracts, . . . this environmental fund I was mentioning we had for $35 million. That all comes from a surcharge on each acre-foot of water we deliver. . . ."

But cutting back on the length of contracts and ***changing*** some of the requirements of contracts, requiring payment of a surcharge, if you would, for each acre-foot of water that goes into this restoration fund, this environmental fund I was mentioning we had for $35 million. That all comes from a surcharge on each acre-foot of water we deliver. So that's part of it.

Land Retirement Program in the San Joaquin Valley

Other aspects is a land retirement program, retiring land in primarily the San Joaquin Basin that has drainage problems associated with it, in the Kesterson area, for instance, where they have the selenium problems. We actually have authority now to go out and ***buy*** that land and just retire it to eliminate the drainage problems.

Storey: Do we have appropriations to go with the authorization?

". . . we get some appropriations, but most of the money is to come through the restoration fund. This restoration fund, as I say, is about $35 million a year, and that will be indexed each year. But that's in perpetuity. . . ."

Dimick: Again, we get some appropriations, but most of the money is to come through the restoration fund. This restoration fund, as I say, is about $35 million a year, and that will be indexed each year. But that's in perpetuity. So forever.

And we get some appropriations ***outside*** of that restoration fund for these activities also. The improvements of fish hatchery, as I said, this temperature control device, which allows us to control the river temperature to maximize the habitat for the fish.

CVPIA ". . . calls for 800,000 acre-feet of water out of our delivery capability to be taken from the users and given to fish for in-stream use and other uses, but primarily for in-stream use. That's about a tenth of the total supply of the system, but what it really does is it affects about one-fourth of our users. . . ."

It calls for 800,000 acre-feet of water out of our delivery capability to be taken from the users and given to fish for in-stream use and other uses, but primarily for in-stream use. That's about a tenth of the total supply of the system, but what it really does is it affects about one-fourth of our users. So it really is a major impact. About twenty-five percent of their water supply is taken and used for this purpose, dedicates that water. It guarantees that we'll deliver a adequate water supply to refuges throughout California, in the Central Valley Project. So all of these are major aspects.

Storey: Sounds like your life is fairly complex, as far as this is concerned.

Dimick: Yep. Well, once we got it going and got everything squared away, it's not too bad. All I get is the problems. All the good things just keep happening and are going ahead. So the

project leaders take all that and just run with it. It's good. We're doing a good job.

Storey: And then, let's see, you came back to do this in '93.

Dimick: Yes.

Storey: Very early '93. And I think almost exactly that same month, or within a month or two, Dan Beard became the commissioner of Reclamation.

Dimick: I think he became commissioner in late April or May, I believe.

Storey: In May, I think, yes. And, of course, he was sort of the primary author of the C-V-P-I-A (laughter)

Dimick: Yes, he was.

Storey: Did that complicate your life even further?

". . . Dan Beard has basically given Roger Patterson the responsibility to implement this act and has not tried to interpret the act for us, even though, as you say, he was one of the prime authors of it. . . ."

Dimick: You know, I wondered about that. I was concerned about that, because I thought, "Oh, boy." But, you know, Dan Beard has basically given Roger Patterson the responsibility to implement this act and has not tried to interpret the act for us, even though, as you say, he was

one of the prime authors of it. We've jokingly said once in a while, "What did he mean when he said this?" And he jokingly replies, "I don't know." But, I mean, that's about the extent of his interpretation of the act for us. He's been very good at letting us implement that and do what we think is right and gives us guidance and counsel, obviously. But as far as saying, "No, that's not what we meant by this," I don't know that I've heard him refer that way at all, if at all.

Storey: So he's been very hands-off?

Dimick: He has been very hands-off, I think because of the fact that people out here are doing such a good job that he really can't–you know, he doesn't have to jack us up to get us going, because the people here are doing such a good job, these project leaders and stuff. We go back to Washington about every two months and brief The Hill. We go up and the congressional staff and brief them. We brief the Interior Department on what we're doing out here and answering questions and keep him informed. So Dan, you know, he lets it go. He doesn't ***have*** to then go in and defend us. As long as he doesn't have to go in and defend us, he's not going to mess with us, I guess.

Storey: Has the nature of your briefings changed since the Congress shifted in November–well, in January, really?

Congressional Briefings

Dimick: Yeah. They shifted in January, and because of the one-hundred-day schedule, we have not been ***back*** to brief them. Our next briefing is scheduled next month. They kind of indicated they didn't want us coming back during this first hundred days, because they didn't have time to mess with us. So we have not had a briefing yet with them. Yeah, we're going back in, I think, about the fifteenth of May and brief them.

Storey: Now, who will go?

Dimick: Well, usually what we do is myself and Dale Hollis [phonetic], assistant regional director for the Fish and Wildlife Service, we'll go. But we usually take with us the project leaders of the activities that are most prominent at that point or the ones that have the most things on their screen that ***might*** be of interest.

The Anadromous Fish Doubling Plan

For instance, this time going back we'll take somebody from the Fish and Wildlife Service that's working on the doubling plan, the anadromous fish doubling plan, because that's the most prominent feature right now that people will ask a lot about. So that will be one of the people we'll take back. We take back about three or four people that we know can give detailed briefings on activities that are high on the list or high on the visibility list.

Storey: What's the doubling plan?

Dimick: The law requires that the Fish and Wildlife Service develop a plan to double the natural production of anadromous fish from the average population from ~~, I think it's 1967 to 1984, I think it was. No, 1967 to 1991, I guess it was.~~ 1967 to '91, the average population during that time. They've got to develop a plan that will try to double that population through natural production.

Storey: Within what time frame?

Dimick: By October 1995, a three-year time frame. Oh, the doubling has to occur by the year 2002. It doesn't ***have*** to. They're suppose to make all efforts to do it. One of the things we want to do when we go back in May is explain to Congress when they wrote the law they failed to take in the fact that salmon have a three-year cycle, that they are born and they go out to sea. They don't come back for three years. And so in six years it's pretty hard to double salmon in two generations. So, you know, they're not a one-year fish. But, anyway, so that's one of the things we'll be doing when we go back in May is try to help them understand that, thank you for the efforts, we appreciate this responsibility, but fish just can't physically do this. No matter how good we are, we just can't get them to do it.

Storey: Now, are we talking Sacramento runs? Are we talking San Joaquin runs? Both?

Dimick: Everything in the Central Valley Project, which is primarily the Sacramento River, the American River and the San Joaquin.

Storey: And the San Joaquin.

Special Requirements for Studying Reestablishment of Salmon on the San Joaquin River below Friant Dam

Dimick: The San Joaquin only as far as tributaries. The law requires a special study of the San Joaquin downstream of Friant Dam. That study is to determine whether or not it would be reasonable and prudent and feasible to reestablish a salmon fishery on the San Joaquin below Friant Dam. Until that study is done, we are ***prohibited*** from releasing water from Friant Dam to establish a fishery on the river. So that's kind of a separate item that is separated out of it. But, you know, the Stanislaus and other rivers down there that are branches off the San Joaquin, we'll be looking at improving the fishery there.

Storey: Where do you think our biggest successes come in implementing the C-V-P-I-A?

"Probably the biggest success is the fact that we have developed an outreach program that pulls in all of the public that we an identify and gets them involved in implementation of this act, gets them involved in giving us advice and help so that we can make the right decisions . . ."

Dimick: Probably the biggest success is the fact that we have developed an outreach program that pulls in all of the public that we an identify and gets them involved in implementation of this act, gets them involved in giving us advice and help so that we can make the right decisions on how to implement this thing. ***We*** don't do anything in implementing this act that isn't done in the open public. We made that commitment the day we started to implement it, and saying that we kept by that. There's no secret meetings held. There's no decisions made without the public having ***input*** to that decision before the decision is made. It's very helpful. By doing that, we're able to implement things long before we would normally be allowed to implement them.

How Reclamation Interacts with the Public While Planning CVPIA Activities

Let me give you an example. What we do is we go out to the public and say, "This is the way we think we want to implement this, and we're going to establish a set of guidelines that tell us ***how*** to implement this. We'll use these guidelines to implement this action. Whether it be water transfers or whatever." ***We*** got out and we have the public help us develop these guidelines, and then we set these guidelines out, and we start implementing based on those guidelines.

Using Guidelines Rather than Rules and Regulations to Implement CVPIA

Now, the other way to do that is to write official rules and regulations, which we are ***also*** doing. But those take two or three years sometimes to write. So while we're writing these rules and regulations, we've already implemented this action under the guidelines with the consent of the public, if you will, the buy-in of the public. And, consequently, we're able to get things off and moving. Like buying water. Here we bought water for the last two years. This is our third year of buying water. And we haven't got any rules or regulations on ***how*** to buy water. But the public recognizes the need to do it, and we have the guidelines, and so we're going ahead and doing it. It's a real opportunity by buying the public in ahead of time.

Storey: Where do you see the most challenges in the C-V-P-I-A?

It is Challenging to Find a Consensus on How to Use and Account for the 800,000 Acre Feet of Water Provided for in CVPIA

Dimick: Well, the most challenges is trying to get the different factors to come to consensus on what's the best thing to do in anything. Probably the most critical one so far has been the 800,000 acre-feet of water that's to be dedicated for the fish, trying to determine how that's to be used and where it is to be used, and how it's to be accounted for. Because we have fishery people interested in it. You have environmental groups interested in it. You have Fish and Wildlife Service. You have the

Bureau of Reclamation. You have water users ***and*** the power users. All of those people are affected in one way or another on how you account for that water and how it's used. So trying to get them all to agree to that.

"The other thing, interestingly enough, that's become a significant effort is how to determine how to spend the money that we have in our restoration fund. Just to determine the priorities . . ."

The other thing, interestingly enough, that's become a significant effort is how to determine how to spend the money that we have in our restoration fund. Just to determine the priorities of what we use that money for is becoming a tremendous task. It's hard to think that if you've got money, that you'd have a hard time trying to figure out how to spend it. But that's really what is happening.

Storey: They need to put me in charge. I'm good at spending. (laughter)

Dimick: Well, we can all spend. It's just that we spend in a way that everybody is happy.

Storey: Yeah. That causes problems.

Dimick: We've taken that to the public and the public gets involved in determining how we spend that money. Again, it's a process we've got started and it seems to be working.

Storey: Where do you think the greatest potential is in the C-V-P-I-A?

". . . the greatest potential is that we're going to mitigate the damage done to the environment by the Central Valley Project. . . ."

Dimick: Well, the greatest potential is that we're going to mitigate the damage done to the environment by the Central Valley Project. What we're going to do is get fish and wildlife habitat back in a condition that will sustain the environment while allowing us to operate the project. So, to me, future generations will benefit the most, because you still have a project operating many years from now and still have the environment, and we can have fish and wildlife within that same environment.

Storey: What else should we be talking about?

". . . we can talk about all the rest of things we're doing on the C-V-P-I-A. In this Mid-Pacific Region we have Nevada. We've got some Oregon issues. We've got some safety of dams issues down on the Cachuma Project. We have some contract negotiations going on on other projects . . ."

Dimick: Well, we can talk about all the rest of things we're doing on the C-V-P-I-A. In this Mid-Pacific Region we have Nevada. We've got some Oregon issues. We've got some safety of dams issues down on the Cachuma Project. We have some contract negotiations going on on other projects other than C-V-P. We've just got a multitude of things going.

Storey: What are the key issues up in–it's Klamath, isn't it?

1991 Was the First Year on the Klamath Project There Wasn't a Full Supply of Water for All Users

Dimick: Klamath. Again, the issue is the same as many other areas that are suddenly waking up and realizing that ***water*** is a limited resource. The Klamath Project was built, and everybody lived happily side by side. The fish people and the refuge people and the farmers and everybody until about 1991 was the first year that ever they had to allocate water on that project. That meant that ***somebody*** wasn't going to get a full supply of water. It was a drought year, obviously, but also it was the first year that they ran short.

Since 1991 Problems Have Escalated on the Klamath Project

Since that time, the issues have really escalated, because they now have the same problem. They have endangered species of fish, both in the lake and reservoir ***and*** in the stream downstream. You have Indian tribes. You have one Indian tribe saying, "Keep the lake up to keep the fish in the lake alive." You have another Indian tribe downstream saying, "Let the water out of the reservoir so you can keep the fish, the salmon alive in the stream so that we can fish in the stream." You have refuge people saying they want the water, and you have the farmers saying that they're entitled to the water. So it's the same type of

issue, but what it is it's coming to a head, because of the fact that water is beginning to be a short-supply source. We just don't have the resources we used to have.

Issues on the Santa Ynez River

The Cachuma is much the same thing. The Cachuma, Bradbury Dam, blocked off the Santa Ynez River, and now we've got a problem with the steelhead not surviving. And so now the issue how do you keep the steelhead alive and still provide water for city of Santa Barbara and the farmers on the Santa Ynez Valley.

Storey: And they're all fighting over it. Are we getting to the point where water in California is fully appropriated, I believe is the term I was taught the other day? The available water, I mean?

". . . only *30* percent of California's water is available. That's all that is the developed supply. There's 70 percent of the water out there that is not developed and could be tapped . . ."

Dimick: If you classify it as available water, probably we're getting to that point where there's not enough water to go around–if you meet the environmental needs as well as the contractual needs. But you've got to remember that only ***30*** percent of California's water is available. That's all that is the developed supply. There's 70 percent of the water out there that is not developed and could be tapped if it was, you know, under the right conditions.

Storey: We're talking about the north coast ranges?

Dimick: We're talking about all around us, water that ***could*** be utilized in some form or another. Just these last floods, for instance. Some days we had over 100,000 second-feet flowing out past the delta. It just flows out into the bay and out into the ocean. That is water that, if it could be tapped, could be utilized in dry years later on. But those are just issues that we're going to have to face in the future.

"The developed supply, yeah, we're getting very low. . . ."

The developed supply, yeah, we're getting very low.

Storey: Do those kinds of floods, such as we had this winter, give Reclamation and the California water project the opportunity to fill up their storage reservoirs on the Sacramento and to pump water up and fill San Luis and things like that?

Dimick: You bet. We replenished our reservoirs this year, most of them. There's a few that still aren't. They got to be replenished because they're long-term reservoirs. And we've been pumping full blast all winter long. We're basically giving all of our water users this year 100 percent supply of water. So, yes, very definitely, those . . .

END SIDE 1, TAPE 3. APRIL 14, 1995.
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 3. APRIL 14, 1995.

Storey: Tell me about the safety of dam issues down at Cachuma, if you would, please.

Cachuma Project's Bradbury Dam and Liquefaction

Dimick: Well, the safety of dam issue is the fact that new science has now been developed concerning what happens to some types of soils under earthquake conditions. The Cachuma Reservoir, the Cachuma dam, Bradbury Dam, we have a situation where under certain earthquake conditions the foundation of Bradbury Dam could liquify and cause failure of the dam. That can be remedied. But in the meantime, it does pose a safety of dams threat. We're holding the reservoir surface down, because we have the city of Lompoc below that.

"The city of Lompoc is asking us to lower the reservoir even further to give them more protection . . . And the city of Santa Barbara, who depends upon this reservoir for their drinking water supply, says, 'Don't you dare lower the reservoir any further, because you're putting us at risk now against a dry year next year.'. . . "

The city of Lompoc is asking us to lower the reservoir even further to give them more protection, while we do an interim fix, which will be done in about one month, month and a half. And the city of Santa Barbara, who depends upon this reservoir for their drinking water supply, says, "Don't you dare lower the reservoir any further, because you're putting us

at risk now against a dry year next year." So the rainy season is over, so we have those kind of conflicts with the city of Santa Barbara saying "Don't lower the reservoir.", the city of Lompoc is saying lower the reservoir, and those kind of conflicts go on continually.

Storey: Let's do one last question, and that is what kind of training did you take to move into a project manager and then ultimately into the assistant regional director's position. Or did you, for instance, do anything special?

Training During His Career

Dimick: I didn't take any formal training other than the regular types of training like managing meetings and management of people. Years ago there was a course called "Managerial Grid." It talked about how to be a manager and showed you where you fit on a grid and so forth like that. But other than those kinds of things, formally, I didn't take any special training.

". . . what I did was early in my career I had some goals and some ideas of some things that *I needed to do*, some places I needed to be, and some types of jobs I needed to fill in order to get to that goal, and that was to get a broad background and begin supervising people and begin solving problems and working on a variety of problems by not limiting myself in a specialized career, but by trying to broaden myself. . . ."

But what I did was early in my career I had some goals and some ideas of some things that ***I needed to do***, some places I needed to be, and some types of jobs I needed to fill in order to get to that goal, and that was to get a broad background and begin supervising people and begin solving problems and working on a variety of problems by not limiting myself in a specialized career, but by trying to broaden myself. I think that's what gave me the background I needed to get into become an area manager.

Storey: Well, I'd like to keep going, but time is running out, again, today. I'd like to ask whether you're willing for the information contained on the cassette tapes and the resulting transcripts from this interview can be used by researchers, both inside and outside Reclamation?

Dimick: Yes. I have no problem with that.

Storey: Good. Thank you very much.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 3. APRIL 14, 1995.
END OF INTERVIEWS