

**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS**

**Oliver Calmar (Cal) Reedy**



**STATUS OF INTERVIEWS:  
OPEN FOR RESEARCH**



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



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**STATEMENT OF DONATION  
OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW OF  
OLIVER C. ("CAL") REEDY**

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, Oliver C. ("Cal") Reedy, (hereinafter referred to as "the Donor"), of, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the Bureau of Reclamation and the National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter referred to as "the National Archives"), acting for and on behalf of the United States of America, all of my rights and title to, and interest in the information and responses (hereinafter referred to as "the Donated Materials") provided during the interviews conducted on November 7 and 11, 1998, at, and prepared for deposit with the National Archives and Records Administration in the following format: cassette tapes and transcripts. This donation includes, but is not limited to, all copyright interests I now possess in the Donated Materials.
2.
  - a. It is the intention of the Archivist to make Donated Materials available for display and research as soon as possible, and the Donor places no restrictions upon their use.
  - b. The Archivist may, subject only to restrictions placed upon him by law or regulation, provide for the preservation, arrangement, repair, rehabilitation, duplication, reproduction, description, exhibition, display, and servicing of the Donated Materials as *may be needful and appropriate*.
3. Copies of the Donated Materials may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the National Archives, including the Bureau of Reclamation. Copies of Donated Materials may also be provided to researchers. The Bureau of Reclamation may retain copies of tapes, transcripts, and other materials.
4. The Archivist may dispose of Donated Materials at any time after title passes to the National Archives.

Date: Dec. 9, 1998

Signed: Oliver C. Reedy  
Oliver C. Reedy

INTERVIEWER: Brit Allan Storey  
Brit Allan Storey

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Archivist of the United States

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## **Brief Chronology of Oliver C. (Cal) Reedy**

Born November 13, 1909 at Orman, South Dakota, on the Belle Fourche Project

1927–Graduated from East High School in Denver

1927-1928–Attended Denver University

1932–Graduated from the University of Nebraska

August 1932-October 1933 worked for the Bureau of Public Roads intermittently.

October 10, 1933–Began to work for the Bureau of Reclamation

1942-1946–U.S. Navy

1946-1948–Walla Walla Planning Office of the Bureau of Reclamation

March-April, 1948-1968–in the Region 1 office in Billings, Montana

- 1954–Detailed to FOA in the Phillipines

1968-1975–Great Lakes Basin Commission, Ann Arbor, Michigan

1976–Contract work with Great Lakes Basin Commission

June 1977-July 1978–worked for Development and Resources Corporation on a contract to do a low-grade reconnaissance of water supply and utilization for the

country of Iran

1978-1995--volunteers at St. Aidan's in Ann Arbor and with the diocese in Detroit.

June 1995 moved to Fairhaven, a retirement center in Sykesville, Maryland.

## **Introduction**

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

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

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

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

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Oral History Transcript  
Oliver C. (Cal) Reedy

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, Senior Historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Oliver C. Reedy, in his home in Sykesville, Maryland, on November 7, 1998, at about one o'clock in the afternoon. This is tape one.

Mr. Reedy, would you tell me, please, where you were born and raised and educated and how you ended up at the Bureau of Reclamation?

**Born at Orman, South Dakota, on the Belle Fourche Project**

Reedy: Well, I was born—to quote my father, I was born in the shadow of the largest earth dam in the world at that time, at Orman, South Dakota, on the Belle Fourche Project.

**"When I was two years old, I put the first shovelful of dirt in the Minatare Dam on the North Platte Project. . . ."**

When I was two years old, I put the first shovelful of dirt in the Minatare Dam on the North Platte Project.

**"When I was four years old, I put the first shovel of concrete in the largest roller crest dam in the world, on the Grand Valley Project . . ."**

When I was four years old, I put the first shovel of concrete in the largest roller crest dam in the

world, on the Grand Valley Project in Western Colorado, and Dad always said, if there's anything in early association, I'd be one of them dam engineers.

**"I never really had *any* idea *other* than being an engineer and working for the Bureau of Reclamation . . ."**

I never really had *any* idea *other* than being an engineer and working for the Bureau of Reclamation, right from the beginning. I grew up—when I was two years old, we moved from—[Tape interruption]

Storey: Go ahead.

Reedy: When I was two years old, moved from the Belle Fourche Project— [Tape interruption]

Storey: You were saying you never thought of anything else.

Reedy: Never thought of anything *but* the Bureau of Reclamation.

**Father's Career at the Bureau of Reclamation**

When I was two, we moved ~~from the North Platte Project~~<sup>1</sup> from the Belle Fourche Project

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1. Note that in the text of these oral history 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  
(continued...)

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to [the] North Platte Project at Minatare [, Nebraska] and were there about a year, and then Dad took a year off to work for a brother-in-law in the copper industry in Montana, but, as he put it, the copper industry didn't want to be revolutionized, so he came back to Reclamation and was given a job on the Grand Valley Project, [Colorado] a member of the Board of Design and construction engineer for the roller crest diversion dam, called at that time the Grand River Diversion Dam, but the name of "Grand" has now been changed to "Colorado," so I'm not just sure what the present title is.<sup>2</sup> Anyway, it was then the largest roller crest dam in the world.

We moved there in the fall of 1913, I think it was, and lived there for about two years. I put the first shovel of concrete in that dam. Then Dad was transferred to the North Platte Project, in charge of building the Fort Laramie Canal on the south side of the Platte River, the North Platte River, to serve land in Wyoming and Nebraska.

We lived at Fort Laramie, the rail site, the rail station of Fort Laramie, which was a few miles away from the old fort. Lived there for

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1. (...continued)  
to clarify meaning or eliminate repetition, and in those cases the density of the font has been reduced to 50% to improve readability.

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

2. The Grand Valley Diversion Dam is on the Grand Valley Project. The project was authorized by the President in 1911 and the dam was completed in 1916.

about—let's see. Fall of '15 to the fall of '17, ~~spring of '17~~, and moved to Torrington when they moved [the] office to Torrington.

### **May of 1918 Father Transferred into the Denver Office of the U.S. Reclamation Service**

Then in May of 1918, Dad was transferred to the Denver office, and we moved to Denver. He left the Bureau in 1919 and had a consulting office for a couple of years, and then in 1921, became Senior Assistant Highway Engineer of Colorado, from which he retired in 1950.

But in the meantime, my *formal* schooling started in Denver, when I was about nearly nine years old. My mother had taught my sister and me at home, and had obviously done a very good job, because we both got a little advanced placement in the school system.

### **Graduated from East High in Denver in 1927**

I went to the Denver schools, graduated from East High in 1927, wasn't sure just where I wanted to go to college.

### **Attended Denver University and then the University of Nebraska**

For some reason or other, I did *not want* to go to the University of Colorado, but the family are Nebraska graduates, and I found out that I had an automatic half-tuition scholarship to the University of Denver, which nobody else could



use if I *didn't*, so I went to Denver University for a year, and then Nebraska for four years, and designed a course so that I could get some education as well as my professional training. So I got some extra English literature and two years of German and some other subjects of that sort, had a little spare time to sing in the university chorus at Nebraska. And graduated from the university in 1932.

### **Began Federal Work for the Bureau of Public Roads in August of 1932**

Jobs were scarce at that time, but I had worked for three summers for the Bureau of Public Roads on highway surveys, and got a job back with the Bureau of Public Roads working from August '32 to January '33. Then was picked up by them again in May '33, and worked till October 1933, and began work with the Bureau [of Reclamation] on October 10, 1933.

### **Started Work for the Bureau of Reclamation on October 10, 1933, the Same Day as Henry Tebow**

I started to work on the same day as another engineer who had a sort of parallel Bureau career, Henry Tebow.

### **Worked in the Denver Office for E. B. Debler**

We both worked in the Denver office in what was then called the—for the Hydraulic Engineer, E. B. Debler, working on investigations. He had charge of all the investigation work for the Bureau, and we worked on that till both of us

went in the—he in the [Army] *military* and I entered Navy service at the beginning of World War II.

**"I had thought . . . I'd probably wind up on construction work, but the job that I was offered and *took* was in investigations, and I was involved in that for thirty-five years. . . ."**

So that's the background out of which I come. I had thought, growing up on construction jobs, that I'd probably wind up on construction work, but the job that I was offered and *took* was in investigations, and I was involved in that for thirty-five years.

### **Three Years of Service in the Navy During World War II**

Denver office till November '42, then three years military leave. I was in the naval reserve on active duty. I had wanted to get into the Seabees, but by the time I applied, they had an excess of Seabees, and I was trained in tactical use of radar. Went to Navy indoctrination school in Tucson, Arizona, for two months, and while I was there, our first wedding anniversary occurred and my wife stood on the curb and watched me march past.

Then I was ordered to the naval radar training school—no, it was called the Fighter Director School, at Pearl Harbor, was there for two months in tactical radar training, then was part of a team—I think it was two from the faculty and three graduates of the Fighter Director

School, were assigned to Canton Island, which at that time was one of the most valuable pieces of real estate in the Pacific. It was one of the stopping places for the Pan American flights when they first started flying to Australia, and at that time during the war it was under control of the Army. It was being *bombed* every full moon by the Japanese. We were sent down there to help reorganize the air raid warning and fighter director facilities, and were there for three weeks, during which there was a full moon, but the Japanese didn't hit us, and by the next full moon, their base had been immobilized. So I never was actually under attack.

Then I was ordered to the Argus Assembly and Training Detachment at Port Hueneme, California. Port Hueneme was the major staging point for Seabees in the Pacific, and the Argus Unit was to train officers and men as teams in air-raid warning and fighter control. And because of my vast experience of three weeks on Canton, I became Assistant Training Officer, so that I was never assigned to one of the units to go out.

Then I was ordered to the Naval Radar Training School at St. Simon's Island, Georgia, and since my folks had brought our car out to us, my wife and I drove across country as fast as we could, and a little faster than was legitimate during the war, and arrived at ten o'clock at night, and I logged in by phone. Then we looked for a place to eat, and when we sat down at a restaurant, the officer that I was to relieve plopped down in a chair opposite us and said, "I

suppose you know you're not staying here." I said, no, I didn't.

Well, Pete had been working with the Commanding Officer of the school in fighter control work on Guadalcanal, and the Commanding Officer knew *him* and he didn't know me, so he called up Washington and got both sets of orders changed, so that Pete stayed at St. Simon's and I was there a few days to get acquainted with the school, and then I went to Washington in the Bureau of Naval Personnel Training Division, as liaison for a few schools which were training officers and men, principally as units with the equipment they'd be using to go out into the Pacific, and I was there for two years. So I didn't get the Seabee training that I wanted, but I had the advantage of having my wife with me all the time, and our older child was born while we were in Washington.

### **Toward the End of World War II Visited the Reclamation Offices in Washington, D.C., Inquiring about Jobs**

Then toward the end of the time when I knew I'd be leaving Washington, I took a day off, went over to the Bureau office, and just *happened* to meet either the Regional Director or Assistant Regional Director of five of the six regions that existed, that had been set up during the war, and talked to several of them about jobs.

### **A Job Was Open in the Walla Walla Planning Office and He Reported in Spring 1946**

**Transferred to the Billings Office of Reclamation  
in Spring 1948 and remained there until November  
1968**

The one that developed was in Region One at the Walla Walla Planning Office, working for Boyd Austin, and I was there for—I went there in early spring of 1946 and was there for two years, and transferred in May to the—well, transferred a little earlier than May to the regional office in Billings, Montana, and was there till November 1968.

**Retired from Reclamation to work at the Great  
Lakes Basin Commission from 1968 to 1976**

I retired early from Federal service in order to take a job with the Great Lakes Basin Commission, which was being organized, with offices in Ann Arbor, Michigan, under the Water Resources Planning Act of 1963, which set up commissions of state and Federal officials dealing with water. The Chairman of the Commission was a presidential appointee, and the commission hired its own staff.

I worked for the Basin Commission—well, I was supposed to retire in 1975, and I was doing some work they wanted me to finish, so they kept me on another year. Then I had a little time off and got a job with Development and Resources Corporation, which had a contract with the Ministry of Energy of Iran to do a low-grade reconnaissance of the water supply and water utilization for the country of Iran.

### **Worked in Tehran 1977-1978**

We went to Tehran in June 1977, and I worked until very early in July 1978. We stayed there, and we figured out then what was the *earliest* we could touch base in Hawaii and still get credit for eighteen months outside the country for tax purposes. Asked them to get us a reservation in October, and they did, and we left in October, and the Shah left in the following January. So we got out at just about the right time.

Things were disturbed, but they hadn't affected us, though it is a little disconcerting, on a Friday morning, which was Sunday, to go to church and have the Senior Warden say, "We don't expect any problems, and we have a police presence out in front, but if you have to get out the back way, this is the way you go." We didn't have to at any time, though [on] a couple of the trips we took, we could see tanks in the town square and a bank that had been broken into.

Came home in October—arrived home the end of November 1978, and I [have] ~~had~~ done no professional work since July 1978.

Storey: And then?

### **Volunteer Church Work in Ann Arbor, Michigan**

Reedy: Then I got involved in volunteer church work, both my own parish, St. Aidan's in Ann Arbor, and with the diocese of Michigan. The Bishop asked me if I would be diocesan treasurer of a

activity called Venture in Mission, which tried to raise money and redistribute it to various worthy causes.

That dragged on much longer than it had been anticipated, but I was driving to Detroit one to three times a week from Ann Arbor to work in the diocesan office, eventually worked also on the—was a member of the Human Resources Development Committee, and was at various times a member of the Bishop's staff, sometimes as a committee chairman, sometimes as treasurer of Venture in Mission.

I wound up on the Board of Directors of the Camp and Conference Center, was Chairman of that for two years, and wound up my diocesan activity in the early 1990s. But my activity with my own church in various capacities was right up practically until the day we left, as Treasurer and Senior Warden and Junior Warden and member of the Vestry and Chair of various committees.

So that was my retirement.

Storey: And then you moved?

### **In 1995 Moved to Fairhaven in Sykesville, Maryland**

Reedy: Then in June 1995, we moved to Fairhaven. We had put our name in on the list in 1991, said we'd like to move in three or four years. In December 1994, we had planned to drive to Columbia, Maryland, where our older daughter and her

family live, for Christmas, which we had done many times before. I had a physical examination the month before, and the doctor said, "Your pulse has dropped off an awful lot in the last six months. We'd better take another look at it." So we took another look at it, and I had an appointment with the cardiologist on the 19th of December, and a pacemaker on the 22nd, so we did not drive on the 20th.

We drove in January, checked up on the possibilities for housing, and were told that a two-bedroom and den cottage, which is what we wanted—none had been available in the last year, so we said, "We'll take a two-bedroom cottage." That moved us to the top of that priority list, and they offered us a cottage that day, and we said, "We'll take it."

Changed our schedule for returning to Ann Arbor, so that we got our physical examinations and our social service interviews, and drove back to Ann Arbor, got together our financial statement, began figuring out what we needed to take with us and what we couldn't take with us, and got in the process of moving, along with taking care of the house and the yard.

Storey: And you've been here in Sykesville since.

Reedy: And we've been here in Sykesville, at Fairhaven, which is a continuing-care retirement community operated by a corporation of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, so that we have a continuing church connection here, as well as a very nice place to live.



I'm going to stop for a minute and get a-[Tape recorder turned off.]

Storey: Well, Mr. Reedy, you didn't tell me when you were born.

### **Born November 13, 1909**

Reedy: Oh. It is alleged that I was born on November 13, 1909, in a snowstorm, in a camp at Orman, South Dakota.

Storey: Just below the toe of Belle Fourche [Dam].

Reedy: Just below the toe of Belle Fourche Dam. Yep. Dad was construction engineer on the dam. He had been working on the canal system, and at some stage was transferred to the dam, and that's where I was born.

### **Harold Comstock**

I've also been told that my first caller was Harold Comstock, a Reclamation engineer who became a close family friend, had most of his career on the North Platte Project. He was moved, transferred from Belle Fourche to Pathfinder Dam, and then, I think, spent practically all his career on the North Platte Project and was the first Regional Director of Region Six, when the regions were established.

Storey: And Region Six is Billings, I believe.

Reedy: Region Six is Billings. At that time it had the eastern half of Montana, whatever work there

was in the two Dakotas, and a northeast corner of Wyoming.

Storey: What are your first memories about Reclamation?

Reedy: Well, my first memories related to Reclamation were in the camp at Minatare, and they are two. One was helping Dad build a bridge across what seemed like a fairly sizable ditch, but when I saw it as an adult, it wasn't very big. And I don't remember just where it went, but it was a part of our yard, actually, and I remember driving—"helping" Dad drive nails for the cross pieces on that bridge.

And the other is one that must be a memory. Nobody could have told me about it. I could have been told about the bridge, though I think it's a memory. The folks had set up a net of some sort, like a tennis net, in the back yard, and I was throwing a ball across it. At some point I realized that if I threw the ball toward the house, it wouldn't get away from me and go nearly as far as if I threw it the other direction away from the house. Those are my first memories.

Storey: Do you remember what the camp was like?

Reedy: I don't remember *nothing* about the camp at all at Minatare.

Storey: You lived in a subsequent one, right?

### **Grand Valley Project and Miner Siding**

Reedy: We left Minatare when I was probably three years old, so I remember nothing about it. I do remember the camp at Miner Siding [phonetic] on the Grand Valley Project, where the diversion dam was built. I remember it very well. Then I remember the camp at Fort Laramie, where we lived later.

But I think my first specific memory at Grand Valley, I put this as first, because in the construction schedule it would have happened early in the game, I remember up on the side of the mountain—well, I take credit for firing the first blast on the project, the first dynamite blast, blasting out the space for the deadman at the tail tower of the cableway. Obviously, of course, Mr. [Whitney,] ~~Whitman~~, whose hands were much bigger than mine, pushed the handle down on the blasting battery, but I was there. I remember that. I don't remember the incident of putting the shovelful of concrete in the dam, but I have seen pictures of that first shovelful of concrete when I was four years old.

And I remember—and a lot of this memory has been reinforced by a very good set of slides which Dad had made and showed a number of places, and which I used and showed with his notes, so that much of what is partial memory was reinforced by pictures. [I] remember the floods. We don't have any pictures, so this is a memory of my sister and I fishing with bent pins when the river came up *inside* the fence in our *backyard* in one of the floods.

I remember the high water. I remember that we used to go out on Sundays for picnics. Dad would carry our food in what we called the "grub grip," and on the way home, in the right season of the year, we walked through the peach orchards and we had permission to pick up any peaches we'd want off the ground, and if you'd get a peach that's just fallen on the ground, it's the ripest and best possible peach. And we had lots of those.

I remember at that time the road from the East, came down Plateau Creek, which is a tributary of the river about a quarter of a mile below the dam, and came down Plateau Creek and turned downstream, and you crossed on a rickety suspension bridge at Cameo, and to back up the canal bank to the dam site.

I remember the big red Winton Six car that my uncle owned, coming around that corner out of the mouth of Plateau Creek, and when the family, my grandparents and aunt and uncle and cousin, with a professional driver, came to visit us, and I was told afterward that that was the day that England declared war on Germany.

Storey: That would have been in World War I.

Reedy: World War I, yeah. I remember for my fifth birthday, we walked downstream to Cameo and caught the train back up to Miner Siding, and I paid five-cents fare. That was the first fare I paid on a railroad. My birthday present for that birthday was a fifty-foot cloth tape in a blue

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case, a wind-up tape, which my grandson now has.

My sister was two years younger than I, and she was born at Orman, also. From Miner Siding, the Grand Valley site, we were each other's only playmate much of our growing up. We had identical carpenter overalls and we had identical cooks' costumes, and we had a playhouse, one side of which had a work bench and the other side of which had a playhouse for tea parties and things of that sort.

We had a cableway in the front yard operated by wringer handles, which one of them handled the traveling of the carriage back and forth on the main cable, and the other handled the fall block, and we had a signal system just like the one on the dam, pretty elementary compared to what is used now. They had a bell in the head tower where the operator was, and various stations on the dam site where whoever was controlling the cableway would—

END SIDE 1, TAPE 1. NOVEMBER 7, 1998.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. NOVEMBER 7, 1998.

Storey: ~~...the ends of two=~~

Reedy: ~~We would touch the ends of two wires together and ring the bell to indicate what the operator was supposed to do with the cableway. Quite different from radio communications such as [has] been used in recent years. But we had such a system, and I would signal my sister where to put the load and the bucket on our cableway, and~~

raise it and lower it. And then other days we'd play house. My dad did all the packing for the family when it moved, so I did all the packing for us and for our dolls when we took a train trip on the settee in the living room.

I remember *somewhat* the—I remember the layout of the camp in general, and I know that every Sunday morning—it probably was Sunday, we'd go up to the—or maybe it was Monday, the day after the Sunday paper came out, go up to the office and my sister would say, "Any funnies today, Mr. Whitney?" Because he was the man who got the paper with the funnies in it. Jack Whitney was the Superintendent of Construction for the dam, an experienced river man. Dad gave him a lot of credit for the successful construction work that went on.

~~———— I remember that when my grandmother was living, we'd go with her=~~

~~Storey:— Could I get you to slip that over your microphone? Yours fell off.~~

~~Reedy:— I'm sorry.~~

~~Storey:— It's in your lap there.~~

~~Reedy:— Okay. [Laughter] Here we are.~~

When my grandmother was there, we'd go with her down to the riverbank and dig a hole and start a fire and put some potatoes in it to bake, and when Mom had dinner ready, we'd

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walk down there and have a picnic supper by the bank of the river, with freshly baked potatoes.

Storey: How many other families were there?

Reedy: There were *no other* families in the camp. I suppose there were some families in the contractor's camp, but we did not have any contact with them. A couple that lived next to us outside the government camp, he was a contractor employee, Mr. and Mrs. Jewell. He was a teamster, had his own team. And they lived in a great big stable tent. I guess they had another one for the team, but that was their quarters. But we were our own playmates.

Storey: You mentioned Mr. Wright. He was a contractor? He was a Reclamation employee?

Reedy: No.

Storey: The man with the funnies.

Reedy: No, no, no, no.

Storey: I've got the wrong name.

Reedy: Whitney.

Storey: Whitney.

Reedy: Whitney. Yes. Whitney. He was a Reclamation employee.

Storey: So if he was Superintendent of Construction, what was your dad?

### **Father, Oliver T. Reedy, Was Construction Engineer on the Grand Valley Diversion Dam**

Reedy: Dad was Construction Engineer. A lot of it was force account work.

### **Work on the Grand Valley Project Was Done by Force Account and by Contract**

Some contractors work and some force account work. Dad was a member of the Board of Design, then Construction Engineer. And Mr. Whitney was the actual day-to-day hands-on man who kept track of what was going on, and particularly in connection with the handling of matters relating to the river when the river was in flood.

Storey: What was your sense of how many other Reclamation folks there were?

Reedy: I remember there was a draftsman with the name of Peek. I have learned since then, there was an electrical engineer by the name of—I'll think of it. I later worked with him. He later was in charge of the Western Slope investigations under Debler. Frank Merriell, M-E-R-R-I-E-L-L. He would never buy a Ford. He had graduated in civil engineering and electrical engineering with the idea of building interurban railways, and Henry Ford cut out his career with the Ford car. So while he had to drive Fords that were given to him by the Bureau, he never *bought* one.  
[Laughter]



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Storey: The Ford Company bought up a lot of the interurbans, I believe.

Reedy: They did.

Storey: Because they wanted to encourage people to drive cars.

Reedy: To drive cars. I remember Peek. I remember the name Peek. I remember Whitney. I know there was a man by the name of Branscom. And it seems to me I remember another name, but I can't think of it now. I think it was Branscom who made me the hull of what was intended to be a two-masted schooner, about twenty inches long. He also made me a little tiny carved-out rowboat. A man by the name of Edell—Edell was not on the Grand Valley Project. Edell was North Platte.

Storey: This was force account, that means the people actually doing the work were Reclamation employees.

Reedy: It was both. It was some force account and it was some contract.

Storey: But when you say "contract," you mean like the teamster was a contractor.

Reedy: The teamster—yes. I don't know. I don't know whether there was a prime contractor on the job or whether there were just individual subcontracts let, and I don't remember that any of my dad's papers indicates that. I know he refers to Whitney as being a river man.

### **Clearing Debris from a Bridge Across the Colorado**

For example, had a pile bridge across the river, and in floods, logs would come down and lodge against—two ends would lodge against two pile bents and pile up a lot of brush and threaten to take out the bridge. Whitney himself, or under his direction, they'd throw a sack out onto the pile under the log, come back under the log loaded with dynamite, and then fire it to blow the log in two and let the two ends swing into through the pile bents.

Storey: Interesting.

### **Lifting the Heaviest Piece of the Grand Valley Diversion Dam into Place**

Reedy: That was one of the specific things. There was a chief clerk there, too, and I don't know that I know his name. The thing I remember about him was Dad's story about when they were lifting what was supposed to be the heaviest piece of the rollers with the cableway, he came rushing out to tell them there had been a mistake in the bill of lading, and they had lifted the heavy one the day before. Which was fine. [Laughter]

But those are the principal things. And, as I say, many of the pictures I have remembering it are so reinforced by the slide pictures that I've seen, that it's hard to sort out whether it's exactly memory and what I remember seeing, what I remember being told.

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Storey: As I recall, your brother<sup>3</sup> was born on the Grand Valley Project.

Reedy: No, he was born on Fort Laramie, on the North Platte.

Storey: So you're quite a bit older than him.

Reedy: I'm seven years older.

Storey: So how long? You were there about maybe four, five years?

Reedy: No, we were there two years.

Storey: Two years at Grand Valley.

Reedy: Yes. I think it was the fall of '13 to the fall of '15. I had thought we moved there in the spring of 1914, but something I've run onto recently says that—well, I guess it's Dad's professional record—we moved there in the fall of '13. So we were there through the 1914 flood and the 1915 flood.

Storey: And then you moved on to the North Platte.

### **Father Sent the Family to Nebraska and Then Moved the Household**

Reedy: Then we moved to Fort Laramie, to the camp at Fort Laramie on the North Platte. Dad's practice was, when he was transferred he'd send my

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3. William W. (Will) Reedy. Reclamation has done oral history with Will Reedy.

mother and my sister and me to her home in Stromsburg, Nebraska, where her parents lived, and we'd stay there. When he got the household all shipped and moved to the new place and the house set up, he'd take his vacation and come back and get us. At that time you shipped things, of course, by rail freight, and it was cheaper to rent a whole railcar than ship LCL, so he'd ship everything, including our playhouse. The piano went from—gosh, I guess the piano went from Minatare up to Montana, when he went up there, and then to Grand Valley, and then to Fort Laramie, and then to Torrington, and then to Denver. But all crated up every time, because that's the way you moved things.

I'm trying to think if there's any other—oh. [Laughter] Two incidents, not related to the job, that I remember. Or maybe three. At Grand Valley, there was one time I had heard something about unconsciousness and I fell, and I don't know whether I hit my head or what. Anyway, I got up and ran into the house, told my mother I was unconscious. [Laughter]

I remember Dad got a little nick on his leg. Some dog just nicked his leg. It was not serious at all. But I can't help thinking that maybe the background of my not being particularly fond of dogs or personally wanting to have anything to do with them—I've become attached to two dogs that were in the family, but I don't just sidle up to a dog on the street and pet it the way my brother and sister do.

And the other thing was, when they had been waiting for a load of lumber to come, and Dad would tell about it at home, "I wish that lumber would come in." And we were standing on the canal bank, looking across the empty canal which had been excavated before the dam was built. At the railroad, the D&RG, Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad, and we saw the lumber coming in, being shunted off on the side track, and my sister began singing, "Columber, the gem of the ocean."

And that about does Grand Valley, I guess, for now.

Storey: So, let's see. You would have been about four when you moved up to Fort Laramie?

### **Moved to Fort Laramie**

Reedy: Let's see. I had my fifth birthday in the summer of '14, my sixth birthday—no, in the fall of '14. I was five, because my sixth birthday we were at Stromsburg waiting for Dad to move us from Grand Valley to Fort Laramie.

Storey: You traveled by train?

Reedy: Oh, yes.

Storey: Your dad didn't come in a car and get you.

Reedy: No, we didn't have a car. He had a car on the Fort Laramie project, on the North Platte Project, and he bought a car toward the end of that time. But I don't remember *any* cars at Grand Valley

except the one that my uncle and family drove out in, the big red one, Winton Six. There undoubtedly were. I can't imagine that—well, I don't know. Maybe the people coming up from Grand Junction—the project headquarters was in Grand Junction. James Miner was the Project Manager at that time, and the siding for the dam site was Miner Siding. I'd have to look it up to know whether it was Miner Siding or Miner's—with or without an apostrophe—Siding, but that was the name of the rail station. And they must have—I suppose they came by car. They might have come by train from Grand Junction. It was about twenty miles.

Storey: Tell me about the camp up at Fort Laramie.

### **Fort Laramie Camp**

Reedy: Fort Laramie, there was a row of—well, I guess you'd call them now prefabricated houses, fastened together with bolts, and we had a playhouse built the same way. I can remember one, two, three, I think four houses for engineers in the office, and I don't remember a bunkhouse for any other Reclamation people. I remember there was a cook house. The contractor had a camp there.

My sister and I would, I suppose regularly, go to the cook house and get scraps which he'd save for us to bring back to feed to our chickens. And as we passed the sugar barrel, we'd grab a handful of sugar, of course, on the way.

The family next to us was named Hubbard. Ray Hubbard. I don't know where else he had Reclamation experience until he moved from Fort Laramie to Denver. He later became head of hydraulic machinery, as I recall, in the Denver office. And they had three children. The oldest girl was living in Lincoln, going to high school. Cullen was maybe three or four years older than I, and Gwendolyn about a year older than I, and we played quite a bit with her and some with Cullen. So we did have other playmates there.

### **Home Schooled Until the Family Moved to Denver**

There were enough children in *that* community to have a two-room school, and I'm pretty sure that Cullen and Gwendolyn went to school there. We did not. My mother was teaching us at home, which she continued until we moved to Denver, teach us at home.

### **Fort Laramie Wasn't Just a Reclamation Community**

On the same side of the railroad as the camp was a large store. I know there was a pool hall there somewhere, and I think it was probably along there. I know the school was on the other side of the railroad. More than that I don't remember. I don't remember what other community there was, but there was enough community to have a school, and it wasn't just a Reclamation community.

Storey: What did you all do for fun?

Reedy: Played outdoors some. I remember one time, I guess it was Cullen Hubbard and I, maybe—there was another boy there, too, and I don't know who he was. I can't place him now, except that I know that he and Cullen were about the same age, and they both had air rifles. That was before I had an air rifle. And some of us strung a tin-can telephone along a fence line at one time. In the proper season, we'd pick the fruit off prickly pear cactus and skin it and eat it.

We had more or less, I suppose, regular school at home, my mother teaching us. I don't remember *anything* about learning to read. I just remember that by the time I was five or six years old, I was reading sort of an encyclopaedia which the folks had bought called *Our Wonder World*,<sup>4</sup> about various aspects of the world.

### Eye Examination

I remember I had to have my eyes examined, and I had kind of a nervous—I don't know what. Squinting. I don't know just what you'd call it. And my dad took me to Torrington, which was about twenty miles, and arranged for the oculist—that was the name they had at *that* time—to have lunch with us, and he sat across the table from me at lunch and watched what I was doing with my eyes, and then did an examination

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4. *Our Wonder World* in ten or eleven volumes was published by Geo. L. Shuman & Co., 1914, 1918, 1923, 1928, & 1930. A subsequent version was titled *New Wonder World* and was published by Shuman and others. Source of information is: <http://www.eskie.net/superior/nellie/wonder.htm> on October 30, 2006, at 3:25 P.M.



in the afternoon. Put drops in my eyes. At that time it took about three days to recover from drops, during which time I had to play under the dining table in the front room to stay out of the light, or wear dark glasses.

I don't remember any particular games that we played. We had our playhouse with a shop and a playhouse side.

Storey: Do you remember your dad talking about the job at all?

**Dad "always talked about the job. . . ."**

Reedy: Oh, yeah, *always* talked about the job. I grew up with the job.

Storey: What kind of stuff was he concerned about?

**Survey Crew Chief Requests Automobile to Reduce the Number of Survey Parties Needed for Work on the North Platte Project**

Reedy: Well, one of the very interesting incidents was this survey, the matter of the survey party. Harold Woodman—that was another couple that lived in the camp, that became very good friends, Harold Woodman and his wife. He was the Chief of Surveys on the project. Well, on that job. The North Platte Project was both sides of the river. This was the Fort Laramie Division. And they were going to let another contract farther down the canal line, and he said to Dad if he could have a *car* for the survey party, he could do with the same crew we had. If [he] ~~you~~

had to use a team, he'd have to have a new survey party and station them at the contractor's camp for the new contract. And Dad called up the Denver office and got permission to put racks on the car that he had and turn it over to the survey party. He said—and I have a feeling he knew—that it was the first motorized survey party in Reclamation. And that's the car of which I have a picture, probably a 1915 Model T, brassbound radiator, flat cross-section fenders, and, of course, thirty-by-three-inch tires on the front and thirty-by-three-and-a-half on the back, with clincher rims, and you jacked it up and took the tire off and put a new tube in and put it back on and pumped it up by hand.

### **Mary E. Holmsley Grave**

Another incident I remember, he said that one of the survey parties had found a grave near the canal line. Mary E. Holmsley. There was a gravestone there with the name Mary E. Holmsley and dates on it. It had been covered over by weeds and so on. Dad had a concrete slab poured and set the stone *in* the slab. The Park Service has since put it in a monument with a glass face over the stone, and it's an isolated piece of the Fort Laramie National Historic Site. One of Dad's survey parties found that.

### **Observing Horse-drawn Construction Equipment at Whalen Diversion Dam**

I remember driving up to Whalen [Diversion] Dam, which was the diversion dam on the north side that diverted to the Interstate Division of the North Platte Project, part of which was Minatare, where we had lived before, and on the south side the diversion was going to be for the Fort Laramie Division, ~~the project~~. I don't remember details, but I do know that we kept track of contracts and who was there and whether there were any visitors of interest. We occasionally would go out and see some of the earth-moving equipment. It was practically *all* horse-drawn equipment at that time, elevating graders, though there were some steam shovels on the job.

I don't remember the tunnel or siphon construction particularly. I know there were tunnels and siphons.

Storey: Why did your dad move to Denver?

Reedy: Transferred.

Storey: But he went from construction to something else?

Reedy: I don't know. I never talked to him much about the move to Denver and what he was doing there. I know that he had an office. The offices were in the old Tramway Building, the old red brick Tramway Building on, what, 14th and Arapaho, I think it is. But I don't know exactly what his function was in the Denver office.

**In 1919 Oliver T. Reedy Resigned from Reclamation and Eventually Became Colorado's Senior Assistant Highway Engineer from 1921-1950**

And I don't know the circumstances of his resigning. We moved there in May 1918, and sometime in 1919 he resigned. My mother said, some years later, that Mr. Walter had made some reference to some misunderstanding, and I don't know what it was. So Dad had a consulting office for a couple of years. He was in Central Savings Bank Building and later in another bank, another building. I don't remember.

And then the legislature had *completely* overhauled the highway laws of Colorado, set up a new organization with the Highway Department, in which they specified a State Highway Engineer, an Assistant State Highway Engineer, and Chief Clerk, and such other employees. The State Highway Engineer was going to be Major Blauvelt, and he and Dad had gotten acquainted some way, I think in a public-speaking class, and he said to Dad, "The Assistant Highway Engineer is going to have to be involved in the engineering. I need somebody to help me with the administrative things and that sort."

And so he established the position of Senior Assistant Highway Engineer, which my father held from 1921 to 1950, under three different highway engineers. And he had largely dealings relating to right-of-way, the dealings with the legislature and the dealings with county

commissioners and that type of administration thing. He was very happy in it. So he had really two careers, one in Reclamation, one with the Highway Department.

Storey: You had already decided to be an engineer, though?

### **Why He Wanted to Be an Engineer**

Reedy: *Never* thought of anything else. Never thought seriously of anything else.

Storey: Why?

Reedy: I don't know. [Laughter] Well, it's a *call*, a vocation. Why does a person go into the ministry? It's a vocation. Why did I go into engineering? It was a vocation.

Storey: Did you have any trouble with it when you went to D.U. and then to the University of Nebraska?

### **Designed Self a Five-Year College Course**

Reedy: No, no. I designed myself a five-year course. I figured out what I wanted to take at D.U. and the first two years at Nebraska, got some general education, [so] in the last two years at Nebraska [I] specifically concentrated on the engineering.

Now, I took enough math at D.U. and took mechanical drawing there, enough that I could take surveying the first year I went to Nebraska. Is that right? Yes, I took surveying the first year I went to Nebraska.

### **Went to the University of Nebraska's First Surveying Camp**

Nebraska had been teaching the advanced surveying on campus, and that year was the first year they set up a surveying camp, a summer surveying camp, so I went to that camp in its first year and got that out of the way. That gave me an edge on employment with the Bureau of Public Roads.

### **Had Worked Summer Jobs for the Bureau of Roads**

I had worked for the Bureau of Roads after my year at Denver University, and then *skipped* a year when I went to surveying camp, came back to Denver, and that was referred to as the summer I was on the wagon.

### **"Denver had gravel streets at that time, and I spent . . . half the summer on a water wagon, sprinkling streets. . . ."**

Denver had gravel streets at that time, and I spent the second half of the summer on a water wagon, sprinkling streets. [Laughter]

Storey: In Denver?

Reedy: In Denver. We had an area west of City Park, I guess about—

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. NOVEMBER 7, 1998.  
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. NOVEMBER 7, 1998.

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Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey with Oliver C. Reedy, on November the 7th, 1998.

...band concert nights.

Reedy: On band concert nights, we'd make one run into the park to help the crew that handled the park full time because of the heavy traffic for the band concert.

Storey: So the park wasn't paved either.

Reedy: Oh, no. No. I can't remember, except for the downtown area, any streets that were. I don't remember how far out, say, 17th was paved. Seventeenth must have been paved, and Colfax was paved, but the 17th Avenue Parkway was paved, the Forest Parkway was paved, certainly.

Storey: Where did you all live?

Reedy: When we first moved to Denver, after a few days in the Adams Hotel, which was the generally accepted stopping place for engineers who came to Denver, we lived in what we affectionately referred to as "the garbage." It was one of the old, old homes on Gilpin, in the 1800 block, I think, an old home with a carriage house at the back, and we had an apartment on the second floor of the carriage house, but the garbage cans for the entire apartment house were right under our windows. So we referred to it as "the garbage."

Then the folks rented a house at 3002 Elizabeth, 30th and Elizabeth, and we moved

there, oh, sometime before school was out, or about time school was out, I guess, in 1918. Lived there for a little over a year. I started to Columbine School when we lived there in the fall of 1918. I had just that much of school experience while World War I was still going on.

The armistice was just two days before my ninth birthday, and Dad did something I've never known him to do any other time. He was usually fairly conservative. But he loaded us all into the car on Armistice Day and drove downtown and caught himself in a traffic jam that he couldn't get out of for a long, long time, just to celebrate.

Storey: So you had a car.

### **Move From Fort Laramie to Torrington**

Reedy: Yes. He had bought a car, I think, before we left Fort Laramie and before we moved to Torrington. Well, we moved from Fort Laramie to Torrington, lived in Torrington for about a year, and as the canal work progressed downstream, why, the center of gravity progressed with it and the offices moved from Fort Laramie to Torrington. We lived there for about a year. I asked my mother afterward why we didn't start to school there. She said, "Well, you were getting along fine at home and it was just as easy for me to teach you at home as to see that you got to school." So that's what happened.

### **Attending School in Denver**



Then we moved to Denver. Dad was transferred to Denver in May 1918. We lived on Elizabeth for about a year. My sister and I went to Columbine School for one year, and then fairly early in the next school year—that would have been 1919—we moved to 2256 Dexter out in Park Hill, and started to Park Hill School. I had fifth and sixth grades at Park Hill. And then go [to] junior high for seventh, eighth, and ninth, and then ten, eleven, and twelve at East High. I was in the *last* class to attend the *old* East High School, which was on the site of what is now the Custom House.

Storey: Downtown.

Reedy: Downtown. That had been the Denver *High* School.

Storey: So you graduated from there?

Reedy: I was in the last class to *attend* it.

Storey: That's what I want to clarify.

Reedy: I was in the last class to attend that school. East High was being built, and I had my last two years at the new East High.

Storey: By City Park.

Reedy: By City Park, yeah. They had a bond issue election, and I've never heard of it any place else, for three high schools in one year: East, South,

and West. They could never have *passed* it without including all three.

Storey: They got everybody behind it that way.

Reedy: Got everybody behind it. North was a relatively new school then, and Manuel was an older school but in very good condition.

Storey: Tell me how you got down to the high school if it was down where the Customs House was and you lived east of City Park.

Reedy: Mostly by streetcar. I'd ride down with Dad sometimes. Dad was officed at that time, first, in the old State Museum, which is across 14th from the Capitol Building.

Storey: Fourteenth and Sherman.

Reedy: Fourteenth and Sherman. And then the state office was built on Colfax and Sherman, and the offices were moved there. But sometimes he'd drive me down. I'd take the streetcar down, nearly always the streetcar home. We had a church school, high school, basketball team at that time, and we'd do our practicing in the old public bathhouse. They had a gym there. We could walk there from school and take the streetcar home or maybe somebody come and get us.

Storey: What was the fare?

Reedy: I don't know, probably about six or seven cents. Somewhere in *that* room I have a collection of

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streetcar tokens, including some from Denver. One of my friends and I, working different parts of the country, collected streetcar tokens and exchanged them. But I think it was about six or seven cents.

Storey: What was D.U. like when you went there?

**"DU was known as 'the streetcar college'. . . ."**

Reedy: DU was known as "the streetcar college." A lot of kids went there, but *also* there were a lot of the streetcars hauled trailers during the rush hours, and a lot of the trailer conductors were students at DU. They could get in their classes in between the morning and evening rush hours and go to school that way. In fact, one of the yells ~~that I don't remember~~ was "Rah, Rah, Streetcar College."

One of those persons, I can't think of his last name now. They were two brothers that I knew in the Highlanders. One of them later worked for Reclamation in Region Seven, and I saw him many years later when I'd be there [from] in Billings.

### **The Denver Highlanders Organization**

Storey: Tell me about Highlanders.

Reedy: Highlanders was, when I was in it, a wonderful thing. A bunch of boys used to get together to play with young George Olinger in a part of Denver known as the Highlands. George Olinger, Sr., a *very* wealthy mortician and very

forward-minded person, organized what was then Olinger Highlanders. The initials were O.H. It later became the Highlander Boys, Incorporated, when it got too big for a one-man operation. But it was *his* operation at that time. There were about five hundred in the regiment, three battalions. I was in Company F in the East Battalion. The name I'm trying to think of was Jesse Woods[, at DU and Highlanders].

~~Storey: At the U. The guy who worked at=~~

~~Reedy: He worked at the U., and later worked for Region Seven.~~

Storey: Which would have been the Lower Missouri Region.

Reedy: Lower Missouri Region, yes.

Storey: There in Denver.

Reedy: In Denver. The Highlanders was built on a military organization. You have to have some sort of an organization, and this was military. And we had regular drill, infantry drill by companies and then regimental drill. I marched in three parades. Marched in the Armistice Day parade in 1919, '20, and '21, I think. At eleven o'clock everything stopped and the bugler sounded taps from the tower of the D&F Building. Mr. Olinger furnished *all* the uniforms. We had used Daisy air rifles with the shooting barrels taken out of them for rifles to drill with.

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Storey: Daisies?

Reedy: Daisy air rifles. They had a military model that had a sling and a stock, a long stock, and you took the shooting barrel out of it and it made a very good thing, and they had bayonets. He furnished all the uniform except your white gloves and your leggings. It was very, very religiously based, also. Your pins, which correspond now to service pins, were Sunday school pins, your attendance at Sunday school. Your stripes on your sleeve were first-class Highlander stripes, and you *had* to get a Sunday school stripe before you could get a first-class Highlander stripe.

And the first-class Highlanders had special trips. My dad drove our car, which at that time was the Model T Ford he had bought in Wyoming, with the five Highlanders down to a trip to the steel mills in Pueblo. And had a winter's sports trip up ~~to Echo Lake. Not to Echo Lake;~~ to Fern Lake.

### **The Speakwell Club of the Highlanders**

He hired a professional public-speaking teacher, and I was in the Speakwell Club. I got professional public speaking [training] when I was ten years old. At the Highlander entertainment in the auditorium, one year I was one of three—you had two groups of three. Who spoke the first night and they found it made the program too long. I was one of the six who was selected to be a part of the group the second night. And that meant speaking without *any*

amplification and people hearing you on the [opposite] side of the auditorium you were talking to. So I don't like sound systems. [Laughter] I can make people hear.

### **Highlanders Band**

He also hired a band director. I can't remember the name of the young man who was there at first. But John F. Light was the one who developed the band the most when I was involved in it. He had been an assistant conductor and solo trumpet player with Souza, and the Highlander Band used to compete in band contests which they had. They finally said it could not compete in the Boys' Band Contest in Colorado; it had to compete in the men's division. Light later became Director of the Municipal Band for a time. [Highlanders] ~~But it~~ was a full-time operation for a family. I was in it for three years, and our plans were made around Highlanders. It meant a lot to me, *particularly*, I think, the public-speaking thing.

### **Highlanders Summer Camp**

I developed a few friends out of it, but no really close friends. Some of the people I knew were in other companies, so I didn't have much association with them. We had a summer camp. The first two years it was at the rifle range out on West Colfax, Colfax, Denver-Golden Road.<sup>5</sup>

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5. Referring to Camp George West on Old Golden Road just west of where it branched away from Colfax Avenue. The facility was established in 1903 as a  
(continued...)

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And the last year it was up in Estes Park. The first two year[s] it was in a camp that was built for a military camp, and you had guard posts and do guard duty and retreat parade with a sunset gun and the works.

But three years was long enough. I never advanced beyond the rank of corporal, which I guess was all right. If I had gone any farther, it would have taken more time. [Laughter]

Storey: Even more time, huh?

Reedy: Even more time, yeah. And I'm sure the folks never regretted it.

Storey: Tell me more about Nebraska and engineering school.

### **University of Nebraska in the late 1920s**

Reedy: At that time, Nebraska had, I think, about eight thousand students. I went there in the fall of 1928 and was there for four years. As I said, I designed myself a course in which I'd take largely arts and science subjects the first two years, first three years, and I did. I took a year of English literature, and I took public speaking, which was not then required. I took twenty hours of German, half of it at DU and half of it at Nebraska. What were the other things I took those first two years? I took some economic geography under the man who was probably the

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5. (...continued)  
training facility and rifle range for the Colorado National Guard.

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**Oral history of Oliver C. (Cal) Reedy**

best teacher I had at any level, a geographer by the name of Nels August Bengtson.

Storey: B-A-N-K-S?

Reedy: B-E-N-G-T-S-O-N. Then the last two years was engineering. Well, I had taken my chemistry at Denver University, and I took my physics during the first two years at Nebraska. And I took my engineering drawing at DU and descriptive geometry at Nebraska. Took my surveying at Nebraska and summer surveying camp. So I had mechanics and my engineering courses, electrical engineering, one electrical engineering course, just a survey course, which happened that year to be taught by the dean. He liked to teach civil engineers. It was a course designed for civil engineers, as he put it, to teach you when you needed to call an electrical engineer. [Laughter] And I took a mechanical engineering course then and some mechanics. I took all my math in the first two years at Nebraska. Well, I guess just one year of calculus.

**"I took the water electives rather than the structural engineering electives, because I was headed for Reclamation. . . ."**

Then I had hydraulics and public water supplies and hydrology and highways and masonry structures. I'm trying to think of the names of some of them, structural engineering, though I did *not*—at the time it came for electives, I took the water electives rather than the structural engineering electives, because I was



headed for Reclamation. I knew I wanted to work for Reclamation.

I thought I got a very good course. The Chairman of the department was—I can't think of his name now.

Storey: But you graduated there in '33?

Reedy: Graduated there in '32.

### **Finding a Job upon Graduation in 1932**

Storey: Tell me about finding a job in 1932.

Reedy: Well, in 1932 there were *not* very many jobs. I remember writing one letter to an engineer, Jack Stevens. ~~Or was he after John C.? Anyway, two John Stevenses, not different generations, but a half-generation apart.~~ He was a Nebraska graduate, and I had met him when he was back on campus. I got a letter from him pointing out how he was laying off people, not hiring people.

So I went back to work for the Bureau of Public Roads, got a job with them the first of August.

### **Went Back to Work for the Bureau of Public Roads**

Storey: This was a Federal Government job?

Reedy: Yes, United States Department of Agriculture Bureau of Public Roads. It's now Federal Highway Administration, been absorbed. But

the Bureau of Roads had then, as I think it does now, the responsibility for dealing with the highway departments. ~~They had at that time dealing with the highway departments~~ on Federal aid projects, and they *also* built the roads in the national parks and in the national forests, those that—I think it was a matter of dollar amount, how much per mile they cost. If they were *expensive* roads, they were engineered by the Bureau of Public Roads. If they were just forest development roads, Forest Service probably did them.

### **Summer Work During College for the Bureau of Roads**

So I had worked for them in 1928. Yes, in 1928, after my year at DU I'd worked ~~for two years~~ for one month on Chicago–Idaho Springs—it was Chicago Creek, Echo Lake. Idaho Springs-Echo Lake Road. And then another engineering student, who was ready for his senior year in college, and I were sent around to two or three different jobs. We spent three weeks over at Eagle, Colorado, [where they] ~~and then~~ needed to beef up the Public Roads crew there to get ahead of the contractor. And then a little relocation around Leadville, Colorado. And then the last month was on the South St. Vrain entrance to Estes Park, Rocky Mountain National Park. [While] we were working on that one, another man and I climbed Long's Peak. So I had that background. Well, that was my first year.

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The next year I went to summer surveying camp and sprinkled streets for the last half of the summer. The next year I worked on the Trail Ridge Road.

Storey: Doing what?

**Did Survey Work on Construction of Trail Ridge Road in the Summer of 1930**

Reedy: Surveys, survey work. The east side was under construction. This was 1930.

Storey: So this was Bureau of Public Roads work.

Reedy: This was Bureau of Public Roads, and they were building the Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain National Park. We had a very nice permanent camp. The camp was built to be used by the maintenance forces after the road was done, so it was well-built and very nice, and we had a good crew, a well-balanced crew. As I said recently in something or other, there were no women at that time. There might well have been now.

We worked from Hidden Valley, where our camp was, up to above timberline, about eleven thousand feet. We surveyed, kept the construction surveys going for the contractor, and did the work for the contract which would be let the next year. At one point during that process, another surveyor and I, ~~another man and I, carried~~—I guess each of us carried two bundles of stakes. They were beginning to start the surveys on the *west* side of Trail Ridge Road and

it was closer for us to carry stakes to their work than it was for them to carry [them.] ~~it to their work.~~ So we carried stakes across the Continental Divide. But that was a good summer's work.

The next year I worked on Rabbit Ears Pass for the entire summer. It was the summer of '31.

Storey: These were locating completely new roads?

Reedy: They were relocations of existing roads.

Storey: So there were already roads there.

Reedy: I take that back. These were construction surveys. They had relocated the road. They had designed the new road. They had let the contracts, and we were there to do the staking that the contractor would need to do the building, and keep ahead of him in that way. These were construction surveys, *except* for the little one, relocation around Leadville. That was just two or three days we lived in a hotel at Leadville and did that. One of the engineers took two of us up there, and the three of us did that work. But those were construction surveys.

### **Begins Work for the Bureau of Roads in 1932**

Then after I graduated the next year, I looked some and did some writing for an engineering job, but first of August [1932], or, rather, the second of August—and that always made us mad—I got another job with the Bureau

of Roads, and that was on location surveys. I say it made us mad, because as you know, August 1st is Colorado Day. At that time the Federal Government observed state holidays, and we were supposed to start on the first, but we lost one day's pay because of Colorado Day.  
[Laughter]

In that period I worked on three different locations. One was at Canjilon, New Mexico, in the Santa Fe National Forest, about a hundred miles north of Santa Fe. And we were there during August and September. I don't remember just when we moved to Cloudcroft, which is near Alamagordo, north of El Paso. It's the mountain resort for El Paso. We were doing a highway location, relocating the road from down in the valley at Tularosa. I think it takes off at Tularosa or La Luz up to Cloudcroft. We were relocating that.

Then sometime before Thanksgiving, we moved to Reserve, which is over on the western side of New Mexico, north of Silver City, [and] has the questionable distinction of being farther from a railroad than any other county seat in the United States. I think it's in a dead heat with Pinedale, Wyoming, a hundred miles from the nearest railroad. That was another relocation. We were there over Thanksgiving and Christmas and into January.

Then when that shut down for the winter, we went back to Denver. I was in Denver til sometime in May [1933], just living at home. Then early in May I went back with the Bureau

of Roads up to Pactola, South Dakota, near where Pactola Dam is, and we were locating a road down the Rapid Creek from Pactola to Rapid City. ~~We were there.~~ At some point we moved from Pactola, which was the upper end of the job, to Rapid City, and worked from there til sometime after the Fourth of July, I don't remember just when.

### **Road Survey Work on the Clark's Fork Canyon of the Yellowstone in 1933**

Then the crew was cut down to do a job in the Clark's Fork Canyon of the Yellowstone in Wyoming, and I was left to work in the Denver office to work up the notes from the Pactola-Rapid City job, and other such things, and they kept giving me other little jobs, so I kept on working and working and working in the Denver office. Supposed to last for about two weeks, then maybe they could pick me up again.

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BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. NOVEMBER 7, 1998.

Reedy: In August there was an opening in Yellowstone Park, and they needed a truck, so I started out with a truck for Yellowstone Park. Stopped at Cody overnight, registered at the hotel, and saw above my name—this is when you registered in a *book* and you could see who else was there—saw the man that I had worked for the previous season and the beginning of that season. Emerich was his name, registered at the hotel, and I knew that he normally went up to his room fairly early, so I went up and knocked on his

door and told him who I was, and he said, "You made good time. I wired for you this morning."  
[Laughter]

One of the other men had accidentally rolled a rock on his foot and wasn't able to stay on the job. And Emerich had wired for me to come up and replace him, so he got on the telephone the next morning, phoned Denver, and phoned the office in Yellowstone Park, and we took the truck up and delivered it. Then he took me back up to Clark's Fork Canyon, which was a fascinating job. Have you ever seen that? Do you know that country at all, around Billings and Clark's Fork?

Storey: I know it a little bit.

Reedy: Cook City-Red Lodge road and that area.

Storey: I've been down toward Yellow Tail and I've been up toward Yellowstone from Cody, and that's about it.

Reedy: That's about it. Well, the Cook City-Red Lodge road had been authorized and was going to be built, and that constitutes a northeast entrance to Yellowstone Park. Charles Kuralt says it's—how did he describe it? I don't think it was the most beautiful drive in America, but some exaggerated adjective, and it's fascinating.

But *Cody* saw that it was going to cut down on *their* traffic to the east entrance of Yellowstone Park, so they got the Congress to authorize a location down the Clark Fork of the

Yellowstone. When Lewis and Clark came back, Clark came down the Yellowstone and noticed the mouth of this stream about twenty miles above Billings. It is named the Clark Fork Yellowstone River, not to be confused with the Clark Fork River, which is Columbia Basin drainage.

It was down the Clark's Fork Canyon that Chief Joseph led his party when they were getting away from the American Army. We hit it in the summer of—let's see. It would have been the summer of 1933, which was the *lowest* water they had recorded in the stream, or we never could have done it. We ~~were the first survey~~, ran the first survey down the canyon. We would camp up on a bench and scramble down about 1,800 feet in the morning and run what line we could, scramble back up 1,800 feet at night to camp.

It was a fascinating job, but, of course, a very, very low-grade reconnaissance. We had a minimum number of people and was all stadia survey work, none of it measured with a tape. The party chief went ahead and sort of lined out where he wanted things to go, and another man would go along and make notes as to the situation on the size of the canyon and take a lot of photographs, and I would set transit points where the party chief indicated. I'd find the point in the *general area* where he wanted the line to come. I'd see whether the instrument man could see me and set a transit point, and he'd either move up that day or move part way and climb



out and get his instrument the next morning and move the rest of the way.

One day we ran about fifty feet, [because] we had to run around a point, where we could not get around it in the water or across the stream, so I climbed over a bluff and set a transit point, and he took a fore-sight, brought his instrument up, and next morning came back and then set himself a back sight with it. It was a very rough job but a very interesting job. Then later we moved down to the mouth of the canyon and worked from there on down. Two or three very interesting incidents there.

That was my *last* horseback ride, was on that job. One night it looked as if we couldn't climb out on the side where our camp was. Two of the men did. The rest of us, the boss took up on the other side, where we hit a road up to a small ranch. He'd gotten acquainted with a rancher and they put us up for the night, the next morning gave us all horses, and from eight o'clock in the morning till three o'clock in the afternoon we rode down this switchback trail to a ford across the river and back up the other side. During that period I was off the horse three times. Twice it was the horse's idea and once it was mine. And I have not been on a horse since.

When we finished that job, we moved to Dayton, Wyoming, for a relocation from Dayton to Kane, Wyoming–Dayton, Montana, to Kane, Wyoming.

### October 1933 Quit the Bureau of Public Roads for a Job at Reclamation

And sometime early in October, my dad wired me, I guess wired me. You didn't use the telephone much then. We didn't have a telephone in camp anyway. Maybe *wrote*. Said that Mr. Bonnet had said they had an opening for me and to report as soon as I could to the Bureau of Reclamation. So I *quit* my job up there and took the train into Denver and started to work for the Bureau on the tenth of October 1933.

Storey: You had applied to Reclamation?

Reedy: I had applied to Reclamation immediately when I got out of school, and ~~I had had no~~, I hadn't had any other offers from any other agency. Some of my friends who had applied got offers from the [U.S. Army] Corps [of Engineers], and some of them took them and some of them didn't. But this was my first offer, and those jobs at that time were Public Works jobs paid with Public Works money that [Secretary of the Interior Harold] Ickes had control of.

#### Hired with WPA Money

We were—let's see. Our pay was \$1,740 a year, the junior engineer's entrance grade. The regular junior engineers, civil service, their base pay was \$2,000, but they were taking a 15 percent cut, which meant they were only getting \$1,700, forty dollars less than we were. And they weren't very happy about that. The next year, they put us on a \$2,000-dollar less—I think

we got less 10 percent, something like that, so we were all making 1,800, and after that the deduction was gone.

### **Converted to Civil Service**

I don't remember the date, but it was probably 1935 or 1936, we were converted to civil service on the basis of unassembled examination, just more or less a blanket thing, but there was some sort of examination connected with it to comply with the law. And at that point we began to get retirement and so on. We were permitted to *buy back* our retirement, which I was able to do.

I had moved back into my folks' home. During the Depression, if you had a place to live, you didn't look for a place by yourself. Will was still in high school. My sister was at Nebraska. No. She had graduated and she was teaching at Ordway, Colorado. So I moved back in with the folks and lived there til-1933 to 1942, and it was a very rewarding experience, because Dad and I both had highway background and Bureau background, Bureau interests, and my mother knew the language of both and was interested.

So Dad and I would drive down in the morning, and as I tell people, when we'd hit Colorado Boulevard, getting ready to drive between City Park and the City Park Golf Course, we could *often* look from Pike's Peak, sixty miles south, clear around to Long's Peak, seventy miles northwest, mountains all the way,

clear mountains all the way. You remember when you could do that.

Storey: Yes. You can still do it every once in a while.

Reedy: Every once in a while, yeah. Of course, now the trees in City Park are too high, but we were looking over the trees at that time.

Storey: So you reported to Denver. '33.

### **Worked for Erdman Bruno Debler**

Reedy: '33. October '33. And I was assigned to the Office of the Hydraulic Engineer, who was Erdman Bruno Debler, who, by the way, was a University of Nebraska graduate.

### **"I did miscellaneous odd jobs. . . ."**

And [I] did miscellaneous odd jobs. *All* of us at one time or another worked on Boulder Canyon Power Studies. We had—I think they were about eight-by-eight-inch quad-ruled notebooks, brown-covered, and we ruled columns in them. We'd do, by hand, power studies for the then proposed and under construction Boulder Dam, varying the power and varying the assumptions as to water supply and so on. There were *drawers* full of those notebooks.

You'd sit there with a slide rule and an adding machine and some curves of evaporation and that sort of thing. No calculators. Debler didn't believe in calculators. If you didn't have a tape record of it, he didn't want it. So we had

adding machines with tapes. The first calculators were *sneaked* in later. [Laughter]

One of the jobs I had, one of the first jobs, and it's an illustration of how far things have come, the office had just finished a report on the economic height of Norris Dam, under contract with the TVA. There were fifty mimeographed copies of the report, hundred pages each, and they needed to make some changes. I erased all the page numbers off *all* those copies of the report. I took them all apart. I put the new pages in, and I renumbered all of them with a hand-stamp numbering machine, and that was the cheapest way to do it. Anything else would have required retyping the entire thing, which would have meant cutting stencils by some typist.

**"It was better to have an engineer do it, because there was a limit on the clerical staff that the office could have, but no limit on the number of young engineers. . . ."**

It was better to have an engineer do it, because there was a limit on the clerical staff that the office could have, but no limit on the number of young engineers. So I was available and did it.

Storey: What was that study on?

Reedy: The economic height of Norris Dam.

Storey: A TVA study.

Reedy: It was a contract job with TVA, because that office had the capability of doing it. We did it all the time for our own jobs.

Storey: Tell me about Debler.

### **Erdman B. Debler**

Reedy: I suppose the simplest thing to say is that it's impossible to tell about Debler. [Laughter] You could never tell about Debler.

Storey: Why is that?

Reedy: He was a tremendously *sharp* person with an *amazing* memory, and he was exacting to work for, but understanding. For a long period I had my desk with my back to the open door to his office, and he would say, "Cal, will you get me that folder that I had when that man from the Utah Power and Light was in about a month ago?" And I was expected to remember *who* was in from the Utah Power and Light, and what they were talking about, and what folder they probably wanted, and I usually could do it. But it was that sort of thing.

### **Alva B. Adams Tunnel on the Colorado-Big Thompson Project**

I remember when they were talking about the tunnel under Rocky Mountain National Park, the—oh dear, what's the name of that?

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Storey: [Alva B.] Adams Tunnel.<sup>6</sup>

Reedy: The Adams Tunnel, yes. And they were arguing about authority for that, whether you could *build* a tunnel under a national park. And Debler just sat there, not saying anything, letting them argue, because he remembered somewhere in a post road authorization bill of 1916 or some odd place, there was the specific authority to build that tunnel.

**Randy Riter "later knew the Colorado River hydrology better . . . than anybody else in the country. . . ."**

He and Randy Riter—Randy later knew the Colorado River hydrology better, I think, than anybody else in the country. Debler might have been involved in more of it, more over a longer period, but Randy became a specialist on the Colorado.

**Did General Office Work**

But *most* of the time I did general office work. At one stage I would take all the reports from field investigations and consolidate them into a report from the Chief Engineer to the Commissioner once a month. That was one specific job that I had. At another time I was the—for quite a period I was the liaison with the Forest Service on aerial surveys and mapping.

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6. On the Colorado-Big Thompson Project, the Adams Tunnel provides the connection for transporting water from the West Slope to the East Slope of Colorado.

They would advise us, and in some cases they would let the contract for aerial surveys that we needed, and I was the liaison for that.

### **Liaison with the Soil Conservation Service for Snow Surveys**

I was the liaison later on with the Soil Conservation Service on snow surveys, and [one] ~~two~~ of the men in the office[,] ~~had no, one~~ particularly, Arthur Johnson, had made a study correlating precipitation in the Upper Colorado River Basin with the inflow to Lake Mead for forecasting Lake Mead.

### **Used the Precipitation Stations in the Upper Colorado River to Predict Inflow to Lake Mead**

And I put in twenty-nine precipitation stations, filled in the gaps in the Weather Bureau network in the Upper Colorado River Basin, found places to put them in, checked with Forest Service people on who was reliable and who would operate the station, and hired them, got the reports every month and put them together and incorporated them with Weather Bureau data to make the first forecasts of inflow to Lake Mead. That was a Bureau job.

I was liaison with the Soil Conservation Service on putting soil survey courses in the Upper Colorado River Basin. These were *almost* exclusively in national forests, where we dealt with the Forest Service or in Rocky Mountain National Park, where we dealt with the Park



Service. They had read *snow stakes*—they had some snow stakes of their own, and they read those, and they read our snow survey courses, too, but the lead agency on that was the Soil Conservation Service, and they furnished the data to us.

### **Worked with Ralph Parshall on the Snow Surveys**

But I had some very nice relationships on that with Ralph Parshall, who at that time was on the faculty at Fort Collins and the head of that *piece* of the Soil Conservation Service. He and I went out together a couple of times to put in snow survey courses, looking for places for snow survey courses.

Storey: Tell me why Reclamation was interested in snow survey courses.

Reedy: To find out how much snow there is on the watershed and how much of it is likely to get to Boulder Dam, to Hoover Dam, to Lake Mead. There is a *fairly* good correlation. It's been refined so much now that I don't know anything about it *now*, but it was a fairly good correlation of the—we had *both* the precipitation during the winter year, winter part of the year, probably September to—well, we did it February, March, April, and May—and the depth of snow.

The snow *stakes* just measure the depth of snow. The snow survey courses, they took a *core* of snow and measured the water content at regular intervals along the course so as to get a good estimate of the amount of water that was

going to eventually run off. And that was—I think that was 1935 and '36 that I was involved in that job.

### **Kept Supplies for Investigations in Stock**

I also at one time was responsible for keeping up the supply of equipment for the investigation, planning investigation parties—instruments and rods and rubber boots and things of that sort. And I would work with the procurement people on buying things for the drill crews. I even learned to select industrial diamonds for the drillers. I never did it independently, but I would be *with* some of the—when they'd get a batch of diamonds in to select, one of the drill foremen would come in and I often sat with him and maybe did a preliminary selection. They did the final selection, of course, always, because they had to use them.

And we tried at one time—I guess we did, we developed a trailer to go out on investigation jobs to handle test pit work. You're supposed to have a hoist and this type of thing. One of the interesting people that worked with me at that time was a man by the name of Schazer. He had flunked out of the [U.S.] Naval Academy theoretically on his math, but I think actually on a blonde that was back in Denver. But he went to Denver University to finish his education and came in one day and said, "Cal, do you know anything about an organization known as Pi Beta Kappa or Phi Beta Kappa or something like that?"

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I said, "Yeah, I know Phi Beta Kappa."

He said, "Well, I was elected to it."  
[Laughter] This is after flunking out of the  
Naval Academy.

But he was working with me on this  
trailer, and he was only working part time  
because he was going to school. But he would  
be gone from the office for a week at a time and  
come back in, having visited manufacturers'  
representatives and hardware stores and other  
sorts of dealers, come in with a lot of ideas and  
sketches and stuff like that. A wonderful  
independent operator who later got a job  
somewhere in Region Two in California.

Storey: Tell me more about Debler. Change his mind a  
lot? What kind of personality?

### **E. B. ("Deb") Debler**

Reedy: He didn't change his mind a lot. Sometimes I  
think we had difficulty recognizing what his  
mind was. [Laughter] One very interesting  
incident, he called all his heads of planning  
offices in: Tom Judah was one; Rex Reed was  
one; Frank Clinton was one; Frank Merriell from  
the Western Slope of Colorado; Glen Sloan, who  
was doing the Missouri Basin. Those are the  
names I remember—called them in. And he said,  
"I want you to find every bit of irrigable land and  
every bit of water that can be put on it. I want a  
reconnaissance and I want it by September 1st."  
And everybody was quiet, and pretty soon Glen  
Sloan said, "What year?" [Laughter] Well,

Debler obviously meant that year. That was part of the beginnings of the Sloan part of the Pick-Sloan Report, Sloan's work in the Missouri Basin.

Debler knew pretty well what he wanted. Most of the time he was pretty patient, I thought. I thought he was very patient with me. I did a small field job, and I can see now, in retrospect, there are a lot of things I missed that I should have done. It's the first time I had been out in the field on Reclamation work at all on a planning job. I just really didn't know how to go about it. But I came in and started writing a report, and I had to go back and pick up some other things, but "Deb" sort of coached me on what needed to be done. He was a little unhappy with parts of it because I hadn't done it. I hadn't gotten some information I needed for estimates, for instance, estimates of cost.

### **Montrose Power Survey and the Uncompahgre Project**

This was called the Montrose Power Survey. It developed out of the fact that the Uncompahgre Project saw all these other projects having a powerplant and getting some of their costs paid with power, and they wanted a powerplant, and I was supposed to go find them a powerplant. [Laughter] There wasn't any on the project, but I did find some sites. One of them is one in the Gunnison Canyon. I'm sure they built at the site that I found and took some pictures of and included in my report. Another one is over on the Uncompahgre River. I'm sure

they built a dam there, and I can't think of the name of it now, between Montrose and Ouray.

### **Ridgway Dam**

Storey: I think they put Ridgway in there.

Reedy: Ridgway. Ridgway. I think that was the site that I had explored. Now I know that other people went out, did a lot more detailed work, so I have no idea whether it was the site that I looked at or not. The general area that I looked at and the water supply showed, yes, there was an opportunity there.

"Deb"—well, it was hard to judge, because I never worked for anyone else *but* "Deb" in the Denver office. He had some problems with the rest of the high command. They didn't always agree on things. [Laughter] I remember one time he sent me down to accounting to see if we could get some money changed from one place to another place, and I talked to one of the accountants, then I went back and talked to "Deb," and "Deb" said, "You go back there and tell him that I'm in charge of these investigations."

So I went back and said, "Mr. Debler says he's in charge of the investigations."

"Well, you tell that little son of a bitch that I'm in charge of moving the money around."  
[Laughter]

So I thought, well, here was this office and here was "Deb's" office. I thought, well, I'll just drop in an office here. I'll go back and quote each one to the other, and then I'll go to this office here and wait till they meet in the hall, but it never happened. He had ideas about where he wanted to use the money, and some of it couldn't be done. So they had problems with the financial people. I don't remember any major differences. I was never *aware* of any major differences with Mr. [Raymond F.] Walter or—oh, dear, his successor. [Sinclair O.] Harper.

Storey: S. O. Harper.

Reedy: S. O. Harper. They were the two chief engineers at the time I was there. McClellan was head of electrical, Day was head of mechanical.

Storey: What did Debler look like?

Reedy: Debler was short, German background.

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BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 3. NOVEMBER 7, 1998.

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey with Oliver C. Reedy on November the 7th, 1998.

German ancestry.

**Debler "would never take his change in paper money. . . ."**

Reedy: German ancestry. He was married and had one daughter, was very active in Engineering Society

work, very determined that the silver dollar was important. He would never take his change in [paper] ~~silver~~ dollars. [Laughter]

Storey: Really.

Reedy: It was an interesting sidelight. Well, silver mining was important to Colorado, so we carried around lots of silver dollars. He was very smart and knowledgeable, and I remember hearing when they were setting up Region Seven. There had been six regions at first. When they were setting up Region Seven, I was not there, but I remember hearing the report that Debler had said to somebody, "*I want that job*, so don't you apply for it." [Laughter]

Storey: Oh, really.

Reedy: Or words to that effect, yeah. He got it. He got it. It was logical. He was the logical person for it. I had almost no contact with him after I went into the Navy.

Then I came back, worked in the Denver office very briefly, for about three weeks, I guess, before they got my transfer to Walla Walla organized, but my contacts, I remember Randy Riter at that time, but I don't remember contacts with "Deb."

Storey: Did people call him "Deb"?

Reedy: Yes.

Storey: Did they call that to his face?

Reedy: Oh, yes. Yeah. He was "Deb."

Storey: There were some other interesting people. You've mentioned most of them. Tell me about McClellan.

### **Leslie N. McClellan**

Reedy: I didn't know McClellan very well, but I had some contact with him when I'd be writing reports and things like that. I'd have to go check with him. I always felt that he was a little more reserved and looked a little more distinguished. I know that he was respected. His views were respected by the office in general, but I didn't have enough background with him. I know there were three "Mc"s in that room: McClellan, McPhail, and another one, stair-steps down in seniority.

Storey: Tell me what your office was like.

### **Offices in the Custom House**

Reedy: We were on the fourth floor of the Custom House at the time they added a piece onto the back of it, so we weren't adjacent to the construction work. There was somebody else in between construction and us. I was on the—we had offices on the California Street side. That's between California and Stout, isn't it? Yeah. Had offices on the California Street side.

### **At First All the Secretarial Work Was Done at the Secretarial Pool**



I guess we had three rooms on the street side and maybe three rooms across the hall. The office expanded and contracted as difference in work emphasis came in. When I first started there, we had *all* our secretarial work done by the pool, which was down by the Chief Engineer's office, and later on we got a secretary.

"Deb" had an office by himself, and the rest of us were in various clusters of offices. Randy Riter and I had desks right up against each other, with a telephone in between us at one time. Later on I moved across the hall and trained two or three people to be my immediate boss.

I think we had three offices there. We had *the* file of Geological Survey quadrangle sheets. There were two separate sets of files in the office. There was the general mails and files and then there was engineering files. But we had *the* office file of water supply papers and *the* office file of quadrangle sheets and that type of thing.

### **Study on Consumptive Use of Water in Agriculture**

I suppose the largest group were people working in hydrology and various other things like that. We had two people who did a major study on consumptive use of water in agriculture, Arthur Johnson and Bob Lowry, that was the bible for a long time. A *lot* of work has been done since then that I don't understand. The

Lowry-Johnson method was *it* for a good many years.

We did some other things. Arthur Johnson was detailed to Lebanon for several months, did a study of water requirements of Lebanon. I don't know what sort of a contract it was—foreign activities. Later on, foreign activities got more and more prominent after World War II. But Arthur did this in the 1930s.

### **The Aerial Surveys and Soil Surveys Were Specific Assignments**

I'm trying to think what—I can't remember how the little unit was defined that I largely worked in, doing administrative work and things of that sort, putting together monthly reports of the investigations, equipment stuff, those things. The aerial surveys job was a specific assignment, and the soil surveys was a specific assignment. The ones where I spent [time] on the Montrose Power Study was a specific assignment to me, not to the little unit that I was in.

### **Office Was Largely Water-supply Studies**

But I can't define any better the way the office was. As I say, *largely* hydrologists doing water-supply studies for the various investigations that came up. Rex Reed would do a study up around Big Piney, Wyoming, and the water-supply studies would be done in the regional office, in the Denver office. Frank Clinton was up at—oh dear. He was up [in] at Wyoming, too. That's where I first got

acquainted with him. In fact, I dug out of my files a letter that Red Reed wrote to Frank Clinton describing the kind of a stream-gauging station he had set up, and how he had built it. It had proved pretty successful. Frank was at Worland, Wyoming, at that time.

Tom Judah was at—I can't remember the name of the place where Tom was. That's when I first got acquainted with Tom. Bruce Johnson was in Bismarck, North Dakota. Harold Mutch was up there. I never met Bruce.

Storey: Did you ever work on Hoover or Shasta or Coulee?

Reedy: Well, we did power studies on Hoover. *All* of us worked on them at one time or another. If your other load was light, you started doing power studies. [Laughter] Took it over maybe where somebody else had left off in the middle of a page and worked some more power studies. That was the only work [for Hoover,] ~~at that,~~ and the snow survey courses and the correlation, I did probably the first forecast of inflow after we got the precipitation stations and those things in.

**Arthur Johnson Did the Preliminary Work on Forecasting Inflow at Hoover, and I Did the First Forecasting Using New Precipitation Data**

Now, Arthur Johnson had done the *preliminary* work, taking historical precipitation

and historical stream flows at Lee Ferry<sup>7</sup> and correlating them, and based on that and the current precip data, I made probably the first study of inflow, forecast of inflow to Lake Mead. That was probably 1937, '38, something like that. I *hope* I have a copy of that. I don't know that I do. I hope I find it somewhere.

Storey: Did you ever meet Jack Savage?

Reedy: Yeah.

Storey: Tell me about Jack Savage.

### **John (Jack) L. Savage**

Reedy: I knew him somewhat by reputation from Dad, because Dad had known him and worked with him. Dad had worked for Walter, R. F. Walter, in South Dakota.

Storey: At Belle Fourche.

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7. n.b. Lee Ferry and Lee's Ferry are two different locations on the Colorado River. Lee's Ferry is a historic site on the Colorado River accessible on both sides through a break in the canyon cliffs. There John D. Lee, a polygamist Mormon settler, began operation of a ferry across the river on January 11, 1873. Lee Ferry, on the other hand, is a point downstream of Lee's Ferry established by Article II of the Colorado River Compact signed at Santa Fe, New Mexico, on November 24, 1922, which contains the definition "(e) The term 'Lee Ferry' means a point in the main stream of the Colorado River one mile below the mouth of the Paria River." Lee Ferry is the dividing point between the Upper Colorado River Basin and the Lower Colorado River Basin.

Section 13(a) of the Boulder Canyon Project Act, approved December 21, 1928, 45 Stat. 1057, set up a mechanism for ratification of the Colorado River Compact without the approval of Arizona. June 25, 1929, 46 Stat. 3000, President Herbert Hoover proclaimed that the necessary ratification conditions had taken place.

Reedy: Knew him very well, yes.

Storey: He was the Construction Engineer.

### **Anecdote About Raymond F. Walter**

Reedy: He was Project Manager and Dad was working [for him]. Of course, my mother knew him very well, too, at one time. My father's hair turned white much earlier than it usually does. One time Mom and Dad went to an engineering meeting and Mr. Walter was at the door. He said, "Well, well, well, Mrs. Reedy, I haven't seen you in a long time. Your father here is getting a little old-looking, though." [Laughter]

Savage. I know Savage's views were respected. I don't know the details of his dealings with the design people. He was the Chief Designing Engineer. And we didn't *actually* deal with him. So it was a matter of what you *sensed*. But I sensed that he knew what he was about, but that he also knew that the people who were working for him knew what it was about, too. That's about all I can say about Savage. He was pleasant to meet and knew who I was and spoke to me, remembered that I was related to my dad.

Storey: What about Ray Walter? Tell me more about Ray Walter.

### **Raymond F. Walter**

Reedy: He was kind of gruff on the outside. I don't think he was gruff on the inside. I would see him *only*

if I had something to take in to him for Debler, and I'm sure he knew who I was and knew my connections, but it was only a matter of taking something into his office and maybe giving it to Mrs. Murphy, or maybe she'd say, "Well, you take it on in to him," a memo or something like that to get signed. So I didn't have much contact with him, but he was, as I say, *apparently gruff*. I don't know technically how much he was relied on. By that time it was beginning to get to the point where it was pretty specialized.

**"It wasn't as it had been in the first fifteen years where everybody had to know everything. . . ."**

It wasn't as it had been in the first fifteen years where everybody had to know everything.

Storey: By the time you get to designing a Hoover.

Reedy: Yeah. The Dams Division was the Dams Division. Canals was Canals. And Mechanical was Mechanical. Electrical was Electrical. Of course, there had to be some interplay.

Storey: Did you get any promotions?

Reedy: Yes. Again, I don't remember dates. At that time they had—the general terms were junior engineer, assistant engineer, associate engineer, engineer, and they were basically a P-1, a P-2, a P-3, and a P-4. That whole thing has changed so much, it doesn't have much meaning now. But we also had *half steps*. The basic grade for the junior engineer was 2,000. The basic rate for the

assistant engineer was 2,600. But they had a 2,300.

Storey: The pay, you mean?

### **Pay and Grades for Engineers**

Reedy: The pay. Those are annual pay. They had one for 2,300. I got promoted to that after about two years, I think. Well, it was after I had been converted to Civil Service. Then I think I got promoted to assistant engineer at what was probably 2,600 during the thirties. Then I *think* I got a promotion during the war, which was solely on paper. When I went out to Walla Walla, I was at that time a P-4, later became an 11, that's GS-11, and that was my grade at Walla Walla.

I transferred to Billings at that grade, then got a promotion later on to GS-13, and I went to *almost* every step of the 13 before I retired. I was up above the entrance grade of a 14. But there weren't grade 14 jobs.

Storey: Did they ever put you on a rotation program?

Reedy: No.

Storey: Why was that? Was it typical that other people would have?

### **Detail to the Philippines in 1954**

Reedy: There weren't rotation programs then as there are now. I did have—you could call it a rotation. In

1954, I was lent by the Bureau to the FOA,<sup>8</sup> which is now AID, and detailed by FOA to Manila on what was to be a ninety-day assignment. Turned out to be five months.

### **Projects on the Mariquina and Pasig Rivers in the Philippines**

The Philippine Government–FOA had an established office there. It didn't have any engineers on their staff, as I recall. They had some other people. The Philippine Government wanted to build a dam on the Mariquina River, which is one of the tributaries of the Pasig. The Pasig flows through Manila and it's a tidal stream. The trash will go downstream when the tide goes out and come back upstream when the tide comes in. The Mariquina is one of the tributaries. They wanted to build a multipurpose reservoir on the Mariquina.

They knew how to build a flood-control reservoir or a *power* dam and reservoir and powerplant or a public water supply or an irrigation. They *didn't* know how to do the hydrology of putting them together, sizing the reservoir, figuring out the operation schedule, and allocating the costs.

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8. In 1953, the Foreign Operations Administration was established as an independent government agency outside the Department of State, to consolidate economic and technical assistance on a world-wide basis. Its responsibilities were merged into the International Cooperation Administration (ICA) one year later. Subsequently, the U.S. Foreign Assistance Organization was established by the Foreign Assistance Act, September 4, 1961. Source: [http://www.usaid.gov/about\\_usaid/usaidhist.html](http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/usaidhist.html) visited on November 2, 2006, at 1:20 P.M.



So two of us went over there. Byron Moore was at that time working in the Amarillo office. He was a civil engineer, but he had been *largely* doing economics, and he went over to work with them on the economics and the cost allocation, and I went over to do the hydrology, working with them on hydrology.

**Filoman Rodriguez of the National Power Corporation, Philippines**

They had a team of representatives of the National Power Corporation. The Chairman of the team was the Chief Engineer, National Power Corporation, Filoman Rodriguez. And the city of Manila water supply and the Bureau of Public Works irrigation and the Bureau of Public Works flood control. We had a liaison by the name of Caesar Nuigid, who was a Power Corporation employee.

Storey: How do you spell it?

Reedy: C-A-E-S-A-R N-U-I-G-I-D. Caesar, he was our liaison with the Power Corporation which met with us, and we'd meet about once a week in a large room, sitting around a large table, and with Filoman Rodriguez presiding. And the people from the various agencies would go around and say what they'd been doing, what problems they'd run into, and what questions needed to be answered, and you could fairly hear the wheels in Rodriguez's head going around. And when they got all through with all of these questions, there was to be a decision right there, and it was

always right. I think he was the smartest engineer I ever knew.

### **Delegate to the Economic Council for Asia and the Far East**

I had occasion at the end of that to—well, we were routed home through Hong Kong and Tokyo, and I was sidetracked at Tokyo to be a part of the American delegation to a flood control meeting of the ECAFE, the Economic Council for Asia and the Far East. The State Department had used up all its money for the fiscal year, and the Agriculture Department had used UP all its money for the fiscal year, and the Interior Department had used up all its money for the fiscal year for this meeting. They didn't have anybody to send to this meeting. The ambassador called up the Secretary of State and said, "You damn well *better* have somebody at this meeting."

So they cooked up a representation. One of the men from the FOA office in Manila and—I can't remember. There were two people from that office, I guess, and I. We were the American delegation to the meeting ~~the~~ ~~[unclear] meeting~~ of the ECAFE in Tokyo in 1954.

But I rode from Hong Kong to Tokyo as seatmate of Filoman Rodriguez. He had been on the first Reparations Commission from the Philippines to deal with Japan after World War II. And the second commission was having a little trouble in Tokyo, so the President asked

him to go up there and help them get [things] straightened out. And he looked over at me one time, and he said, "I am rearranging my mental files. I am putting some folders away and getting some others out." That tells you how he thought.

*But* to get back to the Mariquina, we were able to work out what they needed to work out. The hydrology wasn't very complicated. They had *pretty* good records of inflow and pretty good records of what they wanted to use the water [for,] ~~flow~~ and flood control needs was fairly routine as it was done at that time, and I knew it pretty well at that time. I've completely forgotten it and it's all changed anyway. [Laughter] Byron Moore helped them with the allocation of costs. I think it was what later became the separable cost-remaining benefits method. And we were there for five months.

Storey: A lot of field work?

Reedy: Almost none. Almost none. They had gotten pretty well along on the design and the matter of height of dam and size of reservoir and how to put the hydrology together and how to put the cost together.

### **Attended Meeting of the Missionary District of the Philippines of the Episcopal Church**

We did get *out* a little bit to see some of the country, and I had seen on the desk of one of the men in the FOA office a notice of the meeting of what was then the Missionary District

of the Philippines of the Episcopal Church, when they were going to have their annual meeting. So I went over to that annual meeting and I met the priest who was in charge of the mission at Besao, a mission to which our church in Billings had been sending a Christmas box. So I was interested in meeting him, and he invited us to come up if we could sometime.

### **Visits Mission at Besao**

So, Caesar managed to figure out how there were some power sites that they'd like us to look at up in that area, and he got a station wagon and a driver one weekend, and we went up to Besau for the weekend, looking at power sites and one dam under construction, and spent the weekend up there. So I had that much to see, and we probably were a little help too—probably paid for the trip, told them some things could be written off, anyway, that they shouldn't be interested in. They knew pretty well what they were doing, and they built dams and stuff. I have some pictures of the Ambacla Dam under construction. Their protective footing consisted of bare feet.

Storey: OSHA wouldn't like it, huh?

### **Offered Job by FOA**

Reedy: OSHA wouldn't care for it. OSHA wouldn't care for it the least bit. But that was as near to rotation as I ever got. I was offered a job by FOA in the Philippines, but at that time it looked as if Reclamation might be shrinking, and I had

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visions of my two daughters going to schools in nothing but foreign countries, and I didn't want that, so I turned the job down and stayed on in Billings. I was later offered a job in Turkey, turned that one down, but was able to suggest the man who took it and enjoyed it very much. ~~and that I had known.~~

### Foreign Activities Coordinator for Billings Region

I became the Foreign Activities Coordinator for the region, so that anybody who came up to the region, I was supposed to get information about foreigners that came for economics or soil studies or engineering water supply or whatever, I was supposed to get information about them in advance and we'd meet them, have them in our home, get acquainted with them. It gave both Lucie and me and our daughters a chance to get acquainted with a *lot* of cultures of a *lot* of the world.

Storey: That was after you had moved to Billings?

Reedy: Yes. This was after I had moved to Billings and after I had been to the Philippines and when I had more of a background than anybody else and was more interested than maybe anybody else, too.

An interesting sidelight on that, *because* we entertained people quite a bit, foreigners, when the—I think it was the Home Economic Society had a group coming from Indonesia, and they asked Les Bartsch, who was Assistant regional director at the time, to help them with it,

and he asked me. We told them some things to do and some things not to do, and some of these Indonesians kept insisting they wanted to see an Indian reservation. He said, "If you want to see Indians, just go down to Montana [Avenue] ~~Street~~ Saturday morning, you can see all the Indians you want to." "No, we want to see an Indian reservation."

### **Indonesian Visitors to Billings Wanted to See an Indian Reservation**

Well, it soon became apparent that [they thought] an Indian reservation had a big fence around it, so we got the Bureau of Indian Affairs to find a couple of people on a Saturday morning that could take cars and could take a delegation down and drive down to Hardin, you get to this point and it says "You are now entering the Crow Indian Reservation," which got that straightened out.

### **Friendship with David Shu Ling Chu**

Then in a more personal vein, one of the engineers was a man by the name of David Shu Ling Chu, who was one of the first ones we saw, a Chinese, sent over by his firm, the Taiwan Power Company, to do some work, and we met him in Billings, got acquainted with him. This was in 1953, before I went to the Philippines.

Then in about 1962, he came back to work with a firm in Chicago that was doing some design work for them, and to translate American labor requirements into Taiwanese labor

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requirements and equipment and so on. And he stopped in Billings and we saw him then. Then later on I heard he was going to give a paper at some engineering meeting, and I wrote to him. and I said, "If you come through Billings—"no, we were in—

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Storey: So he visited you in Billings.

Reedy: Well, yes, and then this next time I said, "If you're coming to Ann Arbor, why, come see us, or we're going to be at Caldwell, Maggie's—she was Margaret then—house," and he knew the girls, in Columbia. He phoned us in Columbia from Washington, kept in touch.

Then when we were getting ready to come back from Tehran, we wrote the fall before to people and said, "We're going to come home through the Orient," just to let them know what our plans were, and we got a letter from him. We got a letter from Taipei, saying, "When you come to Taipei, we would like to be your host." And it was on the letterhead of the Taiwan Power Company, and signed "David Shu Ling Chu, President."

So this was at the period when the overseas Chinese were coming home, and his house was just full of overseas relatives, so he put us up at a hotel, sent us up to a resort area by plane one day, and the next day he gave us a car and a driver and a guide, and drove us around the

island, and we had lunch at the mess of a nuclear power plant under construction, saw all of that that was legitimate. I never went through Customs so fast in all my life. [Laughter] He met us at the airport and we just went whipping through Customs. Held up our passports and they threw a rubber stamp at it.

And *then* the next day, Jimmy Carter broke relations with the Taiwan Government. We didn't hear from him for—let's see. That was 1978. For over ten years. Finally, through another Chinese engineer that I had known, I said, "When you go back to Taipei, will you see if you can find out where David is living, give me his new address." And I wrote to him, and we've been hearing from him since then. He sent me a copy of a book he had written on power development in a Third World country. So we're not happy with Jimmy Carter. [Laughter]

Storey: Did your work change while you were working in the Denver office, or was it basically all the same in the hydrology?

### **I Did Special Assignments**

Reedy: I did less hydrology than many of the others did, because I had these special things, the compilation of the reports, the aerial surveys, the equipment, the snow surveys. I had those special assignments.

**Phil Gibbs**



So there were others who spent day after day after day doing hydrology. Phil Gibbs was one. Phil later became Regional Planning Engineer in Billings, after Tom Judah died.

### **Memories of the Attack on Pearl Harbor**

Storey: In 1941, you would have been, what, thirty years old when Pearl Harbor was bombed?

Reedy: Fall of 1941. November 1941. I would have been thirty-two years old.

Storey: Were you drafted? What happened?

Reedy: What happened was, in September 1941, I had gone to an engineering meeting in Chicago. Lucie and I have known each other since 1930, in college, and had had an active correspondence of one letter a year, maybe. Maybe I'd send her a postcard from wherever I was working. She and my sister were each other's best friends. In the meantime, I had been engaged to be married, and in June the girl that I was going to marry in August said, "I can't marry you. I don't think I'll ever get married." It was the nicest thing she ever did for me, because then I hunted and hunted and hunted around and didn't find anyone.

I went to this engineering meeting in Chicago and then went on to New York City. I had written to Lucie and said, "Can we go to a theater or opera or something like that together?" So we did. And the first of October she told them she would be quitting her job. No, quitting

her job the first of November, and the first of December she came back home, and the first weekend in December I went to Council Bluffs, Iowa, which was her home. I had never met *any* of her family. Her father had died in the meantime.

On Sunday, we were having dinner in her mother's home, listening to the New York Philharmonic on the radio, and they cut in to announce the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and they immediately shut off the radio because her grandmother was there, and this grandmother's son, Lucie's uncle, was commanding a destroyer squadron at Pearl Harbor, and we didn't want Granny to hear about it. We found out later, we were told that he had gone out on maneuvers. His widow told us just five or six years ago that he had been convoying [Admiral William F.] Halsey [Jr.], taking planes to Wake and Guam.

So this was Pearl Harbor Day. We got married January 1st, and I volunteered for the Seabees, but actually was [trained] ~~training~~ for air raid warning and fighter control tactical use of radar.

Storey: Then how did you come back? You mentioned that you went over and talked to them in Washington.

### **Bob Newell Thought There Might Be a Job in Region 1**

Reedy: I went over and talked to someone in Washington, and Bob Newell said, "Well, maybe

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there's a job for you." I don't think he mentioned Walla Walla. He'd have to talk to whoever was his regional planning engineer, a man that I never knew very well. And when I got back to Denver, he had a request for me.

Storey: When you arrived back in—

**Worked about Three Weeks in Denver after the War and Then Transferred to the Walla Walla Planning Office**

Reedy: Not when I arrived back, but eventually, after I had worked out my terminal leave and started back to work in Denver. I don't remember whether I followed it up or whether he followed it up. I may have talked to—Everett Gould was by then personnel officer. I probably talked to Everett and some of the people there, and told them about Newell. And it may be they made the contact. But eventually contact was made, and they worked out the paperwork. I worked for about three weeks in the Denver office there.

Storey: That would have been in '46, I believe you said.

Reedy: That would have been in '46, yeah.

Storey: What was going on in Walla Walla? Traditionally the Columbia is sort of a Corps of Engineers river, except for—

Reedy: Except for irrigation.

Storey: Except for Coulee, of course.

Reedy: And irrigation.

Storey: Tell me more.

### **Walla Walla Planning Office Was Working on Several Small Projects**

Reedy: Well, we had a project around Pendleton, Oregon. We had a project at—I can't think of the name of it. It wasn't Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. But they had built a little project.

Storey: We had a *bunch* of little projects up in that area. Spokane.

Reedy: The Walla Walla office handled those. Did the preliminary work for them.

Storey: Out of Walla Walla? Why was it in Walla Walla, do you think?

Reedy: Possibly because there had been a hospital there where there was office space and so on, and there was an Air Force base there. I don't know whether that controlled. Boyd Austin had been in an office in Grants Pass, Oregon, I think it was, before the war. Two other people who had worked for him *there* came to work for him in Walla Walla, [John] ~~Donny~~ Mangan and John McEwen. I don't know why Walla Walla.

Storey: That was a Corps district there, or at least there is now.

Reedy: There is now. There was not then. There was not then, no. When the Yakima Project wanted

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to do some flood control, a team was set up with a representative of the Yakima Project, and a hydrologist from the Seattle District of the Corps, a woman hydrologist that I had known in college.

Storey: Whose name was?

Reedy: I'm trying to think of her name. Gosh, I can't think.

Storey: It'll come to you later.

Reedy: It'll come to me, yeah. She was the first woman to get a master's in— [Tape recorder turned off.]

Storey: You remembered that woman's name.

Reedy: I remembered that woman's name. Her name was Meredith Thoms.

Storey: T-H-O-M-S.

Reedy: T-H-O-M-S. And she had a career with the Corps of Engineers as a hydrologist. She got a master's degree from the University of Nebraska, the first woman ever to get one in civil engineering, and maybe the only one so far, I don't *know*. She and I worked one spring vacation for the Chairman of the Civil Engineering Department, Clark E. Mickey, who was doing some work on the Platte River, which later developed into one of the irrigation systems on the Platte. I'm not sure which one. But she and I did some work for him, so I got pretty well acquainted with her. Then later we turned up to

be on the same committee on a flood-control study for the Yakima Project, the Yakima River in Washington.

Storey: So you were doing hydrology up there in Walla Walla?

Reedy: Some. Yes, I guess I was the Hydrologist at that time. The office had shrunk. Originally there was a man by the name of John McEwen, who was a Hydrologist. I was Assistant Planning Engineer, and John McEwen was Hydrologist, and John Mangan was engineering surveys.

Then when the appropriations were cut one year, Boyd had to lose one position and he told me I'd have to go. Then later he learned that the regional office had withheld enough money to pay annual leave, and that made the difference between *my* job and one of the other two jobs.

So it wound up that John McEwen left. And *that* was interesting, because they had both started to work for the Bureau, they'd driven in the same car to a job before the war, with the Bureau, started to work at the same time, and both had military service. John Mangan had had a few days more work for some other government agency at one time than John McEwen had, so John Mangan out-pointed him by a few days. John McEwen went to another Bureau office, a New Mexico office. I can't remember what it was.

Storey: In other words, he transferred.

Reedy: He transferred.

Storey: He didn't really lose his job.

Reedy: He didn't really lose his job; he was transferred. But that *all* had to develop later. It was a matter of a prospective layoff, and then he transferred. So I was doing hydrology then. I took over that as well as being nominally Assistant Planning Engineer, so the hydrology was the bulk of the work at that time. And worked on this Yakima Project. I don't remember that it amounted to very much. I don't remember if we *ever* reached any conclusions on it. I don't know what happened after that. This was probably in the summer of 194 .-must have been in the summer of 1947.

### **Applied for Job in Bismarck**

Sometime in the fall of 1947, there was a job circulated for planning engineer in the Bismarck office, Bismarck, North Dakota. Bruce Johnson. And I had never known Bruce. We had never met. I wrote to him and said I was interested in it, and I would apply for it, said I didn't want to move till after our baby was born, expected in January. And he said, "That's all right. I don't want to fill it till after that, anyway."

Then I got to thinking, "Bruce has got "Swede" Sundahl [phonetic] in a position that looks just like this, and he's got Harold Mutch in a position that looks just like this. Now, what am I going to be doing?"

So I wrote to Tom Judah, who was the regional planning engineer in Billings at the time, and said, "Tom, I'm applying for this job of Bruce Johnson's, but I'm kind of curious about it. What does it amount to with Swede there and with Harold Mutch there and so on?"

Well, Tom had just signed a letter offering a job to somebody who had applied for it in the Billings office, and he reached in his "out" basket and pulled the letter out and got on the telephone, and telephoned me and said, "Would you like to come to Billings?"

I said, "Yes, I would." So that was the circumstances of [my] going to Billings. We talked a little bit about it, and then there was some correspondence. And correspondence, of course, between the two regional offices, and could I be released. And Boyd Austin said, yes, I could be released, and so on.

Storey: Why did you want to move from Walla Walla?  
[Tape recorder turned off.]

**"Walla Walla looked like sort of a dead end. . . ."**

Reedy: Walla Walla looked like sort of a dead end. We were happy there in our church, we had a nice house, we were happy in the neighborhood. I think more it was looking for—well, another thing, it involved a promotion in each case.

Storey: Okay.



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Reedy: No, wait a minute. Did it? Did it? No, it couldn't have, because I got the promotion later. Anyway, I don't remember circumstances, really.

Storey: Did they pay for your move?

Reedy: They paid for the move. It was a transfer.

Storey: So they paid moving expenses and that kind of thing?

Reedy: It was a transfer. Frances was born on January 26th, and I went to [Billings,] ~~Walla Walla~~, I think, sometime in March or April, and housing was *very* tight.

Storey: You went to Billings.

### **Reclamation Had Set up Some Housing on the Edge of Billings**

Reedy: I mean to Billings, in March or April. Housing was very tight, but the Bureau had leased a block and a half just on the edge of town, and went up to the Benbo Mine. There's chrome in Montana that is not economic to mine in peacetime, but the chrome supplies were coming from Russia and from South Africa, and so they activated the Benbo Mine during the war.

The Bureau went up there afterward with a big saw and sawed the log cabins in two, and loaded them on trucks and brought them down to Billings and put them back together again.  
[Laughter] Not literally, but that's essentially the

way it worked. And built a housing project out of log cabins.

So I eventually—I had enough seniority and so on to get one of those as soon as it was available, and then went back and got the family.

Storey: I would say at that point you had worked for Reclamation maybe ten years.

Reedy: Well, I had credit from '33 to '46, to '48. Fifteen years.

Storey: So the military counts.

Reedy: Military counts. Oh, yeah. Sure. Fifteen years and that was a fair amount of time, because a lot were post-war employees.

Storey: And the job there was?

### **Went into the Engineering and Surveys Division in Billings**

Reedy: It was in the Engineering and Surveys Division of the regional office, working for a man by the name of Harry Thompson. ~~under Harry Thompson~~. I had known Harry in Denver. He had worked in Debler's office. I guess Harry knew that I was coming and wrote and said, "What are your travel plans? Our daughters like to meet planes. I'll meet your plane." [Laughter]

### **Went to the Convention of the Episcopal Missionary District in Spokane on the Way to Billings**

Well, it happened that my plane out of Walla Walla was delayed into Spokane, and my plane out of Spokane missed the connection to [Billings,] ~~Spokane~~, so I went to the convention of the Episcopal Missionary District [of] ~~that~~ ~~was~~ Spokane, and cast my ballot. I had already been elected a delegate and was not going to get there because I was moving, but I did. I got into Billings about two o'clock in the morning, so Harry didn't meet me. So I went to the hotel and saw Harry the next morning.

Storey: Which hotel?

#### **Reclamation's Offices Were Scattered Around Billings at That Time**

Reedy: Northern. That was *the* hotel then. The offices were scattered around town at that time.<sup>9</sup> I got a room. The name of another man that I had worked with in Denver was very helpful in helping me find a room and so on. His name slips me.

Storey: Well, you know, we've talked for almost three hours now. Why don't we take this up on Wednesday again.

Reedy: All right.

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9. Kenneth Vernon, who was regional director in Billings, talked about his concerns about the scattered Reclamation offices in Billings during his oral history interviews by Reclamation staff.

Storey: I appreciate your taking time, and I'd like to ask whether researchers can use the information on the tapes and resulting transcripts.

Reedy: They can. I have read the material, read it while you were gone, and it looks quite reasonable.

Storey: Good.

Reedy: Similar to what I signed when I sent some stuff to the Arizona Historical Society and to American Heritage Center.

Storey: Good. Thank you.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 3. NOVEMBER 7, 1998.  
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 1. NOVEMBER 11, 1998.

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, Senior Historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Oliver C. "Cal" Reedy, on November the 11th, 1998, at his home in Sykesville, Maryland, beginning at about ten o'clock in the morning. This is tape one.

Have you thought of anything *you* would like to talk about?

### **University of Nebraska**

Reedy: I've thought about something I'd like to interpolate into the University of Nebraska, about the people that taught my courses. I had two persons of instructor rank for surveying, and there was one man who taught mechanics, who was an assistant professor, I think, but the *three* people

who taught *all* my professional courses were *all* full professors and all had had private-practice experience as well as academic experience, and you don't *get* that *anywhere* these days. The *only* undergraduate assistants we had were laboratory, where in our electrical lab and our mechanical lab some electrical and mechanical engineering students, seniors, worked as lab assistants, but the faculty that we had were all professor rank and had had experience. Now in many advertisements for positions, filling positions, they don't even ask whether you've had any practice or not; they just want to know where you can get money and run research. I think it made a difference.

Storey: I'm sure it did. It was a very different kind of profession back then, I think.

Reedy: A different kind of profession and different kind of professional schools. Now, how it would have been at M.I.T. or University of Michigan, University of Illinois, I don't know, but Nebraska was—and it's not that way in Nebraska now, so far as I can tell from reading.

Well, that's the one thing that I thought of interpolating. I think we covered the other work pretty well.

Storey: I think we got to Billings.

Reedy: We got ready for me to go to Billings.

Storey: What was your job in Billings under Mr. Thompson?

### **Received a Promotion for Moving to Billings**

Reedy: When I talked to you the other day, I wasn't sure what triggered the change to Billings, whether there was a promotion involved, but I've looked up my service record card and there *was* a promotion involved. It would have been had I gone to Bismarck and was going to Billings.

### **Primary Job in Billings Was Assisting the Head of the Office, Harry Thompson**

Harry Thompson was responsible for the engineering and surveys aspect of planning work, and my job was primarily just assisting *him*. Had very little field work. Got out in the field maybe a couple of times, but it was mostly paperwork, correspondence, and aspects of reports and things of that sort.

### **Became Assistant Regional Planning Engineer Working for Tom Judah**

That job continued in that way a relatively short time, possibly a year, and then they established the position of assistant regional planning engineer, and Tom Judah asked Harry if he'd rather have that job or the engineer and surveys job, and Harry preferred to continue in engineering and surveys, so I became acting assistant regional planning engineer and had that job with various titles from about 1950 to maybe 1965, something like that. It wasn't that long, either. As you know, there's a reorganization about every so often. [Laughter]

Storey: In Reclamation there is.

Reedy: And then they took the "acting" away and I became assistant regional planning engineer.

Storey: Well, surely not for a ten-, fifteen-year period.

Reedy: No, from about—assistant regional planning engineer from about 1950 to—well, if you want to know, we can find out.

Storey: So you were acting for a short period of time?

### **Became the Chief, Programs and Reports Branch**

Reedy: I was acting for a short period of time, and then the acting was taken away and I had the title from December 1950 to—I guess it was only about three years and they had another reorganization and abolished that position, and I became Chief, Programs and Reports Branch. That went on for about eight years. Then I—well, that doesn't look right either. I must have gone back to the assistant. It doesn't follow.

### **Later Was Assigned to a Special Study of the Yellowstone River Basin**

Anyway, Chief, Programs and Reports Branch and then a specific assignment in connection with the studies of the Yellowstone River Basin, which was about the last three years. I should have looked at these cards in a little more detail. I forgot what I did.

Storey: You were assistant planning engineer?

Reedy: Assistant regional planning engineer, or regional project—they changed the title of—the divisions and branches changed, and it changed from project planning to project development, back and forth.

Storey: What was the job, basically, all about?

Reedy: The job basically was to take some of the load off Tom Judah. I handled a lot of the correspondence and a lot of the miscellaneous work in the office, and a lot of the report-writing. I made maybe a half dozen field trips representing him various places, went with him sometimes, went with the Regional Director to some meetings where they wanted a planning representative, and generally that type of work—coordination among the various divisions, hydrology, engineering, surveys, economics, in the office. It was primarily to take some of the load off Tom so that he could devote himself more to the following-up on the technical aspects of the planning work.

Storey: When you say "planning work," are you talking about investigations?

Reedy: I'm talking about investigations.

Storey: *Before* a project's been authorized.

Reedy: Before a project's been authorized.

Storey: What kinds of investigations were going on while you were there?



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### **There Were Investigations of the Pick-Sloan Units**

Reedy: The investigations of the individual projects under the Pick-Sloan Plan for the development of Missouri River Basin.

Storey: Such as?

Reedy: Such as—what was the name of the big project in North Dakota? The name slips me.

Storey: Garrison.

Reedy: Garrison. The investigations along the western tributaries of the Missouri.

Storey: Am I thinking correctly, wasn't Sloan an assistant regional director or something up there in Billings?

Reedy: He was.

Storey: What was he like?

### **William Glenn Sloan**

Reedy: Sloan came to the Bureau in the thirties, and it was in the thirties and early forties that he developed the Reclamation's part of the Missouri Basin Plan, parallel to the [U.S. Army] Corps' [of Engineers] part. The Bureau's part was in Senate Document 191. I don't remember the Congress in session. The Corps' was in House Document 475. They were separate authorizations, but they worked together. General Pick was credited with the authorship of

the Corps' plan, and Sloan with the Bureau's plan.

Then I guess it was when the region was set up that Sloan–Comstock was regional director and Sloan was assistant regional director, and then they set up the Interior Department—the title is not right. Interior Department Coordinating Committee, something of that sort. And Sloan took the chairmanship of that, and then was the Bureau representative on the Missouri Basin Interagency Committee.

Storey: So those were no longer Reclamation jobs?

Reedy: Well, I'm not sure. No, I don't think he was paid by Reclamation. Maybe partly. But it was an Interior Department assignment for coordination. He was an easy person to work with. He was of a stature that he could argue with Debler in the 1930s better than most of the rest of us could, both by age and reputation. [Laughter] He had a *phenomenal* memory. I never knew him to make notes about anything. He said, "If I have notes about anything, I will learn to forget." He just relied on his memory for speeches or notes or dates or anything of that sort.

Storey: Really. That's interesting. Did you ever hear him speak?

Reedy: Yes, I heard him speak.

Storey: What kind of a speaker was he?

Reedy: I don't remember them. I don't remember specific cases. I'm not sure that I ever heard him speak formally. Certainly in small groups. I liked him. I got along with him very well.

Storey: I suppose he's dead now.

Reedy: I'm sure he must be. I haven't kept track of him. He would have been—well, yeah, probably in his fifties in the 1930s.

Storey: So he was an older man.

Reedy: He was an older man. That was part of the reason he had the stature he did.

The Interior coordination job and then later the M-B-I-C<sup>10</sup> job were two things that he carried on, I thought, very effectively. He had broad views, and I think he probably represented broader Interior views than maybe some other Reclamation people whose views were Reclamation views. And in any other agency the Corps was monolithic in the Missouri Basin. The Department of Agriculture had maybe a couple of agencies, but Interior was spread out all over the map—Reclamation, Parks, Outdoor Recreation, Geological Survey. Gosh, what else. Fish and Wildlife, of course.

Storey: Tell me, first of all, how Sloan related to your planning responsibilities.

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10. Missouri Basin Interagency Committee.

Reedy: After—well, this is post-regional director time, when he was in the Missouri Basin Interagency Committee. His was a coordination job, first, in the Interior Department, coordination *among* those several agencies, whose views were different, and it was a matter of trying to seek coordination and cooperation sometimes among agencies that didn't particularly want to cooperate on a particular matter.

Storey: What about before he left Reclamation?

Reedy: I don't remember that period. I don't remember *him* at that period. I don't remember Comstock. When I went there, the change was just being made from Comstock-Sloan to Vernon, Ken Vernon.

Storey: What was Ken Vernon<sup>11</sup> like?

### **Kenneth Vernon**

Reedy: I'm trying to think when the Commissioner changed, what the focus changed. See, Reclamation had been primarily in engineering, and it had to spread out more into agriculture and economics and irrigation, though it had *done* those things.

### **Offices in Mandan and Bismarck Reported to the Regional Director Through Different Channels**

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11. Reclamation has done oral history interviews with Mr. Vernon.

But when I went to Region Six, as an example, there was a planning office reporting to Tom Judah, to the Regional Director through Tom Judah, in Bismarck, and economics and irrigation office in Mandan, across the river, reporting through Bill Rawlings, who was—what was Bill's title? It was irrigation, I guess, in the regional office.

Shortly after I got there, they consolidated the two offices, but there was still a feeling of sometimes animosity within the regional office.

Storey: Some *tensions* there between the offices.  
[Laughter]

Reedy: Some tensions there between the office, yes. And it was understandable because the focus was different in the two offices. The old Reclamation people like Tom Judah just sometimes didn't trust what was going on in the irrigation. It was *not* the same between design and construction and planning, because design and construction had been a part of the Reclamation and we knew those people.

Storey: Let's see. '53. Mike Straus left. He had been Commissioner from '45. Of course, he was a newspaperman appointed by—

Reedy: It was under Mike Straus that Comstock was retired and Ken Vernon appointed.

Storey: Yeah. Ken became Regional Director in April of 1947.

Reedy: Who was the Assistant Regional Director?

Storey: That I don't know.

Reedy: You don't have that.

Storey: Sloan was when the region was created in '43, '44.

Reedy: That's right.

Storey: But I don't know *after* that.

Reedy: Well, I think Sloan continued possibly for a short time, and then the Interior Department Coordinating Committee was set up and Sloan took that over.

Storey: But you never became aware of any issues over Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program that came up because Sloan was in that position?

Reedy: No, not really. No, not really.

Storey: I suppose by then things had been pretty well ironed out.

**For Pick-Sloan ". . . we thought we had the authorization to work on any of those jobs, and did. . . ."**

Reedy: Yes, pretty well ironed out, and we had the authorization for—we thought we had the authorization to work on any of those jobs, and did. Had to get special authorization for some of them. Golly, names slip me. The reservoir that

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was built primarily for water supply for a town in North Dakota had to have special authorization.

Storey: Jamestown; Dickinson.

### **Dickinson Unit, Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program**

Reedy: Dickinson. The Bureau did *not have* overall authorization for water supply, public water supply at that time. Dickinson had to be specifically authorized. That was going on when I got there, discussions about it. I think it was under construction, but I'm not sure. I wasn't involved in the construction part at all.

Storey: Think back to when you first got there.

Reedy: And there was a specific unit of public water supplies independent of project planning and irrigation. I can't think of the man's name, later became very much involved in foreign activities, head of that public water supplies there for a while.

Storey: You mentioned a man—his name starts with B, and I've forgotten the name now. Well, anyway. Tell me about Ken Vernon.

Reedy: Well, Ken Vernon—of course, we were suspicious of Ken Vernon because he was an outsider and came in and took the job away from Comstock. But in retrospect, I think he did a very good job.

Storey: Where did he come from?

Reedy: I don't know. I don't know where he came from.

Storey: If I'm recalling correctly, he was in the Commissioner's office.

Reedy: He may have been in the Commissioner's office and moved out there, but, see, I didn't have at that time the same concept of the Commissioner's office that I had had when I worked in Denver and later on working in Billings, because I had come from Walla Walla, where we were filtered through the regional office. I didn't have the same feel for the Commissioner's office.

I think Ken did a good job. He had some obstacles to overcome because of the Reclamation people who were set in their ways—Charlie Anderson in design and construction, and [a] ~~dear~~ power man whom I knew very well. And Tom, who—

Storey: Tom?

Reedy: Tom Judah, the project heads. And Bill Rawlings, who headed irrigation, they got along better because they were beginning to emphasize the economics and that type of thing more than they had, and that was part of the reason that Ken Vernon was sent there, to sort of change the viewpoint of Reclamation. But I became fairly well acquainted with him and I liked him.

Storey: What was he interested in?



Reedy: I'm trying to think at what point I began calling him "Ken" instead of "Mr. Vernon."

Storey: Is that significant? *Why* is that significant?

Reedy: Well, just in my relationship to a Regional director. See, his successors I had known before as planning people—Frank Clinton and Bruce Johnson and—

Storey: Harold Aldrich.

Reedy: Harold Aldrich I had known before, but Ken I knew initially as a regional director, and I always called him "Mr. Vernon." I went on some very interesting trips with him. We went on one trip down when Yellowtail was under consideration, down to a meeting at Hardin, on the Crow Agency, and listened for an hour and a half to a speech by a Chief Yellowtail, in Crow, which we did not understand a single word.

**"Ken was talking and the lights went out, and he had the opportunity to say, 'What you need is a good public power program.'"**

I don't know whether it was at that meeting or another meeting, Ken was talking and the lights went out, and he had the opportunity to say, "What you need is a good public power program." [Laughter] He told me that happened twice. It had happened once before to him in a speech and gave him that opportunity. So he picked up on things of that sort. He was a good public relations person and a good supervisor. I don't know how Tom felt about him.

Storey: Tom?

Reedy: Judah. Immediately reported to him. I got along well with him and I think I reflected Tom's views, and I think *Tom* thought I reflected his views.

Storey: What were Ken Vernon's interests?

Reedy: I suppose maybe water-user relationships and the public relationships aspects of things. He was not an engineer. I don't think he had been a newspaperman like Mike Straus. As I recall, those were his interests—public relations and keeping the office running smoothly and relationships with the other Interior agencies, so that we could do what we conceived as our job.

There were, as you can imagine, a number of disagreements, particularly between Fish and Wildlife and Reclamation, which developed some interesting things. I think Ken was a pretty good manager.

### **Dividing the Waters of the Yellowstone River**

A special assignment that I had at that time, 1949 and '50, shortly after I went there, the states of North Dakota, Wyoming and Montana asked for a commission to divide up the waters of the Yellowstone River. ~~which took a head in Wyoming~~. The major stream heads in [Wyoming and] Montana, and it flows into [the] Missouri, in North Dakota. So that all three states are involved.

The Yellowstone Basin Compact Commission was established, and under the laws under which those operate, the chair is a Federal employee. Bob Newell, R. J. Newell, from Boise Regional Office was—

Storey: P-N Regional Director ultimately.

### **Bob Newell, and Others at Reclamation, Were Educated at the University of Maine**

Reedy: Regional Director, was named as chairman. He was one of a group who came to the Reclamation from Maine. Comstock was another one. Comstock told me that they referred to themselves as "Mainiacs." [Laughter]

### **Bob Newell Predicts Potatoes Would Grow Well in Idaho**

I'm sure Comstock told me *this* story about Newell, having come from Maine, where the potato industry was strong. He went out to one of the projects in Idaho when he first was assigned out there, and kicked some of the dirt and picked up a little of it and said, "I believe you could grow spuds in this country." [Laughter]

Storey: Really. Robert Newell.

Reedy: That's the story. Well, I had that job and I got quite well acquainted with Newell at that time. I had known him before when I worked in Deb's office. Of course, I was in his region, but no contact with him at that time. And the

representatives of the three states. And [I] handled that Commission and the annual reports of that Commission for several years afterward, just a *pro forma* report. The Commission report was issued in 1950.

Storey: So did you sit in the meetings?

Reedy: I sat in all the meetings, took all the minutes, kept all the records.

Storey: What were the major issues that came up?

Reedy: No *real* issues, just a matter of how do we divide it. Part of it is, how much irrigatable land do you have? How much of the water originates in your state? I think it was a matter of not so much debate, but how do we reach logical conclusions that will stand up? That's the impression that I have of it, and how do we do it legally?

I had occasion to work with the—by that time I guess he was regional counsel for the Interior Department, had been a regional counsel for the Bureau, Bill Burke. I had known Bill when I worked in Denver, one of the people I got reacquainted with when I went to Billings. He was a little difficult at times. I had no problems, but there were problems. Later on, after he retired, his successor—

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Storey: Your successor and you—

Reedy: Got quite well acquainted, and it got to the point where if he had a problem on language in a contract or something like that, he would send it to me and ask me sometimes for suggestions as to how to word things. I was able to find for him the names of some streams that were in some old treaties, where the stream name had been changed and he couldn't figure out where it was. For example, the upper end of the Mississippi used to be the St. Peter River, and the St. Peter and the St. Paul joined to form the Mississippi, *as I recall it*. The name "St. Peter" had been lost, and I was able to run that down for him. And some things of that sort. I wish I could think of his name. I can visualize him.

Storey: How did your office relate to the Denver office?

Reedy: Denver office provided technical support for the planning work and any major design problem involved for a planning report went down there. They coordinated, of course, the program work, the division of the money for planning work. I say design work, but they also provided—the Chief Geologist was in Denver and the economics and soils people in Denver that provided support for our soils people. Part of the time the soils people were in planning and then later they were moved into irrigation, but I remember them mostly in planning. And the economics people were in planning. There were economists in irrigation also, and not always did they agree on methods, but that was part of the coordination that had to be worked out.

Storey: Thinking back to those early years, did you ever go to Denver for meetings, for training?

### **Annual Program Meetings in Denver**

Reedy: Never for training. In the earliest years, not for meetings. Later, when I became head of Programs and Reports Branch, I would go to Denver at least once a year for a program conference, at which time Tom would go and I would go, people from engineering and irrigation also, but we worked particularly with the planning programs, estimates of what the planning was going to cost and how much could we do this year, and dividing up money that we always thought was not quite enough.

Storey: Did the Regional Director go to those?

Reedy: Normally not. Normally not. They met some other ways. But normally the planning meetings *did not* involve the Regional Director. They involved the finance programs—Program and Finance Division of the regional office, plus the program people from the separate offices. We had meetings at both levels.

They were very nicely timed, because we'd ride down on the Bureau plane, and for several years in a row it turned out to be Mother's Day. I could go to the folks' house and spend the evening and night with my parents, and borrow Dad's car and drive to the meetings, and drive back and forth, eventually fly home again. So the timing was very nice for that.

Storey: When you say a Bureau plane, what kind of plane?

### **Reclamation Planes**

Reedy: It was a Beechcraft B-17? No, it wasn't a B-17. It was a Beech 17. I think it was a 17. Twin-engine Beechcraft, about eight passengers, I think. When I went there, the Bureau had a pilot and an assistant pilot, but they never used the assistant pilot until he eventually did some other work and eventually transferred to another office where they had a plane. Bill—whatever his last name was—was a pilot, and we all had great confidence in him. We figured he was going to come back and we would, too.

On more than one occasion, when either I alone for some reason or another was flying to come other office in the Bureau, or other people wanted to sit in the back and chat, I rode up in the co-pilot seat and had a chance to look around and see how flying is done.

Storey: How did you get around in the early years when you were up there?

### **Traveling on Reclamation Business**

Reedy: I didn't get around very much in the early years. It was a Bureau car. Within the region it was Bureau car. Within Montana it was Bureau car. Sometimes you'd fly to Riverton or fly to—I don't think we ever flew to Cody. Trips to Bismarck were usually by Bureau car or, I suppose, sometimes by train, though I don't remember

ever going by train to Bismarck. It would have been an easy trip if the timing had been right.

Storey: When you say you flew, what did you fly?

Reedy: Sometimes the Bureau plane, sometimes Northwest, if it was east and west, or Western if it was north and south, or Frontier. When you got over into the Dakotas, it was the North Central Airlines, served Bismarck and Huron and Omaha and the areas there.

Storey: Did you ever fly—I think Ken Vernon said you had DC something or the others in the region at one point.

Reedy: I don't know. Not regional planes. Not region-owned planes. A lot of the equipment on some of those smaller airlines were DC-3s, still.

Storey: Did you visit your family in Denver, personal?

Reedy: We often drove. Several times drove to Denver for either Thanksgiving or Christmas.

Storey: So you would drive?

Reedy: We'd drive.

Storey: How long a trip was it, do you remember?

Reedy: For Thanksgiving, we'd try to get the girls out of school Wednesday afternoon and drive to Crow Agency and stop and have supper at Crow Agency and drive on to either Sheridan or another town in Wyoming, overnight, and into



Denver in time for a late Thanksgiving dinner. Drive home on Sunday. Sometimes we'd drive home in one day, sometimes take parts of two days. It was about five hundred miles.

Storey: Quite a trip in those days.

Reedy: A little more than—yeah, better to do it in two days than one.

Storey: Do you ever remember using trains on Reclamation business?

Reedy: I don't remember on Reclamation business. I do remember one time I used a train on quasi-Reclamation business, when I was getting ready to go to the Philippines and loaned to FOA on a detail by FOA to the Philippines. They sent me up to the Great Falls Air Force Base for my physical, and I took the train overnight up to Great Falls, had my physical, except the EKG machine was broken down, so I had to go back to Billings for my EKG. [Laughter]

### **Lucy Pettapiece**

Storey: Since you've mentioned Great Falls, do you remember a woman named Lucy Pettapiece, who was an engineer in the office?

Reedy: I do.

Storey: Tell me about her, if you would.

Reedy: I never knew her in connection with the office. I knew her in connection with the American

Society of Civil Engineers' activities. I didn't know her *that well*. I remember that she was there, but we never worked together and never had any contact on ASCE business, really, except at meetings and so on. I think she became an officer of the Great Falls branch and then maybe of the Montana section, which we reorganized about that time.

Storey: About what time?

Reedy: '49, '50, '51.

### **Working on ASCE in Montana**

Storey: Were Reclamation engineers active in ASCE?

Reedy: Yes. The section had been built around Butte and Helena, where a lot of the consulting engineers were, and, of course, Butte was the big mining town at the time. But we organized it so that there was a section, and we were, I think, one of the first to formally establish branches. We had five branches at one time: Billings and Great Falls and Helena, I remember. Can't remember where the other two were.

Lucy Pettapiece was involved. A man who had, I think, worked for Reclamation, I know he *grew up* in Reclamation, Lee Walker, who had by that time a private consulting business, and I were principal architects of the reorganization of the section. I was Secretary and then President for a while, and Lee later became national President of American Society of Civil Engineers. His father was A. W.

Walker, worked on the Belle Fourche Project with my dad. I guess his uncle-in-law also worked on the project. I can't remember his name. I never knew either of them.

Storey: Tell me a little more about the ASCE. Is this the group that—I guess it's a certification process, where you get to put "P.E." after your name?

Reedy: No, no. No. There are two major engineering organizations involving civil engineers. One is ASCE, which is specifically civil engineering and has counterparts—the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the American Association of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, American Society of Chemical Engineers. Those are the major—called the "founder societies." The work is kind of mixed. They represent the technical professional activities.

### **National Society of Professional Engineers**

Then there is the National Society of Professional Engineers, which is the one you're talking about, which has no responsibility for examining or authorizing P.E. That's a job in every state, under state law, but NSPE requires that you be registered to be a member of NSPE. There was a reorganization of that in Montana later on.

Storey: Did you have certification?

Reedy: I got it under a peculiarity of the Montana law. I told my dad one time that the worst disfavor he

ever did to me was not insisting that I get registered when I got right out of college, when I graduated, but I didn't. You worked for the government, you didn't need to be. But under the Montana law, which had involved just civil engineers, and then they expanded it to include all branches of the profession, but I got not—it wasn't grandfathering. Grandfathering is when you are already in practice and the law is passed. Mine was long continued service or something like that, so it was automatic in Montana, but it was not transferable to any other state. No other state would accept it. I just let it stand at that.

Storey: So you didn't go through an exam process.

Reedy: No, no. I wouldn't have wanted to take the time at that stage to bone up on all the details one would need to, and the profession had changed so much since I graduated from college. So I had an NSPE membership in Montana and transferred that to Michigan, and then became a life member in Michigan, and I just left my membership there. ASCE automatically transfers you to the section where you live, unless you ask for something else. So I am a member of the Maryland section, but I've had no activity at all. Don't expect to.

Storey: Tell me at what point you quit practicing as a technical engineer in your career at Reclamation.

Reedy: The end of the work in Iran, two jobs after Reclamation.

Storey: You were doing technical engineering work.

**Worked as an Engineer at the Great Lakes Basin Commission and Iran after Leaving Reclamation**

Reedy: I was doing professional engineering work in the Great Lakes Basin Commission and Iran. Report-writing, that type of thing, involving engineering practice. I never did anything such as design work except some estimates off curves for various things, but never any detailed design work, either hydraulic systems or dams.

**"I did water-supply studies, a lot of water-supply studies. . . ."**

I did water-supply studies, a lot of water-supply studies.

**In the Programs and Reports Branch did a lot of writing and editing**

Then later on when I became head of the regional Programs and Reports Branch, I did a lot of writing and a lot of editing and coordinating appendixes with reports and things of that sort. Then in about 1965, I guess it was, 1965 I had a change in title to comprehensive basin planning engineer.

About that time the Missouri Basin Interagency Committee, which was a voluntary committee set up because they saw the need of it among the states and the Federal agencies working in the Missouri Basin, Federal agencies—Agriculture, Interior, and the Corps, primarily, and what was then Federal Power

Commission, less significantly. But they wanted to tie down some of the things that were not specifically spelled out, and look at some of the aspects of the Pick-Sloan Plan, which had been not worked on in detail up to that time.

### **Spent Last Three Years at Reclamation Studying the Yellowstone River Basin**

They divided up the Missouri Basin. The Yellowstone River Basin was one part. The Upper Missouri. They divided up. I'm trying to think, because we had—it was only the Region Six part, not the Region Seven part. The Upper Missouri was one part and the western tributaries was a part. The Corps was responsible for a task force which handled the western tributaries and the main stem of the Missouri. Agriculture was responsible for the—must have been for the Upper Missouri. I was chair of the task force for the Yellowstone, and that involved Corps representatives and Agriculture representatives, and, of course, the myriad of Interior representatives, with their different views. What I worked on then, for the last three years I was there, was an examination of the Yellowstone Basin, the water supply available, the opportunities for development and what was expected.

The Pick-Sloan Plan had called for a dam on the Yellowstone, storage reservoir on the Yellowstone, and it was *very* controversial. I was sent a copy of the report after it was finished, and I don't know what was said in that report. I personally *did not* represent

Reclamation's official views on that dam, but it never got to that point.

One of the great satisfactions I had was when we got to the point when people from the Fish and Wildlife Service and Outdoor Recreation and Park Service came to realize that I would present their views at a task force meeting, even though officially the Bureau might not agree with their views, and would get them, if I needed them, but that I could represent them fairly and honestly, and I felt that was quite an achievement.

Storey: You did three years on the Yellowstone?

Reedy: Three years on the Yellowstone.

Storey: What was that time period?

Reedy: '65 to '68. When I left, another engineer took it over and finished it up.

Storey: That dam was not within Yellowstone National Park or anything.

Reedy: No, no, no, it wouldn't have been within the park. It was downstream from Livingston. But it would have drowned out the area which was used in the movie "A River Runs Through It," which was a different stream than the story is about. That was a nice area to get pictures in.  
[Laughter]

Storey: Good trout fishing.

Reedy: The Yellowstone, I think, is the only major river in the country which does not have any storage dams on it, or power dams.

Storey: Or even diversion dams, maybe. Does it?

Reedy: It has diversion dams. Lower Yellowstone, there's a diversion dam at the Lower Yellowstone Project. But it doesn't impede the flow at all. At its mouth, the Yellowstone annually puts more water into the Missouri than the Missouri brings to that point.

Storey: So, a fairly major study.

Reedy: It was a major study, yeah, and it was interest, interesting coordination.

Storey: What was the objective of the study?

Reedy: To see what developments should be continued, what development, what studies should be continued for development in the Yellowstone.

Storey: Was this a Reclamation initiative? Was this somebody else's initiative?

Reedy: Well, this dam had been proposed in the Pick-Sloan Plan, was authorized. But there were questions raised about it, about first its economic feasibility, second, its effect on the environment, which was beginning to play a more and more important part.

We did think about the environment some, but there was no authorization to really



take it into account in economic studies, even, up to that time. Nor for a long time for recreation—taking any credit for recreation. I think even Yellowtail had to be specific legislation to take credit for recreation at Yellowtail. I'm not sure about that.

Storey: Did you ever hear about any plans in Reclamation to use the waters of Yellowstone Lake?

Reedy: No.

Storey: That's what my research finds, too, but I haven't—there are other people who believe there were things going on.

Reedy: I don't think so. I suppose it would have been a Missouri-Colorado diversion.

Storey: Or Columbia, maybe, into the Columbia Basin.

Reedy: Might be. Might have been. Either one would have been pretty tough and pretty tricky physically as well as politically. [Laughter]

### **Bill Rawlings**

Storey: Yes. [Laughter] Tell me about Bill Rawlings.

Reedy: Well, we were always suspicious of Bill Rawlings, because he came from a different background. He was *imported* into the Bureau of Reclamation.

Storey: From where?

Reedy: I don't know. I don't know where. I don't know where. We were even suspicious of the people that worked for him. But I came to like him, because I grew up with that suspicious attitude. [Laughter] It had to be overcome. A lot of Tom's attitude rubbed off, because they were doing jobs that had been planning jobs, economics. We had the soil surveys. But they were doing economics and there was some conflict about it.

As I say, before I went—and at the time I went to Billings, there were two separate offices, one in Bismarck and one in Mandan, one reporting the sort of work that Tom was in charge of, and the other reporting the sort of work that Bill Rawlings was in charge of. They later consolidated those *under* the Planning Engineer in Bismarck.

Storey: That would have been Mr. Judah?

Reedy: No. Well, the Bismarck man was Bruce Johnson. Bruce Johnson reported to the Regional Director. He did not report to Judah. His technical relationship was with Judah and with any other regional division. Power was with power and irrigation was with irrigation. But his principal function at that time was investigations of the individual projects authorized in the Pick-Sloan Plan. Were they feasible? Did we want to build them? What would be accomplished? Did the people want them?

At one time I had occasion to go to Bismarck. It was after I had been in Billings for about three years, I guess, and Bruce had not happened to come into the regional office in that time. Maybe it wasn't that long. I went over to Bismarck, and Bruce and I drove somewhere in a car, and that was the first time he realized that the job that I had said I wanted to take—  
[telephone interruption.]

Storey: We were talking about Mr. Rawlings, I believe.

Reedy: Well, we had talked about Rawlings, and I was going on to Bruce Johnson on the trip—

Storey: Yes.

Reedy: I think you remember I applied for a job in Bruce Johnson's office. I told you that when I wrote to ask Tom Judah what it was like, he pulled another letter out of his "out" basket and wrote to me and said would I take the job in Billings. [Laughter] And I didn't know that he had never told Bruce about it. So it was about two years, Bruce couldn't figure out what had happened to me, why I suddenly dropped out of the picture. But it worked out all right. I was happy I had made the choice I did.

Storey: You mentioned soil surveys, and you also mentioned changes to engineering between when you were educated and later years. Talk to me about that kind of stuff, if you would. What was going on in the practice of engineering, and how was it affecting Reclamation?

### Changes in Engineering During His Career

Reedy: Well, of course, I was *not* involved in design and construction and the principal changes in those. I just observed. There were changes in the equipment used, changes in the approach. Of course, when the computer came in, that was a *major* change. And constant improvement in concrete.

### Soils Issues of Interest to Reclamation

When we talk about soils, we have two things to talk about: one is the engineering properties of soils, and the other is the agricultural properties of soils. And they are quite different. There were lots of studies going on in soil science—the stability of soil, of slopes, and how to better construct earth dams and improvements in the equipment for earth dams, compaction and drainage and embankment protection and that sort of thing. Those are just evolutions. In soil surveys it was—

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BEGINNING SIDE 1, TAPE 2. NOVEMBER 11, 1998.

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey with Oliver C. Reedy, on November 11, 1998.

**". . . people remembered . . . If sagebrush would grow on some unirrigated land, it would be good for crop land, but if the natural cover was greasewood, it wasn't any good. . . ."**

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Reedy: When Dad was working, I guess it spilled over not really into the time when I began, except the people remembered it. If sagebrush would grow on some unirrigated land, it would be good for crop land, but if the natural cover was greasewood, it wasn't any good. And that's because of the acidity, alkalinity of the soils, which adapted greasewood. Largely ~~the soil surveys were to determine that~~ the agricultural soil surveys were to determine how much of the land was suitable for irrigation and what could be the effective boundaries of the irrigated land from the soil standpoint. They worked with the economists on what could be expected in terms of crops and crop production and monetary output from the land and that type of thing.

Storey: Was that evolving at this time?

### **Soils Classification**

Reedy: It was evolving. It was always evolving. A man by the name of Earl Fogerty was the head land classification. The term "land classification" was often used as well as soils classification, because the land classification included more the economics aspects, and the soils was just technical. What kind of soil is it? How permeable is it? How acidic is it, or alkaline? What's the pH? And that type of thing. But the land classification would take into account the economics of production to some extent, too. And they worked very closely with the agricultural economists on estimating those aspects.

Then, of course, the boundaries were determined also by where you put a canal. Sprinkling was just beginning to come in. I remember large sprinkling, I guess, maybe in the late 1940s, but not the way it is now. Not groundwater sprinkling where we would have never *thought* of irrigating at that time. You assumed that there was plenty of natural moisture for crops. Now they irrigate and put on larger quantities of nutrients, fertilizers, and plant the corn closer together, use up both the soil fertility and the groundwater. But that really became prominent, I suppose, after I left Reclamation. It was developing, but it didn't get to the point where it is now until after I left Reclamation, which was about thirty years ago.

Storey: Thirty years ago this year.

Reedy: Yeah.

Storey: What about other changes to engineering practice? Anything you happen to recall?

### **Computerization of Design Work**

Reedy: I don't recall changes. There undoubtedly were. There was a lot of changes in the mechanics of doing things, and I don't know the changes that took place in the use of computerized design and computerized drawing. I know they took place, and I know there are stories going around, the validity of which I have not been able to check, though I quote them. The particular one I remember was when Yellowtail was under design, the head of the Concrete Dams Division

was an older engineer, not a computer man, and he wanted them to do the studies of Yellowtail by the old hand processes, but the younger engineers also ran a parallel set of studies, unbeknownst to him, on the computer, using higher-strength concrete and more refined repetitive designs, and put the results in the file.

When they came to building Yellowtail, this older man had retired. They pulled these alternative designs out and saved a considerable amount of money. I don't know the validity of the story, but it was quoted. It's one I heard, I guess after I left Reclamation.

Storey: That's interesting. I've heard the difference it made in figuring trial load analysis, for example.

Reedy: That's it. Yes, the trial load analysis, which is an iterative process, and you can only do it so many times with so many people. A computer can do it a lot faster, particularly the right kind of a computer.

Storey: Once you get it set up.

### **Experience with Computers in Tehran**

Reedy: Yeah. Had an interesting experience of that sort in Tehran. We were running some reservoir operation studies on a program developed by the Corps of Engineers in Sacramento, and a program that they would have run in about three hours on their computer. We were using the computer in the Ministry of Energy in Iran, which was not an engineering computer, but a

financial and business computer, and we had to be sure that the second eight-hour shift would come on and the operation could be continuous, because it took longer than eight hours to run the program. [Laughter] It ran it, but it was a much—well, it was an older computer and it was not designed for that purpose.

Storey: Slower.

Reedy: Slower. Punch card input.

Storey: And now we have no machines to read the punch cards any longer.

Reedy: That's right.

Storey: But we've got a lot of punch cards that are being saved.

Reedy: I heard that. I heard that. What was it, the 1980 census, raw data, there are only two machines in the world that can read it. One's in Japan and one's in pieces in the Smithsonian Institution.

Storey: Something like that.

Reedy: Something on that order. I learned in Iran to do a lot of the punch cards, because it was easier for me and faster for me to learn to do that than to explain to the Iranian operators, who were not acquainted with that *at all*, because they were doing financial and business work. I explained to them what to do. And we didn't have *enough* business with them to train punch card operators.



Storey: One of the things that I think was going on while you were in Billings was the development of a Reclamation power grid connected with private grids and so on up in that area.

### **Montana Power Company, Rural Electrification, and Establishing a Grid**

Reedy: It was beginning. It was going on, yes. I don't know how much. Most of this was going on in the Dakotas, where we were involved. Montana Power Company was one of the *early* companies to electrify farms, so that the Montana Power Company served a lot of agricultural area which would otherwise have come under electric co-ops. Now, there were electric co-ops in Montana, yes, but Montana Power Company had done a lot of that work initially. They were ahead of the power companies in some other states in that aspect.

I knew it was going on. I wasn't involved with it. I knew the people who were involved, the power people and so on. And, of course, we were interested in it and interested in the interconnection of the high-voltage interconnection between Columbia Basin Project and Central Valley Project. You can't *help* being interested in a thing like that.

Storey: Pacific Northwest, Pacific Southwest Intertie Project.

Reedy: Intertie. But I didn't know any of the details and wasn't involved in any of the details, and it *didn't*

enter into any of the studies or reports that I was involved in. It was another part of the office. It was then a power division, and I can't remember at what point the power function was separated from the Bureau.

Storey: 1978. That's when Western was created. '77-, '78.

Reedy: '77-, '78. I didn't remember when it was, and I was not involved then at all. Well, it was beginning to be talked about when I was working for the Great Lakes Basin Commission, and the Federal Power Commission had a Commissioner on the Basin Commission.

Storey: That would have been as early as '68?

Reedy: No. Well, it was cooking from '68 to '75.

Storey: Then finally became law. Yes, those things tend to take a while to *work* their way through the Congress.

Reedy: Yes.

Storey: Get all of the interest groups sort of quieted down and to get to work through all of that kind of thing.

### **Stories About Environmental Issues**

Reedy: I mentioned some of the animosities—"tensions" is a better word—between some of the Interior agencies. There was a man in the Fish and Wildlife office in Billings, I think he was the

assistant supervisor, and he or Tom Judah, one of them, called the other on the phone one time, and I could hear Tom's end of the conversation. This was when we were talking about the reservoir which would have been in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area, and would have affected the migration routes for elk. Tom said, "Well, how did you do? You went hunting over the weekend."

He said, "Yeah."

"You didn't do the thing? You didn't see anything?"

"No, didn't see a thing."

So, "Gee, that's kind of funny. Those elk, though, they're pretty smart. They used to be a plains animal, didn't they?"

"Yeah."

"And they learned to adapt themselves to the mountain country."

"Uh-hmm."

"Well, don't you think, then, they could have learned a different migration route in Bob Marshall Wilderness Area?"

And the other phone went down. Bang!  
[Laughter]

Storey: [Laughter] Always poking at one another.

Reedy: Yeah. Another time—this is an apocryphal story, too—we had an agreement at the local level on some aspect of some project with Fish and Wildlife. It had cleared their regional office in Minneapolis and gone to Washington, and it just seemed to be hung up there. The story is that somebody went to one office in the Solicitor's office and asked the man to come out in the hall, and went to the next door in the Solicitor's office and asked the man to come out in the hall, and they were the Reclamation and Fish and Wildlife representatives. He said, "I'd like you two fellows to meet each other, and maybe you can get to work on this agreement that we have."  
[Laughter]

Storey: You don't remember what that agreement was about?

Reedy: No, I have no idea what it was about, probably not anything very significant.

There's the executive director of Fairhaven walking around. I'm supposed to be in a meeting at one o'clock, and I said, "Please excuse me," and I got a letter from him saying, "Of course. Very interesting that you're doing an oral history."

Storey: You don't remember any of the other projects you worked on?

### **Planning on Clark Fork of the Yellowstone River**

Reedy: I don't, no. They're thirty years ago, and the names of the individual projects, I remember we

were working on dams on the Clark Fork of the Yellowstone. Yes, Clark Fork of the Yellowstone River. I know we had worked on some there, and I was particularly interested in that because I had been on a survey job in there when I was working for the Bureau of Public Roads. I remember going with Harry Thompson one time, it was later than the time I was working for Harry, I went out in some other capacity, maybe just because I wanted to go, and saw them. No, I don't remember names of specific projects.

I know I went down to Riverton one time with the drainage man to talk about some project down there in which drainage was involved.

Storey: How would you characterize that project?

Reedy: Well, Riverton was an operating project at that time. We just got involved in it because we had drainage people.

Storey: Was it a big, successful project?

Reedy: I always thought it was a little better than borderline, but I don't know. I don't know. What do you call a successful project? One in which the water users have repaid all their contract costs? There is no such thing.

Storey: Well, that's an interesting question, isn't it. How do you define a successful project?

Reedy: What do you include? What do you include in economic benefits? That's an argument that's been going on for a long time.

Storey: It sure is. Tell me about Frank Clinton. He was the Regional Director after Ken Vernon was forced to leave.

Reedy: Do you want to go up to lunch?

Storey: Sure. [Tape recorder turned off.]

Talk about Les Bartsch.

Reedy: Well, my first awareness of the name Bartsch came about when— [Brief interruption.]

Storey: Your first awareness of Bartsch.

### **Les Bartsch**

Reedy: We had very good friends, church friends, with the name of Riddle. Judge Riddle had been the judge under one of the very famous trials in Denver, and there were three Riddle children, the youngest of whom was Elizabeth. Mrs. Riddle, knowing that we had some Reclamation connections, asked my mother one time if she knew a man by the name of Bartsch, that Elizabeth was going with. [Laughter] So that's the first time I had heard the name Bartsch. He was just in a different piece of the Denver office, and there were about a thousand employees in the Denver office at that time, scattered among at least three buildings, and I hadn't known him.

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But eventually then he showed up in Billings as assistant regional director, and I can't remember having any major contact with him. I'm sure that I had some contact with him, planning business with him when maybe he was Acting regional director and maybe I was acting regional planning engineer, but I had that other sort-of relationship with him. We were good friends, and I was happy when he came. But it wasn't anything about which I have any particular memories. I can't remember—let's see. He served under Clinton, as I recall. And I can't remember when Clinton left.

Storey: Frank Clinton left in '60, or maybe late '59. Bruce Johnson became Regional director in May of '60, I think.

Reedy: Yes. I mentioned never calling his predecessor by his first name.

Storey: Mr. Comstock?

Reedy: No.

Storey: Ken Vernon.

Reedy: Ken Vernon by his first name, but I started right away calling Frank Clinton "Frank," because I had known him as one of the planning engineers working out of Debler's office in the 1930s. So I knew him when he came, and we had a good relationship.

Without any real reasons, I always felt that he may have been the best regional director I

worked under, though I don't know that he *was*, and I don't know whether his peers felt so, and I don't know whether the high command felt so, but the place he went and the promotion he got after that indicated he had a pretty good record.

Storey: Yes. And why was that?

**Regional Director in Salt Lake City Was a GS-16;  
Regional Director in Billings Was a GS-15**

Reedy: Went to Salt Lake City, one of the two jobs that had a Grade 16.

Storey: So he was a 15 as regional director in Billings?

**"Whether I would have gotten a 14, I don't know,  
but there were not opportunities in the  
organization chart. . . ."**

Reedy: He was a 15 as regional director in Billings. That was the grade of the regional director. The assistant regional director and the heads of the divisions were 14s. That's a mechanical thing that stopped any grade increase that I had. I went through practically the entire range of grade 13 salary increases. Whether I would have gotten a 14, I don't know, but there were not opportunities in the organization chart.

Storey: Because people didn't leave, or what?

Reedy: There was only one position that I would have been in line for, and that was regional planning engineer, and Tom stayed there.



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Storey: Tell me about Bruce Johnson as the regional director. He came in '60.

Reedy: Bruce and I were good friends, and he asked me if I would take a job in Bismarck, which would have been a lateral transfer. He told me at that time, he said, "I would never appoint you regional planning engineer until you've been out in the field office," but our circumstances at that time were such that I went over to Bismarck and I checked on housing and I checked on other things, and I sized up the job and I told him, "No, thank you. I will stay in Billings," which was perfectly agreeable to him.

Then later when he went to Omaha as head of the M-B-I-A-C, he offered me a job there. So our relationships were always *good*. But I was very happy there where I was in Billings, and it was a good place to bring up our family. We figured to stay there until retirement, until I got the phone call about the Great Lakes Basin Commission.

Storey: M-B-I-[A]-C was?

### **Missouri Basin Interagency Committee**

Reedy: Missouri Basin Interagency Committee. It was a forerunner, developed there on the ground, because of a sense of need, of the Basin Commissions, which later came in formally organized under the Water Resources Planning Act of 1963. The people that were there in the Missouri Basin just realized they needed some sort of an organization to coordinate their work,

and that's why there was never a Missouri Basin Commission as there was a Great Lakes Basin Commission or a Columbia Basin Commission. The M-B-I-A-C. was there, and it was operating and continued to operate on a more informal basis, but a very effective basis.

Storey: After Johnson left, Harold Aldrich came in.

### **Harold Aldrich**

Reedy: Harold Aldrich<sup>12</sup> came in. By that time, I think I was working pretty exclusively on the Yellowstone and didn't have the contacts outside the planning operation, except the other agencies. I didn't have the contact with the regional director that I had had before or with the other divisions of the Bureau, because it was pretty much that Yellowstone Basin operation, and I dealt a lot with the other Interior agencies, and with the Corps, and with the Department of Agriculture, primarily Soil Conservation Service. But we were the lead agency for the Yellowstone. The other two were lead agencies for other parts of the basin, as I mentioned before.

Harold, I guess, was a good regional director. Things seemed, as far as I could tell, to run smoothly. He was different temperamentally than his predecessors and in stature, too. Do you know Harold?

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12. Reclamation has done an oral history interview with Harold Aldrich.

Storey: Yes, I've met Mr. Aldrich.

Reedy: Very short, but a lot of energy and quite pleasant to know. Contacts I had with him were very pleasant. But I can't assess his dealings with the rest of the office simply because I wasn't involved.

Storey: Yellowtail was constructed while you were there, I believe.

Reedy: That's right.

Storey: Any involvement there?

Reedy: Well, I mentioned one trip that I took to Hardin with Ken Vernon in the early stages when they were working with Yellowtail, trying to assess the local interest and the Indian interest in it. I had involvement *only* peripherally, just awareness of the work that was going on in the recreation development and some assessment of the environmental impact. That was one of the places where I was aware of studies of the environmental impact and the recreation possibilities early in the game, though I had really no involvement with Yellowtail. In fact, I don't think I saw it *ever* under construction, and only once after it was completed. I never spent any time there, and no official time there.

Storey: If you would think back to when you *first* went to Billings, what was the planning process like? Who gathered the data? Who wrote the reports? Who had to sign off of them? How long did it take?

### Gathering and Assembling Planning Reports

Reedy: Forever. [Storey laughs.] The data were largely gathered by various field offices. The district offices had field parties that gathered the data.

Storey: District offices.

Reedy: We had a district office in Bismarck, one in Great Falls, one in Cody. Those are the three I remember. One in Huron, certainly. The data were largely gathered there, and a lot of report drafting done there. Then the final product was done in the regional office. I had occasion to go to—I don't think I ever went to Great Falls. That's where Harold Aldrich had been District Manager. I went to Huron more than once, and I went to Bismarck more than once. Bruce was at Bismarck and—the other name slips me, at Huron. The data-gathering was there.

One of the interesting changes that occurred from the time I worked in Denver to the time I came back to Reclamation was that in Denver, when I was in Denver during the thirties, our planning offices were very small and they were likely to be there for a year or two and then move to another location.

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BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. NOVEMBER 11, 1998.

Reedy: By the time they'd set up the regional organization, the district organizations, the districts were, in general, close enough to the work that field parties didn't stay too long away

from the district headquarters, working on the upper reaches of the Missouri River, for instance, under the Great Falls office. They'd be there only maybe a summer, something like that, just detailed ~~out of the regional office,~~ out of the district office. It didn't establish formal planning offices in nearer locations, nearer the site of the work, as had been the case in the thirties. People wanted to settle down more.

Storey: So they would gather data and do drafting.

Reedy: They were gathering data and do[ing] drafting under the supervision of the regional office. The regional hydrologist, the hydrology work was often done basically in the regional office, because that's where the records were. ~~some of it done in the field offices.~~ Soil scientists were—land classifiers were—most of them, actually attached to the district offices, worked out of the district offices, but there was a land classifier/soil scientist in the regional office that supervised them. Drainage was handled the same way. Design and construction, when it got down to a design or an estimate for a project, it was usually done in the regional design and construction. We made *preliminary estimates* in planning and they did in the district offices. We got serious particularly on a large job that was done in D&C, in the regional office.

Storey: D&C, the Denver office?

Reedy: No, in the regional office, design and construction, in the regional office, yes.

Storey: Then they would end up with a report.

Reedy: End up with a report.

Storey: Then what happened to the report?

Reedy: Go to Denver for review and negotiations on changes and be issued as a report of the Bureau. I don't know to what extent the regional director ever got personally involved in a report, except that I'm sure that Bruce would have been involved in any relating to work that had been done in Bismarck when he was there, and Harold Aldrich would have been involved in work relating to Great Falls when he was *there*. But I'm not aware to what extent they were involved.

Storey: When you say negotiations, what kind of negotiations are we talking about here?

Reedy: Did we use the right [estimates] *instruments* of crop production in figuring the crops? Did we make the right assumptions on flood studies? Were the designs and estimates adequate? What about the soils? What about the salinity? What about the pH of the soil?

One of the real hassles was over an area in North Dakota where some of our soil scientists said it couldn't be properly farmed, and there were areas in Canada which seemed identical and they *were* being farmed. There was quite an internal discussion among the soils people in the Bureau over *were* there differences that were not apparent or were we too conservative in our judgments of what could be

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done? Were there different methods of water application that were making a difference? That was one discussion that I was not involved in, but I knew was going on between our soil scientists and the Denver office.

Storey: So the object of these investigations would be to determine whether a project was feasible or not?

Reedy: Whether a project was feasible. Yes. Presumably they had been authorized. We would argue that anything we wanted had already been authorized in Missouri Basin Project authorization, but the feasibility—

Storey: Because it was sort of a blanket authorization.

Reedy: A blanket authorization. The feasibility, both fiscal and economic feasibility, would have to be determined, and also engineering feasibility. Was the water there that was presumed to be available when Senate Document 191 was produced? And negotiations with the Corps. If it was a project that involved irrigation and flood control, we had to negotiate with the Corps over flood control aspects of it. And if they were building it, and it involved irrigation, they had to negotiate with us over the irrigation aspects, because we had separate authorities.

They had authority for recreation long before we did. I think maybe our authority for public water supply came before theirs, but I'm not sure. But their blanket authority was broader than the Reclamation Act. In fact, originally

Reclamation didn't have authority to do power production.<sup>13</sup>

Storey: Do you have a sense of how many projects the region would recommend for construction and how many they would say, "No, we don't think it's feasible"?

Reedy: I suppose fifty percent is as wild a guess as one could make.

Storey: But a fairly high percentage, then.

### **Many Projects Studied Were Not Recommended for Construction**

Reedy: Yes. A lot on the western tributaries of the Missouri did not turn out to be feasible. Some of them did. Angostura did. Pactola did. But some of the others didn't. Some of the pumping projects along the Missouri, I think, never developed.

Storey: Do you ever recall a situation where the region went in with a determination one way and there was pressure from the Commissioner's office or the Denver office or someplace else to *change* that determination?

Reedy: Not specifically that. I know the *elements* that went into the determination were sometimes debated.

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13. Town Sites and Power Production Act of April 16, 1906—ch. 1631, 34 Stat. 116).



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Storey: Yes. Go ahead and talk about that, please.

Reedy: If anyone accepted the—well, water supply study was one thing, or how much flood control capacity do you need. If you put in more flood control capacity or if you operate in a different fashion for flood control, if you've got enough space in the reservoir for irrigation needs. And that involved working with the Corps and working with the Denver office.

Storey: And that would affect the cost-benefit ratio.

Reedy: Would affect the cost-benefit ratio and also financial studies.

Storey: But did you ever see a situation where somebody was purposely trying to *alter* the cost-benefit ratio in order to build or not build a project?

Reedy: I don't remember specific cases, though I don't doubt at all that there were cases where politically the regional director would sense that something *better* be built, and technically the Denver office would sense that it *better not* be built. Now, I can't point my finger at one.

Storey: Interesting.

Reedy: Not all decisions. It completely eliminated politics.

Storey: What about planning? How did the Commissioner's office become involved in the review of projects, if at all?

Reedy: I'm sure they would review a report. Whether they did more than *pro forma* review, I don't know, and I don't know *who* would do it. I'm sure that the legal aspects of anything were reviewed by the Solicitor's Office, if there were legal problems, if there were problems of right-of-way or jurisdiction or something of that sort.

Storey: Did you ever meet any of the Commissioners?

### **John C. Page**

Reedy: I had met John Page when I worked in Denver, and before he became Commissioner. I don't know that I ever had any contact with him *after* he became Commissioner.

Storey: What was your impression?

### **Harry Bashore**

Reedy: And I had met Harry Bashore, because Dad had worked with Harry Bashore on the North Platte Project, so I knew him, in a sense, from that. I can't remember. I know I met [Floyd] Dominy when he came out to Billings sometimes. I don't remember ever meeting Straus.

Storey: [Wilbur] Dexheimer?

Reedy: I probably had met Dexheimer, but I don't really remember him.

Storey: What were your impressions of these guys?

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Reedy: Well, I liked what I knew about John Page and I liked what I knew about Bashore. As impressions of them as commissioners, my general attitude was, unless somebody gets things badly screwed up, he's doing a good job. [Laughter] I am more willing to accept things that other people might call incompetent, but I'm also pretty critical in some aspects. But I never felt critical of the commissioners that I knew. I was disturbed when a newspaperman became commissioner, but—

**"I was disturbed when a newspaperman became commissioner . . ."**

Storey: Straus.

Reedy: Straus. But recognized that he was an awfully good commissioner. And I was disturbed when Dominy became commissioner, because it changed the focus of Reclamation somewhat, but he turned out to be a superior commissioner, from a political standpoint, anyway. He gave the Bureau stature.

Storey: The Congress really liked him, apparently.

Reedy: They did. Whenever you'd pass a bill saying "salary of so and so," as long as this man gets it.

Storey: Did they pass one like that?

Reedy: They did for Dominy, so I was told. I don't know whether I ever saw it in print, but essentially they fixed the salary of the commissioner and they reimbursed him well.

Storey: Interesting.

### **My Peers and People Who Worked for me**

Reedy: I don't think we've talked *at all* about my peers and the people that worked for me.

Storey: Let's talk about them.

### **Phil Gibbs**

Reedy: They were good people. Phil Gibbs I had known in Denver. Phil was the Hydrologist. Phil and I—there was tension because Phil thought that I was trying to do hydrology, and I didn't think I really was. [Laughter] I think Phil resented a little bit sometimes when I was acting planning engineer and had to make a decision in Tom's behalf, but I tried to avoid that. But personally we got along all right, but there was that tension, because I was basically—I came out of a hydrology background, let's say.

### **Harry Thompson**

I worked for Harry Thompson, and Harry and I got along fine, and continued to. We remained good friends. I remained very interested in what he was doing with the aerial surveys, because I had worked on them in Denver, and with his survey parties and so on.

### **Paul Shore**

Paul Shore. Do you know Paul? I don't know whether Paul's still living or not.

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Storey: I don't believe I do.

**"I never believed what I heard about Paul [Shore] until I met him, how competent he was. . . ."**

Reedy: I never believed what I heard about Paul until I met him, how competent he was. He had graduated from a small school in South Dakota, did *not have* an engineering degree, but he had been one who had worked—what office had he worked in? He worked for somebody, I think, during the development during the thirties—in the forties during the development of the Missouri Basin Plan. So he came with a knowledge of the project, and he had a phenomenal memory for detail about the various projects that he had worked with and about programs and so on. He was head of programs and reports at one time. He was a *good* writer and extremely competent.

Later, when I became head of Programs and Reports, he did the programs part of the work. He was the one that dealt with the regional programs officer, and for a long time he was the one who went to Denver on program conferences. I can't remember *how* that happened to change or whether we both went for a while.

A man by the name of Horn and I worked sort of parallel for a while. He came out of a Corps background, from the Omaha office. We were in parallel slots. One time there was a matter of making one a permanent position and

one a temporary position. I guess I outpointed him by two or three days or something like that. But we were essentially equals.

One of the interesting stories he told me was when he started out from Omaha with another Corps man, and they came up over a hill in South Dakota, the other man said, "My God, Hymie! You can see straight ahead for two days!" [Laughter] Hymie had been in the Corps of Engineers in World War II. A baby was born to his wife, I think, after he went to England. Maybe he saw the child before he went to England. His wife died while he was staging for Normandy, and they didn't tell him about it til afterward. When I knew him, he was married to his former wife's sister. They were identical twins. For years I knew that Pete was the son of one of those two people and I didn't know which one. Finally Hymie told me the story. The family were good friends of mine.

### **Larry Lyall**

Hymie had a minor heart attack and came back to work, then eventually had a more serious one and died while he was working for me. They wanted to fill the job with a man by the name of Lyall, from the Cody office. They were getting ready to close the Cody office and they didn't want to move Larry until they were ready to do that. So during that period I had no immediate help.

**"There was a period between two and three years that I wasn't away from my desk more than three days at any one time. . . ."**

There was a period between two and three years that I wasn't away from my desk more than three days at any one time. That included long weekends. Very stressful period. And then Larry came. Larry was a good writer.

Storey: What was his last name?

Reedy: Lyall, L-Y-A-L-L. He did a lot of the report-writing. At that time I was working on programs and reports, and he did most of the report-writing and so on, and I did the programs work, worked with him on the other. I forget what was the cause of his death.

Then it was about that time that I was assigned to the Yellowstone and the relationships changed. I didn't have anyone specifically working under my direction on that, reporting to me. It was a coordination job with other agencies, and various groups would prepare parts of reports and we'd put them together. A lot of writing.

### **Harold Sylten**

Well, I had another man working for me at one time, too. When I went there, there was a man by the name of Harold Sylten, who was the—I guess he was public affairs officer, public relations or something like that.

### Johnny Walker

The head of the electrical division then was a man by the name of Johnny Walker, whom I had known in Denver and also at Pearl Harbor. Johnny and I ran into each other when I was in school at Pearl Harbor and he was stationed over there in artillery. He wound up in Billings.

**". . . Johnny was very pompous—and he said, "Mr. Sylten, what did you do during World War II?" And Sylten said, "I was the equivalent of a lieutenant colonel in the Army. I was a sergeant in the Marine Corps." [Laughter] Which was Johnny's rank was lieutenant colonel. I guess he just puffed up and exploded. . . ."**

Harold told me the story one time, when he came to work—Johnny was very pompous—and he said, "Mr. Sylten, what did you do during World War II?" And Sylten said, "I was the equivalent of a lieutenant colonel in the Army. I was a sergeant in the Marine Corps." [Laughter] Which was Johnny's rank was lieutenant colonel. I guess he just puffed up and exploded. Harold had been a small-town newspaper editor and was a wonderful, jolly person to work with. Later when they abolished that job, but they wanted to keep Harold on for what he could do, they asked me to sort of take charge of him. But, Johnny's pomposity exploded. [Laughter] Harold had been in recruiting work for the Marine Corps, and he didn't know Johnny Walker at all at that time. He'd just come into the office and just happened on this bit.



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Storey: What kinds of socializing did the regional office do? Anything?

### **Socializing in the Billings Regional Office**

Reedy: Some. We'd have, of course, a retirement party for anybody who retired or was going to leave. A few office parties. I can't remember any occasions for any really significant things that didn't involve retirement of a regional director or a division head or assistant regional director.

Storey: Didn't have picnics, baseball teams, golf tournaments?

Reedy: No golf tournaments, baseball teams, anything like that. Certainly not that *I* was involved in. My involvement outside the office was primarily church, church-related, and gardening, things like that at home.

Storey: Is there anything else we should talk about, about Reclamation, before we move on to the Great Lakes Basin Commission?

Reedy: I don't think of anything right now. Undoubtedly something will come up that we should have thought of, but I don't think of anything right now.

Storey: Tell me how it was that you ended up at the Great Lakes Commission.

### **Great Lakes Commission**

Reedy: Well, I was running through some files the other day, and I found the note that I had made of filling out a form that the personnel office had sent around, May 1968, maybe June, noting that a lot of people were reaching retirement age, people who had been working for the Bureau before and might be a lot of retirements, and what could they expect. Do you expect to stay on with the Bureau until you retire? Do you expect to stay in Billings? What do you expect?

I said, "Well, I expect to stay with the Bureau until I retire. If I have another job that's attractive, I'll take it." In going through files a couple of weeks ago, I was surprised at how many applications I had filed for other jobs, some with Bureau offices, some with other agencies.

### **Wife Was Working in the Library at Rocky Mountain College**

Then in July, my wife by that time had started working at the Rocky Mountain College Library, and I had a phone call. I called her up and I said, "You'd better sit down." I said, "How would you like to move to Ann Arbor, Michigan?" And it took her somewhat aback, as you can imagine, having just said I expected to stay with the Bureau the rest of my life.

### **Interest Solicited Through a Telephone Call**

The Basin Commission was organizing. This was in 1968. Leonard Crook, who had been in the Civil Works Section of the Corps for

many, many years, had about a thirty-five-year career with them, was involved in doing some recruiting.

### **Leonard Crook Was Heading the Planning Activities of the Great Lakes Commission**

Apparently he had been selected, and I don't know just how, as the head of the planning operation in the Basin Commission. He had gotten my name, I suppose, from somebody in the Washington office. Called me up and asked me if I'd be interested. I told him, yes, I'd be interested in thinking about it.

### **Leonard Crook Stopped in Billings to Talk to Reedy**

He happened to be on a trip to the West Coast shortly after that, so he, I guess, changed his schedule so as to have time between two Northwest flights in Billings, and we chatted a while. Then I agreed that I was interested in the job. I checked and found that I had time enough and I was old enough to retire early at full retirement.

### **Asked to Columbus, Ohio, for an Interview**

Then in—must have been in September, they asked me to come to Columbus, Ohio. ~~Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati.~~ [Laughter] Columbus, Ohio, for an interview. So our younger daughter was at Oberlin at the time, and she was getting ready to move, so I flew to Cleveland and rented a car, and went out to

Oberlin and helped her move. Then went back and flew down to Columbus.

I was sitting in the lobby of the hotel, and Gene Jarecki, whom I had known in the Bureau, he worked in Region Seven and I worked in Region Six, and we had some contacts of various sorts, he came around the corner of the hotel and saw me, and he said, "Are you looking for a job here?" [Laughter] We realized then, comparing notes, that we were both being considered for what looked like the same job.

Storey: How do you spell his name?

Reedy: J-A-R-E-C-K-I. Eugene Jarecki. He graduated from University of Nebraska in engineering after World War II. He had worked for the National Archives in a clerical position before World War II.

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BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 3. NOVEMBER 11, 1998.

Storey: [This is an interview by Brit Allan] Storey with Oliver C. Reedy, on November the 11th, 1998.

Reedy: Well, we—

Storey: Thought you were competing for a job.

Reedy: We thought we were competing. We went upstairs and had an interview with the Commission. The Chairman of the Commission had not, at that time, been appointed. I don't

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know whether you know the organization of the Basin Commissions.

Storey: No.

Reedy: The chairman was a presidential appointee. The commissioners were representatives, a representative of each of the states in the area covered by the Commission, in this case the Great Lakes states. And each of the Federal agencies that had *some* relationship to the work of the Commission. It could be water, it could be legal, it could be power. So that we had a *lot of agencies* involved. The Interior Department, being multifaced, had only one commissioner, so when it got down to the work, each of the Interior agencies was involved.

So the acting commissioner at that time was the Agriculture representative. He was the head of the Soil Conservation Service in Michigan, stationed up at East Lansing, I think. So we had our interviews, and I agreed then that if everything worked out as had been discussed, I would take the job.

So I went back to Ann Arbor with them and spent a couple of days there getting acquainted with the office staff and looking around a little bit at housing and things of that sort, sort of getting a feel for things. Went to a task force meeting.

**"They wanted me to work on the comprehensive basin plan, a reconnaissance of the entire [Great Lakes] basin . . ."**

By that time, Jarecki and I had found, from talking to Crook, that we were not competing for the same job. We had the same title, but they would be different jobs. They wanted me to work on the comprehensive basin plan, a reconnaissance of the entire basin, and they wanted Gene to work on specific basin areas at various times as they came up. So eventually he took the job, too.

Eventually another Bureau man by the name of Dave Robb was there for a while, came out of the Denver office. Dave went to the St. Lawrence Seaway, later became Chief Engineer of the St. Lawrence Seaway, has since died.

When the Basin Commission broke up, Gene went with the Energy Department in Washington and retired from there. The last correspondence I had with him was in Florida.

Then I had to go back and clean up business in Billings. Lucie had to clean up business at the library. Our older daughter, Maggie, had taught one year in Billings and had a contract to teach the next year, but she and her husband moved to Bismarck before that beginning of the school year, a completely *other* story. Frances was at Oberlin, so Frances never really moved out of Montana. The family moved out from under her. [Laughter]

### **Finding a House in Ann Arbor**

The Basin Commission gave us a house-hunting trip to Ann Arbor, and we looked. I didn't like some of the houses, didn't like the construction. The people there told me, "You'd better like him. That's the best builder around here of mass housing." Well, we didn't find anything. The last day we were going to be there, we had decided to go to a restaurant on the edge of town that we'd seen advertised, called the Lord Fox. And we were driving out and we passed the models of some houses that we had looked at before, but always there were big crowds. We saw there were no cars there except the agent's car. We stopped and looked and he said, "I've got a lot I want to show you that came on the market this morning. They just told me I could sell it. We were going to use it for a model, and the foundation was built, and they couldn't get the utilities in underground. I want to show it to you."

So by the headlights of a car, we went around and looked at this lot. We had driven by it before. We said, "We'll take it." And by the time we got back, the house was half built. It happened to be the model that we would have *selected* out of the three models. It was the opposite hand, but that was a minor point.

### **Phil Gibbs Became Regional Planning Engineer in Billings after the Reedy's Moved to Ann Arbor**

So then I went back to Billings and turned over the work to Bob somebody, who finished up the Yellowstone report. After Tom's death, Phil Gibbs was made regional planning

engineer, and when Phil retired—did Phil retire or did Phil die? I think Phil retired as Bob became regional planning engineer.

Storey: Tom died after you left?

Reedy: Tom died after I left, and Phil Gibbs became regional planning engineer. I don't remember the dates. As I say, when the Yellowstone report was finished, Bob sent me a copy of the report, and all the appendixes, which are in one of the unopened boxes, ~~came to me in Billings, and I was busy doing other things.~~ Or it came to me in Ann Arbor when I was busy doing other things.

Storey: The Great Lakes Basin Commission was not a Federal agency?

Reedy: It's a state/Federal agency.

Storey: So did you get Federal retirement credit?

Reedy: No, it is a state/Federal agency. The *only* Federal employee was the chair. Well, I'll say the only Federal employee peculiar to the Basin Commission was the chair. The Federal commissioners were all Federal employees of their agencies—Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Power Commission, the works—and the state commissioners were state employees. They hired their own staff and set up their own pay scale and everything else. And we were under contract to the Commission.

Leonard Crook, who was the chief technical person on the Commission, the head of



the planning, the planning officer, and Gene Jarecki and I were the first ones, and being all former Federal employees, we—and I don't think we had any problem saying we wanted to go on a Federal pay scale. The checks were written by the Commission. They happened to be on government checks because that's the way they operated.

### **Worked under Contract for the Equivalent of a GS-15 Salary**

But Gene and I both said we'd come at the equivalent of a Grade 15. I don't remember what—I think Leonard was getting the equivalent of a 17, maybe, 16 or 17, maybe 16. And another man came from Agriculture shortly thereafter, [John] ~~Don~~ Hull. He was the same grade as we were, and I think Dave Robb and others were a little lower grades.

### **Set up Annuities and Paid Social Security**

We set up a retirement system with the Equitable Life Insurance Company to make deposits for annuities, and we also said we want Social Security. So we got both of those. Well, now, Leonard and Gene and I and John Hull were all retirees anyway, so we could afford to put that much money into some more retirement. It hit some of the younger people pretty hard to have retirement and Social Security *both*, but that was the way *we* had gotten it set up. And it's been very good to me. This was before Federal employees were involved in Social Security.

Storey: Yes.

### **Broke the Studies down into River Basins and Sub-basins**

Reedy: As I say, I was working on the comprehensive basin plan. We had the river basins all numbered and the sub-basins all numbered. We studied a river basin as a whole and maybe the sub-basins. For instance, the Maumee was one. The Maumee flows into Lake Erie at Cleveland. It's formed by the St. Joseph and the St. Mary River, which join in Indiana. I should remember this. And that was the first one that Gene Jarecki started working on as a specific basin *parallel* to the *general work* that I was working on, which was less detailed.

But we had people from Soil Conservation, of course, and the Corps, and the Park Service, if they were involved at all. Outdoor Recreation was involved in nearly *every* basin. Fish and Wildlife Service was involved in *every* basin. So that there was a lot of coordination. We had a task force for—the *work groups* were by basins. ~~The task forces were by sub-basins, as I recall.~~ No, the task forces were functional. There was a recreation task force for the Maumee Basin, an Outdoor Recreation task force, and a Fish and Wildlife task force for the Maumee Basin. And those task forces involved people from various agencies *and always* from the state. States were heavily involved *all the way* through. Sometimes there would be more than one state and sometimes just one state.

There's only one county in Pennsylvania, for instance, that's adjacent to a basin, that's a basin county. Much of Ohio, the northern half of Ohio, *all* of Michigan is Great Lakes Basin. A piece of Wisconsin, a piece of Minnesota, a piece of Illinois, a piece of Indiana. About half of Ohio and one county in Pennsylvania and some of New York.

Storey: So now am I hearing that the way you did this planning was by having task forces composed largely of other Federal agencies?

Reedy: They were Federal agencies and state.

Storey: Employees who were—and state employees who were assigned, in effect.

Reedy: Assigned to that work. We did a lot of the work, but we were largely a coordination agency.

Storey: Wouldn't that be a problem if you got a loafer?

Reedy: Yes.

Storey: How did you deal with that kind of stuff?

Reedy: I don't remember that we had any. I felt that we had—well, of course, every one of them was being pressured by his agency to represent his agency's views, and most of them *believed* in those views. Originally it was largely an engineering operation and agriculture operation, soil surveys and so on, and power and flood control. Those were the main functions.

Environment began to take—environmental aspects began to kick in, and Fish and Wildlife, as related to the environment. And all those interrelationships. The states, of course, were trying to balance *their* interests. Sometimes the state would have two or three different people represented certainly on different work groups and maybe even on different task forces. There was somebody representing the power interests of the states, somebody representing the agricultural interests of the state.

Storey: Did you get the big overview done?

Reedy: Not before I was too old and had to retire.  
[Laughter]

Storey: Why did you retire?

Reedy: In 1974—yeah, in November 1974, I became sixty-five, and they wanted people to retire at sixty-five. John Hull and I reached retirement age at that same time. But I was doing writing on the basin report, and John retired and they kept me on. He was pretty unhappy.

So I worked then for another year and the commissioners told Mr. Rouse that I had to go, so I retired at the end of 1975 and then did some consulting work on a contract basis, more writing, in 1976.

Storey: For the Commission?

Reedy: For the Commission. Then in '77 I went to Iran. Let's see. When was Jimmy Carter? Jimmy

Carter was elected in '76 and became President in '77.

Storey: Yes.

Reedy: And Rouse, being a Republican, resigned then. A woman who had been very active in coming to meetings and observing them and so on, a very active person from—was she from Wisconsin or was she from Chicago? I think she was from Chicago. Was appointed commissioner. And the whole aspect of the Commission changed from one of engineering studies to environmental studies. It had been slipping that way.

Then when the—let's see. The law was passed in '63, to run for ten years. It was renewed in '73 to run for five years, then in '78 it was allowed to expire, and the Commission was dissolved. But I didn't finish up the report. There's another one that I have a copy of, an old basin report. I've read the executive summary of it and so on. It was an interesting thing, but it was, in a way, quite different work from Reclamation. It was related to, but different from.

### **Staffing of the Great Lakes Commission**

We had some other problems. We had a *good*, well-organized office with planners and adequate secretarial help. I had grown up not used to having a private secretary. John Hull and I shared a secretary, but he did a lot of dictation. I did a lot of hand-drafting, simply because I found it better, found it easier to do.

But then we had a small but good library, and we had a staff of editors who would go through and edit reports and appendixes and so on, but sometimes they thought they knew more than they did. There are several rivers in the Great Lakes Basin that have the same name, maybe with a little different spelling. There are two Vermillions, one with two Ls and one with one L. I can't remember the name of this particular stream. We were writing a report on the stream that's in Ohio, and this person tried to go through and change *everything* to fit a stream that was in Michigan, and it came to me with all those changes made, and I had to send it back and say, "You should trust the author of the report to know the geography, and don't make changes until you're sure." [Laughter] Because a lot of it had to be changed back.

A lot of it was—well, a number of the people were wives of graduate students, and we had some graduate students themselves who worked on a part-time basis. One gal who answered an ad for a Xerox operator, the woman who was doing employing sensed right away that she was more than a Xerox operator and hired her as a technical assistant or something like that. I'd give her a report and appendix and it would come back with notes in it that "This figure does not agree with page so and so of the appendix, and this figure does not agree," and things of that sort. She had a degree in business administration and was working on a master's in urban planning, and she had a choice of jobs all over the country. Her husband was just a lawyer. [Laughter]

Storey: And he could go anywhere. [Laughter]

Reedy: He could go anywhere. She was an *awfully* competent person to have working for you.

Storey: What was her name, do you remember?

Reedy: I don't remember. I've lost track of her. I know when she moved, but I don't remember now where it was.

Storey: How did you end up going to Iran, and what did you do there?

Reedy: Well, after they decided I was too old and had to retire, I wasn't ready to retire. I can't remember what the first overseas job was I applied for. At that time we decided that if I got it, we'd sell our house in Ann Arbor and ship our household goods to the Denver area and move there when we came back. Well, by the time we—I didn't get that job. A year later, we had decided Ann Arbor was a better place to stay.

### **Went to Iran to Do a Reconnaissance Water-supply Study of the Entire Country**

But there again, I don't know how my name came up, but they were going to make a personnel switch in Iran. Development and Resources Corporation was the agency that had this contract with the Ministry of Energy to do a *low-grade* reconnaissance water-supply study of the entire country. D&R had been organized by one of the first Commissioners of the TVA and was organized at the behest of President

[Franklin D.] Roosevelt to work in Iran, and they had built some dams and some transmission lines there. They had this job, this reconnaissance contract.

It was about a four-year study, and we went there at about year two—no, about year three and a half, I guess, maybe year three. But I didn't get in on *any* of the field work. One of the men who had been there had children in school, and he felt it was time to get them back to the United States, so I went over on this personnel exchange.

There we were doing, as I say, very low-grade reconnaissance work. We used a lot of averages for soils. They had pretty good water records, pretty good rainfall records, and we'd do the hydrology for a small river basin and look at the use of the water in the river basin and how much more land could be irrigated, and make some estimates of crop production, and put it together by river basins.

Part of Iran is very wet. The Caspian coast on the northern edge of Iran is subtropical, almost rainforest, and much of the country is desert. There were a number of irrigated areas in the country which you took into account. I was working on several small areas, and as we'd get them worked up, we'd maybe do a draft of a report on it, and the report draft was—we did it in draft form, then it was sent back to Sacramento office of D&R for putting in final form. I'm sure it never got back to Iran. The revolution came about that time.



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### **The Report Was Never Implemented Because of the Revolution in Iran**

Storey: So none of this was ever implemented?

Reedy: I'm sure not. I'm sure not. The office was closed. The job in Iran wound up the first week in July of '78, and the office was closed. Lucie and I wanted to come home through the Orient, and we figured out when was the earliest we could touch base in Hawaii and still get credit for eighteen months outside the country, and asked them to get us a reservation on such and such a date in October. They got the reservation and we left in October of '78, and the Shah left in January '79.

But in that intervening time, we had a chance to take a couple of very interesting bus trips around the country, operated by the American Women's Club of Tehran, which at that time was the largest women's organization in the world outside the United States, the American Women's organization, a very interesting group that Lucie had a lot of contact with.

As long as I was in Iran, as long as I had a work permit, a visa was automatically renewed, but when I no longer had a work permit because the job was over, I had to go outside the country and get a new visa to come back in. Most of the people went to one of the Emirates, because that was the closest. But we wanted to go to Israel anyway, so we went to Israel for about ten days and came back, got our visas and

came back, and were there till October, seeing as much as we could of Tehran and taking a couple of bus trips.

Storey: Then back?

Reedy: Then back—two days in Delhi, two days in Bangkok, about seven days in Hong Kong, which is longer than we'd expected to spend, but there was a typhoon and they grounded all the aircraft. About ten days in Manila, where I still had people that I had worked with in 1954, still was in touch with them. Two days in Taipei, about two weeks, I guess, in Tokyo. Some of our Japanese—I don't know if I told you about our Japanese connection or not. Probably not. Japanese friends were there, and we spent about two weeks in Tokyo. And back to the West Coast.

**"I've done no professional work since I left Iran. . . ."**

And I've done no professional work since I left Iran.

Storey: So you retired in Ann Arbor and then moved here about three years ago.

Reedy: Yes.

Storey: Three and a half.

**Hosted Foreign Students in Ann Arbor**

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Reedy: Yes. About a year after we moved to Ann Arbor, Lucie was involved with Church Women United, and through them she got involved with the Ecumenical Campus Center, a religiously based organization dealing with a lot of people from other countries, a residence department. And they called up and said could we put up a Japanese couple and their little boy for two or three days till their apartment on north campus was ready. They were coming to the University of Michigan under the auspices of the East-West Center in Hawaii, which a lot of Japanese and other eastern country people use for graduate work. They will send people to schools for a particular work. This man was coming for international law and one other subject, and he was there for just one semester.

So *we* entertained the Uedas in our house for a few days until their apartment was ready, and then kept in touch with them. For Halloween we had two pumpkins, one Occidental and one Oriental. They saw how we celebrated Christmas and so on. When they got back to the East-West Center, they said could the Nakadas send some books to our house. Seiichi Nakada was coming to study that fall at the university to work on a doctorate in linguistics. They sent books to our house, and they stayed in our house till their housing was ready. They have been close friends ever since 1973, maybe, to now. He finished his course work at Michigan, got a job teaching at Princeton, did his dissertation—

END SIDE 1, TAPE 2. NOVEMBER 11, 1998.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 3. NOVEMBER 11, 1998.

Reedy: ... celebration for his ~~doctoral~~ doctor's degree at our house. Reiko Nakada and a couple of friends spent about three days preparing the proper Japanese food. We put out both silverware and chopsticks. There were twenty-eight people there. Not one piece of silverware was used.

They were at Princeton and later after he went back, he was on leave from Princeton, and when we hit Japan on our way back from Tehran, *they* were there to show us around. Then subsequently he came back to Princeton, then he got a job of teaching in Japan, where he is now. But they would come back every summer for a while and they wanted a car, and I'd take care of their car during the winter, have the use of it, and it would be available to them during the summer. They used our address and I'd watch their bank account, their bank statements, and their tax notices and things of that sort, keep in touch with their tax attorney. ~~with them~~. They have been special friends. They came here to see us after we moved here to make sure we were being properly taken care of. They had business in Ann Arbor, flew from Detroit here, and then back to Detroit. ~~came here~~. In 1990, they gave us a two weeks' trip to Japan, the entire thing.

Storey: How nice of them.

Reedy: Yes. They spent the first part of the first week taking us up north to Hokkaido, including the undersea tunnel, to Hokkaido, and part of the second week taking us south. At the close of it,

there was a reunion supper at the International House, where we were staying in Tokyo. There were fourteen people there, *all* of whom had been in our home in Ann Arbor, except one girl who was born after her parents went back, and they gave Lucie a bouquet, "To the American mother of us all."

But we had a succession of Japanese that came in after the Nakadas. *Most* of them had known each other, but there was one couple that had not known any of the others, that got acquainted with them at this reunion. Some of them—well, the Nakadas we're still in touch with. The Sugimotos, their son was born in this country and they couldn't go home when he finished his work at the university in engineering. They couldn't go home till they got the proper papers for their son to go back to Japan, because he was born here. We're still in touch with them and still in touch with the Uedas and still in touch, of course, with the Nakadas, and somewhat with others. We specialized with Japanese ~~Japanese~~ in Ann Arbor.

In Billings, we had a whole succession of people from many other countries working on—who would come in for engineering or soils or economics work. As I told you, I think, I was foreign activities coordinator for the office in Billings, so I'd hear about these people ahead of time and try to have them in our home and get acquainted with them. Some of them we had continuing contact with for a while, and some of them not. One of them bought the necessary ingredients and cooked a Turkish meal for us at

home, and others taught Lucie other things about cooking. ~~So that wound up my professional career over in Iran.~~

Storey: Anything else about Reclamation you'd like to talk about?

Reedy: I've been trying to think, since last Saturday, of things that we missed. *I* haven't kept up too much with the changes in Reclamation. I know that it's changed. I know that its emphasis has had to change. I always, all my life that I can remember, I felt dedicated to Reclamation. It was a vocation, it wasn't just an occupation. I think every decision I've made on a job turned out to have been a good one. I'm not sorry for *any* that I made. Any of the jobs I turned down or the ones I didn't get. [Laughter]

Storey: Well, I guess I'd like to ask you again whether you're willing for researchers to use the information in these tapes and the resulting transcripts.

Reedy: Yes, I certainly am. I hope they're useful. I wish I could have remembered more names.

Storey: Thank you very much.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 3. NOVEMBER 11, 1998.  
END OF INTERVIEWS.

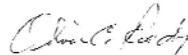
Appendix A: Professional Résumé of Oliver Calmar  
Reedy

7200 Third Avenue C-077  
Sykesville MD 21784-5213  
June 29, 1997

To Whom it may Concern:

Attached is a copy of a summary of my professional record with the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation.

This summary was made from memory and reference to personal diaries, incomplete at some critical times. My office diaries and service record card are still packed after a move, and not available. Major changes in location and assignment are essentially correct, I am sure.

  
Oliver C. Reedy

Oliver Calmar Reedy  
Outline of Professional History with  
United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation

<u>Date</u>	<u>Position and Duties</u>
Oct. 10, 1933	Apptd. Jr. Engr., P-1 PWA, Office of Hydraulic Engineer, E. B. Debler, Chief Engineer's Office, Denver
(mid-1930's)	(Converted to Classified Civil Service and promoted to P-2)  Misc. office work on project investigations  Power studies, Boulder Canyon Project  Compiled consolidated monthly report on project investigations and planning  Liaison with procurement and property personnel for equipment and supplies for investigation field offices  Liaison with U.S. Forest Service on aerial photogaphy and mapping  Liaison with U.S. Soil Conservation Service on Snow Surveys  Established precipitation stations and snow survey courses in Upper Colorado River Basin, for forecasting inflow to Lake Mead  Montrose Power Survey (Reconnaissance of power sites in Gunnison and Uncomphagre basins)
Nov. 1942 to	Military leave (LTJG and LT USNR on active duty)
Jan. 1946	

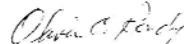


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<u>Date</u>	<u>Position and Duties</u>
Jan. 1946	Returned to duty with Bureau of Reclamation at grade P-3 (or P-4) in Denver Office, Project Investigations  Miscellaneous office work related to Project Investigations and Planning
Feb. 1946	Asst. Planning Engineer, Walla Walla Area Office, Region 1, at Walla Walla, Washington  Assisted Area Planning Engineer; miscellaneous office work and field trips
June 1947	Head, Hydrology Branch, Walla Walla Area Office  Hydrology and water supply studies
Apr. 1948	Tfr. to Project Planning Division, Region 6, Billings, Montana at Grade P-4, in Engineering and Surveys Branch  Miscellaneous work of the Branch
1949 (mid-year)	Assistant Regional Planning Engr. Grade P-5  Assisted Regional Planning Engineer in supervision of the Planning Division  Performed specific tasks in planning as required  Secretary, Yellowstone River Compact Commission, during compact negotiations, and subsequently for periodic reporting
1961 or 1962	Chief, Programs and Reports Branch (GS-13)  Prepared and supervised preparation of Regional planning program and schedule in conjunction with Regional Programs Division; participated in annual Program Conference in Chief Engineer's Office  Prepared and supervised preparation and editing of project planning reports and appendixes  Prepared and supervised preparation of monthly report on investigations

<u>Date</u>	<u>Position and Duties</u>
June (?) 1965	Designated Chairman Yellowstone Basin Task Force for Missouri River Basin Inter-Agency Committee  Coordinated work of several Work Groups made up of personnel from Interior, Agriculture and Army, and supervised preparation of appendixes covering various aspects of overall planning for the development of the Yellowstone River Basin
Nov. 1, 1968	Last day of work for Reclamation Terminal Leave
Jan. 3, 1969	Retired

Prepared June 28, 1997



Oliver C. Reedy

Appendix B: Letter and Printed Biography Outlining  
Career of Oliver T. Reedy, Father of Oliver C. Reedy and  
William W. Reedy

7200 Third Ave. C-077  
 Sykesville MD 21784-5213  
 June 3, 1997

Dear Will and Marg,

Herewith another edition of Dad's history with the USBR, giving the details that the archivist at USBR would want. As noted at the top, I deduced the dates from the time periods given in the "Who's Who", and what I know about moves. Dad used only six-month increments in the "Who's Who" and I have fudged from my first analysis in order make the Grand Valley and Fort Laramie moves a little more reasonable. The dates I have any real question about are the date he was assigned to Grand Valley Project, and the transfer from Grand Valley to North Platte.

To make the periods come out right he must have been assigned to Grand Valley in June or July 1913, but I know we were in Stromsburg through my birthday that year. I think the explanation is that he spent time in the Denver Office or Grand Junction on design of the dam and looking at the site. I know he was on the board of design, and those would have been logical places for him to have been. I have no recollection about whether he was in Stromsburg any of that time, or about our move. As I said in the other compilation, I think we were in Grand Junction for Christmas.

The reassignment from Grand Valley to North Platte isn't so easy to explain, but must have been similar. If he were assigned to the North Platte in August, we could have gone to Stromsburg in late August or September. He then packed and shipped, and came to Stromsburg for his vacation and to move us to Ft. Laramie. He could very well have spent some of that time in Denver, Mitchell, or Ft. Laramie.

Undoubtedly the flu epidemic affected our move to Ft. Laramie. Dad possibly came to Stromsburg in the fall expecting to move us shortly, but with everyone sick, and Auntie's death, the move was delayed. Maybe we moved in late Jan. or Feb. I remember no more than that it was winter or spring.

I don't know any better way to adjust the dates. On my first try I used assignment to Grand Valley in June, and to North Platte in July, which fits the "Who's Who" time periods better, but doesn't make as much sense.

Unless you have some suggestions to make about this, Will, I suggest you turn it over to the Bureau, and use your judgment about giving the other compilation also. I would include a print of the "Who's Who" page in any event.

*Love to all,  
 Dad*

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 Oliver T. Reedy - Professional History with U.S.Reclamation Service

(Information on Period, Project and Position were taken from "Who's Who in Engineering", 1931. Dates were assumed from this information and personal knowledge about the family, by Oliver C. Reedy, June 1997.)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Position</u>
Oct. 1902			Appointed October 17, 1902
	4 yr.	Salt River	Asst. Engr.- Topographic surveys, const. of power canal, including reinforced concrete pressure pipe, usual cross drainage and minor structures, and began const. of Salt River Diversion Dam.
Oct. 1906	1/2 yr.	Yuma	Asst. Engr.- Location and const. of main canal and levee.
Apr. 1907	1-1/2 yr.	Belle Fourche	Asst. Engr.- Design, location, and const. main canal and lateral systems.
Oct. 1908	3 yr.		Asst. Engr & Engr. (1910)- Completing const. of Belle Fourche Dam.
Nov. 1911	1 yr.	North Platte	Engr.- Const. Engr. in charge Minatare dam and two Lake Alice Dams
Nov. 1912	1/2 yr.		(Extended leave - Supt. North Star group of mining properties, Maxville, Mont.)
July 1913	2 yr.	Grand Valley	Engr.- Member board of design, and Const. Engr., Grand River Roller Cross Dam.
Aug. 1915			

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 Oral history of Oliver C. (Cal) Reedy

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Position</u>
Aug. 1915	3 yr.	North Platte	Engr.- Const. Engr. Ft. Laramie Unit, in charge of design, location, and const. of main canal, two tunnels, four main canal siphons, headworks, wasteways, bridges and minor structures (compl. about 50%).
May 1918	1-1/2 yr.	Office of Chief of Const., Denver.	Engr.- Design; and investigation of water supply problems.
Dec. 1919			Resigned



Appendix C: Correspondence from Oliver T. Reedy to J. F. Griswold Regarding Early Days of Reclamation

Denver, Colorado, April 17, 1957

Mr. J. F. Griswold, Secretary  
Salt River Valley  
Water Users Association  
Phoenix, Arizona

Dear Mr. Griswold:-

As per my recent letter I am now handing you an enlarged copy of the first group picture of the engineer topographers of the U. S. Reclamation Service making contour surveys of the Salt River Valley. This work was in charge of Mr. Robert Muldrow, an expert topographer of the U. S. Geological Survey, loaned to the Reclamation Service to train the younger engineers in the plane-table and alidade method of contouring. Names of the men in the picture, as far as I can remember them, are given on a separate sheet.

I arrived in Phoenix early in November, 1902, and stayed over night at the Adame Hotel. Next morning I entered the lobby and seeing a man strolling around asked if he could direct me to the USRS office. His reply was, "Right here; my name is A. P. Davis." And so I met the future head of the Reclamation Service, who was Supervising Engineer for Arizona at that time.

After breakfast I was introduced to Mr. Muldrow, who assigned me a few chores in helping get organized and equipped, and shortly moved to quarters in the Alhambra Hotel in Mesa. At that time, as I remember it, only Mr. Muldrow and his family, including his brother-in-law Harry B. \_\_\_\_\_, were in Phoenix. On Nov. 6, 1902, we three got together in Mesa. I set up a T-level on one of the streets, took a back-sight on a bench mark at the front of the hotel (Alhambra) and began a line of levels for controls of contour work in Mesa Township. (T.M., R5E. G&SR Base and Meridian). I believe (and trust I am not mistaken) that this was the first field work by a classified USRS engineer on the Salt River Project.

As soon as the control levels were far enough advanced, Mr. Muldrow started me on the Mesa Township topography. Of course the first thing to do was to have our pictures taken (copies enclosed); I took his and he took mine, posed at the same plane-table set-up. At this time the only men in the group picture who were on the project were Nos. 2, 4, 9 and 11. I don't remember who were my rodeos except that one of them was, or had been, a Tempe College man. Shortly Mr. Muldrow set up a camp in the township east of Mesa which we called Lehi, and my party moved there with him for completing Mesa and taking up and completing Lehi.

Meanwhile Mr. Hawley had arrived, organized a party, and after working out of Phoenix for a while set up a camp on the Arizona Canal. I moved in with him, and we all had our picture taken, which is before you, and which is the cause from which stems all this flow of words.



-2-

I completed the Camelback Township while in this camp and then set up one north of Glendale, which was nothing but a railroad siding, and began contouring Glendale Township, but before it was completed I was transferred to Power Canal surveys at Livingstone. The enclosed picture marked Glendale Township on back will give a hint as to general character of much of the area at that time. Just look at it now!

This will bring us up to the squad of "First Horse Engineers" that started all this in my letter of March 15th.

Reminiscently yours,

Oliver T. Reedy  
2340 Dahlia St.  
Denver 7, Colo.

P. S. - Very little of these data is documented, and 55 years is a long time to remember details accurately.

P. S. 2 - Am having a photostat copy made of the "Hess Township" map, which I will send you when ready. Map mailed to you under separate cover. Since the largest photostat I could get is smaller than the original, I am keeping the negative which will be satisfactory for my collection and am sending the original to you. Think it will be more interesting as an item of those early days. Mr Muldrou told me that copies of this map were sent by Mr Newell to other projects as a sample of what was desired.

OTR  
MOR

P. S. - From the tenor of your first letter to me, I don't believe it would bore you to hear what started my interest in "reclamation" and landed me in Arizona.

In the fall of 1891 the city engineer of my home town, Beatrice, Nebr., and his only assistant, a teenage rodman, chairman, etc., facetiously known to the City Hall crowd as "Assistant City Engineer," entered the University of Nebraska, - the former (an 1888 graduate) as 50% of the faculty in the Civil Engineering Department with the title of Instructor. The latter - meaning me, of course, - matriculated with the title of freshman, finished two years of work and then dropped out and taught school for three years to help finance another trick.

When I returned to the University in the fall of 1896 the instructor, Oscar V. P. Stout, was a full professor and head of the department (later Dean of the college of Engineering). Also, acting as quasi-official state hydrographer, he supervised the placement of stream-gaging stations and received the reports from the gage readers. I was the office boy (until graduation in 1898) who examined and summarized them in shape for Professor Stout to send to Frederick H. Newell of the U. S. Geological Survey, who six years later became the first CHIEF Engineer of the Reclamation Service.

Professor Stout and I used to spend not a little time in discussing the use which would be made of those reports and others like them, and in anticipating the wonderful results of a federal "Irrigation Law," sure to come as a result of the growing interest in the matter. When the Reclamation Act was passed I was in Cuba, having just completed 18 months work in a sub-department of the U. S. Military Government of Cuba making a topographic survey; and with meager information about the new law, I did not appreciate that it was just what I had been dreaming about a few years before.

The Mexican Central Railway took over several of the engineers who were thrown out of a job by reason of the Cuban Government being turned over to the new president, Tomaso Estrada Palma, and I was one of them. In October, 1902, a letter from Morris Bien, Engineer, Washington office, addressed to me in Havana and offering a job in the USRS, finally reached me in the mountain wilderness between Tepic and Mexico City, and I woke up to what the Reclamation Act really was. As soon as I could get back to the States I wired Mr. Bien to the effect that he had bought something, and he told me to deliver it to Phoenix, Arizona. And now we're at the beginning of Paragraph 2 of the letter to which this pertains.

Appendix D: Oliver T. Reedy List of Early Appointments  
to the U.S. Reclamation Service

Appointments during the First Year of the U. S. Reclamation Service from June, 1902, to December 31, 1902: Compiled from Proceedings of the First Conference of Engineers of the Reclamation Service, in W. S. & I. Paper No. 93. This list covers appointees in the Reclamation Service only; U. S. Geological Survey employees not included.

1	W. F. Schlect, Assistant Typographer,	7-2-02
2	Yermiah Ahera, Engineer,	7-8-02
3	Arthur P. Davis, Supervising Engineer,	7-8-02
4	E. T. Perkins, Engineer,	7-8-02
5	F. H. Newell, Chief Engineer,	7-9-02
6	Morris Egan, Engineer,	7-10-02
7	Lester V. H. Branch, Assistant Engineer,	7-28-02
8	O. G. Babb, Engineer,	July, 1902
9	D. W. Ross, Engineer,	July, 1902
10	John R. Kerr, Assistant Engineer,	8-15-02
11	John T. Whistler, Engineer,	Aug., 1902
12	E. M. Sands, Assistant Engineer,	9-8-02
13	William G. Russell, Hydrographer,	9-15-02
14	M. D. Williams, Asst. Engineer,	9-17-02
15	George L. Warner, Engineering Aid,	9-26-02
16	Ferdinand Bonstadt, Assistant Engineer,	9-29-02
17	E. G. Murphy, Engineer,	10-8-02
18	F. H. Tillinghast, Assistant Engineer,	10-9-02
19	W. G. Stewart, Assistant Engineer,	10-10-02
20	Oliver T. Reedy, Assistant Engineer,	10-17-02
21	Harry T. Patterson, Assistant Engineer,	10-28-02
22	Hart E. Forbest, Assistant Engineer,	11-1-02
23	Joseph A. Sargent, Assistant Engineer,	12-3-02
24	P. M. Churchill, Assistant Hydrographer,	12-10-02
25	Charles H. Fitch, Engineer	1902
26	Charles H. Olberg, Assistant Engineer,	1902

Appendix E: Oliver T. Reedy List of Attendees at Conference of Project Managers, Denver, September 18-21, 1916

Denver, Sept 18-21, 1916

Conference of Project Managers, U.S. Reclamation Service

Name	Position	References
*1- Crowe, Frank <del>AT</del>	Proj. M. Flathead (Temporary)	OSR HDC DMC
12- Williams, Chas. F.	Denver, Asst. Chf. of Const.	" EAM
13- Moritz, Ernest A.	Denver, Office Engr.	" EAM
14- Reatty, Bill	Denver, <del>Chief</del> Mechanical Engr.	EAM
15- Gaylord, J. M.	Denver, <del>Chief</del> Electrical Engr.	OSR EAM
*16- Weiss, Andrew	Proj. Mgr. North Platte Proj.	"
7- Hughes, A. J.	Traveling Accountant	Mr. CPW JLL
*18- Fyle, Fred D.	Proj. Mgr. Montrose Proj.	OSR
9- Whittier, J. T.	Secondary Investigations	EAM HDC
10- Burch <del>Fullert</del> M	Project Mgr., Colorado	OSR Mr. CPW EAM
11- Lottin, L. S.	Project Mgr., Colorado (Inter. on)	Mr. CPW JLL
12- Lytle, Jas. L.	Proj. Mgr. Strawberry Proj.	OSR
13- Reedy, Oliver T.	Const. Engr. Fort Laramie Unit, N. P. Proj.	"
14- <del>Q</del> Camp	PM Klamath <del>Inter. on</del>	JLL <del>OSR</del> HDC DMC
*15- Murphy, D. W.	Denver, <del>Chief</del> Drainage Engr.	OSR EAM
*16- Walter, Raymond F.	Denver, Asst. Chief <del>Engineer</del> of Construction	" EAM
17- Savage, John L.	Denver, <del>Chief</del> Drainage Engr.	" EAM
18- Sanford, Geo. O. <del>Bl</del>	Proj. Mgr. & Structure Party 2	" OSR EAM
19- Caris, <del>Paul</del> L.	Denver, <del>Chief</del> Engr. (?)	" HDC DMC
*20- Tiffany <del>of</del> RK	Denver, <del>Chief</del> Proj. Mgr.	OSR <del>OSR</del> EAM
*21- Meymouth, Frank E.	Denver, CHIEF <del>Engineer</del> of Construction	" EAM
22- Smith <del>Willard</del>	Visitor, Formerly Belle Fourche?	" HDC
23- Cantel <del>Calvin</del>	Denver, <del>Chief</del> Engr.	EAM OSR
24- Dibble, Barry	Denver, Asst. Chief Electrical Engineer	OSR EAM
*25- Hayden, Buford E.	Proj. Mgr. - Belle Fourche	" EAM
*26- Miner, James H.	Proj. Mgr. Grand Valley Proj.	"
27- Fifield, Ralph <del>(?)</del>	Proj. Mgr. (?) Huntley Project (?)	JLL <del>OSR</del> EAM
28- Connor, Mikey <del>(?)</del>	" " (?) Fort Peck Proj. (?)	"
29- Mitchell, Lester H. <del>(?)</del>	" " (?) Lower Yellowstone Proj. (?)	"
30- Cole, D. W.	" " <del>Total</del> San. Engr. N.W. Div. (?)	OSR <del>OSR</del> EAM DMC
31- Nowell, Herbert <del>(?)</del>	" " <del>Total</del> San. Engr. N.W. Div. (?)	"
32- <del>Hough</del> Frank E	Traveling Accountant	Mr. CPW JLL
*33- Davis, Arthur P.	Washington, D. C., COMMISSIONER Director	OSR <del>OSR</del> HDC

32- At this date was Acting P.M., Truckee Canon Vice District - DMC

\* deceased

## Appendix F: Lester V. Branch to Oliver T. Reedy

LESTER V. BRANCH  
237 NORTH DOWNEY DRIVE  
DEVILLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA

June 27, 1946

Mr. Oliver T. Reedy,  
Denver, Colo.

Dear Mr. Reedy:

Your note with accompanying list of the original old-timers in the Reclamation Service reached me some weeks ago while I was confined to a hospital bed. By the time I got back home and in shape to handle correspondence the note and list had been mislaid and has not as yet come to light.

I was very glad to hear from you and find that so many of those who started with the Reclamation Service are still here. There are many missing too, particularly our chiefs in those early days and my old friends Alberg and Schlicht.

I noted the absence of the name of Frank E. Weymouth from your list. I first met Mr. Weymouth in July 1902 in Montana when he came there to do some work not far from where I was busy. He was one of the early group.

My resignation from the service was effective January 1, 1921 when I went with the Alabama Power Co. I followed major hydroelectric plant construction for the next eleven years and have five big plants to my credit. In 1933 I came to the Metropolitan

Water district of Southern California on the construction of the Colorado River Aqueduct. Weymouth was General Manager and Chief Engineer and he had quite a group of old Reclamation men in the organization.

Weymouth died just before the job was done.

We completed in time to get into war work and I went to Pennsylvania to handle the engineering on a large ordnance works. I finished my work there but was in rather poor physical condition so have been doing nothing for the past three years. Most of the time I have been able to get two or three games of golf each week and enjoy myself in general and, as result of recent operation, expect to be in better shape in the future.

It really was a pleasure to hear from you.

Sincerely yours,  
Lester V Branch

## Appendix G: Percival M. Churchill to Oliver T. Reedy

PERCIVAL M. CHURCHILL  
 U. S. ARMY, COL. (R.)  
 ELLENWOOD, MASSACHUSETTS

June 22, 1946.

Mr. Oliver T. Reedy  
 2340 Dahlia St  
 Denver, Colo.

Dear Reedy:

I was delighted to hear from you and to receive the list of "Old Timers" of the Reclamation Service you sent me. Yes, you got the right Churchill this time. The Boston address you first used was that of the Public Safety Committee where I functioned during the war- they said I was too old to fight even if I do still hold my commission.

It had never occurred to me that I was among the first 26 men to join the Service. The date was right however. I do remember that most of the men got off to the field the spring of 1905 and left me to finish up marking the civil service papers we were sorting. I then went out to Cody with Ahern. I left the Service in 1906 and have spent the balance of the time in various places all over the country and Canada including 26 months in the Army in the First World War. Have worked in many fields of engineering but mostly on investigations of projects for the War Dept and for private parties. Am still active at 73 and working most of the time. Would like mighty well to see Colorado again. Am fond of the West.

I don't know about the others on your list. Want the A.R. Soc. O.R. give the address of those now living?

Hope I'll hear from you again and from any other "Old Timers".

Sincerely yours,

*Percival M. Churchill*  
 Percival M. Churchill

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Oral history of Oliver C. (Cal) Reedy