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OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW OF**

ROY KELLEY

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ROY S. KELLEY

INTERVIEWER:

James M. Bailey

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Oral History Interview of
Roy Kelley

Bailey: This is an oral interview with Mr. Roy Kelley in Yakima, Washington on October 15, 2003. Jim Bailey doing the interview. Roy, thank you for coming and participating in this project. It's appreciated. And, I'm curious. Let's go ahead and start by, tell me about where you were born, and raised, and went to school.

Kelley: Well, I was born in a little town called Zinc, Arkansas, and I went to a Zinc school there. Then I went to high school up to Bergman. And, I was born and raised, lived in Zinc until I was eighteen years old, then I joined the United States Marine Corps. And, after I got out of the service, I moved to Yakima Valley here, and I got married and made this my home, raised my family here.

Bailey: When did you move to Yakima?

Kelley: It was in 1955.

Bailey: The same year I was born.

Kelley: November 7, 1934.

Bailey: That's when you were born?

Kelley: Yes.

Bailey: I was just saying, I was born in 1955.

Kelley: Oh. (laugh)

Bailey: Do you have any college behind you? Did you ever go to college?

Kelley: No. You know, it's amazing. I never did go to college but I've held down jobs that required college education. As a matter of fact, I didn't finish high school, and, but after I got out of the service I had taken my GED test. I was thinking about going to

college because I had four and a half years coming on the GI Bill. So, anyway, I passed my GED, and that's equivalent to a twelfth grade. So, I moved out here. So, I didn't go to college and I just started working in the farms, and I started off just like a hired hand. Then, I was a foreman [for a] small orchard. Then I moved on up to a management position. I did that for about four years, and, for Norberg School. And, anyway, I worked as a field man for Earl, and like a, that requires a college education. You go and you tell the farmers when to pick their apples and so forth. And so I did that, and later on, well, I heard that there was going to be an opening for Yakima-Tieton as a ditchrider, and I knew Leo [Heilman] real well, because he used to ride ditch when I was managing orchards. So, he was my ditchrider, Leo Heilman, which, later on he became the watermaster for Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District. And he was a real nice person. Leo, he had a, you couldn't ask for any better a supervisor to work under than old Leo. He's really nice.

So, anyway, I filled out an application for the employment as a ditchrider, and so I was hired. That was back June, I think it was June 2, 1978. So, I stayed with them for eighteen and a half years. I'd taken early retirement at the age of sixty-two. And, so anyway, my main job was, as a ditchrider, we delivered water to the farmers, made sure they got their water what they were entitled to, and it was kind of hard work. It wasn't easy, because back when the old system was in it was all done by ditches. A lot of hand cleaning was involved. And, as far as in the winter we would go out and burn the ditches. A lot of times we used old gunnysacks to put out the fire

when you couldn't get water wagons in. We didn't really have no water wagon to speak of anyway. And, we always had a propane tank, as far as in the back of the pickup, as far as burning. Jack Hart, him and I, we kind of teamed up being my district was number two and Jack was number five. And so, anyway, he was a backhoe operator and like if I had any backhoe work to be done, well he'd always come on my district and he would do that for me. And, I'd always have to go down and burn his ditches for him in the winter, on district five, which now happens to be Kenneth Sainsbury is a rider there, and living in Jack Hart's old home place there.

Bailey: Yeah. I met Kenneth.

Kelley: He's a real nice guy. But anyway, to get back to Leo. He was a real nice guy to work under. All he asked that you just do your job, and there wasn't no complaints as far as I know. Everything went real well. I worked good with the farmers, and they worked good with me. And so, I felt like as far as in the community I did a good job and everything. And at the end of my retirement I'm sure I did, or otherwise I wouldn't have received this little plaque here. (laugh) And the which, this little plaque to me, it means a lot. To a lot of people, you know, it wouldn't. But, "To Roy Kelley," -- first it's got my car number, "Car 2" at the top, then it says, "For eighteen and a half years of loyal and dedicated service from everyone at YTID," which is Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District. It says "You're loyal and dedicated and Arkansas accent will be greatly missed by all of us." I thought that was real cute, you know. And they'd taken my wife and I out and they, after I retired, and so anyway, they, we could have bought

anything we wanted to, on the house, it was from them. And so, just a swell bunch of people to work with, Yakima Tieton Irrigation. Everyone of them.

Bailey: Okay.

Kelley: And, as far as a crew, you couldn't ask for any better crew. But, I feel like the ditchriders, as far as in the communities, they really play important role as far as when it comes to farming, because they're the ones got to be, make sure that the water gets to the farmer in order for the crops to grow, because it takes water, you know. And, of course, there's a maintenance crew, you know. We all worked together, is what it amounts to. But, we had, we worked under a good management, you know, and so, you couldn't ask for any better place to work than Yakima Tieton Irrigation.

Bailey: Talk about your first job. What were your impressions of the job when you first got there? Were you overwhelmed? Or, were you, did it fit in well?

Kelley: Well, actually, the watermaster, Leo, he had taken me out with him to show me my route. And so, there for a while when I was trying to do the paperwork, of course he was doing the driving, and you know going around those ditchbanks, they can be awful crooked. You got a lot of sharp turns, especially when you go in the mountains, and stuff like that. (Bailey: Yeah.) And, the old G-ditch up there, the main ditch, that was the one I rode. Of course, I had a lot of small laterals. But anyway, he was showing me the route and he wanted me to do the paperwork. And, I tried to do that paperwork while he was a driving and boy my head would kind of get dizzy, (laugh) while I was trying to do the paperwork. Then, after a while then I think he went with

me a couple of days. He was going to go with me, I think, for about four days, and I said, "Well, I'd just as well go on my own, if I'm going to do it." And so, I went on my own and I didn't have a bit of trouble. I really, really enjoyed it. And after I once knew my route, you know, it was real simple then. And, but as far as meeting the farmers that was nice. And, a lot of them would meet me at the water boxes, where we would make the delivery at.

Bailey: They still do.

Kelley: They still do?

Bailey: Still do on the pressurized system. I think they're the outturns or something? I can't remember the word, but . . .

Kelley: Yeah. Well, see we put in, actually, Yakima Tieton Irrigation went to under pressure, under pressurized.

Bailey: It was the first one.

Kelley: This was the first one in the Northwest. It's the largest one, for its size. And, all together, we held a total of probably better than 300 miles of pipe, under the ground. And so, that was quite an improvement there. That was quite, as far as saving them water. Like under the old system we lost quite a bit of water in the old ditches, and stuff like that. So, I, it seemed to be they were getting about 3.6 gallons per acre then, if I'm not mistaken, per share. Then, after we put the pressurized system in, that jumped up to 4.9, I think, 4.9. So, that was quite a savings, as far as the farmer right there. He got more water automatically. And, which they were well pleased with that,

because that was something it seemed like a lot of times they were always a little short of, is water.

Bailey: Now, were you around when they started and they made the shift over from the old system to the new system?

Kelley: Oh yes. Yeah.

Bailey: What were your impressions? Were you wary at first? Were you a little . . . ?

Kelley: Well, yeah. At first I was, you know, we were having a lot of blowouts. The lines were blowing out. See, these, this Bailey company, the one that sold the system to the Yakima Tieton Irrigation, they were located in California. Okay, they had used these Baileys down there on Little Le Grande, which they didn't have no problem, But up here, you know, you go up one hill and down the other one, and you got high pressure, and you got low pressure. Otherwise it's not equal pressure. And some of those lines, the pressure is real high. We had some problems with blowouts. Also, where the Baileys would be connected into line, and we had problems with the Baileys not a regulating right. And it had taken us quite some time to get all the bugs worked out of the system. But, I'd say, now that was put in in '85, and it was completed in '86. And, so I got to work on that for about eleven years, I guess, and I was sort of a Bailey man too, especially the little ancient half Baileys. They had quite a problem with them. (laugh) It seemed like nobody could work on them things and get them working right because they were low gallons, you know, per minute, as far as the Baileys. But, matter of fact, when I retired they did give me a little Bailey too,

and rigged up for me as a souvenir, (laugh) because they knew I just loved them. They was really a headache. But, anyway, after we got all the bugs out of the system and the thing started working good, everybody was well-pleased with it, including the farmers and all.

Bailey: Did you have problems with the farmers early on? I mean, when they, when you were going to say you were going to switch to this new system? Were they apprehensive about that?

Kelley: Well, they were kind of really excited about it, because they were looking forward for that more water, and everything being under pressure. They wouldn't have to pay as far as electricity, and as far as pump operation expense. So, overall, through them it would equal out about the same cost as far as paying, you know, the water bills, but the thing of it was they had a lot better system. They didn't have to worry about pumps when the electric storm coming by and kicking the pump out, and going out and starting up, sometimes it would flood everything. And, they didn't have to worry about going to the water boxes and cleaning the old screens, you know, all the time, because we had a lot of silt, you know, came down the old canal, and especially like if we'd have a high windstorm. We'd have tumbleweeds at those weed racks. (laugh) That was something else. You go in there and you might work a couple of hours, then have to go ahead and make your delivery, then you'd have to go back and re-clean it all out, you know? And so, yeah, they were well pleased, you know, when everything got going good and smooth.

Bailey: So you were on the old system for a while. Tell me about some of the things you had to do to keep it maintained.

Kelley: Well, the old system, to keep it maintained, we would clean the silt out of the water boxes. That was a continual thing each year. A lot of the water boxes would build up, you know, a tremendous amount of silt. It would depend on the location it would be and so forth. And, we would have to go in there and shovel that all out. And, a lot of times we would, as far as the upper end of canal, we would go up there and maybe lining to that. That's up in the mountains, where it comes down out of the river there, from Rimrock. We would have to line that so much each year, as far as what the weather would allow us to do. Then we would come back down here and we'd start working our other jobs here, and cleaning water boxes, burning canal banks, and it was just a, really a, there was no let up, even of a wintertime. And, there was always a certain amount of black willows would grow along the banks, you know, and you got to cut them out and everything. A lot of cleaning. And as far as maintenance, the maintenance crew mostly taken care of that, as far as broken pipes, stuff like that. You know, anything need be repaired, they would do that. Our main job as ditchriders was just to make sure everything that was clean, and the water could get to the point, from Point A to Point B. And so, otherwise there was a certain amount of maintenance, sometimes, but most usually, if we had any real problem, that would go to the maintenance crew would always take care of that. Our job was mostly of cleaning, and stuff like that, burning. And that was something else too, because I remember one

year, down below Jack Hart's old place, Jack and I we were good buddies. And, I'll never forget them two old dogs he always had with him too. He'd haul them things around with him every place he'd go. But anyway, down there I had a guy help me there one fall burning the ditch there. And, so this guy, I said, "Now, don't do anything." Oh, we were hot and we were just a burning up. Didn't have any water, so I just stepped back there to this guy I kind of knew, and asked him could I get a little water in a jug? And so he said, "Sure." So, in the meantime, while I was there I happened to look up there and I seen this guy running up the ditchbank. He was still burning, and the fire had got so close to him, I mean he just got scared and run off and left it. And, we had a little old water tank in the back of the old jeep. And, I run up there when I seen what happened and I grabbed that hose and that spray gun out of the fire, and which I really burnt my hands good, but in order to put that out. And that fire got so hot it was really a burning the rubber off of the joint tie rod ends, stuff like that, on that jeep, before I got it put out. And that was, that was quite a situation there, you know.

Bailey: Any, during your years as a ditchrider, are there any events that really stand out? When I'm talking about events, one common thing between all the ditchriders that I've interviewed, that were actually working during the time, was Mt. St. Helens blowing up. Do you have any tales about that?

Kelley: Yeah. I certainly have.

Bailey: Go for it then.

Kelley: That was really something. Yeah. I'll never forget that. Matter of fact, that, I was on duty that weekend. Okay, my wife and I had just went down to get some tomato plants, that was Saturday evening. And which, okay, we still had the tomato plants. I get up Sunday morning early. We'd always have to have a, sort of like a reveille, every morning we got to go and get our water reading, and we got to call in, and give, you know, turn in a report. So, anyway, that Sunday morning I went up and I got my reading and I came back, and I was just kind of kicking back in my old easy chair in there, kind of tired, you know. Ditch riders, they put in a lot of hours. We were tied up as far as like every other weekend on duty during the summer months. Then, the weekends we wasn't on duty we still had to put in like five and a half days a week. So, when St. Helen, it erupted on a Sunday morning. So, my wife, she woke me up. She said, "Better go and plant them tomato plants." So, I get up and I go out there and stick them in the ground, and boy it was thundering, and I mean it really got dark like. And so, "Boy," I said, "Look like it going to rain." And so, I didn't have my cap or anything on, and all of a sudden that ash started hitting me on top of the head, and I said, "It's not a going to rain." I said, "St. Helens had just blew its top." And so, I came in the house. Of course, we had some children, you know, out, and we were concerned about them. We did a little calling around. And so I called and they said, "Yeah. St. Helen just erupted" And, so anyway, we had to go back out, you know, on those ditchbank roads. And that ash, oh it was terrible, and hard to breath, and stuff like that. We had to close all the water boxes and we, we really had a job getting

things, you know, back in order, cleaned out, and stuff like that.

Bailey: That old system was still there?

Kelley: The old system was still in, see? Because, St. Helen, that erupted what in, May?

Bailey: 1980.

Kelley: May 1980. Or May 20 or somewhere like that. And so, anyway, yeah. That was, that was quite an experience there as far as St. Helens when it erupted. That caused a lot of extra work, and we had a washout up in the mountains from that ash. Hard rain up there, you know? It had taken the canal out. Man, we went up there and we worked double shifts and, oh, just straight, you know, trying to get the rocks out of it, and had to repair a lot of the canal also. Had to put in pipeline. You'd be a hanging up there on scaffold, you know, running chippers, jackhammers, or getting some of the hill knocked off. So, that was quite an experience there, as far as quite a job. And, we had a lot of men up there probably all together around 400 men was up there working on that canal during that time. So. When that mountain erupted, that caused a lot of problems, even with the farmers too. They really didn't know what to do with their apples, you know. They were getting, you know, up pretty good size. And, they'd go out there and try to get all that ash off the trees because it's so heavy. You know, that was an experience for everybody, because we didn't really know what it was like. We had never been in anything like that before. Some people thought the end of time was coming when that happened.(laugh) And, but anyway, the birds, I mean it got so dark here you couldn't see anything.

Bailey: That's what I heard. Yeah. Then the birds came.

Kelley: Yeah. And when we had the lights on the bird's will be trying to fly into the windows, getting in out of that hot ash, and stuff like that. And, I think that's an experience probably all the ditchriders here in the Yakima, I would say, especially the ones here at Yakima Tieton Irrigation, they'll never forget St. Helens because of the hard work it caused us, and everybody else. (laugh) But, yeah that was really really something. It was a lot of ash and stuff like that. And those water boxes, you know, had a lot of silt and stuff like that. And, we seen that ash, you know, it taken a long time to get that, you know, and finally it just kept going down in the ground. But, which later on in years it works good at, as far as help holding moisture in the ground, you know.

Bailey: That's what Jack Hart said. He said that if you dig down a little bit you will see a very very thin layer.

Kelley: Yeah. You see a layer.

Bailey: A very thin layer of ash down there.

Kelley: Yeah. You'll see a layer of that ash. And so, you can find that quite often.

Bailey: Okay. Any other amusing stories? Any other things you want to share with me about your job?

Kelley: Well, I remember one winter -- oh, we'd also have to walk out the main canal. And, that's up in the mountains. We'd have to make sure there wouldn't be no animals in the main canal. Like, they'd run water, when we had the old canals going, for cistern runs, where the farmers could fill their cisterns and stuff like that every winter. Okay.

And I'll never forget this. There was four of us riders had went up. And so me and Tom Loveless, he was one the other riders, he got one of the riders and said, "Well, we'll just go down the canal, and you'ns can go up." So anyway they had to come through the tunnel, and just as they had got through the big tunnel up there, there was a big black bear in the canal there and a deer. And that deer they said, was just froze, didn't know what to do. And they said they was kind of froze too, didn't know what to do. (laughter) And so, anyway, I was kind of glad as far as that experience because me and the other guy we got to go up, which we run on some elk, but we just drove them out at the upper end. So, we didn't run onto no bears or anything like that. And, that was really something I thought was kind of interesting, over the years, you know. And, but that was kind of exciting, and in a way, in a way it wasn't. So, anyway, they called Department of Game and they went up and so they shot the bear. Didn't kill it, just gave it a tranquilizer and got the bear out and turned it loose. But, we would have to always go up there every winter and walk that canal, you know. But, they don't walk it anymore. They got four wheelers and stuff like that. They ride through it.

Bailey: That canal's coming out of Bumping Lake?

Kelley: No, this is the one comes out of Rimrock.

Bailey: Okay.

Kelley: Yeah. It -- matter of fact it's down probably about five miles this side of Rimrock, before it goes into the canal. It comes right out of the Yakima River.

Bailey: Right.

Kelley: And, but anyway, it comes right along the mountain, and if you're going up Highway 12, you can look up over at the left on that mountain and you can see a big long piece of pipe, that we went in there and we hung from scaffolds, whatever we could do, you know, to knock away the banks. I mean, it washed out that canal when St. Helens erupted. They probably burned two hundred feet just straight down. So, that was quite a deal there.

But, yeah, as far as excitement, really not a whole lot of excitement, but I feel like we all did the community a good job. At least I hope we did. And, I'm sure we did, because a lot of farmers, I have had a lot of them to tell me, they said, "You probably one of the best riders that we've had to ride for us." Some of the old timers. So, I try to treat them right, you know. As long as you treat them right they're going to treat you right. So I, overall, I think I got along pretty good with the farmers. And, I gave them just what they were allowed, as far as water wise. I didn't try to shorten them at all. I gave them, if anything, maybe a gallon or two over, you know. Because like a, you can go through of a morning and you can set your water, and in the evening when that sun drops that water level's going to drop a certain amount anyway. So, as long as you give them just a little extra, by the evening they'll be getting what they're entitled to.

Bailey: Stop and flip it here.

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1. OCTOBER 15, 2003

BEGINNING OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1. OCTOBER 15, 2003.

Bailey: Talk about your relationship with the farmers. Was it mostly a good relationship? Did you have problems with any farmers?

Kelley: I'd say, overall, I had a good relationship with the farmers. At least, I only know of really of about one farmer that I didn't have, you know, a good relationship with. And we had a kind of, that was like a little sublateral where he got his water, and like there'd be sticks could get in the open ditch, you know, and get down into his head gate or something like that. And, he was on the tailend of the line, and he was always a griping and complaining. Really, I don't know why, because he always ended up with a lot of extra water. But, you take a little stick or something would get in that headgate, he would always complain about it. But really, overall, he's really the only one that I know of that, any problem at all. And so, except -- now that was in the old system. I did have a problem with the new system, for one. What was happening, this guy, this tub was sticking up above the ground. Okay. If they're not flat to the ground just about anybody can go in there with a big long screwdriver or anything and they can prise that tub, because what it's made out of and they can prise that lid right off of that tub. Then they can just reach in where that Bailey's at and they can run their water on up to suit them the way they want to. And so, I did have problems with one guy. I caught him actually, they call that stealing water is really what it is. (laugh) You know, entering and breaking, you know that's a, they're messing with government property there, really is what they're doing. Because if you got a lock on that, they're

not supposed to mess with that tub. I won't mention no names or anything like that, but I had a little problem with him. So, what I did, I just went in there and I just put long hooks on that tub lid all the way through the tub and that a way he couldn't prise them off or anything. And so, anyway he did, I think he went up to the office there one time talking to them about it, you know. And so, I met him up there one evening when I came in from work, and saw he was there. And so, we did have a talk, and so I just told him, which I'd already had a run in with him before, you know, and so which I just told the watermaster and the manager then what was going on. And so, there wasn't no more said about that, because, and so that's something you got to watch, some of those guys, you know, especially -- and he was just a small water user. He probably never had over, I don't think, five shears. It's the small ones, really, if you have problems with it would be them. But, as far as the other ones, you know, I, overall, I'd say I had a good record of getting along with all the farmers, and I think you can probably go to all of them right today and they'd probably tell you that they really appreciated me as a ditchrider.

Bailey: Well, the general impression I receive from you is that you really enjoyed your job, and you really liked what you were doing. You felt a sense of community and you felt that you were giving something back to the community, and that's been the common thread for every ditchrider that I've interviewed for this, is that it's the community service. Is there anything about this job that you disliked? And, I remember when I asked this question to Jack and a few others there were a few things that -- Jack didn't

like paperwork.

Kelley: Well, yeah, paperwork. Of course, there wasn't really, overall, that much paperwork involved in it. It was just a matter of keeping a track of your water you would deliver each day, you know. You'd have to total it up and call it in, give your report in the evening. Which, it wasn't that bad as far as the paperwork. And, maybe if you see something while you're out there that needs to be done, you write that down. You give that, turn that in so the maintenance crew can take care of that, you know, the following day. And, I think probably as far as disliking anything, I disliked, I'd really have to say the only thing I really didn't like is a lot of that hard shoveling. The old laterals, small laterals. And, as far the burning those ditches, and using the old gunnysacks and trying to put the fire out. Now that, I will have to say I didn't like that part there. But, and I don't think anybody else would neither, because a lot of times you couldn't get the equipment in, you know, on those small laterals. They didn't have no roads or anything like that. And so, that would be the only part of the job that I would say that I really, you know, disliked.

Bailey: The intensely heavy labor end of it?

Kelley: Heavy labor, I didn't mind that so bad. I was a little younger back then and it seemed like, you know -- I've been a hard worker all my life. I was raised up on a farm even back in the hills of Arkansas. We used to farm with horses and plows back there clearing new ground, chopping axes. So, I know what work's all about. I've did it all my life. And, it's something, you know, if you've worked all your life you're used to

it and you don't pay too much attention to it really. You just go ahead and do what you got to do because you just figure, "Well, it's a day's work," see? And, but as far as a ditchrider, a lot of times in the evening you might get called out, have to go back out, as a ditchrider, you know. Like if a farmer had a little problem, or something like that. Then you go back out in the evening, or whatever, you know. And, but which that was no big deal or anything like that. That's just all in the job, you know. There were a lot of jobs, you know, that requires that. But, as far as disliking, no. I'd have to say overall it wasn't bad. As far as the heavy construction part, probably lifting those Baileys would be about the heaviest, you know. And, sometimes we'd go out and we would put in line in the ground, too. And, that wouldn't be bad there at all. Mostly them bigger-sized Baileys. And I know some PRV stations we've have to go in, especially there for a while, and even the big six-inch, eight-inch Baileys, like a when they put this system in, the pressurized system, the big pipe in, the eight-foot pipe, they drove wedges in to help hold them together until they got everything in. And, a lot of times when they would remove those they would just leave them inside the pipe. Of course what happens when you do something like that, hey that's going to float around and after a while it's going to end up in some Bailey, or you know, a PRV station or something like that. A PRV station that's where they reduce the pressure, you know, it's real high pressure then they reduce it to lower the pressure. I'll never forget one year, over on the Summit View Extension there, that PRV station, we pulled a two-by-four out of there. I don't know how that could have got in

there, at least four feet long. Because we had two great big PRVs inside that reducing station. And that had taken, instead of going straight through, it didn't. It made the bend back into the left, then into the right, right into the Bailey. And we had a job of getting that one out. We had to redo everything because when they made those PRVs they didn't put, you know, as far as lifting the Bailey's out or anything like that, and those things probably weigh a thousand pound or better. They were big ones. And, but, there was some heavy construction, and cement work. We always, you know, carry a little cement and stuff like that when we go up in the canals. Have to stack it pipe arm, and you know, and get rocks out of the canal. And, overall, I would say it wasn't too bad. It wasn't too bad.

Bailey: How was your relationship with Bureau of Reclamation?

Kelley: Well, as far as I know it's good. I think it should be, or otherwise I don't think they would have gave me this little plaque, you know, when I retired. (laugh) Did the Irrigation District give you that or Reclamation?

Kelley: The Irrigation District.

Bailey: Right.

Kelley: Yeah. See, I never had no problem at all with the Bureau of Reclamation.

Bailey: Okay.

Kelley: Most usually they just kind of work with the districts. You know, when it comes to something like that.

Bailey: They're the big watermaster?

Kelley: Yeah. They're the big ones. They're over the districts, you know. They most usually own the property and the districts, which they did have their own houses, and but anyway I never did live in a house all the time they furnished the houses for the ditchriders, but I lived here. And so, instead of me a moving, I was right in my district, and so it worked out great for me that I didn't have to move into one of their houses.

Bailey: Did they ever mention that they wanted you to live in one of their houses?

Kelley: Well, at first.

Bailey: At first?

Kelley: Yeah. Then when they found out where I lived at, well that changed the situation. They said, "Well," they said, "You're right in the district." They said, "You won't even have to." As a matter of fact, they said, "Where you're at it's, you're better off than you would be if you'd had to take the district house." The house I'd had to move in it'd been up at Cowiche Canyon . And so, this worked out great for me because I was taking care of some water on the Naches Heights, under the old ditch, plus up Cowiche Canyon and around Tieton Drive, and all the way down to 96, Pear Avenue, and that area, open ditch.

I remember back they used to have a lot of ditchriders when they had the horses and stuff like that. When I first came to work for the district, as I mentioned earlier, at the beginning, and I believe it was in the fall of 1956, they used a lot of help back then for cleaning ditches, because the biggest majority of it was all done by hand.

And, I worked for them that one fall, some, and then I moved back to Arkansas for a little while, then I came right back out. But anyway, I remember back then they had a lot of riders, and they had a manager, and they had a watermaster, and they had one secretary running the whole system. And now, they've got a watermaster, they've got a manager. Oh excuse me. They don't have a watermaster. They have a manager and they have assistant manager and they have two secretaries. And they've got all kinds of computers, and they got a office now about four or five times as big as the old one, and it's still, you know, serves the same purpose. So it just seems like anymore there's so much paperwork involved in everything you do, you know.

Bailey: You also have more of an expanded operation now, because you have more municipal and industrial use. When I was riding around with Ray Thomas he was pointing out all these big houses and their lawns. (Kelley: Okay.) And everything like that, that's just not so much for crops anymore but municipal and industrial.

Kelley: Alright now, Ray, I helped him get the job.

Bailey: Did you?

Kelley: Yeah. As a matter of fact, see, when I gave them my notice when I was going to retire, and so there was two guys was wanting the position I had, and I knew Ray was a good worker, a hard worker, because I delivered water over there to him and his dad, you know. So I knew Ray was kind of small, and smaller guys, it seemed like, works out a lot better as far as getting down in the Baileys. They can get in and out, no problem. You take a big guy, he jumps in there and he breaks half of the [inaudible]

word] off and stuff like that, and it's hard on them. But anyway, I did, I recommended Ray for the job, so they hired him. So, I know Ray. He's a good friend of mine. So, he's riding what I rode.

Bailey: Do you see Ray pretty often?

Kelley: Yeah. I see Ray. Yeah. As a matter of fact I still work some with Yakima Tieton Irrigation. Matter of fact, I put in ten hours yesterday. I just work of a summertime, you know, most usually taking care of the, groundkeeper, stuff like that, lawns, stuff like that, irrigating and stuff. I only work like twenty hours a week, just part time.

Bailey: So in a way you're still kind of a current employee? In a way?

Kelley: In a way, yeah. In a way. Yeah. You might say that. But, yeah, I don't now. It's kind of been part of my life, you know, I've been there so long and everything. And, but yeah, Ray he's a nice guy. He made them a good hand, Ray did, too. So, I'm really glad now that I did. I know they was asking me, the watermaster and I believe it was the assistant manager, if I'm not mistaken, or it could have been the manager, who did I think would be the best for the job? See, I knew the other guy too. And so, I said, "Well," I said, "I believe Ray would. He's kind of small, and he could get in and out of them Baileys good." You know. And I said, "And he's a good worker." I said, "I pass by his place over there," he raised hay, you know, and cows and stuff like that.

Bailey: Does horseshoing too.

Kelley: Yeah. Does horseshoing too. And I said, "It seems like he's always a doing something," you know, "It seems like he's a good worker," and I said, "I believe he'd

really make a good hand.” You know, come to find out Ray did. He made them a very good hand.

Bailey: Yeah. And he was hired, what, a couple years before (Kelley: Before I retired.) before you retired. In ‘95 or something?

Kelley: Yeah. Yeah, I worked with him. I helped train him on working on the Baileys and stuff like that.

Bailey: Oh. Okay.

Kelley: Yeah.

Bailey: It’s all fitting together now, I see.

Kelley: Oh yeah.

Bailey: Okay.

Kelley: And so, that a way he knew how to work on them and take over, you know, when I retired. Yeah. A lot of that stuff, you know, we had to learn. We had to, when we, that system was put in we had those guys from Bailey’s to come up here. And they was a lot of bugs in those Baileys they couldn’t even work out. I’m talking about these engineer men. And a lot of times we didn’t know a thing about them, but we’d go up and we’d start working on them, by experience, and we learnt things that they couldn’t even find the answer for, as a ditchrider. It’s something, you know if something’s not a working right the thing to do, just get in and try to find the problem, you know. And so, sometimes they could be kind of simple when you find out how the water, you know, controlled those [inaudible word?], control your pressure and

your flow and all of that. And, but, and you got to have the right type of orifice in, and it seemed like, and you righted a set in and -- so, we had to change them little orifices, in-line orifices, to make some of them Baileys work right in high pressure systems. We'd have to put in a little larger orifice than what it came out with, and that a way it would regulate that Bailey like it should.

Bailey: What kind of work did you do during the winter season?

Kelley: That was cleaning, cleaning open ditch, and shoveling out water boxes, and burning, and a working up in the canal.

Bailey: Okay.

Kelley: Relining the canal.

Bailey: So, there was always plenty of work for you to do in the winter?

Kelley: Yeah. You wouldn't, one thing you don't run out of work. (laugh) No. You don't run out of work as far as when it comes to irrigation company. There's always plenty to do.

Bailey: Well, here's a question that's kind of the final question that I asked everyone here. I mean, you've given me a lot of good information on this interview. I always look at, it's not length, but quantity and quality of what's in the interview. Talk about what was your greatest satisfaction of being a ditchrider?

Kelley: Well . . .

Bailey: What provided you, what made you get up every morning to go to roll call, or reveille as you said, to get your water orders for the day, and just drove you to enjoy your job?

Kelley: Well, to me, I kind of like my job, for one thing. I liked the farmers that I worked with, delivering water to them. And, I felt like I was doing the community good, as a ditch rider. And, it just made me feel good, for myself, knowing that I was doing something good for the community, more than anything. Because, you know, farmers, they play an important role, as far as worldwide. They're the ones that grow the food that we eat off of our tables. And, unless they get the water to grow that by, you know, we all might get a little bit hungry. And, so, that gave me satisfaction to know I'm doing good there, see, to help provide food on the table. Not just for here, but for other places also. And, so I would say, overall, I felt good. That kind of give me the energy each morning to get up real early, because you'd always have to get up early, as a ditchrider. You got to be prepared to go even if something happens in the night. You got to be prepared to get up, go out during the night.

I remember even after pressurized system was in, they had problems with another ditchrider over here and they couldn't get in touch with him. They was running frost water. I think that was in the month of March, if I'm not mistaken. Okay. They had a problem with the PRV station, and they couldn't get in touch with him (ringing phone).

Bailey: Okay. Go ahead.

Kelley: The farmers wasn't getting no water, okay? So, they called in. So, being they couldn't get in touch with the other ditchrider they called me and asked me would I go down and see what was going on at that PRV station. I said, "Sure." So, I, that was about

probably two o'clock in the morning. This was during frost season. And, I came up that PRV station, I didn't have nothing to remove that lid. Oh, those lids are heavy. And so, anyway, I reached down to get that lid. I lifted and I pulled back, and it got on my foot. You know, I injured by foot there. That laid me up there for a few weeks, on that. But, I would say, I fixed it where the farmers could go ahead and get their call-in. Then, the next day, then they got in touch with the ditchrider and they told him what was going on, for that certain system, you know. I think that was system three, which he was a good worker, Vern, that was Vern Henderson. He passed away before he was able to retire or anything. He'd been with them for a number of years. He was a good worker. A good hand, too, Vern was. But anyway, he was out that night, I guess, doing something. But, they couldn't get in touch with him, so I went down to check on what was going on, see if I could solve the problem. So, I had taken care of the problem there for him.

Bailey: So, you said community, your service to the community was the most important thing?

Kelley: I would think so, yes. Yeah. I would say that would be the most important part of my job, right there.

Bailey: Any final thoughts about your job?

Kelley: Well, any final thoughts? I believe they could have provided better automobiles at the beginning. (laugh) If I, I just wished I could have got on at younger age, really, you know. And, because they'll wait, a lot of them guys they like their job. They worked

thirty years, you know. And, if you like a job you don't care how long you work there because you know you're going to have to work anyway, you know, as a working man. And so, yeah, I kind of wished that I could have got on there at a younger age and that way I could've been a better serve, served the community, you know, a little better. As far as in number of years. But, overall, I'd say I'm very happy for the things I did, and I feel like hearing them say, "A job well done."

Bailey: Okay, Roy. Thank you very much. I think that will do it. I appreciate you time and trouble for this. And, I think that'll do it. I have some very good stuff in here to go along with the other interviews that I've done. So, thank you very much.

Kelley: Thank you too, Jim. And, I sure appreciate you coming out.

END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1. OCTOBER 15, 2003.
END OF INTERVIEW.

