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HISTORY AFIELD

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PHASE II FINAL REPORT
MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS RESERVOIRS
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS PILOT PROJECT
DACW 37-86-M-1722

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AUG 01 1988
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Submitted to:

John Anfinson
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District

October 1, 1987

by Jo Blatti on behalf of HISTORY AFIELD

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<p>This report documents oral history field research conducted for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in December, 1986. The subject concerns the development of public recreational resources at the Mississippi Headwaters reservoirs: Leech, Pine River, Pokegama, Sandy, Gull, and Winnibigoshish.</p> <p>This exploratory study is a pilot project in oral history documentation for the St. Paul district office. The report includes notes on oral history as a methodology, transcript editing, as well as content.</p> <p>Personnel interviewed were: LeRoy Campbell; Edmund Fitzpatrick; Orin (Ole) Henderson; Russell (Ike) Kolb and Edward Sunde. Betty (Mrs. Russell) Kolb and Agnes (Mrs. Orin) Henderson were interviewed as well.</p>					
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Report on Field Research

ABSTRACT

The following report documents oral history field research conducted for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in December 1986. The subject under inquiry is the development of public recreational resources at the Mississippi Head-waters Reservoirs - Leech, Pine River, Pokegama, Sandy, Gull, Winnibigoshish.

Personnel interviewed were:

Leroy Campbell
(maintenance Leech Lake, 1962-)

Edmund Fitzpatrick (retired 1973 as area manager
Headwaters region; formerly damtender at Cross and Gull
Lake)

Orin (Ole) Henderson (retired 1975; damtender at
Leech Lake 1959-1975)

Russell (Ike) Kolb (retired 1970; damtender at
Sandy Lake 1947-1970)

Edward Sunde (retired 1985; parks manager Leech
Lake 1975-1985, formerly maintenance and assistant at
Cross/Gull Lake).

Betty (Mrs. Russell) Kolb and Agnes (Mrs. Orin) Henderson were interviewed as well. Approximately seven hours of tape were collected in all.

This exploratory study is a pilot project in oral history documentation for the St. Paul office; our report includes notes on oral history as a methodology and on transcripts editing, as well as content.

This report is divided into the following sections:

- research design
- summary of research findings
- note on oral history methodology
- note on editing
- recommendations & conclusion
- appendix containing full transcripts for the Fitzpatrick, Henderson-Campbell, Kolb(s) and Sunde interviews plus tape summaries, indexes and questions schedule for the interviews.

A more detailed analysis of interview data and themes is in preparation under separate cover. The phase I literature review for this project was completed and delivered to the Corps in November 1986 (final revisions March 1987).

I. RESEARCH DESIGN MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS INTERVIEWS

Interview subjects were chosen following the preparation and submission of a literature review concerning Corps activity in the Mississippi Headwaters region from the 1870's through to the present. HISTORY AFIELD staff submitted the literature review to Environmental Resources staff in November 1986. The November report considered the general history of the Corps in the area and also interaction with Native American communities in the Headwaters, especially at Leech Lake. However, the major emphasis of the November 1986 literature review was preparation for oral history research on the development of recreational facilities at the dams, focusing on the role of damtenders.

As part of that report, a list of potential informants was gathered from Corps documents and conversations with active duty personnel. This list was circulated among Environmental Resources and Headwaters staff. HISTORY AFIELD investigators then established priorities for interview requests in consultation with Corps staff. Edmund Fitzpatrick, Russell Kolb and Orin ("Ole") Henderson were identified as first choices for a 3 to 4 part interview series, Edward Sunde and Leroy Campbell as alternates.

The principal criterion for the selection of oral history narrators was participation in the construction and management of public campgrounds at the Corps damsites in the transitional period, 1946-1970. During these years, the Corps emphasis switched from water resource management to provision of visitor facilities for camping, boat launch, swimming and other recreational activities. Length of service with the Corps in the Headwaters region and the advancing age of the retired individuals were important considerations, as well.

HISTORY AFIELD investigators Jo Blatti and Peg Korsmo-Kennon conducted interviews with Corps personnel (retired and active) in the Headwaters region, December 14-17, 1986. Informants were visited at their homes and businesses in Palisade, Boy River and Brainerd. Tentative dates were made with Kolb, Henderson and Fitzpatrick prior to departure for north central Minnesota. Appointments with Leroy Campbell and Edward Sunde were arranged following arrival in the area and confirmation from the first three.

II. SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW THEMES AND CONTENT

The mid-1960's master plans for individual damsites outline an official view, looking north from St. Paul, of a new emphasis on fishing, camping and picnicking in the area. The Corps annual reports from the late 1950's through to the '70's document the levels of funding for construction projects and labor at the Mississippi

Headwaters dams. Interviews with reservoirs damtenders illustrate human dimensions of change in work and living arrangements as the new facilities were built and a larger public entered the Headwaters region.

Taken along with the written sources, the picture which emerges from the Headwaters pilot interviews is one of substantial change over a 30-year period. Damtenders who began their tenures reading gages and solving mechanical problems in fairly isolated rural settings following World War II ended their careers in the 1970's as park managers in people-centered recreation facilities. Oral history with four retirees, one individual still actively employed by the Corps and the wives of two retirees reveal a considerable range of attitudes and perspectives on those developments.

Five interviews were conducted in all:

- 1) Ike and Betty Kolb; 12-15-86; 2 hours, 10 minutes
- 2) Orin ("Ole") Henderson and Leroy Campbell; 12-16-86; 1, hour 20 minutes
- 3) Agnes Henderson; 12-16-86; 40 minutes
- 4) Edward Sunde; 12-17-86; 1 hour, 20 minutes
- 5) Edmund Fitzpatrick; 12-17-86; 1 hour, 45 minutes.

The interview schedule proposed in the November 1986 literature review was used as the basic outline for each. Note: the Corps staff request for additional questions about the Indian-white relations was handled by asking each informant to comment on interaction between the two groups and following up on initial response.

Given the time and budget constraints for this project, detailed analysis of the individual interviews is not possible. The following observations, organized around the interview schedule categories, are intended as an accompaniment to careful reading of the transcripts and audition of the original tapes. As we noted in our preliminary report (November 1986), the schedule is an outline, a map for exploration, in oral history interviews, not a checklist.

A. General biographical info

The Kolbs and Fitzpatricks are originally from Wisconsin; in a sense, they followed the Mississippi north via work on the 9-foot channel. The Hendersons, Leroy Campbell and Edward Sunde are natives of the Headwaters region; they more or less followed local opportunities with the Corps.

In two of the interviews, relation to the region seems genuinely related to the views expressed. Orin ("Ole") Henderson, who was born and raised in Federal Dam, analyzes his work there more on the basis of community loyalties than a Corps identity. By contrast, Edmund Fitzpatrick's broad, comparative analysis and deep identification with the Corps as an institution strike the reader/listener as linked to his 'traveling' history up the river.

B. Corps entry

All of the informants entered the Corps in their 20's or 30's; not surprisingly, all had some technical skills, experience or aptitudes which proved important.

Interestingly, both Fitzpatrick and the Kolbs report willingness to take a paycut in exchange for a more desirable quality of life in the Headwaters region. For both, the comparison was to downstream Mississippi conditions.

Edmund Fitzpatrick describes downstream pollution as an important factor in his northern relocation in the 1960's; the Kolbs noted recuperation from surgery as an inspiration to transfer upstream. Taken along with the general tenor of the Henderson/Campbell and Sunde interviews, there is, again, not surprisingly, a strong commitment to outdoor life and 'unspoiled' surroundings among all the informants.

C. Experience as damtender

It was hard to get a typical day's schedule; we have come to understand that the work was routine gage reading and levels adjustment punctuated by episodic emergencies or highly specific tasks, such as painting and machine overhaul.

Kolb, Henderson/Campbell and Fitzpatrick give a good, detailed sense of gages, sluice gates, fish ladders and the like. Everybody except Fitzpatrick talked about snow-sampling, obviously a notable seasonal event. Henderson/Campbell give a masterful account of a floating bog, its causes and remedy. Henderson and Sunde offer interesting comparative judgments about the individual Headwaters reservoirs.

The damtenders' dwellings and domestic arrangements proved a fruitful topic. Taken altogether, the Kolbs, Sunde, and both Hendersons provide a picture of high quality housing, detailed descriptions of the Corps/tenant arrangements including utilities and rule-making, rising rents and abandonment of the live-in system circa 1970.

The Kolbs, the Hendersons and Ed Fitzpatrick also discussed the officers' quarters once located at each damsite for the convenience of visiting Corps personnel. The damtender's wife was paid to cook and clean for these visitors. An obviously unpopular system with these damtenders and their families, the officers' quarters were phased out in the '50's, early '60's.

D. Water resources/recreation

This general category encompasses everything from gage-reading and dam breaks to the resort community and wild rice culture. The Kolbs discuss the 1950 flood on Sandy; Sunde and Henderson talk some about the 1957 break at Leech. The Kolbs and Henderson/Campbell give a nice sense of interaction with the "resorter" community in terms of hired labor, shared interests and also protests over water levels. Sunde, Henderson and Campbell describe commercial wild rice culture at Leech Lake. Henderson/Campbell comment a little on the fishing concessions at Leech, as does Sunde.

Earlier dam-tenders figures on the Reservoirs - Snetsinger at Sandy (Kolb), Erickson at Cross/Gull (Sunde), Dart at Sandy and Federal (Kolb/Henderson) - are mentioned, but the references are essentially anecdotal.

General comments regarding St. Paul - local dam relations suggest more paperwork and considerably more official staff and bureaucracy with recreational development. Fitzpatrick and Sunde give a good view of the shift into a parks mentality in their descriptions of new procedures and the development of a regional office at Remer.

E. Development of recreation facilities

All the narrators address this topic in some detail. Ike Kolb presents himself as the pioneer, the first damtender to develop a campground. In his telling, it was on his own initiative at Sandy. Salty "Ole" Henderson loved caring for the Leech Lake dam and compares the fancy camper pads to cow stanchions. Fitzpatrick and Sunde give thorough and complementary views of facilities development at Cross/Gull.

F. Native American relations

The Kolbs, Fitzpatrick, Sunde, Henderson/Campbell all discuss archaeological investigations of Native American sites to some extent.

Responses to our questions about Indians ranged from Henderson/Campbell's description of interaction between the white and Native American communities around Federal Dam and Leech Lake to the Kolbs' propensity to respond in terms of intermarriage; the Kolbs' response may signal a more self-conscious attitude in these matters. All four of these narrators suggest active seasonal villages on the shores of Sandy, Winnibigoshish and Leech through the 1920's and '30's, a more dispersed and differently configured Indian community in more recent times.

III. THE PILOT INTERVIEWS AS ORAL HISTORY

Every oral history interview has its own character or storyline - it is a structure formed in the combination of the narrator's perspectives and the interviewer's response to that self-presentation. In reviewing the tapes, the Fitzpatrick interview seems to emphasize working one's way up through the ranks and loyalty to a supportive institution. The Kolbs' suggests genial storytelling and a self-dramatic capacity. Ed Sunde emphasizes the managerial challenge in his history with the Corps, and Agnes Henderson her domestic interests. "Ole" Henderson and Leroy Campbell speak in the context of longtime community and work relationships. Through these differently motivated voices, we get diverse, yet complementary views of the Headwaters recreation facilities.

The great strength of oral history as a methodology is its capacity to explore multiple perspectives. In this sense, the Corps pilot interviews constitute a good sample or range. At the same time, there is a good deal of internal consistency within these interviews - the snow-sampling and fish ladders discussions, general agreement on the language ('brushing out' of campgrounds, for example) and the timing of recreation development. That is an important quality to look for and test for in any oral history interview series.

The pilot interviews also demonstrate a fairly standard range of strength and utility as historical evidence. The Fitzpatrick and Sunde interviews are strong and focused, testimony to these informants' narrative and comparative abilities. The Henderson/Campbell tape works well as a joint reminiscence on work practices and community. Agnes Henderson gives a solid, but limited view of the dams from a spouse's perspective. The Kolb tapes are less incisive; there is much of interest within the tapes, but there's also a lot of circling. Overall, there is a strong 'fit' between preliminary documentary research on the Headwaters Reservoirs and oral history testimony from these narrators. The one notable exception is Russell (Ike) Kolb's self-presentation as a solo pioneer in the development of campgrounds, independent of developing Corps

policy in this area. One doesn't know precisely how much this is due to the informant's self-concept or fading memory; however, these certainly appear to be the operative factors.

As regards the joint interviews with Ole Henderson and Leroy Campbell and the Kolbs as a couple, it is always a calculated risk. Most oral history primers and veterans such as ourselves caution against the practice of multiple interviewing. However, the social circumstances of fieldwork sometimes force the issue. In the case of the Kolbs, it became clear upon entering the house that Mrs. Kolb was going to be a presence in the interview; inclusion seemed a better tactic than off-mike commentary. And, in many ways, Betty Kolb proved a valuable informant; she is the principal narrator at many points. In Boy River, we were unable to arrange separate appointments; Campbell and Henderson interpreted the interview as an opportunity to get together.

As regards interview of damtender spouses, we found our "accidental" conversation with Mrs. Kolb informative on several counts. She provided highly specific information about interrelationships between domestic arrangements and dam tending duties at the Sandy damsite - e.g. the care of visiting officers and their quarters, feeding Corps staff and community volunteers in the 1950 flood, her own occasional gage-reading when "Ike" Kolb was away on other Corps business. She also commented on Corps policy and procedures in ways that illuminated relationships between the St. Paul office and the individual damsite. Consequently, when we had an opportunity to interview Mrs. Henderson several days later, we went with it.

Corps staff has asked for a discussion of oral vs. written testimony as part of this report. We have tried to address the central questions in our foregoing discussion of the oral history qualities of Headwaters interviews. To assume (or to fear) that interpretive statements have greater or lesser validity because their form is written or oral is to misunderstand the nature of this kind of historical evidence. Oral history is a form of personal testimony. The questions which historians apply to testimonial evidence are:

- first, how does it square with other sources and other data about the same matter?
- second, in what context is the informant writing or speaking? How are we to understand that person's "voice"?

This is why our discussion of the Headwaters pilot interviews is couched in terms of internal and external consistency. We recommend Envelopes of Sound (Ronald J. Grele ed.) as an excellent general discussion of these issues.

IV. EDITING AND TRANSCRIPTION DECISIONS

All five interviews recorded in the Headwaters region in December 14-17, 1986 have been transcribed in their entirety and are appended to this report along with archival face sheets and tape indexes. Originals of the informant releases and the interview cassettes (tabs pulled to prevent additional recording or erasure) have been given over to Corps staff.

In editing the transcripts, we punctuated for sentences and paragraphs where appropriate, following rhythms of the informant's speech throughout. In general, we did not edit out false starts or the use of conjunctions such as 'but', 'and' and 'or', believing that Corps staff would want to see readable, but verbatim data. Generally speaking, oral historians agree that transcription should be literal and verbatim; cosmetic editing of colloquialisms and grammar should be avoided in "the first pass", though these elements may require subsequent attention in informant - reviewed transcriptions or in publication of data.

The relationship of tape to type in oral history transcription is an exceedingly complex one. Whole careers, especially in the archival repositories, have been devoted to the subtleties of oral and written expression. Suffice it to say here that some in the field consider the raw interview tape the primary document to be consulted by any serious researcher, the transcript (raw but accurate) as a form of listener's guide. At the other extreme, a highly polished transcript, carefully edited to convey every possible nuance of the spoken words, in essence becomes the primary document available to researchers; the raw tape is rarely heard except on special request.

In this project, we have taken a middle ground of sorts. Considerable care has been taken to produce clear, readable transcription which flows intelligibly; however, we do see the raw tape as primary in terms of nuance, tone of voice and other aural signals such as laughter, sighs, verbal tics; these elements have not necessarily been noted in the transcriptions. To do so would have required a third round of editing and typing. As it is, the level of editing in these pilot project transcripts required 6-8 hours professional time per interview in addition to clerical services in transcription. Our overall time on these transcripts conformed closely to the 1 hour tape - 14 hours processing ratio suggested by the Minnesota Historical Society guidelines for oral history projects.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION

Corps staff has requested our recommendations concerning

- 1) specific follow-up to the Headwaters pilot interviews
- 2) general guidelines and evaluation procedures for oral history projects commissioned by the St. Paul office.

We will consider additional directions for Headwaters research first, and then the more general questions of oral history evaluation.

Additional research in the Headwaters Region

Given the overall strength of the pilot interviews, HA staff feels confident in recommending consideration of additional interviews with retiring or long-term Headwaters personnel. The pilot project has yielded strong descriptive data on both dam tending procedures and the development of recreational facilities at the Headwaters Reservoirs. We believe that fuller views of water resources issues, recreational development and management, regional economic issues, community and social life can be expected.

In historiographic terms, the context or "big picture" for these modest pilot interviews is the Corps of Engineers presence in the Headwaters region from the 1870s forward. In essence, this is the story of the operations and the effects of a large, national institution within a group of rural, seemingly intensely localized communities. As we indicated in our preliminary report of November 1986, many different historical themes and ideas could be pursued at varying levels of generalization. These are the large questions which emerged most clearly in the course of this exploratory project:

- * Corps activities as a factor in local economic and social life in the Headwaters (employment opportunities/access to communications and technical skills/in-migration from other regions/social space for Native American and inter-married families)
- * Corps activities in relation to overall commercial development in the Headwaters - timbering, fishing and trapping, wild rice, potatoes and other agricultural products, the resort industry
- * Corps activities in relation to BIA policies and local Native American communities over time.

More discrete or self-contained areas of inquiry include:

- * Corps employment in relation to patterns of work, domestic life, habits of communication and worldview - range and variation among Headwaters employees

- * Corps activities in relation to the resort industry (from early, relatively privileged clientele for railroad-based fish camps to decline and reformulation based on automobile travel and more broadly accessible campgrounds)
 - * the summer season in the Headwaters as viewed by vacationers and public/private recreation providers
 - * multiple perspectives on wild rice culture in the region - Corps/Native American/ white commercial culture
 - * St. Paul office and Headwaters perspectives on policy formulation and implementation within the Corps.

In terms of oral history research limits and opportunities, historical memory among the pilot informants stretches easily to the 1920's and in some cases beyond. Ole Henderson remembers an older relative who was a blacksmith for the Corps in Federal Dam; the Kolbs tell stories of the Snetsingers on Sandy Lake. Taken altogether, the pilot informants identify a web of interrelated networks and potential informants. These divide into several broad categories:

- * peers. Other retirees and their spouses, active-duty Corps personnel, area contractors and laborers who work(ed) on Corps projects
- * local clients of Corps facilities. Resort operators, wild rice growers/harvesters, fish guide and concession operators, farmers, Native American tribal officials and members, other area residents.
- * St. Paul Office personnel (usually superiors) and outside experts such as contract engineers, archaeologists and the like.
- * sojourners. Vacationers - both longtime, often longterm (2-3 months) visitors and more recent, more numerous automobile campers.

This pilot data and available documentary evidence could support continued research in any of the areas suggested above. The question is: What is the Corps' institutional interest in commissioned research in the Headwaters region and how would that interest best be served?

In historical terms, the broad, complex story in the Headwaters is the intersection of white and Native American cultures within a relatively fragile ecology. Concomitant themes include "harvest" vs. "gathering" approaches to available resources in the area and sources and forces of cultural change over a hundred-year period. These forces include everything from railroads, resorts and automobiles to agricultural practice, mass communications and consumption. The Corps presence in the Headwaters intersects with all these elements. These are important developments and themes in Minnesota history generally

and in comparative regional studies in related areas of the Upper Midwest, the Northeast and Upper Canada. As historical consultants, we would urge the Corps staff to pursue its Headwaters researches in communication with the Minnesota Historical Society, the National Park Service and others who share an interest in this territory and the themes which arise from it.

In terms of short-term, practical tasks arising from the Headwaters pilot study on post WWII recreation, we recommend

- 1) completion of the "retired damtenders' series" through interviews with Henry L. Sharp (Pokegama) and Irvin Seelye (Winnibigoshish).
- 2) additional interviews (2-4 total) with J. Wesley Walters and with other St. Paul Office decision-makers such as Owen Emsweiler and Jim Von Lorenz, who worked closely with the damtenders on the development of recreational facilities at the Headwaters.
- 3) consideration of additional interviews (3-4) with younger, active duty personnel such as Jim Ruyak, Dennis Cin, Walter Hermerding and Ray Nelson who participated in the change over to a recreation model at the Headwaters.
- 4) selective oral history documentation of additional 20th century changes in the Headwaters region. We recommend consideration of a) development of commercial wild rice culture; b) changes in the operation of resort facilities and concessions circa WWI to the present; c) summer visitors' experiences, expectations and finances over time.

Briefly, our thinking is that the Sharp and Seelye interviews would complete the range of available thought and commentary on the part of damtenders who participated in the change over from water resources management to recreation. Also, on the basis of other informants' testimony, we believe Seelye to be a potentially valuable informant concerning interaction with the Native American community. Interviews with retired superiors and policy-makers plus younger participants in the recreational system will complete the triangle, offering a more properly-rounded array of perspectives on recreational policy and implementation. Finally, an advantage of oral history as a methodology lies in its capacity for documentation and analysis of recent historical experience. Little information has been collected to date concerning the ricing and recreational issues suggested for further research. However, they are of institutional significance in terms of Corps operations and they tie in with important regional, technological, and consumption patterns in 20th century history.

B) Recommendations concerning oral history evaluation procedures

We will discuss three evaluative resources herein:

- 1) the use of the Headwaters pilot project as a model
- 2) current professional journals and related literature which consider standards in oral history methodology, technique, and theory
- 3) peer review of Corps of Engineers research and planning in oral history.

1) The Headwaters pilot project as a model

We do not claim perfection for this interview series by any means. However, HA has approached the Headwaters pilot interviews as a model project. We have endeavored to illustrate high standards in our preparatory research, actual interviews, analysis and processing of data. In our reports, we have tried to describe clearly both our practical techniques and our historiographic assumptions. This is for the immediate use of Corps personnel and for subsequent use by researchers who might work with the interview data. The releases and the processing forms which accompany the Headwaters transcripts are model documents, suitable for adaptation to whatever archival procedures the St. Paul Office might develop for oral history.

2) Professional journals and literature

We especially recommend the periodicals Oral History Review and International Journal of Oral History to Corps staff. Both journals are devoted to oral history as a method of inquiry and to theoretical development within the field. We also commend the Wingspread evaluation guidelines to your attention. These criteria were formulated by a task force of the Oral History Association (OHA) in 1979-80; new subscribers to the OHR receive a free copy. A subscription to either of these journals will quickly lead readers to the classics of interpretation and technique within the field.

3) Peer review

Minnesota is an active area for oral history research; the Oral History Association of Minnesota, a state-based affiliate of the national OHA, operates under the sponsorship of the Minnesota Historical Society. Through this organization and its membership, it would be relatively easy to identify a group of professional oral historians who could offer collegial advice to Corps staff in its oral historical activities. Should the Corps staff wish to pursue this idea, we would recommend the following persons as initial contacts:

James Fogerty, president OHAM and Head, Acquisitions
and Curatorial, MHS
Margaret Robertson, Project Oral Historian
(Environmental Issues), MHS
Hampton Smith, Field Representative, Library and
Archives, MHS
Edward Nelson, Iron Range Resource Center, Chisholm
Barbara Sommer, Carlton County Historical Society,
Cloquet.

Each is knowledgeable concerning theoretical aspects of oral history, has considerable field experience and conducts research along environmentally- or institutionally-based lines consonant with Corps interests. These may or may not be the individuals who would actually advise Corps staff, but they certainly could provide likely leads.

Appendix A
Interview Transcripts

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ST. PAUL DISTRICT

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW FORM

Narrator Name: Edmund Fitzpatrick

Address: 1407 11th Ave. N.E., Brainerd, MN 56401

Date of Interview: Dec. 17, 1986

Place of Interview: Home of Edmund Fitzpatrick

Name of Interviewer: Peggy Korsmo-Kennon

Project Title (if any): _____

Narrator Biographical Information:

Full name (including maiden name): _____

Year of Birth: Oct. 2, 1906

Spouse's full name: _____

Subjects Discussed:

Work with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, began on dredge near Prescott, Wisc; Lock & Dams on Mississippi; Gull Lake and Pine River Dams; Reservoir Manager, years 1932-1973.

TAPE RECORDING:

No. of Cassettes: 2 No. of Reels & Speed: _____

Length of Interview: 1 hour 45 min.

Release form signed (date): Dec. 17, 1986

Restrictions (if any): -0-

Comments:

TRANSCRIPT:

Date completed: February 1987 No. of Pages: 32

Restrictions (if any): -0-

Comments:

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ST. PAUL DISTRICT

ORAL HISTORY AGREEMENT FORM

I, Edmund Fitzpatrick, a participant in
an oral history interview recorded on December 17, 1986,
hereby give and deliver to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul
District all the incidents of ownership in that interview, including
copyright, from this time forward.

Signed:

Date

12-17-1986

Edmund Fitzpatrick
Donor

Address

1407 11th AVE NE

Brainerd MN 56401

Signed:

Peggy Kornum Jensen
Interviewer

TAPE INDEX
Interview With Edmund Fitzpatrick by Peggy Korsmo-Kennon
December 17, 1986
(1 hr., 45 min. total)

Tape 1, Side 1

0 min. Born in Prescott, Wisc.

Began work with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) in 1932, on Mississippi River near Prescott.

Worked with Corps until World War II began, served 3 years, returned to Corps, work at lock and dam at Lynxville, Wisc., (Locks and Dam No. 7).

Transferred to lockmaster at Hastings, (Locks and Dam No. 3).

By 1959 the river was getting pretty polluted - (before Clean Water-Clean Air act).

Looking for "change of scene".

Dam tender's position opened at Gull Lake/Pine River, applied and got job.

10 mins. Discusses reasons for development of recreational areas at dam sites - more leisure time, more money.

1st improvement at Pine River was to clean up dam tender's dwelling site, picnic tables, toilets.

Village of Cross Lake started campground, Corps took over site.

Corps staff started improvements, then contractor was hired.

Discusses Corps plans for area during 1960s.

Improvements included roads, camping pad.

Public response to campsites.

Development of campsites during the 1960's.

Changes in visitors; tents, pick-up campers, trailers-bigger and bigger; from basics to luxury.

Gull Lake recreational development came after Pine River late 1960s.

20 mins. Details of development at Pine River.

Most of the improvements at the dam sites were part of a plan developed by St. Paul office -- other improvements were improvised.

Discusses function of reservoir systems - specifically Gull Lake and Pine River.

Defines "head," the amount of water against dam -
Pine River - 11 ft.
Gull - 5 ft.

Original timbers in Pine River Dam - some still existed in 1976.

Dam(s) as tourist site vs. draw of campground.

Dam tender's role as "guide" to area.

Popularity of Pine River campground, full by Thursday evenings.

Development of Corps land around Whitefish Chain (Pine River).

Fishing around dam site, not allowed within 300 ft.

Changes in dam tender's job. Dam oriented work to recreation management.

Enjoyed job as dam tender. [Shows interviewer certificates and awards on living room wall].

End of side one

Tape 1, Side 2

0 min. Archeological investigations at Gull Lake dam site, early 1960s.

Trouble with Indians for disturbing burial grounds.

Cross Lake site is more attractive to tourists than Gull Lake.

10 mins. Impact of Corps recreational development on local economy
Gull Lake - not much impact.
Pine River - great impact.

Change from summer-only tourist economy, to development of winter recreation.

Describes dwelling at Gull Lake.

Rented dwelling from Corps, about \$45 mo. It was a condition of employment for dam tender to live on site, no longer the case.

Visits of Corps officers to dam sites -- abused visiting rights (too much fishing).

Wife was not involved with operations of dam site.

20 mins. Communication between dam tenders, shared equipment.

Fitzpatrick was 1st dam tender to be issued government vehicle, a pickup truck.

Dam site provides wood for campers.

Describes daily routine, responsibilities of dam tenders.

Fitzpatrick hired 1st woman to help out at dam site, created quite a stir, late 1960s

Summer staff, describes problems working with youth.

Work day always started at Gull Lake, after getting crew started, Fitz. would spend remainder of day at Pine River.

Job had increased responsibilities as recreational sites grew.

End of side 2 - End of tape.

Tape 2, Side 1

0 min. Describes management of campsites.

Problems with campers, others.

Stories about staff and campers.

Philosophy on managing staff.

Speculations on uses of computers at dam sites.

Paperwork involved at dam site.

Involved with survey work to determine recreational needs in Gull Lake/Pine River area.

10 mins. Reasons for public's increased interest in campgrounds.

Taught boater's safety classes while working at Hastings.

Recalls isolation of Gull Lake, Pine River area during winter.

Complaints of resort owners about dams.

20 mins. Dikes on Whitefish chain.

Logging and reservoir system.

Returns to function of dikes to reservoir system.

Fish ladder at Pine River Dam.

Making provisions for handicapped at Pine River.

[Aside about Walter Hermerding].

Disappearance of wildlife in area.

Story of how a bass ate a baby loon at Gull Lake Dam.

End of Side 1

Tape 2, Side 2

0 min. Fitzpatrick's promotion to Reservoir Manager, Grand Rapids.

Describes work of Reservoir Manager.

Moved office from Grand Rapids to Remer, Corps bought (or transferred) land/buildings from U.S. Forest Service.

Retire from Corps to Brainerd at age of 67, 1973.

More about work as Reservoir Manager.

Changes in Corps staff from people who worked their way up through ranks to hiring professionals.

Describes jobs with Corps: on dredge; with survey crew for locks/dams; with locks at Lynxville, Hastings

10 mins. Work at Hastings Lock/Dam.

Transition from Hastings to Gull Lake.

Views on cleaning up the Mississippi River.

End of Interview (some tape remains).

U.S. CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ST. PAUL DISTRICT
MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS INTERVIEW SERIES 1986
EDMUND FITZPATRICK, NARRATOR

This is Peg Korsmo-Kennon and I am interviewing Ed Fitzpatrick in his home in Brainerd on December 17, 1986.

INT: Maybe you could tell me a little about yourself, where you were born and when.

EF: Well, I was born in Prescott, Wisconsin. I came to work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1932. Dredge Pelee, it was a hydraulic dredge, sand sucker dredge they called it, below Prescott, Wisconsin and I worked on the dredge, 1932 through, it was part-time the four years; ...it was seasonal —.

Then in 1936 they started building locks and dams on the Mississippi River, changing from the 6 foot channel to the 9 foot channel. And eventually I went to work on one of the Lock and Dams the Trempealeau, Wisconsin, Lock and Dam #6. Let's see, that was probably 1936, 37.

INT: How old were you then?

EF: Well, let's see, I was a slow learner, I had been in Canada the year before that, bouncing around the country, you know. I graduated from high school in 1925, I was 18 then, so I must have been —

INT: 21 or so?

EF: More than that, 25, 30, probably 24. I had a lot of varied, many jobs, odd jobs. I worked in Milwaukee for a while and then North Dakota, bouncing around the country, Canada for a year. Then in 1936, as I said, they started building the locks and dams and I went to work on Lock and Dam #6 at Trempealeau, Wisconsin.

That's where I met my wife. I lived in a hotel there for about a year. And then in 1938 we were married and I was transferred later to Lock and Dam #9 at Lynxville, Wisconsin.

And then the war came along, and I was in the Army for three years. I was over in the South Pacific for two years. We had the landing craft. I was with the Amphibian engineers, landing craft with MacArthur, bouncing up and down the islands. Got out of that safely except I was in bad shape when that war was over. I had malaria and what they called jungle rot. Did you ever hear of that?

INT: Yeah.

EF: It was a fungus of some kind on the skin. Malaria and then the jungle rot and a few other things. I spent some time in the hospital after the war. Then I went back to work in Lynxville, and I was promoted to Assistant Lockmaster. I spent about a year there, and then I was promoted to Lockmaster in Hastings, Lock and Dam #2 at Hastings, Minnesota. And I stayed there until 1959, I believe it was.

And the river was getting pretty dirty at that time, I was looking for a change, I wanted some clear, clean water. That was before the clean air clear water act came through. It was just beginning to have a little effect on the streams, you know. People weren't aware of how much pollution there was going on at that time. I could see it on the river. Matter of fact, one time at Hastings there was a barge came through, tow came through with a barge that was leaking oil. After they pulled out, I could see the oil on top of the water. So I brought up a pail of that water and put some of it in a fruit jar and took it to St. Paul and showed them what was happening. I think that was one of the first times that they were really aware of how much pollution was going on. And then South St. Paul packing plants were putting a lot of stuff in the water. Now, of course, anybody who throws anything in the water is liable to [be] fined of some kind, which is a good thing. It's too late though, a lot of the streams have been polluted. Let's see, then in 19--, I finally left the locks and dams on the river and came up here in 1959, I guess.

INT: You were looking for a change of scene?

EF: I took about a \$2,000 a year cut in salary just to get off the river and up here. I wanted to do a little fishing and hunting and have a little different lifestyle. So I came up here as a dam tender at Gull Lake Dam and Pine River Dam, both of them. Now they got a dam tender at each site.

INT: Where were you stationed, where did you live?

EF: At the Gull Lake Dam out here. If Jo is going out there, Ed will probably show her that place. I don't know, but it's a dam on the foot of Gull Lake. We lived there until, let's see ... That is where we started the recreation areas when I was there.

INT: Nothing had been done prior to...?

EF: Very little.

INT: Now can you tell me how the decision was made to do some recreation improvements?

EF: Well, looked to me like people were getting, saving more money and buying.... They weren't spending so much time working. They had a little more leisure, had a little more money. They were buying a few boats and a few guns and some fishing tackle, slowly, but you could see it coming. And they had no place to go. The State owns a lot of land in the State, Minnesota. The Federal Government owns some land, too. The Federal Government apparently had a little more money than the State did. See, they started developing some of these areas, and we started at

Cross Lake and in the late 1960s, probably 1961. Gradually we started making a few moves here and there. And at that time we really wasn't aware of what was going to happen. We changed a few things.

INT: What were some of the first things that you did?

EF: At Cross Lake, for instance, there had been an old dwelling, two dwellings up there. One of them had burned and had moved the other one out. And there was an old warehouse, and they had a man reading gages. And there was some old fences here and there, you know. I guess the dam tender might have had a cow or chickens or something. So gradually we moved all that stuff and tried to clean up the grounds.

And then the village of Cross Lake who had the... put some couple of picnic tables and some toilets in the on the government property along the lakeshore, beautiful site, and then you could see the possibility of one of the campgrounds there or recreation area.

INT: And the city did that in cooperation with the Corps?

EF: Yeah, they tried to maintain, [it] but the village didn't have any money to do much, and the picnic tables were in bad shape and the toilets were run down. So we gradually, over three or four years, we made it. We asked the village to abandon their stuff, to take care of it and go on from there. And probably about in 1963 we got a contract to come in. This man that Jo is going to see, his name is Ed Sunde, and I and another fellow by the name of Bohall, he lives up at Cross Lake, cut the first tree down to make room for the first parking lot in that area. We started in and then they brought in a contractor. By that time apparently, the Corps. of Engineers had done quite a bit of bird dogging around the country and found out what the proper design for a good campground, and they send up some maps, instructions. And the contractor and we started in on a full-time basis up there. Just making roads, cutting trees and making roads and building camping pads. By 1965 we probably had things pretty well under way.

INT: Was it used immediately by the public?

EF: Yeah, it had been used off and on by local people. It took a couple years before the camping public knew we had such a site. Locally, of course, it was well accepted, but the people from the Minneapolis, Twin City area weren't aware of it for a couple of years. In the meantime, we moved all of the old toilets and buildings the village had, and we built some toilets, a lot of them, pit type toilets. And made some more road and made some more camping pads and put an office in the warehouse and put in some water, built two wells — everything we needed to make a decent campground. And they expanded with, I think, the first year, with 54 campsites and the next year over 70 and now there is over 100. And then we improved the roads from gravel to bituminous and hired some people to cut the grass, cut the weeds, kill the poison ivy, get the obnoxious weeds out, do some select cutting of some trees that might be blow downs, the bad looking trees. We provided firewood for the campers; I don't think we even started the fee for the first year or two. I think the first fee was around two dollars or something like that. Now it must

be \$8 or \$10. Of course, we didn't have electricity in the area either for the first four years, except for our own use for pumping.

INT: So did you see a change in the type of visitor over the years?

EF: Oh, yes, at first everybody came, the campers came with tents. Some didn't even have tents--well, the canvas just slung over a stake or something, you know. And then from the tents we got pick-up campers, trucks with a cover on them, you know, what they call pick-up campers, I think. And then the trailers, the camping trailers, the camping trailers got bigger and bigger, and the tents got bigger and bigger, and the mini-homes came in and the motor homes. Over ten years there really was a change; it was really remarkable, from the very basics to almost the extremely luxury.

INT: So did, what the people expected, did that change, you know, their expectations as far as what they wanted from your site, did you think you met that fairly well?

EF: Oh yes, the place was well accepted. Everybody was pleased with it. There is always an element that comes in at a public ground, especially, that's not exactly the kind of element you would like to have. But it was open to everybody. But for the most part people really loved that area, and, right now today, it is one of the best campgrounds in the company.

INT: It is a pretty site. /

EF: Yes, and then after we got that going real well, I was in charge of both of them, Cross Lake and Gull, and we were so busy, people started coming in and we had almost a full crew up there at Cross Lake.

INT: Now, how many people did you have working for you? Can you remember?

EF: Well, you see, you have a crew of about 10 or 12 at Cross Lake and when we started at Gull, I bounced back and forth between the two of them. I put a man in charge at Cross Lake and another one down at Gull and another contractor down in Gull. That was a much smaller site, because the grounds were a little swampy there at Gull, and we had to do backfilling. But I finally had a pretty good area at both places.

INT: When did you start the development at Gull about the same time? Or did you say later?

EF: No, much later. We were well under way at Cross Lake before we started Gull. Let's see, Gull was, let's say, probably 1966 before we got it going there real good. Now, that's well accepted. Then we went from the pit type toilets at Cross Lake. We put in water and sewage system, complete sewage system, and that's in operation now at Gull, I mean at Cross Lake and at Gull. Which means we had to train some people to run these sewage systems because they had to be in line with the Department of Natural Resources provisions. Things have changed quite a bit. Have you been up to Cross Lake?

INT: Not since the late '60s, so I have in my mind the vision of what you are describing, but that was the last time I was...

EF: I was, let's see, we took the warehouse out of there, the big warehouse and put in a new office building and warehouse. Put in two, what do you call them, I would have to call them toilets, but you would have to call them more than that.

INT: Would you call them comfort stations?

EF: Yeah, comfort stations, I couldn't think of the name.

INT: Yeah, I remember the terminology switched from toilets to comfort stations.

EF: Right, okay, I don't remember all these names any more. That's what we call them, comfort stations, and they were well accepted, of course. So then we put in two swimming beaches at Cross, two boat ramps. I remember the first boat ramp we had; there was a concrete boat ramp at Cross Lake where it was in such poor shape that we had to take it out. And then I was alone that winter, I busted it up, I broke it up myself with a sledgehammer and lowered it on a truck and hauled it out of there. We built, the following spring, we built a new boat ramp there, and later on another one across the point on Cross Lake proper. It's too bad we don't have some pictures of the change from one year to the next. Maybe the Corps of Engineers does in St. Paul.

INT: Were people taking pictures, was it being documented when they were working on it?

EF: Not really, well I took a lot of pictures.

INT: You have a scrapbook.

EF: Yes, it's in St. Paul.

INT: Yes, we had looked at that.

EF: Oh you did. Well, I don't have too much about the recreation area, I get too busy, I guess. I had more on the Mississippi River than up here, although there are some pictures, I believe.

INT: Well the changes that you made, the development of the recreation area, was that part of a plan that the Corps gave you from St. Paul or did you devise it yourself?

EF: No, it was part of a plan, an overall plan, the design section of the Corps of Engineers, they were responsible for the changes.

INT: And you worked, I guess, I've seen a master plan for the Pine River development.

EF: Yeah, you probably have. You spent some time in the office before you came up?

INT: Yeah, we did some research.

EF: Yeah, they, it was from year to year. They would come up with recommendations and some drawings and a design. Although some of the things we did, we had to improvise, I mean, it actually went faster than the Corps of Engineers could keep up with us. We had an old shack that a man was living in that on the government property. His name was Olson; he was reading the gages on the dam. And one morning we, Ed Sunde, I think it was Ed, we found him dead. He was quite old and was a bachelor. And after he died, we took his little shack and cleaned it all up. And moved it from where it was out onto the area where we were going to build the campgrounds and made an office out of it. We did that on our own, we did a lot of things on our own. Of course, always with the approval of the Corps of Engineers in St. Paul.

INT: Within the limits they had.

EF: Yes.

INT: That brings to mind the tending of the dam. Did you have responsibilities? You had someone reading the gages? Did you actually do some of those..?

EF: Oh, yes.

INT: What were your jobs related to the dam?

EF: Well, have you seen some of the dams?

INT: Ya.

EF: Did you see the one, let's see where were you yesterday?

INT: We were at Leech.

EF: You saw the one at Leech Lake yesterday?

INT: And the one at Pokegama.

EF: Pokegama. Well, those dams control the flow on the rivers, and they have to be regulated. Of course, if you get a lot of snowmelt or heavy rains, you have to let some of that water go, because each lock and dam has controlled elevations to be maintained. You don't want the water to get too high or too low; you keep it at as constant a level as you can, because it affects so many people along the boundaries of the shorelines. People are building, building, building all the time you know, right in the water, some of them. And so you try to maintain a constant level.

In the spring, when the snow and ice melt comes, you have to open these gates up and let that water out in order to maintain the prescribed elevation. And then, as the season goes on, you have to close those gates down, to close those gates down in order to hold the water or to keep the

elevation to the proper level. So that means almost constant monitoring of the operation. You read the gages every day and the Corps of Engineers has a hydraulic section, which gets gage readings from all over the country on all the tributaries, on those little creeks mostly, and wherever there is any discharge into the main streams. And they know before you do how much water is coming to you from all these tributaries and how much snow there is. And they know how much water to expect from the snow and things like that so they can tell you ahead of time what to expect, and they can tell you how much to raise the gate and how much to lower it. Sometimes, but not always, you have to play it by ear, which counts for a little experience as you go along.

Well, I had both of those to do over at Gull and at Cross Lake. The one at Gull is a real small dam compared to Cross Lake. It impounds for water on Gull Lake and Gull Lake, Upper Gull, Lake Nisswa and Lake Margaret. I think that's about it. And at Cross Lake is the Whitefish Chain, it's the Upper and Lower Whitefish, Lake Bertha, Trout Lake, Cross Lake and is that all.

INT: Now, I assume any of them, now, is there Hay?

EF: Oh, yeah, Upper and Lower Hay. The head, that's the amount of water that is up against the dam, at Cross Lake is around 11 feet the year around, where at Gull, it's only about 5 1/2. It's what they call a head, the depth of the water against the dam.

INT: I think I read someplace, in 1976, at least, there was some of the original timber in the dam at Cross Lake. Do you remember anything about this? There was a point they wanted to make during the bi-centennial celebration that there was some, I think, it was a horizontal. Do you remember when that was rebuilt, repaired or rebuilt while you were there?

EF: No, I left in 1973. I was promoted from dam tender to area manager, and I went to Grand Rapids. But to answer your question, the dam at Pine River, at Cross Lake they call it the Pine River Dam, but it's at Cross Lake. It's very old; it's, let's see, it is over 100 years old last summer I think, and, of course, I think part of it had been rebuilt once, and there was some old, there was some old material there. While I was still working, we took out some old timbers and replaced them with concrete, but I can't really answer your question about that. There is a dam tender up there now by the name of Walt Hermerding; he was very knowledgeable; he probably remembers more about that than I do.

INT: Of course, if it was celebrated when he was working.

EF: Yes.

INT: Well, another question I have been curious to ask is, did people who came to those campgrounds, were they interested in the dam site. Was that just incidental that it was there, or did that bring in it's own kind of sightseers and tourists?

EF: Well, I think they came up for the campsites, but once they were there,

they would take a look around. And then they would become interested in what was going on in regard to the dam and its operation. But for the most part, they came up for recreation and to go camping and fishing.

INT: Were you somewhat of a guide of the area, did they ask you questions about..?

EF: Oh, yes. Yes, we tried to. By that time most of us were aware of what was going within say 30, 40, 50 miles around us. It got, we were so popular that when I left there, say about 19, let's see, I moved from there to Grand Rapids in 1969, I think. By that time, at Cross Lake area, the campsite was so popular, so well known, that by Thursday evening or Friday at the latest, the thing could be full, no more room for anybody. And we would be sending them off to other places, even to private resorts, and it's that way yet. In the meantime, they expanded somewhat.

INT: Now, did they develop other Corps land around? Were there campsites on some of the other land around?

EF: No. There were no campsites on some of the land that the Federal Government owns, but we did put in some boat ramps, and picnic tables, boat ramps and picnic tables, that's all. I don't think they put in any toilets, unless they did without my knowledge after I left.

INT: So, were they, did they ask you where to catch fish, was that..?

EF: Oh sure. Oh yeah. That was one of the first questions they would ask: How's the fishing, you know? And you would have to be aware of what was going on.

INT: Could you fish around the dam site?

EF: No, ma'am. There's a, the Department of Natural Resources is cooperating with the Corps of Engineers. The fish like hanging around the dams, as there is a lot of food going through there you know. For the most part, there was a 300-foot limit. You couldn't get anywhere near, any closer than 300 feet above or below the dams, and also that applies on the Mississippi River to most of them.

INT: Yeah, I can see, my brother was once tempted below the dam.

EF: He was once what?

INT: He was once tempted to fish below the

EF: Oh, yeah, it's dangerous in the first place

INT: Well, yeah, that water

EF: Not so much the dams up here, but on the Mississippi River, there have been some drownings, because people come near getting in too close.

INT: Well, in your tenure there, could you look at some of the changes as far as your job or the job of your predecessor? How it's changed over time as far as the people, the dam tenders? It has changed in name; do they call them dam tenders any longer?

EF: Yeah, they don't call them dam tenders, they are, recreational - I don't even know what the term is right now, let's see, what do they call them - recreational - I really don't know.

INT: Managers or...

EF: Yeah, but at that time we were all called dam tenders. And it was a good job, but the pay was not so good. But there was a - I loved it, I really liked it. I had 41 years with the Corps of Engineers, and I loved every minute of it. That includes 3 years in the Army, of course. Would you like to see some of these things I've got up on the wall here?
[Interviewer stops tape, EF shows her the Army Corps of Engineers awards he has on his living room wall.]

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1

INT: Oh, yeah. We could talk a little bit about the archeological finds you

EF: I wasn't aware of this, but there is a man in town here who is now retired. He worked for First Federal Banking system; he was a quite an archeologist and knowledgeable about all the Indian artifacts and mounds and artifacts that were around the area. And he told us to be on the lookout for some Indian mounds exactly where we were going to dig through for the campsites. We called in a team from the University of Minnesota, and we found what they call the effigy mounds. There was 11 of them, and the University of Minnesota, and they got some equipment. We got very well acquainted with the man in charge, and some of the -.

INT: Do you remember who that was?

EF: No, I can't, do you know?

INT: No, I know

EF: I doubt if he's there anymore, because I'm talking about 1960, you know, 1960, early '60s. I remember one gal; her name was Eleanor. I can't think of her last name; she was in charge of the field. Anyway, they opened up some of these effigy mounds and dated them. And then we had to, the Indians got up, and they made some protests. They didn't like the fact that we were disturbing their burial grounds. We could relate to that, of course, but the damage had already been done by the county when they made the first road through there. They dug right through one of them, not being aware of it. So, after the team from Minnesota were through with their diggings, we restored the mounds all back to their original state, and then we put an off limits to the camping grounds, put a fence around it. And they are still there, you can still see it now, they keep the grass clipped so you can see the mounds. That's about the only time I got involved in anything like that, although the whole country is full of artifacts if you stumble onto them in the right place.

INT: What Indian tribe was interested?

EF: You can answer that better than I, what tribes were in here - Chippewa

INT: Was it the Ojibwa?

EF: I think so, ya. What did they date this? They dated some of the artifacts to the year 1300. There ought to be a record of that at the University of Minnesota or the Minnesota State Historical Society, I think.

INT: Was it put on the National Register of Historic places?

EF: I would say so, yes.

INT: So, you think that has added to the interest of that campsite?

EF: Oh, surely, more and more.

INT: Are there any other historic sites that people come to see in the area of the campgrounds?

EF: Well, this area is loaded with stories about the Indians, of course, as most of the country is. But there are a lot of other people even here in town that could tell you more than I. As a matter of fact, the Indians put up such a protest that they almost stopped our recreation area at Gull one time. You see, the Corps of Engineers owns property at Gull on both sides of Gull River, and the Indian mounds were on the east side of the river. And, you see, that was an area of about 12-16 acres. The main land, the biggest area, was on the west side of Gull River, and we couldn't, we didn't know of any archeological diggings or whatever on the west side, not to say that there might not be some. So they, for a while, they abandoned all construction on the east side where the Indian mounds were, until we resolved our problem with the Indians. And then we went ahead with it again. Now, it is a beautiful campsite, but it was, like I said, it was low and it cost quite a bit for a campsite. It cost about three times more to put the campsites in at Gull than it did for Cross Lake, because of the low ground. It required a lot of fill and the one in Gull Lake has never been accepted as well as the one in Cross Lake for some reason.

INT: How do you speculate that?

EF: Well, it's much smaller for one thing, and I think it's too close to town, Brainerd. The kids will run up there with their automobile and raise hell, you don't -. And we didn't have the facilities that we had at Cross Lake. We didn't have the boat ramps. We didn't have the swimming beach. We didn't have the, to start with much of anything at Gull. And in the meantime, everybody got excited about the Cross Lake area, and that's where they all want to go.

INT: And they are fairly close in proximity within, between Cross Lake and Gull.

EF: Yes.

INT: What do you think the impact of these campsites has been on economy, on the local economy? Do you have any idea?

EF: Well, I don't think it impacted too much in the Brainerd area, but it certainly did in Cross Lake. We came up here in 19, we started the area in Cross Lake. Cross Lake was just a place to buy bait, and gasoline, and a store. That's really all there was; there wasn't much there. And we started building the recreation area, and people started coming in. And, boy, right now, Cross Lake is well known all over the country. I was there last summer, but it really changed with night clubs and restaurants and stores and gasoline stations and bars and real estate offices, you know. To answer your question, I would have to say the economy since we put in the recreation area at Cross Lake really made the town. I know a lot of people made money just on the sale of land, because of what we did. And the business, of course, would never have made it. They couldn't have afforded to go in there at all if we hadn't have been in there.

As it is now, some of the stores will close in the late, in the fall and reopen in the spring, because you surely must know in this country not too much is going on in the wintertime. But it's better now than what it was. When we first came up here, resorts would close right after Labor Day. Now you've got skiing; you've got ice fishing; you've got snowmobiling; you've got hunting, of course, and you've got some cabins you can live in without freezing through the floor. You know, they've rebuilt them; they've insulated them. There was a time when most of these cabins were just shells, and you would freeze right to the wall if you tried to stay in cold weather. But now, a lot of them are rebuilt and insulated, and you can live in comfort. And, as a result, a lot of these resorts, the better ones, are staying open all winter. So that helps the economy, also, of course. Brainerd, the town as a whole, is really, what shall we say, a dead-well, that isn't the word I want to say. But since the recreation area started up here, it's meant a lot to the economy and Brainerd, because they all come down here for the theaters, and the better stores and the restaurants.

INT: Maybe we could talk a little bit about the, where you lived. Now, you said there was a dwelling at Gull Lake.

EF: Yes, a beautiful house is still there.

INT: Can you tell me a little bit about, describe the house and where it was located?

EF: It's too bad you can't drive out there before you go. Anyway, it's a large house. I think it's a -, there is three stories and a basement, and the main room -. Actually, it's almost four stories, because the attic was finished off. There was one, two, three, four bedrooms and a hall and bathroom upstairs, nice stairway, large dining room, large kitchen, and then I suppose what you might call a den and a large porch. And [the] a construction was something you'll never find anymore in this

day and age. There was a frame building, just like you would build an ordinary building, with a 6 inch wall, and then on the outside of that another 8 inches of solid concrete. I never saw anything like it; that building today would cost; I can't question what that building would cost. I guess \$2000-3000 - \$200,000-\$300,000 just for that house alone.

INT: Who built it?

EF: The Corps of Engineers. That was when labor was cheap, and materials were plentiful. Labor, well, a good carpenter, mason was \$3.00 a day at that time, and they had the material. I remember hearing stories about it. They must have hauled it in by horses, a team of horses. But it was a beautiful place; we hated, that's one of the reasons Hazel hated, to leave when we moved up to Grand Rapids. When we were promoted and moved up to Grand Rapids, we really hated to leave that place, because that was the best house we ever had.

INT: Did you rent from the Corps there?

EF: Yeah, at that time, it was a condition of our employment that we lived on the site. Now that is not the case anymore. They don't have to live on the site, but it was also true on the Mississippi River in the St. Paul District from St. Paul down to McGregor, Iowa to ah, Guttenberg, Iowa. The lockmaster and the assistant lockmaster had to live on the site. It was a condition of their employment. And that was also true up here, but the last three years, two years, that's been changed.

INT: Why do you think they've changed that?

EF: Well, one of the reasons, it was costing a lot of money for the government, the money to maintain those houses. They had to keep them up and have them looking good, paint and repair and all this. And they charged the people who had to live there rent, but it was a minimal rent. They didn't, they -, that same house at Gull when I was there, were paid about \$45 a month, which would be and if that was in Brainerd or St. Paul or Minneapolis, that would probably be around \$300.

INT: Right.

EF: So, finally, they decided that they would abandon the dwellings at the sites. They started out on the Mississippi River. They paid the lockmaster a little more money, but he had to find his own place to live. And then they moved the houses off, moved them off completely. Now, they will never move the house at Gull. If you go to take a look at it, you could see why, because it is a massive structure.

INT: It is made of concrete.

EF: Yeah. The dwelling at Pine River Dam at Cross Lake burned just before we came up here in 1959, and they never replaced it.

INT: But prior to that time, someone lived there as well?

EF: Yes. At that time, each dam tender each had his place to live; they even had a cow and chickens. And then the officers. You understand that this was controlled by U.S. Corps of Army Engineers and the other control is the military. And so, some of the Corps of Engineer officers would come out to these sites, and when they saw what we had out there, like the fishing and hunting, especially the fishing, they wanted to stick around. So they had, at some of the sites they had little cottages, just to, just for these officers that came up, and the dam tender's wife would have to cook for them.

INT: So, did your wife have any responsibilities like that?

EF: No, that day was over by the time we got up here. Thank God for small favors and the devil for the big ones. But anyway, and the cottages were finally taken off, too, 'cus it got to be a racket, you know, I don't know how far this tape is going to go, but I'm sure everybody is aware of this, especially the Corps of Engineers themselves. The people in charge, some of these officers, would come up and stay for two or three weeks and the dam tenders' wives would have to cook for them, and they'd clean the house. And the officer and his wife and kids would go fishing. That got to be a little much and they finally said the hell with that. We can't abide that too much. So they finally changed that.

INT: Now, did your wife have any responsibilities, was she..?

EF: No, not by the time we moved up here, that had all been changed. The cottages had been moved off.

INT: You still had visitors from St. Paul now and then?

EF: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. We had, you see, I worked on the Mississippi River for quite a while, for 20 years or more, by the time I came up here. So I got to know a lot of people in the St. Paul District Engineers Office. And when I came up here, I was pretty well aware what was going on in the entire District. I knew a lot of people, and when they came up, they knew that we'd had had them at our place at Hastings and Lynxville. When they came up here, why, they came in and we'd have them for dinner, sometimes overnight in bad weather. To answer your question, no, my wife did not have any responsibility in that as far as taking care of it is concerned, but we had a lot of friends in the area, still have.

INT: Did you get together with the other dam tenders in the area or was there communication between say Gull, Leech and..?

EF: Oh, yea, not so much now because I can't drive anymore. I got a good car sitting in the garage, but I can't drive. I have to depend on other people to drive for me. But yes, we used to, we always had good relations between the sites. We would get together once in a while, and they have these retirement parties. And Ed Sunde now has got a restaurant out here; he's retired on disability. He and his wife and part of the family have a restaurant out here on 371, go out there a shoot the breeze, you know, talk over old times.

INT: Solve problems, and...

EF: Yeah, and then Walt Hermerding is a wonderful operator at Cross Lake, and he comes down here, and I go up there once in a while. Yeah, they're all nice people.

INT: When you were active, were there any provisions to meet, or did you work pretty much independently, pretty much, of the dam tenders. Did you go up and talk over mutual problems? Or did you have any communications with them?

EF: Oh, yeah. Yes, for the most part, the operation at each site was basically the same, but there were differences, also. And when a problem would come up at one site that may have been resolved at another site, we'd get together to help each other out. And we were always moving machinery from one place to another, you know. We had special equipment that might apply to this site to start with, and another site would find a use for it, and we'd move it up there. Worked back and forth all the time.

INT: So, what kind of equipment was that?

EF: Well, like cement mixers and power equipment, ah, generators, pumps, ah, tractors, trailers, you know, working trailers for moving equipment. When I came up here in 1959, they didn't, none of these areas, the dam tenders, had any government vehicles. But, ah, we always had government vehicles on the locks and dams; I had two government vehicles at Hastings. And so, when I came up here, and I had the Pine River Dam and the Gull Lake Dam both, I requested some government transportation. And they sent up a pickup truck, and that started it. Now they all got pickup trucks, and a lot other. Of course, when we started the recreation areas, we had to have some machinery, and we finally got a tractor and they all got tractors now. They got wood splitters; you see, we have to provide wood for the camping public.

INT: Why is that? So they don't take the wood themselves or...?

EF: If we didn't, they wouldn't have any. I mean they, yeah, they'd start cutting trees down if we didn't provide it. So now, we go through the area and, what we call select cutting. Take the trees... That are dying or about to die, or don't fit in with the general contour of the land or whatever, in the way, maybe, and take them out, and cut them up, and split them up and provide firewood for the public. But there's an end to that, also. So now, we had to buy it, most of it. There's always a few trees that are going to have to be taken out, for safety sake, if nothing else. Because some of these trees are, they'll get what I call a certain shelf life, after that you can expect some of them to blow down some day. And with these campers all through the woods area, some of these big trees blowing down would create quite a hazard. Matter of fact, there has been some accidents, but no serious ones. So you take out the trees that have to come out, but that isn't enough for the campers anymore. So now, we go to the local lumberyards. That is, there's always, oh scattered through the country here, there, are these local native lumber, like Ole Henderson got. There's always scrap lumber, and, you know, and ah, what we call ah, oh what the heck is the name of

it, ah, sheeting or something, the sides of the logs that you can't use. And then we buy it in quantity, and provide it for the campers.

INT: Then do you sell it to them now?

EF: I don't think they charge for it yet here, but they do in most places.

INT: Yeah.

EF: Yeah, I've camped out west in Canada, and we had to pay for it.

INT: Well, now it doesn't sound like you ever had a typical day, but could you talk about some of the routine, some of the responsibilities that you had to take on, you know? One of the things that we couldn't find was a job description of the dam tender during this period, and maybe if you tell me a little about what you did, sounds like you did a lot, but, some of the daily routines.

EF: Well, for my part, I, we lived at Gull Lake in the large house I talked about. In the morning, the first thing you did was go down and read the gages to see if you had anything change on the dam, either increase or decrease the flow. Ah, and then, you'd have to get in touch with the hydraulics by phone at that time. Now we have radio, and tell them what the gage readings are, and ah, if you made any change.

And then there was on the dam, machinery that had to be looked after, greased and taken care of and painted or whatever. And the buildings have to be taken care of, and in the wintertime, you'd have to chop ice so these gates would be free to move. They have to be moved. It wasn't, ah, it was a really kind of a slow, monotonous job, you might say, in the winter before we started the recreation areas. Because there wasn't really that much to do, snow removal, reading gages. And sometimes in the winter, there was the time to repair all your machinery. So you'd take out the stuff you didn't need and bring it inside to fix it, paint it or do whatever and replace it again. But when we started the recreation areas, it was entirely different because then, for my part, I didn't even read gages anymore. I had somebody. I hired a girl to do that; she'd read that.

By the way, we were the first ones up in this area that hired a woman, a young girl. She's still working for the Corps of Engineers, and she's got a very good job now. Her name is Denise Blackwell, and ah, I really got in trouble for hiring that girl, too. 'Cus some of the men on the job said, gee, what the hell are you doing hiring a girl up here in this country. You're crazy. They won't let you get away with it. I said, well, we'll have to do something. We'll try it anyway. After that, we hired quite a few girls. Then, in the summertime, after we started the recreation areas, we hired a lot of summer people, high school kids, you know, some college kids, too, to work in the summer. We had over, between Gull Lake and Cross Lake, we had sometimes, over 30 people working.

INT: Were these mostly laborers, or did they...?

EF: Yeah, clearing and cutting grass and weeds, and that was one of my biggest worries, especially with these young people, and some of them had no experience at all in the woods, you know. I remember one day I walked through the woods at Gull. We were clearing a lot of timber, or a cutting, doing some select cutting, cutting the brush out. We had to cut the brush out first so you could get a good look at the land, and there was a lot of poison ivy. One kid got poison ivy so bad I took him to the doctor. And, ah, the doctor gave him some medication. By the time we got him home, he had, had his eyes were swollen shut. We took him in the house. Hazel set him on a chair, she fixed him up with some kind of solution according to the prescription the doctor made. Well, we were really worried, 'cus I thought he was going to go blind, he was so bad with poison ivy. Those things, you know, you had to worry about. And, of course, we had to provide axes, hatchets, and saws, for these people, some of them never picked, didn't know what a double bitted ax really was. I remember, one day, heard some hoopin' and hollerin' down in the woods, and I went down to see what was going on and here one kid was, had a double bitted ax and was showing some of the other kids how to throw that ax and make it stick in the tree. We never had any accidents, thank God, but it was a constant worry with these young people.

INT: Yeah.

EF: Then, ah, for my part, after say, I spent maybe an hour at Gull Lake to see that everything was going good and then go to Cross Lake. And I'd stay there most of the day to keep the gate going. And by that time we had a girl in the office and another man, he was a laborer in charge of the work, and he'd report to me pretty much and ah...

INT: Who was that?

EF: His name was Chuck Rono. He lives out here in the country now; he doesn't work for them anymore. He was a good man. And then, gradually when the campers started to come, we had to make provisions for charging them finally. We had a little book that we took, ah, we had coupons, what we called coupons, the camper would sign his name to that and tell us how long he wanted to stay and do you want to stay five days, and then he'd pay for it whatever it was. I think it was a dollar and a half a day when we first started or something like that.

And then we had, ah, it was all new to us, every bit of it... Of course, we were responsible for the money that came in; we had, we didn't know what to do with the cash we got. We finally got a little safe to put it in and about twice a week we'd go to the post office at Cross Lake and send it to the Corps of Engineers. And gradually one thing led to another. And none of us were bonded; we never had any trouble with the financial part of it, luckily. Oh, sometimes we would be short a couple of bucks, by some mistake, but it was nothing critical, nothing we couldn't handle. And ah, in the meantime expanding all the time, making new camping pads, and we devised a system of ah, we made all these... camping pads were numbered finally. We started from number one, we went from one to twenty-six, I think, in the first section. 26 camping pads in that section. We numbered, put up number 1 on this, we made a tag a little bigger than that [2" x 2"] and hung it on a post by the campsite. And when he'd move into that camp, we'd put that number on that post, and we'd number his ticket the same as the tag. And when he'd move, well he'd just...

[End of Side 2, Tape 1]

Tape 2, Side 1

INT: We were talking about the campsite, how people, how you were managing the campsite.

EF: The regulations call for a visit not over, to start with it was, I believe it was 10 days. You could come in and stay for 10 days, but that didn't last long. We changed it quick to 5 to a week, because there were so many people that wanted to come in to use the campgrounds. We decided a week would be enough. After a week you would have to get out, move out, and that is still causing some problems. Some of them would move off of their campsite, go out and turn around and come back in and get 'um another one. That a, and then we had problems to start with, and I suppose to some extent they are still existing. These younger people who really didn't care too much about fishing, recreation, but just wanted to come up and have a beer party, or you know, kick up their heels a little bit.

INT: Play loud music.

EF: Yeah, that's right, and we had to have a, we had some problems with them, there was one campsite in particular, I had to, was called in to settle a fight between two campsites I discovered that one of the campsites was held down by some boys and girls that had been there for three or four days, mostly drinking. And they'd stolen a davenport and moved that in on the campsite. And gee, the morning I decided that they'd have to go it was kind of rough 'cus I took a couple of big guys with me. We walked in there, and I think we gave them a half hour to pick up everything and get out. If they had any money coming, we'd give it back to them. They did, they left.

And after that, we'd instruct our people. By that time we were operating day and night after about the third year. There were people coming and going all the time. We had people working nights patrolling, walking through the area. And the minute they'd see somebody coming in that didn't look right, we'd take special care to see that we had control of that place. And if they did anything out of the way, we'd go and talk to um and if they, for the most part, they'd respond.

And there was some pilfering. That was done by the people who were not in the campground, but by the people who lived in the area, most of the young people would drive in at night. These campers would, they had a lot of equipment, lot of good equipment, fishing tackle, coolers with food in them, you know, especially the ones with tents, they'd have coolers, ice, beer, pop, food. And they couldn't, they didn't have room in their tents, it would have to sit outside. And then these young people who were aware of that would come in and snatch the stuff up. And we had some trouble with that, too. So the only way we could correct that was to go to the camp, talk to the campers when they came in, signed in. Now, please take care of your equipment. We cannot be responsible because there has been some pilfering. So you're responsible if you loose any fishing tackle, and if you got any fishing tackle that you want to keep, hang on. Don't leave it out where people can get a hold of it. For the most part, nobody would bother it, but if these people that come

in from some other, that live in town or out in the country that cause the trouble, and one camper won't steal from another camper. That wasn't the problem. So we had trouble with that, they all did, they still do.

INT: So you managed the people who watched over, you yourself weren't there day and night but you had...?

EF: But they would report to me. We had some good people. I screened them. I mean I wouldn't hire anybody that I didn't think would be responsible, although I made some mistakes. I mean, you couldn't, you can't tell a book by its cover. So you know, ah, I made some mistakes. Ah, we had some kids that were really, they were good I liked the kids, but sometimes, boy, they'd scare you, you know. Heck, one kid, he was a really good worker, too, nice looking young fellow about 18 years old. He was working there for about a week or ten days doing alright. One morning one of the older people came to say, say Jim is out swimming with the girls. I said, he is? What's he supposed to be doing? Well, he's supposed to be helping us; we were building some campsites. He's supposed to be helping us. What happened, some girls that Jim knew came up and got a campsite, and Jim thought, boy, this looks like real fun, I think I'll throw my shovel down and go swimming. So I went to see him and said, say, Jim what are you doing out there. He said, I was swimming with the gals. He said, I quit. He wanted to quit before he knew I'd fire him, I suppose. I really wouldn't have; I would have talked to him and just moved him over to some other place, just so he wouldn't be embarrassed. But he said, I quit, so I said OK, well, if you quit, well, when you get through swimming, come in and we'll sign you out. One time one morning we came to work and here a picnic table was out in the lake; they were using it for a diving platform. Things like that will still happen.

INT: When you work with the public.

EF: Oh sure, like these comfort stations you where talking about; you wouldn't believe some of the things that would happen in that comfort station. But I don't know what kind of people, I mean, what their homes would look like, you know. Gee, but for the most part, the people who go camping are really nice people. They really are; there's only a certain element which you will find anyplace.

INT: Yeah.

EF: You go, say you got a job to do, and you go out and hire ten men, eight of those men will be real nice people and want the job, appreciate the work and do the best they can. There will be two of them that will give you trouble, one or two. There will be one of them that will be agitating all the time. You will be saying, we could, we aren't getting enough money here. We should be getting x number of dollars here instead of what we are getting, in the agitating. There would be another one that would be a little careless and cause accidents. They would be accident prone. You'd have to watch him, so no matter where you go-- I've discovered it on the Mississippi River on all the locks and dams and up here, wherever you go you will find that and--

INT: Wherever you are working.

EF: So it pays to screen them. I know these efficiency experts who work with these big companies are really good at that. They can always tell by looking at you if they want you on the job or not. Yeah, of course now, with the computers and all that it doesn't make so much what you look like, if you can handle some of this, like computerized equipment, I guess.

INT: Well, has that become a part of the dam sites yet?

EF: It has on the river.

INT: Yeah, sure.

EF: Mississippi River, but not so much up here yet.

INT: Was there a lot of paperwork, did you have a lot of reports, did you write annual reports about...?

EF: Yes, we had a lot of reports. When we first started, the government really didn't know how much money they should spend to justify, ah, spending a lot of money for these campsites, building all of these campsites if the people wouldn't use them. So one of my jobs, and I started this on the Mississippi River, was to go around and survey the areas, the rivers and the lakes, to see exactly how much land was being used for recreation.

And the first year I was here, that's about, in the summertime, that's about all I did. I'd go around and go to all the resorts, see how many people they had, what their operation was, would you think there was, I'd talk to the resort owner. Do you think there is room for more expansion, more? Should we put in more campgrounds? What should we have in these campgrounds. What are the people like, you know? What do they do, and where are they from and all that? We send these reports in with a map. I had a map of the entire Gull Lake area and the Cross Lake area. And we'd mark these resorts down, how many units each resort had, how many people they had, how many parking sites they had for cars, how many boats they had, how many boats they'd rent out, things like that. And that was all sent in to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, probably St. Paul, or most of the money would come from Washington, you know.

INT: Huh.

EF: And they'd look this over. And through that they'd decide whether to or whether not to, donate, not donate, but provide money for this. So that was all going on before I even came up here on the Mississippi River. And from that we brought all that information up here, and we still did this recreational surveys up here on all the lakes.

INT: So before you started any recreational improvements you started...?

EF: Yeah, they knew, by the time we started, the Corps of Engineers knew pretty well whether these sites would be accepted, and how many people would use them. But they missed it by quite a bit, 'cus it was really, by that time like I said before, people were only working 40 hours per week. Up 'til then, which you probably weren't aware of, we used to work 60 hours a week, and the pay wasn't good. Nobody had, well, there wasn't such a thing as a two car family you know, very few. Then there got to be the two-car family, and a boat in each family, maybe, and fishing tackle and guns and camping equipment. But mostly more time. You'd work, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. By 4:00 Friday, most of them were through, and they'd have the Friday afternoon and Saturday. And Sunday, if they didn't have to worry about going to church on Sunday, they'd have all day Sunday. So they started looking around for some, some way to get a little better life style, let's say.

INT: Yeah.

EF: And they started moving to the rivers and the lakes, buying boats and then. When we built the locks and dams on the Mississippi River, a lot of these people never had been on the river before, never had a boat before, had no ideas what to do with it. And I worked with the Coast Guard and ah, they came down, I was at Hastings, and they said, boy, we have got problems. These people are buying boats; they don't know what to do with them. And I could see it.

INT: Danger.

EF: Yeah, and the Mississippi River is channelized. Now, it's all nine-foot channel, but there's markers on the river. There's a black buoy on this side and a red buoy on that side going upstream. And when you're going downstream, the black buoy would be on your port side and the red buoy on the starboard side. Well, and then the, no one had an idea what the locks and dams were for.

So I conducted schools at South St. Paul, Hastings, and called the people in and told the people what the structures were like, the locks and dams, how to approach it, and how to behave in the lock and dam and get your boat through, and the dangers of coming too close, and abide by the signals and the lights and the whistles, and everything and ah. We had problems getting the, with the camping public, you know, to start with, the recreational public, the people in boat, had money to buy boats now and spend some time. I know at Hastings it was especially rough. We had 52 boats in the lock at one time at Hastings one Sunday, they'd come down from St. Paul and go through the lock at Hastings. And then at Prescott, Wisconsin, the St. Croix joins the Mississippi. Then they'd go up the St. Croix to Stillwater, Hudson, camp along the shorelines, but the worst part of it there would be a lot of the boat operators that would be drinking.

INT: Yeah.

EF: Yeah, it was bad. But now they, you could, of course, you could, even the law, the sheriffs were responsible for this in each county. But they weren't aware of what was going on either, 'cus it was all new to

everybody. And the Coast Guard knew what was going on, though. And now, if you, if you have an accident, I mean you don't want to drink while you are operating a boat, on the rivers or the lakes, any more than you would want to drink when you are out on the highway in an automobile, 'cus the laws are almost the same for drinking and driving. But before that, there had been a lot of accidents, some serious ones. There still are, of course, on the rivers and lakes with the people who drink too much, the same as there are on the highways with the people who drink and drive. I've seen boats cut right in two with, by another boat at Prescott, just above Prescott at night by a party that was drinking too much, going fast up the lake without any lights, and another party out fishing and they were drinking, too, and no lights on and this boat sliced right through the other one.

INT: Gee.

EF: And up here when, let's see, like I said once before, in the wintertime it was pretty quiet, I drove, we lived at Gull Lake. And I drove from Gull Lake to Cross Lake to make a change on the dam and drove back again in a cold day like this and never saw another car. Never saw another person; matter a fact, I stopped at Nisswa on the way back to go to the filling station, and it was closed. Of course, that's all changed now. There are people up here the year around.

INT: Yeah. Were there any unusual events, you know, ah, at either of the dam sites that you can remember or something? I can't think of any floods that I've heard of or a high water marks or a...

EF: Not so much up here as the Mississippi.

INT: Yeah, I imagine it was a bit more dramatic.

EF: Yeah, we had problems on the Mississippi with high water. Up here too, of course, these resorts are built of necessity right on the shoreline because they rent boats. And their patrons are fishing people. They want to go fishing, so they have to be as close to a lake as possible. Now you take a big lake like Gull, sometimes, somebody on the north side of Gull Lake would call up, call me up at Gull and say, say what are you doing to the lake. It's dropped here about six inches here over night. We hadn't made any changes at all on the dam. But what had happened, the north wind had started to blow and if that north wind blows say for a day, that water will move, it will move, pile up, it will move from one side of the lake to the other. It will go down 6 inches on the north side and up 6 inches on the south side.

INT: You'd get the call from the other side and...

EF: Yeah, so you'd get a call from the south side and say what are you doing, the water came up about 6 inches last night, can't you control that dam anymore; if you can't handle it, we'll report it to St. Paul. Things like that, um...

INT: So you were diplomatic.

EF: Yeah, we'll fix it just as soon as the wind goes down. Well, there's always some people that are not satisfied, you know, that they think you're doing the wrong thing. They could do it better. When you're impounding water, you got problems, no matter where you are. Just the minute you impound water, some place, some way they're going to be unhappy about it. You can ask the beavers about that; they do it all the time, and they're in trouble all the time.

INT: Yeah.. No-one wants them around. Well, there's a series of dikes, the Whitefish Chain; now, were those part of the dam system?

EF: Yeah, I think there are 16 dikes on the Whitefish Dam. When they built the dam, you see when those dams were first built, they had no idea that the only reason that they were built was for the logging industry. Did anybody ever tell you that?

INT: Yeah, I heard that.

EF: The log industry, they'd cut the logs down out in the woods, wherever, in the winter time and then haul them to the stream someplace, or a lake, wherever, on the ice and wait for the ice to thaw. Then they'd raft them all up when the ice thawed and move 'um down the river. They'd move 'um down to, the biggest mill was just above St. Cloud. It got so they needed more water, so they'd, say just for example, they built the dam at Cross Lake. When they built the dam, it was only for the logging industry for the most part. And when the logs would come down, they'd have what they call a log sluice and these logs would shoot down through this log sluice down into the river. And then they'd raft them up and keep on going. But they had to do that in order to have enough water to get to the dam in the first place. Alright, when they built the dam, they discovered they had a lot of low places. When they built the dam, they had to impound the water, and it would back water up for x number of miles. And they discovered there would be low places. Say that we are talking about a pool 30 miles big and in this 30-mile pool, there were some low places where the water would run out.

INT: Sure.

EF: Run out.

INT: Spill over the--

EF: Yeah, they didn't want that, they wanted to keep it in the pool. So they built these dikes. They built these dikes, wherever there was a low place. And up on the Whitefish Chain, there was a, I think there was 16.

INT: Yeah, I know I saw a map where there was a...

EF: Yeah, I was aware, I was on all of them.

INT: Was there any upkeep to that, the dikes?

EF: The only upkeep would be if some animals would start digging in there, you know, and cutting through. Or somebody which, it was all government property, somebody would start cutting logs off of it. You have to watch for that and so we'd keep, we finally went in and cleared them all and put government property signs on 'um. And then they were inspected every year, two or three times a year to see that they were OK. The only maintenance would be re-cutting, keeping the brush down, and to be aware of erosion, of a wind, or rain or wave action. They also had a fish wagon at a, fish ladder on the dam at Cross Lake.

INT: Now what was that?

EF: That was a --

INT: Fish lantern?

EF: Fish ladder. OK, so, say we have some fish coming upstream, fish always seem to work upstream, most of them anyway, they want to keep going up, that's true today, too, and a --

INT: Like the salmon.

EF: Yeah, they, ah, it was their nature, I guess, to keep moving upstream. Anyway, when they got to the dam, they couldn't get through. So they built a fish ladder. They don't do that anymore. They do it out west for the trout and the salmon, but if you go. Were you at the Pine River Dam at Cross Lake?

INT: I have been. Yeah, when I was a little girl.

EF: But not since?

INT: No.

EF: Well, the fishway is still there, but they don't operate it, of course. What it is is a series of the steps. The fish would come into the first step and then in order, then, they'd only have to jump a little but, just over a wall. They would be in the second step, like maybe from here to there.

INT: Was that about 12 inches?

EF: Hardly that, maybe about 8 inches. And they'd keep going like that until they got up to the elevation of the pool. I never saw it work; I never saw a fish in it. Matter of fact, it's closed; it's bulk-headed off. It was bulkheaded off when I got there and it still is.

INT: So --

EF: It didn't work. Even now today, you go on any of these dams where there is a flowage through the dam, you see fish coming up and jumping, want to go over, want to get through, even on the Mississippi River you see it happen. The carp are especially that way.

INT: Oh, the carp.

EF: Yeah, they are always trying to go through, get up. I've seen at Hastings. We had 11-foot head there at Hastings most of the time, and the carp would come up to the miter gates in the lock chambers. It would be a little leakage through the gate, and the carp would try to get in where the leakage was. They'd think they would jump over, they'd get into a leakage to get over the gate. And they'd be doing that all day until some of them were so battered up that, well, they finally would have to get out of there.

INT: None of them ever made it, did they?

EF: No, oh no, they never made it. They had to jump 13 feet.

INT: Carp I don't imagine as jumping fish.

EF: Oh, yeah, you know about 'um.

INT: Yeah, sort of, I caught a couple carp, they're big. You know, that's interesting. You know, I think the way a dam attracts fish must be just real interesting to watch.

EF: Yeah, it is. Another thing we did up there at Cross Lake, which is very popular, I know they're doing it all over the country now is making provisions for handicapped people. These campers would come in and they might have somebody in a wheelchair, you know, or some elderly person that couldn't get around very much and we noticed that they were, there should be some provisions for them to go fishing. And when I, after I retired, we moved back here from Grand Rapids, I didn't have too much to do and I always volunteered wherever I could. I used to work for the Red Cross; I was the chairman of their, ah, Crow Wing County Red Cross Chapter at one time here before I, when we were at Gull. And I did a lot of volunteering, so I was driving for a the State Hospital and some of the rest homes, the nursing homes, taking people out fishing.

INT: Oh, that's neat.

EF: Yeah, we'd go around the lakes and I got up to Cross Lake. I say, gee, I said to Walt, you could have a whole dam full of people in wheelchairs; we would have to wheel them right to the lakeshore. Some of them would get a little antsy and want to get a little closer and there would be a couple of wheelchairs in the lake and, ah, Walt Hermerding was there, a friend of mine. I hired him when he started to work. I mean, he was working on the Mississippi River and he wanted to come up here, and I interviewed him and hired him. And he turned out to be a real good man. Anyway, we got together and talked about it, and I'm going to, without anybody knowing it, I'm going to spend a little money and build a ramp here for these wheelchairs. I said, that's a good idea, Walt. Why don't we do that, and we did. And one thing to another. And now we've got a ramp up there, wheelchairs can come out on it. First, it was only wide enough for one wheelchair. That was a problem because you would get one wheelchair out, and then another might want to go by, and they couldn't make it. So, ah, he made, ah, in the meantime, the Corps of Engineers got

a hold of it and wanted to, know why he was spending that money for, for buying material. And he showed it to them, and they thought it was a real good idea. They were all for it and, they let him have what he needed to go, make the ramp wider and longer. And now it's well accepted; it must be almost 200 feet long.

INT: Oh, wow.

EF: And wide enough for two wheelchairs with a railing on both sides, life preservers hanging on it. And fishing is excellent there below the dam.

INT: Yeah, well that's really nice.

EF: Yeah. So now when you come out there with these people - either handicapped or not, it's for everybody - they really've got a chance to go fishing and a without too much trouble.

INT: Yeah, opens up.

EF: Yeah.

INT: Is there anything else that you can think of about, you know unique about either of those sites that you would like to talk about?

EF: Well, there's so many things that happened.

INT: Yeah.

EF: We were, one thing that bothered me was the fact that the wildlife was being gradually phased out, because of the people that were coming up here. Like, for instance, Gull, when we first came up to Gull there were loons, a lot of loons nesting all over around the lake. And they weren't being bothered too much, because there weren't too many people on the lake. But gradually more people kept coming in, more boats on the lake, and, ah, the nesting places were getting scarce,

INT: Yeah, they're finicky.

EF: Yeah, I remember one time a pair of loons had a, I don't suppose they could find another place to nest, I don't know. But, anyway, they picked a poor spot. It was just above the dam, at Gull, oh, let's say maybe a thousand yards above the dam, a little narrow, you could call it an island, it wasn't much bigger than this table. And they had, they hatched two chicks there. Hazel was watching them; so was I. I don't know what happened to the first one, but they had two of them. One of them disappeared. I suppose a turtle got it. We don't know what happened, but they still had the other one. And they was moving around there, kept growing bigger, got to be about the size of maybe this [6 inches], maybe. And one day, it got out into the main stream and got going down towards the dam. And here the mother loon was trying to get it to come up on its back to get it out of there, and the little loon would jump on the mother's back and jump off again. She'd tried to keep it going, getting it away from the dam, moving it upstream. He wouldn't pay any attention, and gradually they were getting closer and closer and

closer to the dam, and I was going to close, we had those--. We were discharging a lot of water; I was afraid it would get sucked in. So I was running down there, but in the meantime, this little loon got pretty close. There were big fish hanging around those dams all the time; there were some big bass there. I mean big ones. A bass came up and grabbed this little loon by the feet, pulled it down, but for some reason it got away, it came up again, it came up to the top of the surface and the mother loon was right there [the baby loon was grabbed again and never came up.]

END SIDE 1, TAPE 2

Side 2

INT: OK, now maybe we can talk a little about when you moved on to Grand Rapids; you said it was a promotion?

EF: Yeah, it ah, they had a man there to oversee all the reservoirs. They called it the reservoir manager, and a the one who had been reservoir manager was moved to construction. And that job was open and I got it. So, we were at Gull at that time taking care of Gull and Cross Lake, and a we moved to Grand Rapids. It was in the winter. We couldn't find a place to rent, so we lived in a motel for a while. Then we finally found a house in town, a nice place on the edge of town. We bought it, and a then my work was entirely different. By that time, they had a dam tender at each site - one at Gull, one at Cross Lake, one at Federal Dam, Leech Lake, one at Pokegama, one at Sandy where Ike Kolb is. And so all of my work was to more or less coordinate all the work between all the, and we had a warehouse at where we would stock a lot of supplies. Ah, the a, we were, lived in Grand Rapids, oh, for about six months when we discovered that the U.S. Forest Service had six acres of land at Remer, Minnesota with a lot of nice buildings on it. And they were going to abandon it, and we got in touch with them. On paper, I think the Corps of Engineers might have paid a dollar. It was just a matter of--

INT: Transferring--

EF: Yeah, transferring property from the U.S. Foresters to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. They had three nice dwellings on this site.

INT: I was there yesterday; I saw the site.

EF: Oh, were you? Then you know what I am talking about. So then we moved from Grand Rapids to Remer and I had a nice office there.

INT: Oh, yeah.

EF: And that's where I did, I stayed there until I retired in 1973.

INT: So then you moved there in '69, did you say?

EF: Well, I moved. No, I moved to Grand Rapids in '70 and then to Remer and worked there for-, and in the meantime Hazel got, she was having problems, healthwise. And a finally the doctor suggested that if I

retired, I better move back to Brainerd so that she would be close to a hospital. In the meantime, she had gone to the University of Minnesota Hospital and had the, some heart surgery and a, and I was 67 at that time, time to retire. I loved the work, though, every bit of it, especially the, we liked Remer, too, that was a nice little town.

INT: Yeah, it's nice, and pretty.

EF: So, from Remer, we moved back here to Brainerd. My job then was, I had a nice big Ford station wagon with a radio in it and could keep in touch with the St. Paul District Office, all the dams, all the locks and dams, most of them, anyway, and all the reservoirs by radio. They knew where I was most of the time; I knew what was going on with most of them, and I more or less was errand boy running from one to another.

INT: Did they have that position prior to your...

EF: Yes, but it wasn't quite as comprehend, duties were a little different.

INT: And that's, ah, Jim Ruyak.

EF: And that's the job Jim Ruyak has now. Of course, he's a pretty good man. He's a, I think he is a registered engineer, I believe. I was not; I was just a river rat promoted. I learned as I went along. Jim was a professional; he's good. It was a good job.

INT: Have you seen that happen in the jobs in general in the Corps for people who came kind of, came up in the ranks and learned through experience to be replaced by —?

EF: Yeah, it depended on the individual, if a person wants to apply themselves, you know, and work and not be afraid of an extra mile once in a while. Yes, they would go in for a promotion. I started out as a handyman in the Dredge Pelee in 1929, 1932 I mean, 1932, and then I went on. I always liked to read, so I learned as we went, you know, learned different techniques, and the language of the, that was required to do the work.

INT: I think there was quite a lot of that in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

EF: The language?

INT: The language and regulations, I'd say, there's lots.

EF: Yeah, yeah, there is a lot, sometimes too much.

INT: Well, what drew you to the Corps? Was it something that you had just been exposed to, or how did you just happen to?

EF: Well, we lived on the river at Prescott, Wisconsin. That's a river town. And a, at that time, at that time, the Mississippi was a six-foot channel. Now it is nine foot at the locks and dams. But the some of, there were boats running, towboats, all steam, coal burners running up and down the river, and some of my friends and enemies in town were

working on the river. And I thought maybe I'd like to try it, and I never took it very seriously. I'd been to Canada for a year, bounced around. And I was back home working in a filling station when the dredge master, his name was Brewer, Roy Brewer, whose father and mother lived in Prescott, came along one day and said, say, you got a full-time job here? And I said, no, I haven't. Said we need somebody on the dredge; how would you like to come to work on the dredge this summer? I had no idea what the dredge was.

INT: Yeah.

EF: So, he said, ah--

INT: But that was during the depression.

EF: Yeah, it was during the depression and jobs were scarce. So I had a part-time job in Prescott making fishing tackle, too. And, ah, so I, my brother had a canoe. So he [Roy] said, you come down tomorrow if you can, whenever you talk to Earl, Earl owned the filling station, and tell him you'd like to, want to quit and come to work for us. He said, I'm sure you'd like it. So I got my brother's canoe the next day, and I went down on the dredge. And I was so green, I didn't even know how to land the canoe, you know; I almost capsized that. I learned fast, the hard way, and that was in 1932. And I, it was seasonal then, that would be March through October until it froze up and then go home. And that's where it started. Then, from handyman on the dredge, all we did was scrub woodwork, paint, you know take care of whatever had to be taken care of. And then they, then they, started doing survey work for the locks and dams, and I went on a survey crew sounding - sounding the river to find out where would be the best place to put these locks and dams and whether the dredge should go from one spot to the other. On all these tributaries that empty into the Mississippi River, there is a certain amount of debris that comes into the river, mostly sand and mud. Where the tributary empties into the Mississippi, that builds up, and instead of a six-foot channel, sometimes you only got four feet. So our job was to go up and down the river to sound these spots out with what we called a sounding pole. It was a pole 19 feet long, painted in increments of a foot, a black, the first foot would be black, the next one white, the next one black and the fifth one red and then, etc., for 19 feet - a pole about that big around [1 1/2"]. And you'd go down the river and keep sounding, and there would be recordings and you'd put this pole down until you hit bottom. And you instantly look at it and see whether you, read it. You got so you could just like that read it, you'd say four and one-half feet or five feet or it would be a hole maybe eight feet. You sound hole, sound that out and he'd record it. If you'd find a place where it was below grade, where the towboats would have trouble, we'd stop there and make cross sections across the river back and forth and ah...

INT: So you would know exactly.

EF: Yeah, exactly where that bar was and plot it on the map and send it to St. Paul. And they would send a dredge in to pump that out. They still have to do that in places. Ah, but it is not as bad as it used to be now

with the locks and dams. Because the locks and dams provide a steps from one, from one lock and dam to the other, and they provide a nine-foot channel, for the most part, except in the areas like a, where the, where the Wisconsin River comes into the Mississippi at Prairie du Chien, below Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. And where the Chippewa River, where the Chippewa River comes in, where is that now? Chippewa, where the heck does that come-, oh, at Reads Landing.

INT: Oh, ok.

EF: Yeah, at the foot of the lake. There are other tributaries that cause trouble, and for some reason, these sandbars seem to move. There will be a sandbar here today, and you go to sound it out. And the next day it will be pretty well gone; it will be down the river a half a mile or something. But you don't find that so much now because the locks and dams are in there.

INT: Because the flow of the water isn't as great is that--?

EF: Yeah, and the towboats kick up turbulence, you know; they raise the sand up. When the channel was a six-foot channel, they used to load these barges right to the very limit, and they'd get stuck a lot. Matter of fact, one of the things that I'll never forget was in 1936, I believe, when I, we were sounding and the water was real low that year, real low. And they discharged as much as they could here from all these reservoirs to help, to raise the water out on the Mississippi River at that time. And it still wasn't enough, and the barge lines almost quit running that summer. I remember I was with a survey party at the a-, we were sounding at Wabasha, Minnesota, making cross sections, and I walked entirely across the Mississippi River from one side to the other.

INT: At Wabasha?

EF: Yeah, with a sounding pole, it got a little deep right in the channel, about up to here, but I was a good swimmer, you know, I just...

INT: So was it about 4 feet in the middle?

EF: Yeah, about 4 feet, maybe 4 and one-half feet. That was the deepest part of that river at that time. And the, the towboats quit running completely, the towboats did. But they were still sending a few barges up with the smaller craft pushing them. I walked from one side of the river to the other, sounded all the way. Yeah, that was real low that year

INT: Was it a dry year.

EF: Yeah, low water. Now last year we had, they had lots of water; there was more water. They actually almost had flood stage in some places; all the locks and dams were out of operation. That is, the dam was, not the locks; they raised the gates a bit, what they call free flow. It would just go right on through.

INT: That was last year?

EF: Yeah, for all during the month of June and most of July.

INT: Yeah, we had lots of rain. Do you think that that was just rainfall?

EF: Oh, sure, rain and snowmelt. The snow starts, you get snowmelt in the spring and like some places in March, already. You get a little snow melt and then more and more in April and a lot more in May, and then in June it really shows, what they used to call the June raise. In June, the snowmelt would be coming down, and you get all the rains, the spring rains on top of it, and then you'd have lots of water. We had a some floods there at Hastings, Prescott, a, Lynxville, all up and down the line.

INT: When you, after you worked as a sounder sounding, then where did you--?

EF: Well, let's see, then they started building locks and dams. And ah, they were building them then already. Started up, then the first one was what they called the Ford Dam at Minneapolis.

INT: I know where that is.

EF: Yeah, that was built by the Corps of Engineers. But the Ford people used [it]. It was a hydroelectric dam. They generated electricity, and that's where the Ford people got their power. And the next one was Hastings; that was a, that was strictly a hydraulic dam, too, at that time, ah, they had a water wheel there it hauled direct current. And then they started building locks and dams all up and down the river in 1936, '37.

INT: And the Ford Dam was built?

EF: The Ford Dam was built in the 1920's, I believe. Yeah. And Hastings right after that. Hastings must have been in 1922, the first dam, the first lock in 1920, then Hastings. When I came to Hastings, we had two locks there - the big one which was 600 feet long and 110 feet wide and the other one, the old one which was about half that size. The old one was powered by a, water power.

INT: OH, how does that work?

EF: They had a turbine and water would come through a chute and turn this turbine. The turbine was hooked up to a generator, and the generator would generate direct current and they could operate the machinery by that direct current. It depended a lot upon the flow of the river; you had to have a certain amount of head to make that efficient, a certain amount of water power. I mean they had to have at least 10 feet of drop to make it eff--. If you didn't have that, the wheel wouldn't turn fast enough and you wouldn't have the power. While I was there, we changed it all to a-, hooked it up to the power lines and didn't use the water wheel any more, although we kept it in operation just to play with it once in a while. And they had a big diesel engine in there, and old fashioned diesel engine with cylinders that big around.

INT: Wow.

EF: And when the water, that was a standby, and when you didn't have enough water power, you'd start that diesel if you could get it started. Then they built another dam with a new one at Hastings, and it was all new to us, of course, the lock and dam operation. We all had to play it by ear. Some times, some cases, a lock would be ready but it wouldn't be wired up properly, and you had to kind of control it all by manual controls. Now it's all operated by switches and ah computers and I don't know what not. It's got away from me completely.

I, ah, I went from the dredge to one of the locks and dams. See, I started at Trempealeau, Wisconsin, that was, ah, lock and dam number six. And ah, I was one of the few that had a some, I had high school, you know, I had high school. And when I was, we never had typing in high school but there was an old shoe shop in Prescott and we used to go down take our shoes down, and have it fixed. And behind this shoe shop was a I don't know what the heck that, what he had-, kind of a junk pile out there behind that shoe shop, there was an old typewriter in that junk pile. And I asked the shoe keep, shoe repairman what that typewriter was doing out in that junk pile, he said, just junk you can have it if you want, so I took it home. You wouldn't believe it, when you hit the keys, you couldn't see what you were typing, because the keys would come up under the roller, under the roller...

INT: Oh, old...

EF: Oh, yeah, real old. You had to lift it up like this to see what you were typing. But anyway, I learned to type on that thing and, ah, I was always pretty good with figures and with English. And when I got to work on the river, it showed up here and there, like in my training and education. It was still only high school except I had taken a few correspondence courses. And then I was promoted from lockman to assistant lockmaster at Hastings. At Trempealeau, no, they were building another dam at Lynxville, Wisconsin, and they wanted me to go down there, so I went to Lynxville. And there the lockmaster was one of the old-timers on the river-, he was real good at, ah, at the work that had to be done, he was overseer, a labor foreman actually. But he was not too good at paperwork; matter of fact, he was not good at all. And I had, by that time, I had had a little training, and I took over as a, took over the paperwork. More and more, they wanted more paper, like the government does, you know; that paper you got there was just a-, I mean nothing, it used to stack up that high with letters and correspondence and instructions you know and all this. So my job there was more or less a clerk, besides all the other work on the lock on the dam. The timekeeper, I did some timekeeper. And then we started, the lock was about half finished and there was a lot of new work to be done, a lot of hiring to be done. And I fit in pretty good and I got promoted to assistant lockmaster. And then the Army, the war came along. And I'm gone for three years and came back and went right back to work again, and then the lockmaster at Hastings, this was one of the bigger locks on the chain, one of the hardest to handle was, he was going to retire. And I didn't even apply for the job; I didn't think that; there were so many people that would be interested in that and had more time than I did. And I got a letter from the St. Paul, just a little form that said, it was

a little handwritten note there, and said, Fitz, sign this and send it back. It was an application for the lockmaster's job at Hastings that I didn't even apply for. I mean I just signed that and sent it back. Of course, I think it was strictly against the regulations because they were supposed to advertise this job; they had advertised it but they wanted me up there, I think.

INT: They knew you were the best man for the job.

EF: Whether they thought that now I don't know, but that's the way it looked. So I signed that and pretty, soon it wasn't long, and they said, make the telephone call, you got the lockmaster job at Hastings, so I went up there and that, we did a lot of new work up there, too. Yeah, it was all good, and then from Hastings, I came up here.

INT: Well, it sounds like a real interesting career, you know, to have.

EF: Yeah. The river is being cleaned up now; I mean th's clean air, clean water act, you know, has done a lot. Well, at one time, it was bad. What time is it?

INT: Well, I think it's time that we might quit.

END OF INTERVIEW

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ST. PAUL DISTRICT

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW FORM

Narrator Name: Orin (Ole) Henderson/LeRoy Campbell

Address: Box 149, Boy River, MN 56632/Box 85, Federal Dam, MN 56641

Date of Interview: 12/16/86

Place of Interview: Henderson home Boy River, MN

Name of Interviewer: Jo Blatti

Project Title (if any): Corps/Mississippi Headwaters

Narrator Biographical Information:

Full name (including maiden name): _____

Year of Birth: _____

Spouse's full name: _____

Subjects Discussed:

Work activities at Federal Dam (Leech Lake) and Winnibigoshish.
Work histories with Corps of Engineers. OH worked for Corps,
mostly as dam tender 1947-1973; LC in maintenance ca. - 1962 to
present. Development of recreational facilities in 1960's.
Commercial camping, fishing and resorts in Federal Dam, 1920's
and '30's forward. Wild rice. Native American presence -
prehistoric mounds, 1920's-'30's villages, personal experience.
Note: Mr. Campbell is Native American. Relations St. Paul office
and Mississippi River Headwaters personnel.

TAPE RECORDING:

No. of Cassettes: 2 No. of Reels & Speed: _____

Length of Interview: 1 hour 20 min.

Release form signed (date): 12/16/86

Restrictions (if any): -0-

Comments:

TRANSCRIPT:

Date completed: 7-3-87 No. of Pages: 35

Restrictions (if any): -0-

Comments: OH comments freely on several local figures. Short term limited
access might be wise.

OH's nickname for Mr. Campbell's is 'Nig'.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ST. PAUL DISTRICT

ORAL HISTORY AGREEMENT FORM

I, Leroy Campbell, a participant in
an oral history interview recorded on Dec. 16, 1986,
hereby give and deliver to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul
District all the incidents of ownership in that interview, including
copyright, from this time forward.

Signed:

Date 12 16 86

Leroy Campbell
Donor

Box 85
Address

Federal Dam Minn

Signed:

Jo Blatti
Interviewer

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ST. PAUL DISTRICT

ORAL HISTORY AGREEMENT FORM

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an oral history interview recorded on Dec. 16, 1986,
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District all the incidents of ownership in that interview, including
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Signed:

Date 12 16 86

Ole Henderson
Donor

Box 146
Address

Boy River MN

Signed:

Jo Beattie
Interviewer

TAPE INDEX
Corps/Mississippi Headwaters Pilot Project
Interview With Ole Henderson and LeRoy Campbell, Boy River, MN
12-16-86
(1 hr., 20 min. total)

Tape 1, Side 1

- 0 min. Ole Henderson (OH) describes early work with Corps as laborer ca. 1947, "swing" dam tender, Dunwoody carpentry schl., Sandy Lake as remote.
- LeRoy Campbell's (LC) start in 1960 - 1962 on riprapping project at Red Lake.
- OH on 1975 retirement; on-site family housing at Leech Lake; officers' quarters ca. 1900; building his own retirement house.
- 10 min. Typical day's routine winter/-40°, beastly cold, problem of keeping underwater discharge flowing, slush 4-5' ft. deep.
- OH on steady as assistant at Leech 1949; Winni dam tender 1952-1959; Leech dam tender 1959-1975.
- LC helper and maintenance at Leech 1962 - present.
- 1st visitor facilities at Leech - LC helper and maintenance Leech 1962 - present; 1958 boat launching ramp; 1959 clearing brush; approx. 25 visitors per weekend; 'old' people didn't like expansion when that came.
- 15 min. Current staffing patterns winter/summer; rangers; collection of fees (\$1.00 1967).
- 20 min. Leech Lake resorts and fish guides, 1920's; municipal campground at Federal Dam (approximately 100 tents); Iowa and Duluth clientele; importance of railroad to tourist scene; bad roads in area.

Tape 1, Side 2

- 0 min. Continued discussion Federal Dam campground; cabins and resort hotels in area - Northstar, Battle Point Lodge, Sugar Point, 1920's, '30's.
- Resort owners and water levels; OH tells story of taking St. Paul office visitors to meet an owner with many complaints.
- 10 min. OH questions effects of Federal Dam on water levels; gives ex. of 1957 washout and relative stability lake levels during repairs; compares different roles of each Headwater dam.
- Wild rice, commercial and Native American culture; importance of; Mud Lake Dam (State-owned, Corps-operated in OH's time) and bog; LC and OH explain floating bogs and 'chopping out'.
- OH and LC on snow sampling.

20 min. LC on maintenance and sewage plant responsibilities, definitions 'vault' system, contracted work.

Tape 2, Side 1

0 min. OH discusses relations with visitors; tells story of couple who came annually until 1967 camper pads (compares to cow stalls) put in.

Lack of swimming facilities at Federal Dam; danger from boats and drop-off.

Archeological digs described as authorized "from [St. Paul] office"; OH tells story Three-Finger Jack, road built over his grave.

OH describes annual fall visit St. Paul staff member; layout of annual work program; preference for local hired labor over contracted work.

10-

12 min. Discussion of safety engineer program; St. Paul staff vacations in area (Art Johnson mentioned); Wesley Walters, austerity program.

OH describes Winnibigoshish burial mound; a tree burial in birch bark; 1920's Indian communities near Sugar Point as self-sufficient, huge gardens - LC comments on sugaring, trapping, current community.

OH on Indian humor, interaction among Corps, Indian, white community members.

20 min. END

INT: December 16th, [1987] and I'm interviewing Ole Henderson and LeRoy Campbell in the Henderson family home outside, kind of between, Boy River and Federal Dam, Minnesota, and this is Jo Blatti interviewing for the Corps of Engineers. And we're talking this morning about their work at Leech Lake after World War II. Maybe I could begin by just asking how long you two - ? When did you work at the dam, - ?

OH: Well, do you want me to speak?

INT: Yeah.

OH: Ok. I started working, ah, as a laborer in 1947 and, ah, worked. I was off about a year and a half. And then I went to Dunwoody to take up carpentry and learn a trade. But anyhow, I starved out and had to come back to work, and I worked continuously until 1975, was it?

LC: Yeah.

INT: So, were you dam tender from '47 to '75?

OH: No, and as I become, well, I was, they had a swing dam tender in those days up at Federal Dam or Leech Lake Dam. And then he had an associate, what do you call it? Assistant. And that was the position I had. That was to relieve other dam tenders when they were on leave.

INT: Ok, so you floated among all the dams?

OH: Yeah.

INT: Was this everywhere? Ike Kolb told me yesterday that you came to relieve him once.

OH: More than once, but -.

INT: And this would have been at Sandy, I guess. He also said that you didn't care for Sandy much, that you thought that it was a pretty God-for-saken place.

OH: Well, that's the way I felt about it. Well, when we went to work there in '48, we put in the gages, upper and lower gages. It was quite a job, we spent 2, 3 months there, commuting from Federal Dam every weekend, and we stayed down there at the dam area, but that was before 65 was built.

INT: 65, I don't know what that means?

OH: That's the highway.

INT: Oh, ok, ok.

OH: You know, that's -.

INT: Yup.

OH: Now, it comes up to Jacobson, and then on to, hits 2 up there. But it was just a damn cow trail down there at that time. And it was a pretty lonely place. God, I came, we came across the dam, the road did, that's right, and that damn thing was only 7 foot wide, I suppose. You've been at Sandy, haven't you, Nig?

LC: Yeah.

OH: Yeah, and it wasn't a very -. And you know, McGregor was quite a ways if you follow that little dirt trail. Maybe that's where Ike got that thought.

INT: Now, were you raised in this area, Mr. Henderson?

OH: I was born right up at Federal Dam. Nig was born in Federal, too.

LC: Yeah.

INT: Ok, so you're both [natives]. When did you start working at the dam?

LC: About in '62, I started when Ole was -.

OH: '60 you went up the Red Lake with me, Nig.

LC: Yeah, mum hum.

OH: Remember?

LC: We had some riprapping to do up around, where was that, Gull Lake?

OH: Well, that was below the dam at Red Lake; that was 1960.

LC: Yeah, I think [indistinct].

OH: That was about the first you worked for me, wasn't it?

LC: Yeah, that's the first I started.

OH: Yeah.

INT: And so you two worked together from '60 or '62 until when?

LC: '75, when he retired.

OH: Yeah.

INT: Ok, ok. Now, were you the associate dam tender for Mr. Henderson?

OH: No, they discontinued that in 1970, which was a blessing, I thought. See, ah, there was two dwellings at Federal, Leech, and ah, this assistant would live in one with his family. And it was a pretty rough go there, you know; that's too damn close to live together when you are working together. And, ah, so finally, they shut it off in '70 and made me happier.

INT: But did you and your family live in the other dwelling at Federal until you retired?

OH: Yeah, yeah.

INT: I can see, one of the questions I wanted to ask a little bit about was: was it an advantage or disadvantage to live and work at the same place? And you're suggesting it was a little close.

OH: I'll tell you I think it's a disadvantage for, especially, the wives, I'd say and the children. You know, we had a set of rules and they had to adhere to 'um or they'd pay. And then, somebody'd come in there, if they didn't have any control over their children, and that, it was a hell of a mess, as far as I'm concerned. But ah, I don't think it's good to live at your work. It's convenient, you know -.

INT: Mum hum.

OH: Real convenient. But ah, it's a rented house.

INT: I understood that. I thought perhaps that it was a benefit of the job, and that you all had free lodging.

OH: No, no.

INT: But the Kolbs told me that you did pay rent.

OH: Yeah.

INT: For the houses.

OH: Paid rent and fuel and, ah, utilities. We paid everything. They even taxed us a buck for the pump every month.

INT: Mum, mum.

OH: I can't remember just what it was.

INT: So from your perspective, it was kind of a requirement of the job, but one you could have -. Would you have been as happy living in a private house at Federal Dam?

OH: Oh, I'd loved it. 'Cus I built my first house then after I started working for the Corps, listed as laborer. And, by God, we moved in there and it was a [indistinguishable]. [Note: glitch in tape, conversation moves to present Henderson home, also built by OH.]

INT: I thought perhaps you might, you can just tell when you drive up that it was built by somebody who either lived in it or lives in it now.

OH: That type of a trim I have, I just copied it from -. Well, let's go back to the other dwelling that was at Leech. It was called the Officers' Quarters. That was for visiting personnel that come from wherever. The dam tender and his wife had to cater to them, which was the nasty thing. And that was built in 1914 by two friends of mine, Ed Rawley and Claude Johnson, I think it was, yeah. But, to get back to this trim I have

here, it was copied from the trim that they had at that time. Now, you know, the trim that's on the existing dwelling, let's say -.

LC: Yeah.

OH: That was, oh, they had a plinth block, and I don't know what you call it; they have rosettes up in the corner.

INT: Mum hum, oh, I know what you mean, about how the inside door looks, yeah.

OH: What type of, there's a name for that. But, and I suppose it was real nice, you know, when it was put in in the 1900's, let's say. But through the layers of paint that was splashed on there through the years, in drying, and you'd bump it with like a chair or something, a big chunk would flake off. It's damn near impossible to repair it, you know, because you'd have to clean the whole damn thing.

LC: Yeah.

INT: Yeah.

OH: Well, it's still there. We got rid of some of it when we replaced the windows. I think I replaced the door trim, too, didn't I, like in the office?

LC: Yeah, mum hum, that's been changed.

OH: Same time, so that -. Well, that's right. I think I put that type of trim on, didn't I, LeRoy?

LC: Yeah.

OH: Yeah.

LC: Yeah, it's easier to paint and take care of and everything.

OH: And clean.

INT: So, could I ask both of you to kind of describe a typical day when you were working together in, say, a summer day? What would that be like? And then a winter day, so I have a sense of the structure of the work and what you did when you got up and went out of your houses and -.

OH: Well, I can remember many, many mornings when it would be 40 below zero and step out, and I'd hear this whistling. I don't know if you ever hear it anymore, Nig, but -. And that was in the old days. We had just over the, over the -. We're discharged now; there's stop logs in there, and you took out so many and the water run over like this. And it was so beastly cold, and it would freeze up to the dam, and then it'd freeze up from downstream, and finally it would freeze over. And it'd cause a suction, and you'd go out and look at that gage, and the damn thing'd be way out of sight, you couldn't even find it, you know. So you'd have, you'd go and poke a hole in that and, God, it was just a scream like, you know. You've seen that thing.

LC: Yeah, it still freezes over.

OH: Yeah, yeah, and so you'd have to chop that all out. And you couldn't wait until it warmed up, because it had to be done at that time. It'd be 40 below. I've been out there many, many mornings that it's been that cold. You had to work. You didn't stand there and look at it, I'll tell you.

INT: Too cold to do that!

OH: Oh, that was a miserable thing. I think you got away from some of it with that underwater discharge, didn't you?

LC: Yeah, but they freeze up, too, and that's a bunch of -.

INT: At 40 below anything will, huh? Yeah.

OH: There's a funny thing happens; it'll get so damned cold, it'll be slush. You've seen it.

LC: Yeah.

OH: 4 to 5 foot deep comes down, and eventually it plugs the hole up.

LC: Yeah, there isn't a drop that comes out of them underwater discharges.

INT: And you would try to keep it open just a little bit in the winter, so it wouldn't completely freeze up.

OH: Well, you had to keep it open

LC: Yeah.

OH: So you'd be out there with chisels and you, you could -. This wasn't froze down there, this slush, just you -. But then it was difficult to find water enough to get running through, you know. And then when you did that, then it would, you could work it through. But you had to work it through, or I think it would have froze solid then, Nig.

LC: Oh, I think so, if you leave it long enough, it would.

OH: Yeah, yeah.

INT: And so, if, you know, if that was a project for a winter morning, you and your associate would be out there digging it out.

OH: Well, generally, when I was there, former years, there was no associate you know, you was alone.

INT: Mum hum, so you were alone from '47 when -? You were an associate yourself you said from -. You said you started working at Leech at '47.

OH: '47.

INT: Ok.

OH: And I got on steady in '49.

INT: Ok, and then were you steady as the associate, for the assistant dam tender or is it until - ?

OH: Only until '52. And then I moved to Winnibigoshish Dam, and then stayed there until '59 when the man at Leech retired. And so they brought me back over to Leech then.

INT: I see, I see. So you were at Winnibigoshish as dam tender from '49 until -.

OH: No, from '52.

INT: '52 until -.

OH: '49, seven years.

INT: '62, wait I'm -.

OH: '52 'til '59.

INT: Sorry. OK, '50's. Because we have a conversation going next door; we probably should have figured out a different way -.

OH: Don't listen to um.

INT: I'm trying not to.

OH: I haven't heard a word they said.

INT: Ok, and so '59 is when you returned to Federal Dam.

OH: Yeah.

INT: And '60-'62 is when you [two] began to work together.

LC: Yes, mum hum.

INT: And how, what was the period in which you two then were dam tender and associate dam tender at Leech?

LC: I was never, I was more or less a dam tender's helper after he retired. But before I was maintenance man and laborer, started out as laborer.

INT: And you lived on the site?

OH: No.

LC: No, I had my own home then.

INT: OK.

OH: No, they discontinued that small dwelling, we called it; ah, I think it went up for bids in '70.

INT: And it was moved out or something?

OH: Yeah.

INT: Ok, ok.

OH: Oh, I don't know, it might have been '71 before it was moved out.

INT: And so you never lived at the dam?

LC: No, uhuh.

INT: You lived in town somewhere or out of town somewhere?

LC: I lived out of town.

INT: Ok, ok.

LC: I live out of town about a mile now, so.

INT: And so, but you still, you are, ah, work from May to October, or something or - ?

LC: Well, I usually -. I worked the year round there for, oh, 3, 4 years. But now they're cuttin' down a little, so I work probably 9 months out of the year. So I'll go back in February this year.

INT: I see.

OH: Well, you used to work damn near that much when I was there, Nig.

LC: Yeah, I took a -.

OH: Yeah, you come in April.

LC: Back in April and work 'til November.

OH: November.

INT: Mum hum. When did you begin to have, you know, people come to visit the dam for recreation, and to have a picnic or start, staying camping?

OH: Well, in '58 I come over from Winni and we poured the first launching ramp, and that was about the extent of what they did. And then, I moved over in '59, and we started clearing out some brush there. And ah, we got some, a couple of picnic tables, and I put up two toilets or latrines right up close to the launching area. Quite a number of people would come there; a lot of people would come, I'd say. You've seen 'em, Nig, when you were working there.

LC: Oh, yeah, just in little campers, not big like it is now.

INT: What does it mean for, I mean, in those days, was -, to have 50 families on the site, would that be a lot of people or - ?

OH: No, 25, let's say, I've seen it, but this would be weekend stuff mostly. And they were happier than heck; they all just bunched up there like a bunch of cattle. Hell, they really liked it.

LC: Yeah.

OH: And in '67, they finally got the contract out to expand it and rejuvenate it, and those old people they didn't like that.

INT: What do you mean?

OH: The ones that had been coming before they, you know they had to stay put; they called it like puttin' a cow in a stall, they said.

INT: Oh, that's interesting, that's interesting.

OH: God dang, I says, now I didn't do it, I says, they did it, so -.

INT: How did people hear about the dam sites as places to camp and to fish?

OH: Well, it was advertised in brochures, you know.

INT: Um hum, do you remember when that started?

OH: What's that?

INT: The brochures?

OH: No, I suppose, I imagine, it didn't start until about '67 though because -.

LC: Yeah, after they started building that big campground.

OH: Yeah, you see, we didn't have all those facilities there. Finally, we'd move a picnic table out, you know, to kind of separate the people a little bit, but -. And we made some roads in there, didn't we, Nig?

LC: Yeah, we brushed a lot out by hand you know, grubbed out stumps by hand, and used just chain hoists and stuff to pull stumps and grub them out.

INT: Was this kind of, did this happen because you got a memo from the St. Paul District office that said, you know, go ahead and do a little work on clearing out for campgrounds?

OH: Why certainly, you didn't do it on your own.

INT: The reason I am asking is because, when I was talking to Ike Kolb, he was talking about the first year that he came up to Sandy and he just kind of cleared out a point apparently 'cus, I think it was partly to improve his

family's view from the dwelling. And because he could just see that it was a beautiful point, and there was a family that used to come up from Iowa to fish, and one thing just kind of led to another in his memory.

- OH: Yes, well, that's how it was originally; now I'm talkin about '59. That's how they'd start coming up, just by hearing from somebody, you know. There was no brochures or nothing out then. We didn't have all the facilities there.
- INT: Mum hum. And did you all do most of the work in the '50s and early '60s on?
- OH: Yeah, all of the work. yeah.
- INT: Fixing up things for the -. And then, they began to contract out, you said.
- OH: Yeah.
- INT: So you all, how did your work change then, I mean? It sounds to me, tell me -.
- OH: I never was contract. We had what, a couple of guys, you and old bellerin' Bill?
- LC: Yeah, I and Bill -.
- OH: And a couple of lawnmowers, and they'd keep it clean. Where now, it takes 25 to do it.
- LC: Yeah, they get a lot of kids in there now, you know. They like to give them a job and keep them occupied. They liked it.
- INT: So, I guess what I am trying to get at was: did you begin to do less dam tending in the sense of looking after the dams and more with visitors in the summer and - ?
- OH: Yeah, that's what it all was then toward the end, for me. No, I liked the dam tender part, where you did carpenter work and concrete work, every damned type of work there was and that other stuff. They changed it; I guess I'm old-fashioned.
- INT: Is that work still done at the dam now or do you contract out more? Reading the annual reports down at the Corps, I imagined that the work now for people who are on-site is more with visitors and less with reading gages and things like that.
- LC: Well, we read the gages and everything. But the, a lot of the stuff like lawnmowers and maintenance and everything and taking care of the coupler station, that's all contracted, and the raking is contracted. But we still, like that little park across the river, we put all that in, do that type of work with those kids that we hire.
- INT: And how many people work at the dam now?

LC: Well, there's just one there now, and then when I go back to work there will be I and John, and probably another one. There will be three until April, then there will be probably 7 or 8 during the summer.

INT: Uh huh. Were there rangers working at the sites when you two were working together?

OH: Well, they come in my latter years.

LC: Mum hum.

OH: They still have them, don't you, Nig?

LC: Yeah, we still got rangers.

INT: And so, how did you work with the ranger, for instance, as dam tender?

OH: Well, they did the collecting, didn't they?

LC: Yeah, they did the collecting and -.

INT: Well, you mean for rent at the campsites?

LC: And at night they'd patrol the campgrounds and stuff.

INT: How much did you charge?

OH: God dang it, a buck?

LC: Dollar at first it started out, I think.

OH: Buck, I think, 50 cents for 65 and over.

LC: Yeah.

INT: And this would have been in the '50's and '60's?

OH: No, '67.

INT: OK.

OH: They didn't charge before '67.

INT: OK.

LC: No.

INT: And, well, the reason I am kind of curious about this is that I remember reading in the flood control act that it was free access to recreation, so you would collect a little to cover the cost of maintenance or something?

OH: Yeah, I think by the time it got all counted out and pay the wages for the people counting it, we might have been in the hole. But we don't, shouldn't say things like that, I suppose.

INT: Did the concessions - ? I have read that there were, for a long -. I know, I read a lot of stuff down in Minneapolis-St. Paul about Leech Lake, in particular, because long ago in the first World War there began to be a resort industry up here. So I know a little about the railroads bringing people up here and a little bit about the fish guides.

OH: Yeah.

INT: And stuff like that, and I know that at Leech Lake there apparently were some concessions right at the dam, fish guides, the -.

OH: Yeah, there, there was, when old John -.

LC: Old Patton, I guess, was one of them, George Patton.

OH: George, I suppose, he wasn't the first. I think Bill Wooster and John Clark are the first ones.

INT: And then I was given the name, Jim Ruyak gave me the name of one family he could remember, Warren Bridges and his father.

OH: Yeah. They came about in '35, I think. But there wasn't really that much activity when LeRoy and I was growing up in the '20's because they had to come by train if they was going to come 'cus our roads were not very desirable.

INT: Even you didn't think so, huh?

OH: God almighty, they were tough roads. You know when I think about it, Nig, I had to walk from Bena once when I was a little kid at 12:00 at night; I was scared to death. And that was the crookedest, that had to be one of the crookedest roads in the world.

LC: Yeah.

OH: You know, it went around the swamp and around that swamp and around -.

LC: Laughs

OH: Only 7 miles but it sure as hell was a lot more than 7 miles. Ah, but ah, 'cus I can remember when I was a kid we'd get down by the depot, you know, and if someone was coming up to fish, maybe we'd get a job hauling a suitcase or somethin'. But I forgot now, we had one hell of a nice campground once.

INT: Where was that?

OH: Right -. You came through Federal Dam?

INT: Yes.

OH: Yeah. Ok, you cross the bridge. Then there is a road going down to the dam and you keep coming and there's a new place there, RC's, KC's, what is it?

LC: Oh, that's ah -.

INT: I remember what it is, just seeing that.

OH: Right in that area, right where the road is, we had a campground that accommodated a hundred tents.

LC: Mumhum.

OH: I say we, this is, I think, the town of Federal Dam took care of it. LeRoy's grandfather lived right smack dab in the middle of the road there, right on the south edge of that. Can you remember that?

LC: No, I never did know Charlie.

OH: God he was -.

LC: Too young -.

OH: He was a mean old guy. We had cattle up beyond there, and we had to go by there. And old Charlie'd step behind his building, and he had a club. He'd wait until we'd get just along aside of him, and he'd jump out. And God dang up to the woods we went.

INT: Scared you half to death, huh?

OH: Yeah. Now, they had a pump and one or two toilets, maybe just one, I don't know. I can't remember.

INT: Now this would have been in the '20's, or - ?

OH: Yeah

INT: Now who would come to that campground?

OH: My God, I've seen people from Iowa there all summer long. See they were not enforcing, well, there wasn't that many fish then. But, they'd just go down along the riverbank, and they'd haul fish out of there all day long. Warnakes were from Iowa. I remember them; they were real tall people, the whole family, the mother and father and three boys, I think. But they'd be up there a good two months of the year. They also had a, what would you call that, you can remember that yet, LeRoy?

LC: That gaging station?

OH: No, no, that shelter. They had a shelter that stood just about where that road from Federal Dam comes, right on that corner, right in that area. There was quite a large shelter, oh, 25 foot wide, 40 foot long, possibly, maybe the size of this building.

LC: Yeah.

OH: And the sides, you could, were hinged and you could push them up and hold them during the summertime, you know, and they had some benches in there. And for inclement weather they'd go in there and eat their meals and stuff like that.

INT: Just like a big, open-air kitchen kind of dining hall.

OH: Yeah, it was quite a thing.

INT: Now, people would come up on the railroad and they would stay for - ?

OH: Or, they might drive up, you know, with an old Model T.

INT: And would it mainly be families, or would it be parties of men, you know, fish - ?

OH: Ok, they could be a group, too, you know. Say, like a bunch from Duluth would come on a train and stay maybe a week and then they'd get back on the train. That really hurt us when they took that train out.

INT: When did the train go out here?

OH: Oh, just recently, last year, but it wasn't for any use for individuals, you know. There's no passenger cars; you couldn't ship a load of pulp, I don't think, could you, Nig?

LC: No, uhha.

OH: I don't think they ever did that, for many years.

LC: Not for a long time, everything went to Remer, I believe, at the mill there.

INT: When did the passenger service go out, do you remember?

OH: Oh, the '50's huh?

LC: Yeah.

OH: That's when mail quit.

INT: Is that when the camp, did that really change the tourist thing for you?

OH: Well, by that time we were getting roads here, and 'course cars were much better than they were back in the '20's. I remember when I was a kid, anyone that had cars, there wasn't many in our town, but about November they'd jack 'um up and put blocks under 'um so they wouldn't set on the tires. And they was there until it warmed up the next year.

INT: And so people would get around walking and skiing in the winter, and the trains.

OH: Well, horses. We had a lot of horses in this country; they were, God, I think every family had 'em but us.

INT: Excuse me, I have to turn this [tape] over.

Tape 1 - Side 2

OH: But that campground was one hell of a nice thing.

INT: And did it stay in operation, into - ?

OH: There was no maintenance.

INT: Oh, people would bring their own camp, I mean, they would bring their own tents and set up there?

OH: Yeah, yeah.

INT: So, they brought all their own equipment except that dining hall cover.

OH: Yeah, and they had a pump there, and like I mentioned two privies maybe, and his old uncle Ben [Lego] you know, had a -.

LC: Yeah, he lived there, didn't he?

OH: Right on the corner, there.

LC: Yeah. He cleaned fish.

OH: He made quite a little money on that.

LC: Yeah.

OH: That had nothing to do with the Corps of Engineers.

INT: Right, right. Were there resort hotels in this neighborhood for people who came to fish or to - ?

OH: Ah, right up near John's place there, Clark had a number of little cabins, you remember, them, ah, real small ones, LeRoy?

LC: Yeah, something like what was by Clemas' there.

OH: Ah, that Bobby, you know, right next to where Mrs. McKeig lived right south of there.

LC: Bob, Bobby Stanstrom.

OH: A little teeny shack, about 8' by 10', I think they was. And he had about ten of those little, what do you call 'em, cabins. And, ah, Merrill had some cabins; there wasn't many, though.

LC: No, I don't think so.

OH: But they had some resorts - North Star [run by Buck Headman], Cap, but that was out in the northeast corner of Leech Lake, and then out, ah, on Sugar Point area, we call it.

INT: I remember seeing that sign as I came in.

OH: Battle Point Lodge was there, and old Westling had a place.

LC: Yeah, Westling did, yeah, and B.G. [Bert] Rounds.

OH: Well yeah, he stole it from them afterward, and old T.B. Reed, he had cabins.

LC: Yeah, he had a little spot. Probably Tony Kracy [proximate, a Polish name] -.

OH: Tony must have come here in the '20's, huh?

LC: Yeah, he was there before we went out there.

OH: When did you move out there? '28, '29?

LC: Well, let's see, I was four years old.

OH: '28, huh?

LC: 1930.

OH: '30, huh?

INT: This is your family when you were growing up?

LC: Yeah.

INT: And living on the lakeshore.

LC: Yeah, my family went -.

OH: [indistinguishable]

LC: Out to Sugar Point then.

OH: LeRoy, I rode out that time.

LC: Did ya?

OH: Ya, ya, Cap Neururer, you know?

LC: Yeah.

INT: Did -, was there a lot of conversation or a lot of, I mean, did the resort owners get concerned about the water levels on Leech, and did you as dam tender have to deal with that much?

OH: Some of them, yeah.

LC: Yeah, Florence Storhaug at Herman's Lodge and the store [can't decipher, presumably Bill Roeder]

OH: God damn. One night a terrific storm come up, and this place we are talking about sets right out in the lake there and the water was tearing their breakwater down and called me up about 2 o'clock in the morning, I should do something about that. What in the hell would I do about a storm?

LC: Yeah.

OH: And she, she just was constantly on that phone. The water was too high or too low. It never was right, I don't think. Well, that other one at Five Mile, he was a nasty one -.

LC: Oh_____

OH: Those two, God. This was really funny; I complained. We had a gage house out at this Five Mile Point Resort and this guy was there, and he was, oh, obnoxious and -. Just like we was talking about that woman, water was too high or too low or some damn thing wrong. And I complained, I says, God, let's try to get that gage house somewhere else. Oh, it's been there a long time. It was there a long time. And, ah, so one day, two guys from the office come up, and we was a talking, and says let's drive out in the prior lake gage and out in that country. And I said fine, let's go; so we drove out there. You could drive in there, and the gage house all set up right up on that shore there. So I got out; I said I'm goin' to walk out around here; I thought I seen something around back of that building. I seen old Bill coming out of the house, this was Bill Roeder, the gentleman that owned it. And I said, you can talk to that guy there if you want to for a minute, and his old mouth was a flapping like this and gol dang it and everything else, you know, and he give them hell. So I just stood back of that building for about 25 minutes and just let um listen to um. So, I come back around and ah, [Harold] Taggatz said, I suppose we better get along now. And I said, I don't know, did you get done talking to this gentleman? He said, yeah, we're done talking.

INT: What happened, I mean, I can see you took a lot of the pressure right around here, but what could you do to let your bosses know in St. Paul?

OH: I'd tell 'em. No, these people knew that I didn't open that dam or close that dam on my own whim.

INT: They were talking to you as the pressure point, kind of?

OH: Yeah, so if they complained too much I'd just, I always referred them to St. Paul Office. If their complaint was that great, they could contact them, not to go through me, and I don't know how much they did; I don't think they did much.

INT: Did it, I mean, did it change much in terms of the water levels, I mean - ?

OH: Oh, it could, yeah.

INT: So they would be adjusted sometimes to meet the resort needs?

OH: Yes, and most of those people think that those guys are God or something, you know. Now, start of the winter season, you have to anticipate how much precipitation would come, either in rain or snowfall or what. So you have to plan to have that lake down enough to accommodate the spring rains then, and what came during the wintertime.

INT: Right.

OH: So now, I wouldn't of had that job for ten million dollars a year 'cus it's impossible for a man to judge that precisely, you know. So maybe, they'd, once in a while they'd maybe draw it down too much and you didn't get your rains, and then it would be low. But, ah, maybe I shouldn't say this either, but I don't think that dam has that much to do with the level of the lake. This dam here now I'm talking about [Leech]. Winni is a man-made lake, so the dam does control the levels there. But, for instance, in 1957, they were repairing the apron. That's what it was, wasn't it?

LC: Yeah, um hum.

OH: I think that's what the deal was.

LC: 1955, or - ?

OH: I was at Winni at the time. Anyhow through the fault of the contractors, he never was blamed, but that portion that we, I showed you, that 25 sluices was washed out in this thing.

INT: Ok.

OH: So, they took stream measurements and, I think, maximum about 32 hundred feet a second was going through that.

LC: But she went -.

OH: And the lake went down about 4 and one half inches, and then it didn't go down anymore. And that wasn't repaired right away; see they didn't stop that flow for, oh hell, it was -.

LC: Quite a few weeks there before they ever got ah -.

OH: Long, long time -.

LC: Yeah.

OH: Remember, they had that little temporary bridge down below there.

LC: Mum hum.

OH: It was, it was months before that dam was repaired.

LC: Yeah.

OH: So, that's just, it gives you an example, we wasn't really in that much control of the lake. See and I'll explain it to you, ah, Jo. There's an outlet up at the, about a mile and a half upstream from the dam. That's where the lake, the major lake is, and there is just a narrow outlet, so only so many cubic feet can come through that at the time. And even in

the wintertime it freezes down on the edges where some would get, come around through the rushes, so your discharge, I couldn't maintain a thousand cubic feet. They'd ask me for that, you know, this was years ago. I couldn't maintain that, because it would suck that down.

INT: That other outlet on the other side.

OH: Yeah, you can only push so much water through a hole.

LC: Yeah.

OH: Unless you have a pump there, pumping it. But now it'd be altogether different if -. Most the rest of the dams, you know, like Sandy would go, I'm sure, like that point, you see. I think it would erode that out if that dam was out of there. And Gull, that isn't very far from the lake, and Pine dam, that is right at the lake, and it's a high one. That would wipe out everything and Winni the same way.

LC: Yeah, Winni about 13 foot, Leech is only about -.

H: And Pokegama, that's just a convenience for the papermill and after it got up to what, you know, the papermill would hold it back. So they just filled that little lake there and that'd be the end of that.

LC: Yeah.

OH: Am I talking wrong stuff here?

INT: No, I'm very interested in this. I wanted to kind of shift a little bit and ask about something else, ah, that's related to, to the area generally. The, one of the things that the Corps staff wanted us to ask a bit about as we were talking to you all was the extent to which the Native American community, the Chippewa, I mean, are we on, we came through part of the reservation, I know, to get here.

OH: When you get across the dam, you come off of it.

INT: Ok, that's what I didn't know when we came off of it. The, ahm, but to what extent there was a lot of interaction between the local white community and the local Native American community, to what extent the Corps itself - ?

OH: Yeah, there always has been, hasn't there, Nig?

LC: Yeah.

OH: He's [LC] quite a bit of Indian.

INT: Your family is part Indian?

LC: Yeah, my father.

INT: Ahha, from the reservation?

LC: Yeah, he was from the Leech Lake Reservation.

INT: And so does your family kind of move back and forth, I mean, do you have relatives kind of on the reservation and off and - ?

LC: Yeah, my brother. Well, my grandmother is dead now; she was on there. They lived there most of their lives, I suppose.

INT: And have you lived off it most of your life?

LC: Well, I moved off when I was about 4 years old and then I lived in Federal since.

INT: Ok, and have you worked, you've worked for the Corps a lot of your working life?

LC: Yeah, 19 years.

INT: And the kind of thing that I was curious, I mean we've talked some about the resort owners and what they thought about the water levels and how some of that -. What about, have things like wild rice or hunting and fishing rights of the Chippewa been things that you two have worked with?

OH: No, no.

INT: As part of the Corps?

OH: No, not me.

INT: That hasn't just been, it's been more that who -.

OH: Wild rice entered into it some, I suppose. But like I said, you can't -. It's not something you can take and, you know, like they want the lake raised six inches, we don't do that now. It's gonna take a maybe long, long time to do it. And then, here's one thing that these people could never understand. They were up here above the dam; you do this. I says, how about Fred down below the dam now; increasing the flow might jeopardize something of his. You have to think both sides.

INT: Right, now what was on the other, if the wild rice would be over in one corner of Leech, right, kind of the southeast corner wasn't that right?

OH: Yeah.

LC: Yeah.

INT: And the resorts would be kind of all around. What's on the other side of Federal Dam that people would say, wait a minute, you're letting too much water out.

LC: Well, Mud Lake, rice down there.

OH: That's the start of it, and now we got lot of irrigated land.

INT: Farmland?

OH: No. Well, they call it farming. It's agriculture; it's wild rice.

LC: Rice paddies.

INT: Oh, so the big fancy paddies, the commercial paddies.

OH: My brother [Russell Henderson] has a -, God, that's a mile long down there.

LC: Oh sure. Yeah.

OH: And there's many of them, Giffen across the river, now.

LC: Yeah.

OH: Legos.

LC: Right down the river there, yeah.

INT: I see. So there is a lot of commercial rice growing in this area now? And -.

OH: You're have, they're having trouble with that Mud Lake, huh?

LC: Yeah, they did have a lot of high water got in there. Well, the bog clogged up the dam, and they didn't, the State takes care of that, see; they put the dam in.

OH: I got a little static here from somebody not very long ago. I didn't mention it to 'um because it's none of my business and none of his business. But they are to maintain all that kind of stuff. All you do is put the stop log in and take it out, and that's all and leave it be.

LC: We don't even go down there now, so I don't know what they do. I haven't been down there all summer.

OH: Good.

INT: You mean to Mud Lake?

LC: Yeah.

INT: To that dam.

LC: Yeah.

OH: It's a State dam, and we was just maintaining, or what the hell do you call it, some word? We just operated it, let's say.

LC: Tried to keep the water at a certain level, you know, for the rice there. But when it plugged up with bog, why then it raised the lake up, and up come the bog. And they had a mess there.

OH: Well, see, they didn't keep their repairs up.

LC: No.

OH: They'd put in piling, used piling up above the dam, oh, from here to the road.

LC: Oh yeah, about that far.

OH: And this would catch this rice, or -.

LC: Bog.

OH: Floating bog hold it there. And then, if it got too bad, I suppose they could blow it, I suppose, or something.

LC: Well, they had a chopper in there this time.

INT: Wood chopper kind of a - ?

OH: It come right up to the dam this time.

LC: Yeah, it got through the piling; the piling broke off.

OH: Yeah.

INT: Oh, that sounds like a real mess.

LC: About an acre of bog come in there and that really -.

OH: Oh, that's a nasty thing.

LC: Mum hum.

OH: We've had many, many acres of bog come down there.

INT: Can, I get the idea of what you are talking about 'cus I've just driven through the country, so I can see that there's all this marshy land.

OH: Sedge, they call it.

INT: Yeah, and it's the tall grass and it breaks loose and comes in big clumps, is that what happens?

LC: Yeah, and when the water gets high, it'll break loose from wave action and stuff.

INT: I see, and then it will collect at the dam or any kind of little inlet -?

LC: Wherever the current will carry it.

OH: Yeah.

INT: And then you have to get it -.

LC: Saw it out of there.

INT: And it's woody enough so that you can?

OH: You can walk on it.

LC: Really tough.

INT: Oh.

OH: Use snowshoes. You can find a hole. Oh God, that was quite a job cutting that stuff.

INT: Was there something that was really your favorite, I mean, something that you just particularly loved about being a dam tender in terms of the work and something that gave you a particular sense of accomplishment?

OH: I liked it real well before they got this campground in. 'Cus that took eight hours of damn good hard work.

INT: So what you liked was the maintenance and the repair and the taking care of things?

OH: Yeah, we'd have to paint it, you know, and then I'd get called out a lot of times to, ah, go out to Henry [Dart, then at Leech].

LC: Yeah.

OH: I had to go out in North Dakota for good part of a summer, last of November to repair a dam [circa 1955].

INT: Is that Ashtabula?

OH: No, this was at Park River.

INT: OK.

OH: Homma Dam.

INT: 'Cus a lot of these, Mr. Kolb told me a little bit about being out at Ashtabula and apparently people from this area got -.

OH: Yeah, Ike did have to go up there.

INT: Kind of got pulled into the Dakotas when help was needed.

OH: That's a -.

LC: Lot of times when the old Red River would flood -.

INT: People would come. Now, have you gone on trips like that, too?

LC: Just taking bags and stuff out there but never -.

INT: Mum hum.

OH: LeRoy, you got in on quite a bit of snow measurements, though, didn't you?

LC: Oh yeah, we'd travel on snow measurements and -.

OH: Do you still do that?

LC: No, uhha, I don't, Erv might.

INT: Interesting though, Ike Kolb described the process to me, and I think that would be an interesting thing to do.

LC: Yeah, it is.

OH: You see a lot of different country.

LC: Yeah, you go clean up to the Canadian border there, stop at different places and get your measurements, and that way they know what -.

OH: That's a hell of a job sometimes, though, to find the mean, you know. If the wind's blowing, you could have four feet there and two feet here and you got to pick. See, in snow sampling, you would take a sample and weigh it and that'd give you the water content of the snow. This is so they'd have some idea what it's going to come. Possibly, Ike told you about that. What'd be coming in. See, we have our divide, one divide is right up above Winni Dam there, slippery deal. And the other one goes to Winnipeg, and the one down below there goes to, ah, the Minnesota River and which in turn comes and meets this one.

INT: So, do you have, I've gotten the impression, tell me if it's right, that you're another kind of mechanical kind of person, and that's what you are mostly involved in doing.

LC: Yeah, well right now I'm running the sewage plant; that's what I take care of mostly. But I still collect, too, you know.

INT: You mean for the Corps, that's what you do is run the - ?

LC: Yeah, umhum, sewage plant out there.

INT: So, how does that, 'cus I realize that it used to be portable toilets, or not portable, but just outhouses and now it's chemical toilets system -.

OH: Not all of them.

INT: Dumping and -.

LC: We still have an outside comfort station.

INT: OK, but you pump them out, and there's some kind of sewage plant?

LC: Yeah, they, ah - ?

INT: Where is it?

LC: They come in and, it's right in the shop area there. It'd take care of the pumping station.

OH: You know, excuse me, the first one when you come in the campgrounds to the right there or left, is it - ?

LC: That's a vault toilet.

OH: That's a vault type.

LC: So, when we turn off the sewage plant, they still have them, see.

INT: What is a vault toilet, I don't - ?

OH: Oh, that's one you can pump out.

INT: Ok.

OH: They have access to. Ah, you took down those two old ones, huh?

LC: Yeah, those metal ones.

OH: Yeah.

LC: Mum hum.

OH: Now, how many vaults do you have there now?

LC: Ah, three. Now they've put these chemical ones down by that fish cleaning house.

INT: Ok.

OH: I'm learning something about this, too, 'cus I haven't been up there since 1975.

LC: They've been renting them, and that's contracted out and whoever owns the chemical -.

INT: Comes in -.

LC: They come and take care of them.

INT: OK.

OH: Now, there's that one place was pretty horrible there a year ago.

LC: Oh, yeah.

OH: That one I mentioned at first there.

LC: Um hum.

OH: Now, do you still use that bottom side?

LC: No, we don't put no chemicals in.

OH: You don't put nothing in.

LC: But see, that's contracted out, too; that's maintained by a maintenance.

INT: Mum hum, mum hum.

LC: We take care of it after he goes, but during the summer months, why -.

OH: Oh, they have to pump them, huh?

LC: Yeah, well, the Corps pumps them in the fall. They only get pumped once a year.

OH: Oh, what about the, did you have any complaints on that one?

LC: Yeah, it was getting kind of smelly and stuff and -.

OH: Do you still use Sanex in them or - ?

LC: No, they don't use anything.

OH: It's odd that you don't use even lime.

LC: Well, they got some other new stuff they got; they put in there.

OH: Evidently, it didn't work; I don't know what it was. We had one up -.

LC: Yeah.

OH: In the southwest corner there one time that just couldn't stop that; I don't know just what was wrong, something was wrong.

INT: Let me get another tape because I can tell this one's going to run out. I won't talk to you for another whole hour, but I want to ask a couple more questions about the visitors.

Tape 2 - Side 1

INT: More and more people, as you were growing up, you mentioned the campground and you lived, I mean, Mr. Henderson, this is to give the transcriber a sense of what's going on here. And you also, Mr. Campbell, mentioned that you were, you lived out near the resorts on Leech when you were growing up. Did you get to know visitors as you were growing up and living here?

OH: Oh yeah.

INT: And become friends with them, and was that part of your lives?

LC: Yeah.

INT: Can you tell me, I'll ask you to take turns, who are some of the people you remember meeting because of the dam tending or just because of the resort?

OH: Uh, it would be quite difficult to answer that, 'cus there's thousands, I suppose. There's a lot of people know Ole, but I, and I'd see these people next year, and I couldn't remember their name, even. You know, they tied Ole up at the dam and stuck with them, but now that's, gosh that's an awful feeling to know this person and they talking to you about this and that. Gol dang, like my first boss down there, his name was Dart, D-A-R-T, so he was down to the chiropractor in Grand Rapids, and I guess he got a prescription or something, so old probably and, ah, he says, how do you spell your last name, Henry, and old Dart looked at me (laughs). Ah, no I, I, ah, after you girls leave, I'll remember thousands and thousands of them that I knew real well.

INT: But for instance -.

OH: Of course, maybe I shouldn't talk about some of them. Harold and Margie, what the hell, they were campers up there, real good friends. Course they weren't married - she was. But not to Harold.

INT: Oh, I see, I see. They would come up on a holiday and you knew about it.

OH: Gol dang, I had a lot of fun with them.

INT: Did they come back year after year?

OH: No, after '67, that was the end of it. See 'cus they could get out into, I'd have a little brushy spot there that they could go to, you know. They camped right in there -.

INT: Ah hah.

OH: In their station wagon. After we got them stalls there, that was the end of that.

INT: Did the nature, I mean, did some of the customers change, did different people come after '67?

OH: Oh, I imagine, yes. Like I say, some of them never come back just on account of that rejuvenation.

INT: Mum hum.

OH: And then, there are a lot of them like Royer; they've been coming up many years, haven't they, Nig?

LC: Who was that?

OH: Lloyd Royer.

LC: Oh, yeah.

OH: You know him.

LC: Yeah.

OH: And some of these other ones I don't know as well; George met them, you know, through the landings down there. Now in the last, see I, damn near 12 years since I quit. That's quite a while.

INT: Mum hum.

LC: Well, they got these, it's contracted, a lot of it, you know, and they'd go in there now and do the collecting and stuff so -.

INT: So you don't -.

LC: You don't know who's in there.

OH: Yeah.

INT: But when you were growing up or when, you know, the pre-'67 phase, did you get to know the people who came back year after year?

LC: Oh yeah, I'd stop in and visit 'em.

OH: Oh, LeRoy worked for this nasty one, that woman, and you met a lot of people.

LC: About 10 summers there.

OH: Lenny used to come up there, didn't he?

LC: Yeah, yeah. Lenny [Katz] he used to -.

OH: He was from the office. He was in the hydraulics, wasn't it?

LC: Hydraulics, yeah. But he was married to that, Florence's sister, that you talked about.

INT: Mum, so can you remember people, I mean just where they were from or people that you - ?

LC: Oh, a lot of them were from Iowa, like, ah, oh, what the heck -.

OH: Bittenbender.

LC: Bittenbender, well like Art Silvus, now he's in the Rapids and people like that. But they were people I knew when I was collecting, but -.

INT: And when did you do that work?

LC: Oh boy, probably in '75 and '6.

INT: Ok.

LC: '70's.

OH: You collected before '75 and -.

LC: Well, for you.

OH: Yeah.

INT: That would have been in the late sixties?

LC: Yeah.

OH: You was working pretty steady when you got married, wasn't you, Nig?

LC: Yeah, um hum. I'd work most of the summer and the fall.

INT: So just every day you'd, every evening or every morning, you'd go around and collect from the campers?

LC: Yeah, mostly in the, probably, in the afternoon when they came off of the lake, then you could catch 'em.

INT: Ok, were most people there to fish?

LC: Yeah.

OH: Oh, everybody fished.

INT: And so, and would they just kind of go out in the morning and come back with their catch, was that their - ?

LC: Yeah.

INT: So, there wasn't as much swimming or - ?

OH: No, there was no swimming there. They shouldn't even allow it. I don't know if they do.

LC: No, they're talking about making one but it would be a big hassle, you know, 'cus it's too -.

OH: Then you'd have to have lifeguards and see, ah, ah -.

LC: Too confined.

OH: You, you didn't go down there.

INT: We didn't get off; no, we didn't get off but we will on the way back just to take a look.

OH: But you drive in here to this launching ramp I'm talking about, and there's a dock there for tying up your boats while you are loading or unloading. And it's 12 foot deep; there's no sand within a hundred miles and if, if children are swimming there and these guys come in there,

it might be snapped up or it might not be snapped up, and they might not see this and it would be terrible. It'd scared the, scared the hell out of me if I'd find some kids down there swimming, and I'd scare the hell out of them, to even it up.

LC: It's a sharp dropoff, too.

OH: Boy, that's deep. About 12 foot deep there, Nig.

LC: Yeah, it's got to be.

INT: Mum, did you two have anything to do with archeology digs?

OH: No.

INT: Or sites or was that a part of anything that you worked with or -?

LC: No, they'd come in from the -?

INT: From the -.

LC: Office and do that, get someone that knew what they were looking for.

OH: There was a girl up there once. Was you there, Nig, when she, her and, they were snooping around? It was in the wintertime, how ridiculous. The snow was that deep now; you couldn't see very much. They should've come up in the summertime, you could see if there was a mound or something like that.

LC: Mum hum.

INT: Did the, did the community at Leech Lake express any concern about this, the archeological sites around the - ?

OH: No, I don't think so; there isn't that much.

LC: No.

OH: There was, ah, ah, Point View [resort].

LC: Yeah.

OH: They figure that mound, they did find bones in there, didn't they?

LC: Yeah, I think so.

OH: Yeah, and then when they was, I don't think they ever did anything to this nasty bugger down on Five Mile.

LC: No.

OH: But he dug into some dirt a little.

LC: Oh, yeah, they found 'um when they were plowing the garden, you know, but nobody would ever mention anything. I think, my brother.

OH: I don't know, possibly some of your ancestors were there.

LC: Yeah.

OH: But you don't know, they weren't marked or anything.

INT: What happens when the bones are found? Do they go, are they reburied or something?

LC: I don't know what they did with them.

OH: You take machinery like you got now -.

INT: These big backhoes and things.

OH: Yeah, or bulldozer, hell, you wouldn't have enough chunks to even find.

LC: I think they reburied one out there when he was making, over by old John Musher, they found one.

OH: I was just telling that Three-Finger Jack, how to cross the dike there, they was re-making this road, and somebody said Three-Finger Jack was buried there, there was a little old cross. So they dug him up, put him over there in some pine trees pretty close to the railroad track. Well then, in, what the hell was it, '53, when they built that road to Bena?

LC: Yeah.

OH: I think it's '53. So they didn't even think about old Three-Finger Jack; they went right over the top of him. Nobody knew his last name, that's all he was ever known by.

LC: Yeah.

INT: Um, one final question on my list and then you tell me if there's anything I've kind of struck that you would want to mention to me. When you were working at the dam, were you pretty much, I mean, on your own; I understand that you talked to St. Paul every day by radio or by telephone.

OH: Yeah, in later years, yeah.

INT: But did you all feel kind of independent up here, or closely tied to St. Paul -?

OH: I never did really, unless there was some complaints. 'Cus they, we'd, ah, every fall a fellow would come up from the office and we'd go over what was needed like stop logs and paint and anything. We was pretty astir in those years. If you bought a pound of nails, you had to show 'um where the hell you nailed it. It's no 'kidding, Niggie. Well, you was there yet, then.

LC: Yeah.

OH: And, ah, then we'd lay out our work for the next year, what was going to be done, not this week or next week, but it was to be done in, during that summer. If there was any major work, then we'd hire hired labor; it wasn't contract. We never contracted much until, oh, later years there. You know, I liked hired labor, because you could pick your men.

INT: So you'd pick, you'd pick people right around here.

OH: Yeah, you knew they'd work and got along with and all that.

INT: Were there families that you especially relied on to work with you?

OH: Well, that family right there.

INT: This one, huh, the Campbell family.

OH: His brother worked for me quite a bit.

INT: Mum hum.

OH: And there's a number of 'um.

LC: Ray Johnson, he worked there.

OH: Yeah, he was an accident waiting around to happen, though.

LC: And Bobby Stetstrup.

OH: Well, he was a good man. I had him even over at Winni. His job was to sweep, keep things clean, and he was spotless. You know, you had Colonels, Generals and stuff like that come up, and I'm not that good a housekeeper. Well, if you're working you can't have it. I never was really bawled out for the shop having sawdust on the floor.

LC: No.

OH: 'Cus if you have sawdust on the floor, evidently you've been cutting something. And I suppose they looked at it that way. Ah, ah, I can ask him that.

INT: Did you want to ask me something, go ahead?

OH: No, no, I was just wondering, safety engineer, ah, that, that fellow's gone, isn't he?

LC: Yeah.

OH: Do you have a safety engineer now?

LC: Yeah, there's one coming around.

OH: Young guy or what?

LC: Young feller.

INT: And is this somebody who made the rounds?

OH: Yeah, that's what he was; he'd inspect your tools and everything.

INT: Once a year or - ?

LC: Yeah.

OH: Oh God, they used to come up more than that. What was his name?

LC: He's out west now; can't remember.

OH: Gol dang, he happened to come from my same division in the war so we got along real good, and after I retired he was the only one that stopped out to see me and ah. See, damn that makes me mad. I can see him and everything -.

LC: I can see his face.

OH: God dang it, I can't, but he'd stop and visit every time he came by -; he was real nice.

LC: Yeah, he was a good gentleman.

INT: Did people, say, at the, who work in the St. Paul office, come up here for their vacations ever?

LC: Yeah, once in a while, they'd come in the park. You wouldn't know they were there, but they'd be there.

OH: That one, that safety engineer used to be there a hell of a lot, that -

LC: One from Dakotas.

OH: Art Johnson, wasn't it?

LC: Johnson, yeah.

INT: Is this the man you were trying to think of?

OH: Oh no, no, this was another one.

LC: This was a different guy.

OH: But he was safety engineer 'cus I know he'd come out on that campground at 7 o'clock in the morning and want to start snooping around. Well, I didn't go to work until 8 and, by Jesus, he didn't sleep 'til 8.

LC: Yeah, he came up there every year for a long time. Even after he retired, he'd still come up.

OH: Yeah

INT: Did you work with Wesley Walters, was he somebody who - ?

OH: Yes, he was one of the first ones. Is Wes alive yet?

INT: Yes, he is, he's in St. Paul. I haven't talked to him but I've recommended that if they're talking to the dam tenders, they ought to talk to Walters, too. Because I understand he had a lot -.

OH: Yeah, he was part of that austerity program.

INT: The what?

OH: Ah, watching the nickels, which I went for. I think that that's something that should be done all the time, not just at certain times. Because there's too much spending. I suppose I should keep my mouth shut.

INT: Well, it's your privilege to think that. It's, you know.

OH: Well, I should be able to say it. I don't have nothing to do with them, but I still get my monthly check from somebody.

LC: Yeah.

INT: Yeah, yeah. Well, they probably appreciated that attitude when you were working, you know, full-time for them. Now is there anything, oh, I think that is really what I had on my mind. Is there anything that I've asked you questions about that you would want to say more about or point something out to me?

OH: All in all, Jo, we'll go over to Winni now, that was my dam for a while. But up on that point there was, the story that I got from it was that there had been a mass burial back in, oh, turn of the century or before, small pox or something come in and killed off a good number of people and they buried them. I don't know if you were ever up there, Nig?

LC: No, I don't believe so.

OH: Straight across from Billings. And you could see this distinct mound, it run quite a ways there. And ah, through the years erosion cut into the bank, and I had a fishhouse out there. But I see a pair of knees sticking out of there one day. Oh, hell, it was up 12 - 14 feet up in the air; this bank was sliding away, and through the winter, finally. They buried them sitting up. That was the practice with some of them. And the, the boom finally did come down. But there's nobody interested. And also in that same place, I found this other way of burial, where they'd wrap them in birch bark.

LC: The heck -.

OH: And, and put them up in the crotch of a tree or something like that. And evidently, the limb had blown off, this was red oak. And then, I found the birch bark with the bones in it at the base of the tree. I just left them. That's the only time I ever saw that. Well, I think that'd be the best place for archeology, is over there in that area.

LC: Yeah, I think that was for, could be over in that area.

INT: Is that part of, is the Leech Lake community concerned about that or knowledgeable about that at this point? Is that memory still within - ?

LC: A lot of these younger ones, I don't think they even remember.

OH: Know nothing about it - ?

LC: They never, I don't think they ever kept track of much in those, as far as notes and stuff that I know.

INT: Were there a lot of communities of Indian, I've been told about Indian villages on Sandy that seem to have disappeared as time went on.

OH: Oh, I imagine.

LC: Yeah.

INT: Was the same true at Leech and Winnibigoshish?

LC: Yeah, they used to keep up them little houses they built over 'um, but now it's just grewed up and -.

OH: Well, even their dwellings, remember, I think I can remember the birch bark houses they had out there on Battle Point.

LC: Mum hum.

INT: This would have been when you came in the '40's and '50's?

OH: What?

INT: This would have been in the '40's and '50's, when you were - ?

OH: No, that'd be way back in the '20's.

INT: Ok, so that's when they began to, they stopped using those settle, those lakeside communities in the old way?

LC: Yeah, they started, moved out and, supposed to get work and stuff, but -.

OH: There is quite a, actually, those Indians were pretty damn nice people. Now this is something that makes me sick, Nig, is to drive out to this Sugar Point area, we call it. And there was about every half mile, there would be a dwelling, it might be log or whatever, and there'd be one hell of a big garden, huge gardens. Each one of them had a garden, and they

raised their food, and they prepared their wild rice. They didn't sell it out; I suppose they couldn't get nothing for it, anyhow.

LC: No, they get -.

OH: And then, they'd go out and net their fish, and they were self sufficient, you know. They didn't have to have relief. Well, they didn't have relief and that stuff. But now that, I don't know if there's anyone ever got a garden out there, do they?

LC: No, not that I know of.

INT: And the wild rice was for themselves more than for selling?

LC: Yeah, they saved a lot of it, they made their own sugar, you know, maple sugar.

OH: Yeah, maple sugar, own fish -.

LC: They'd trap and got their income that way.

OH: And they had their deer; they'd, I don't think there was many deer in those days.

LC: No, uhha.

OH: They'd get a deer, possibly in the fall or whenever. They were pretty damn nice people. I liked, all but old Silas [Cloud], he was a mean one.

LC: I guess he was.

OH: But then, humor. I tell you, an Indian's got more humor than most white people. And you know, you take Jim Bobolink -.

LC: Yeah.

OH: Just as comical as the dickens, and Richard, John Richardson, my God -.

LC: Harry White.

OH: Harry White, he's a younger one, but he's, he comes up with some of the damndest things -.

INT: So people, so everybody knows everyone else around here, it's not as if there is a Corps community, or a white community, and a native American community. Everybody's all mixed up together in who they know and who they visit with.

OH: Yeah. No, there's no segregation or anything; maybe the Indians are segregating us white, but I don't know.

End of Tape 2, Side 1

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ST. PAUL DISTRICT

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW FORM

Narrator Name: Agnes Henderson

Address: Box 149 - Rte 1, Boy River, MN 56632

Date of Interview: Dec. 16, 1986

Place of Interview: Home of Agnes and Ole Henderson

Name of Interviewer: Peggy Korsmo-Kennon

Project Title (if any): _____

Narrator Biographical Information:

Full name (including maiden name): _____

Year of Birth: _____

Spouse's full name: Ole Henderson

Subjects Discussed:

Responsibilities, observations of a dam tender's wife.
Winnibigoshish Dam, and Leech Lake Dam
Years 1947-1973

TAPE RECORDING:

No. of Cassettes: 1 No. of Reels & Speed: _____

Length of Interview: 40 min.

Release form signed (date): Dec. 16, 1986

Restrictions (if any): _____

Comments:

TRANSCRIPT:

Date completed: 7-5-87 No. of Pages: 17

Restrictions (if any): -0-

Comments:

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ST. PAUL DISTRICT

ORAL HISTORY AGREEMENT FORM

I, Agnes Henderson, a participant in an oral history interview recorded on December 16, 1986, hereby give and deliver to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District all the incidents of ownership in that interview, including copyright, from this time forward.

Signed:

Date Dec. 16, 1986

Agnes Henderson
Donor

Box 149 - Rte 1
Address

Bay View, Tenn. 36632

Signed:

Peggy Karoma-Kennel
Interviewer

TAPE INDEX
Corps/Mississippi Headwaters Pilot Project
Interview with Agnes Henderson by Peggy Korsmo-Kennon
December 16, 1986
(40 min.)

0 min. Her husband, Ole (Orin) Henderson, began work with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) at Federal Dam, around 1947-1948.

Went from laborer to dam tender.

Took leave to attend Dunwoody Institute (Mpls) to study carpentry. Corps gave him a leave of absence.

First worked at Federal Dam as part-time dam tender, then applied for job at Winnibigoshish, got job and became full-time dam tender, around 1950-1951 for 7 years.

Discusses effect of dam tender's job on family life.

Describes dwelling at Winni.

Stayed at Winni 7 years (ending in 1958-59).

Worked 16-17 years at Federal Dam. Retired 1973?

Last year at Federal Dam they began to build house at Boy River (present home). Built on property they bought from Agnes' parents (her girlhood home).

Describes dwelling at Federal Dam as house of seven gables, layout upstairs and down.

Agnes' only duties as dam tender's wife were to keepup house; later that was taken over by Corps personnel.

Rented house from Corps.

Federal Dam was headquarters for Reservoirs.

St. Paul Corps personnel visits to Federal Dam.

Dam tender's family had to be "models" for community, in limelight, ex. fishing on the dam restricted.

10 mins. Ole grew up around Federal Dam.

Hendersons had 3 children, one son, two daughters.

Describes her day's schedule.

Changes in community.

Other staff members at dam sites.

Changes in job and dam site.

Reasons people visit dam site.

Stories of when Federal Dam broke in 1957.

Life near Leech Lake Indian Reservation.

Wild rice crop in area.

20 mins. Observations on how recreational development at Corps site (Federal Dam) has affected community (Hurt waterfront businesses.)

Discuss the Corps decision to develop camping areas.

Visitors - at first "roughed it", later recreational vehicles.

In her observation, fishing has declined.

Centennial of Federal Dam.

Agnes works at area supper clubs.

Impact of dam site on community, very little purchased locally by summer campers, in her observation.

Commerce center for area is Grand Rapids.

Ole's hobby business - sawmill, sawed lumber for this house.

Discusses process of building their house.

One building on Henderson place was moved from Federal Dam site — carpenter shop.

End of side one.

0 min. Changes in dam tender's job "when we separated, we separated" meaning they've left the job behind.

Names present dam tender, came as summer ranger.

Discontinued practice of living at site.

Dam tender's job wasn't too hard, more and more paperwork.

Computers are next step.

Collecting weather data.

People from Fountain City would come to take snow samples to measure water content.

10 mins. No floods in reservoir area, only downriver.

End of Interview.

INTERVIEWER'S POST SCRIPT

Following the tape recorded segment of my interview, Agnes Henderson reiterated that she felt that the Corps development of recreational campgrounds has hurt local waterfront businesses.

Peggy Korsmo-Kennon
Dec. 16, 1986

This is Peg Korsmo-Kennon talking to Agnes Henderson near Boy River, Minnesota. Today is December 16, 1986.

INT: Maybe you could just tell me a little bit about how you got into this occupation and when.

AH: Let's see now, that was in, mum, 19__, he's better on dates, but it was in '47, '48.

INT: Shortly after the second World War?

AH: After the second World War, and we were at the dam, and he needed a job. And they started repairing and putting the dam back into service a little more than what it was.

INT: And that was Federal Dam?

AH: At Federal Dam, mumhum. And there was a job opening for a laborer, and he applied for that, and got on, and worked there for a period of time. Then when the, ah -. Oh, I'm going to be really mixed up on this, because I don't go back. I'm not a --.

INT: Don't search for dates.

AH: Behind time. But anyhow, when they finally needed a replacement for the swing dam tender, as he was called at that time, he put his application in for that and, ah, got the job. So then he was on there for a while, and then he took off and went to Dunwoody for, ah, part of a year, in -, studying carpentry, because it was something that he would be using as, in the work field. And they let him have a leave of absence, and then when he felt he couldn't, we were too poor at the time, he had to get back on the State payroll.

INT: So you were starting out having your family, have a family - ?

AH: Right, yeah. So then, ah, he finally came up there and went back to being a part-time dam tender. Then the job opened at Winni, and he put his application in for that one. And then he was a full dam tender over at that place.

INT: So does that bring us like in the '50's?

AH: In the '50's. Yeah, that was about '50, I think, '50, '51 something like that, we went over there. And then we were there for seven years.

INT: So how does that affect your family now?

AH: Well, they were small at the time, and they really weren't affected by moving. In fact, I think the family liked it, because they had a place to come and have Sunday dinner when we moved. Like the other relatives and stuff. And it was a nice house, big house, so we could have people stay over with us.

INT: Could you describe the house a little bit?

AH: At Winni?

INT: Ahuh. At Winni.

AH: Ah, let's see, it would be built somewhat on the order of this, but more spacious. It had a fireplace, a nice big kitchen, dining area, three bedrooms, and a big living room. It was really a nice house, and we had a big pine tree out in the back yard that the kids had a swing in. And they loved that. My daughter and I went over there this summer and took a look at it just for old times sake.

INT: Oh, that's neat.

AH: It's still there with the swing hanging down in there and, ah. So all the kids have gone through that even since ours. Ah, then we moved back over to Federal Dam after being there [Winni] for seven years, and from there we put in over 16 or 17 years, and then he was old enough for retirement. So the last year, we started building our house out here and, ah, had it all finished, or practically all finished, before we moved out here in the spring of '75.

INT: And there was a residence in -.

AH: This is where my folks lived. We bought the farm from my dad, and he stayed on here until we, while we were building even, but then he passed away before we moved out here. So then we just have it to us. So, it's my home. It's been here all the time.

INT: It's pretty. And there was a dwelling at Federal Dam, too, for you.

AH: Oh, yeah, that was the house of seven gables.

INT: Oh, is it still there?

AH: Didn't you look at it as you came through?

INT: Well, we were looking at the dam and the rest area, but I didn't see the house. Where is it?

AH: Oh, oh, see that's a two-story building. As you were coming across the dam you would have had to go to your right, and then there's a lot of pine trees in there which were planted during the time he [OH] was there-- and with the help of LeRoy, who is sitting on our davenport right now. And, of course, they have grown up to the point where they are getting, enclosing the whole place; it's hard to see it from the road now.

INT: Yeah, I missed that, so when we go back -.

AH: Yeah, you'll have to look at it. It was a nice white house with red trimming. They painted it since, and they made it a tan and trimmed it with either green or brown, I can't remember.

INT: Is it still occupied by the -.

AH: No, no. They are not going to use it anymore. It's a shame because it's a beautiful old house, you know. It's probably the oldest structure in town, and they should keep it.

INT: Oh, yeah.

AH: I hope they don't destroy that. But it's a two story house, and 'course, it's got the little gables over the windows, you know, to make more room in the bedrooms, so that your head doesn't hit the low spots.

INT: Right.

AH: I think it has two on either side, four or six; it would only have six gables on the house. So it isn't quite seven. And the rooms are really big upstairs. There was two rooms as big as our living room that were bedrooms upstairs with closets, and, ah, two smaller ones and a bathroom. The downstairs had the office, the kitchen, dining room, and the living room and one bedroom down and a nice big bathroom. So, that was a nice house to live in. A lot of work.

INT: And you were responsible for -.

AH: Well, we were just talking about that. I did most of the house, yeah, like the painting and stuff like that. I kept all the painting, but I think in the recent years, then the guys more or less took that over.

INT: So did you rent the house or was that part of your compensation?

AH: Yeah, we rented.

INT: You rented.

AH: No, we rented.

INT: From the -.

AH: Corps of Engineers.

INT: Corps of Engineers. So can you remember how reasonable the rents were? Were they reasonable compared to what other people were paying in the area?

AH: At that time, they were reasonable. I think the last few years, they have raised the rents, because of the upkeep, probably. I'm not sure just why they were raising it.

INT: Ah huh.

AH: We weren't highly paid or anything at the time we went in there. When I stop to think of the little bit of money compared to what they're earning in this day and age.

INT: Yeah.

AH: But then I think it went farther, so it sort of balances out.

INT: Now, what kinds of things did you do? Were you removed from the dam tender's job or did you have some things to do, too?

AH: No, I was never required to do anything. Up until we moved over to the big house at Federal Dam, which was sort of a headquarters when we came back there.

INT: Headquarters for - ?

AH: For the dams, like they have the headquartering place in Remer now.

INT: Mum hu. I see. So instead of Remer it was - here -

AH: Yeah, no it was closer to the whole area and everything. But, ah, before we moved over there, they used to have a room upstairs that was reserved for visiting personnel from St. Paul. And then the lady of the house I think she had to fix breakfast and lunches, and so forth for the visitors. But we just, it was more, ah, if we fed them, it was because we wanted to.

INT: There wasn't any requirement or - ?

AH: No, uh ha.

INT: Did you have visitors often?

AH: Oh, quite a bit, yeah. They would come every so often; there was always things that they had to check on. Ah, they did a, oh, what should I say, what's the word I want to use, I can't think of it. They checked all the-

INT: Equipment?

AH: The equipment. Ah, there was some of the furniture up in the big house, and all this was on the, oh, what is the word I want to use - ?

INT: The Corps?

AH: The Corps of Engineers, yes. Ah, mum.

INT: I have lapses, too, where you can't think of the right word.

AH: I don't know, well anyhow.

INT: And it's hard as you think back, too. Well, as far as your family, do you think that it was a different type of life for you and your children? How many children did you have?

AH: We had three.

INT: Three.

AH: We had two girls and a boy. And I imagine we had a lot more restrictions on them, because we were in the limelight of the town.

INT: I suppose, yeah.

AH: You know for, they used to have a lot of, they were more strict with things, you know, to observe the laws. They have, ah, so many feet from the dam, fishing on the dam, or on the apron of the dam. So we had to be sure that our youngsters weren't down there doing things that the others couldn't.

INT: Yeah, they kind of had to be a model.

AH: They were restricted quite a bit, ah ha. But it didn't really hurt them. I think it was good for them.

INT: Mum hum. So, did Ole grow up in this area, too?

AH: Mum hu. He grew up in Federal Dam. He was born and raised up there.

INT: So. Are your children in the area or - ?

AH: We have one son that lives at home with us yet, yeah. And then we have a daughter in Aurora, and one in Minneapolis. And they're married, children.

INT: Yes, busy.

AH: And they work.

INT: Maybe you could tell me, I know that Jo is asking about typical days of your husband, but what was your typical day and realize that you have not the same - ?

AH: Same as yours, washing and ironing, cooking and cleaning.

INT: Trying to get it all done and wondering why things get dirty as soon as you clean them. Ok.

AH: It wasn't any different, go to town shopping once every couple of weeks for groceries, because in our little towns we don't have that much to choose from in the stores.

INT: Have you seen a great change in these towns?

AH: Un un.

INT: Since you -.

AH: They're about the same, different people, of course. The older people are expiring and new ones are taking their place.

INT: So it's a beautiful place to live, you know, its just, ah, I think, frosty morning makes -.

AH: Oh, this is what makes it. Yeah, we took pictures yesterday morning. It was like this, too. We don't have them developed, of course, but I hope they turn out real well, yeah.

INT: Were there lots of, ah, staff, other staff members in the area, or was it just up to Ole to do?

AH: He usually, in the wintertime, worked alone. In the summertime, there was help. And I think maybe one person to help him to begin with, and as they started building the campgrounds and adding more work to it, then they had to put on more help. But it was all part-time.

INT: Seasonal labor and - ?

AH: Mum ha.

INT: Can you think back as to how the sites changed from when you, like you said you, 13 years ago, that was like in the early '70's that you moved.

AH: Mum ha. Mum ha.

INT: Had that already developed as a recreational site pretty well?

AH: Mum ha. Mum ha. Yes, that was already started, yeah. But they've expanded it a lot since we were there.

INT: What do the visitors come for? Do they come to fish or boat or picnic? What are most of the visitors - ?

AH: All that, all that. And a lot of them just like to come up and relax.

INT: Yeah, why, I just think to watch a dam is of interest, if you haven't seen one.

AH: But these dams are a little different than what you might have down your way, because they just maintain the water level up here. Where some of your other dams, they lock the boats in and out and they and -.

INT: Were there ever locks on these dams that you - ?

AH: I'm not sure. They had a log sluice. That was the purpose of the dam, I think, to begin with, was to float logs down the river and so forth.

INT: Do you remember any unusual events? Now, before you came, I guess, that one day, I guess, it was 1957 when the dam, they were repairing this dam on Leech, and it broke. Do you remember any stories about that or hear any - ?

AH: Mum ha. He was over. You see, we were at Winni then. And he had come over to Federal Dam to visit that evening, and they had gotten back just, I think, they had probably crossed it just before it went out. Because when he got home, we got a call to shut Winni dam off. And ah, cut the water flow, so there wasn't so much going down the river.

INT: So, what was the impact on the community or the area, with something like that?

AH: Oh, I don't know; I think they thought it was kind of neat.

INT: What, the land?

AH: No, no. I'm not familiar with all this, but he says there is a natural, ah, stop at the mouth of the river up at the lake, so that it doesn't just go woosh, no, unha. I'm not up on that kind of stuff. That's his category.

INT: Well, I'm curious. As we were entering the Leech Lake Indian Reservation, you know, I said, well, I had never been to this Indian Reservation, others -, but. So this is on the reservation now, or is this - ?

AH: No, we're not on the reservation.

INT: Ok, but you live in close.

AH: We're sitting in between it.

INT: So has that been an interesting way of life? Or was it - ?

AH: It's just been a way of life. We've lived here all that time. It wouldn't make any difference. It hasn't made any difference.

INT: And when, ah, -.

AH: I think they put too much importance on it.

INT: Yeah, I think the farther removed you are from the location, that might be the case.

AH: I think so.

INT: I think of the wild rice, you know, and that. Have you seen, I mean, are there wild rice growers in the area? It's no longer -.

AH: He [OH] has a brother that's in the wild rice growing, and we have a brother-in-law in it, a nephew now. It's a good crop.

INT: Have you seen that change? Is it better now than it was, or, you know, do they harvest more rice than they used to because of cultivation?

AH: Oh, I'm sure they do, depending on the year, of course. Weather has a lot to do with everything, whether or not the crop is good.

INT: And do you think the -; I read in some of the reports -.

AH: California is growing it too, you know, and this is the thing that's really bringing the price of our wild rice down. So it may not be a good money-making crop, if the market is flooded again, so. But then again, it puts it down where everybody can eat it.

INT: Yeah, lots of good. Oh, yeah, I just sent some. My sister lives out of State and I sent her a big, a pound of it, so she could at least think about Minnesota.

AH: Oh, it's good.

INT: Well, I'd like you to think a little bit about, you know, the images, your images of life as a dam tender as we look at, over those 13 years here, and then seven, so it's 20 years that you've had this way of life. And we're most curious about the role the recreation has played, you know, how it's changed, ah, from -.

AH: Do you really want to know?

INT: Yeah.

AH: Ok, we had, ah, five businesses on the waterfront that were making a living up there. And, of course, putting in the camping area didn't really do a whole lot for their business. It has, ah, I think, it has really taken a lot of the livelihood away from the individuals that was [sic] in personal enterprise.

INT: And that was at Federal - ?

AH: At Federal Dam.

INT: There's only a limited amount of land that you can develop in -.

AH: Well, they used to have their boats, you know, their business depended on the people who wanted to go on the bigger boats for fishing and to be guided on the lake. And, of course, when they put in the camping area and put in the other boat ramps and the place where it made it really easy for people to come up and camp and bring their own camping equipment -. I know it's fun to do this, but it did really hurt private enterprise in Federal Dam.

INT: And resorts?

AH: Maybe not as much the resorts as it did the little waterfront businesses. They won't be there, I don't think, a whole lot longer.

INT: Mum, it's a shame.

AH: Yeah, it is. Yeah, 'cus it was a good, thriving business up there at that time. Well, I would say the campground has affected it in that way.

INT: So, how was the decision made? I mean, who decided that that should be developed instead of leaving it to the private individuals to develop the waterfront area, you know?

AH: I suppose the Corps of Engineers, somewhere in the recreation, field of recreation.

INT: They thought it was economically feasible for them, or they thought they were serving the public?

AH: I think they thought they were serving the public, yeah, and they do. But at the same time it does, it has hurt the private business.

INT: Is there any animosity, you know, with the business?

AH: Oh, I don't think so. Most of your resorts and stuff have put in their own camping areas now to balance the situation. Most of your resorts have all got a camping area now, so that people -.

INT: Are the prices - ?

AH: I would say basically, close, yeah.

[Pause]

INT: If you think of other things -.

AH: Oh, I'm not a talker, only when it comes to cooking and kids.

INT: Were the, maybe we can talk a little bit about the visitors, your observations on who came up here. You mentioned that there's a lot of people who bring their own trailers and their tents and so forth. Was that the way it was early on, like when you were at Winni, or - ?

AH: They didn't have any camping area at Winni at all, not at that time. They do now.

INT: So was the campground fully developed when you came to - ?

AH: No, it was just a very small area at that time. It was roughing it yet, you know, you had outside privies and water from a pump. And, of course, now you have flush toilets and showers and electric hookups, so it isn't really, isn't roughing it anymore.

INT: People bring their recreational vehicles? Do they bring their RV's?

AH: Oh, definitely, yeah, yeah. And then you have areas where they pay and then you have free areas. And you have your senior citizen discount, of course. The free area I don't think is as developed as the part that they charge for.

[Pause]

INT: Has there been a great increase in the number of visitors from like '73 to now?

AH: Oh, I'm sure there is. The camping areas, they've developed more pads and there's a - it's filled.

INT: And they're filled up.

AH: Your big weekends, your Memorial Weekend, the opening of fishing, Labor Day, and then throughout the summer, I think, they have, ah, a fairly good weekend fill up there. And, of course, what a lot of people are

doing is bringing their RV's, and they can camp there all summer long now. Where they used to be limited to a couple of weeks. But they can just park their little trailers and stay right on.

INT: Their summer home.

AH: Their summer home. I don't think a lot of people know what goes on.

INT: I mean, they don't know that people are necessarily doing that?

AH: Yeah. I don't know if it's, there must not be any restrictions on it anymore. But they used to be able to only stay two weeks, and then they would have to leave. And then, I think they could come back again. But now, they can stay right in there.

INT: Is there good fishing here? That's kind of an obvious question, but do people come up for the fishing as much as just the camping and outdoor life, or - ?

AH: Well, I would say they're just coming for camping and outdoor life, because our fishing has gone down considerably from what it used to be.

INT: Do you have any speculation on why that has been?

AH: I suppose there is [sic] many reasons. Too many people on the lake fishing. If the fishing is good, they probably take too many fish. Ah, we have the reservation, the Indians are allowed to net. And, ah, probably they're not stocking the lakes as well as they might.

INT: It takes a long time for a good size walleye or northern to grow.

AH: Ah, ha, I'm sure.

INT: Ah, the dams were celebrating some of the centennials. Were you in on any of the celebrations when they observed the centennials?

AH: I was at Federal Dam. Orin didn't go up, but I was there. I didn't go down for the part that the Corps of Engineers was putting on. I didn't have that much time. I think I had to go to work, so I didn't participate at all.

INT: So you work outside the home?

AH: Oh, I work.

INT: Where did you work?

AH: I usually work in a supper club. Summer time. No, I worked at the one at Federal Dam, and then I worked down at Sleepy Hollow, it was called. And it's changed now, it's Norm's Place. I don't know if I will go out and look for a job this summer or not. They usually come to me.

INT: Well, it's hard to find a good job.

AH: No, I like working -, it's fun. I don't like housework that well.

INT: And somehow if you have a job you can get things done and then go on to your work.

AH: I accomplish just as much working as I do when I stay home.

INT: Yeah, I'm amazed that that's the case.

AH: In fact, I think sometimes you have a better routine, because if you have tomorrow to do it in, it always waits.

INT: Yeah, I'll do it tomorrow, then you -. Again, these are things just for you to speculate on, but how do you think the dam has affected the recreational areas now, ah, the community economically? We talked a little bit about the impact on the private individual when they have their concessions along the lakefront. But other than that, can you see, is it a focal point of the community, or do people just say or there, you know - ?

AH: No, most people, if they run out of little items, they might run to our little stores. But as far as really putting a lot of money into the economy of the little towns, I can't say that they have done that. Because the little one at the Federal Dam went kaput. It's now under new management, but it isn't helping that, I don't think. Maybe the liquor store gets some business and a little to the supper club. But when I was working at the supper club, I don't think we had that many people from the camping area that came to eat.

INT: The people who camp are more self-contained and right in that area?

AH: They bring their food; they bring their liquor; they bring just about anything that they can, because they can buy it cheaper in Minneapolis than they can here. So, the thought of helping the economy in little towns, it really, I don't think it has done it. I don't think it has helped one little bit.

INT: So when people do shop, you know, it brings to mind, when you go to do larger shopping, where is the commerce center? Where do you go? Is it Bemidji or is it Walker?

AH: I go more to Grand Rapids myself -.

INT: Grand Rapids.

AH: And I think most of the people in this area do. Some to Bemidji, and Walker, rarely.

INT: It's not as large, is it? Walker?

AH: It's a nice little town. I was just over there a couple of days ago, and they have a lot of things to offer. But it's expensive.

INT: You find -.

AH: Grand Rapids is much more reasonable for shopping.

INT: And there's a nice road. Do you take [Hwy] 2?

AH: No, I was going to direct you across country, but it involved too many roads.

INT: Too many turns?

AH: Yeah.

INT: It was nice and simple.

AH: But it's a much prettier drive; you would have enjoyed it.

INT: Maybe we can take it back, or I think we'll head to Remer.

AH: Oh, you're going to go to Remer from here. Well, then -.

INT: You maybe can give us direct -; Jo's driving, so she probably needs to listen.

AH: Out of Remer you can take 6, and then that little county road in Itasca County that I was going to bring you across. Across some rivers and there's farmhouses, and it's much prettier, across the Mississippi.

INT: Ah ha, more to look at.

AH: It's a real pretty drive, very pretty.

INT: It's nice to take a different route, anyway.

AH: Then you can say you circled.

INT: Yes.

AH: You made a complete circle.

INT: Yes, yeah, you feel like you're not backtracking.

AH: It's fun to do that if you know the roads so that you can drive them. But there are so many that you don't know where they all go to, and you may get down and, ah, get into a dead end.

INT: You find a lot of lost souls in this area?

AH: Yeah, you find a few, ah ha. Yeah, there's a lot of little roads to get confused with, you know, so.

INT: Now Ole has a, is it a logging business here, or is it a sawmill?

AH: No, it's just a hobby, hobby thing that keeps himself really busy with logs and cutting lumber. He sawed all the lumber for our house.

INT: This house?

AH: For this house, this old house. And the cedar siding that we have on I would imagine came out of the cedar swamp we have right up close to us. And then, of course, he built the whole thing.

INT: Not many people can say that.

AH: Yeah.

INT: And say that you have done it with the materials -.

AH: From the ground up, yes. We done the whole thing just about, except the interior we did put sheetrock on and -. We had thought about some paneling, but I like to change it once in a while.

INT: It's brighter, a little brighter.

AH: Um hum. Although I've saw some pretty wood, pretty paneling done.

INT: As long as it's not the plastic photographed wood.

AH: But we've got it done, and we're still together. [Laughs] There were a few times.

INT: How long did it take you to build your house?

AH: A couple of years, probably. There's still a little area here and there that needs a little something done to it, but I guess if it doesn't get done, we'll live in it. I'd like to add another bedroom, but the kids don't come that often. It seems kind of crazy, but it would certainly be nice.

INT: So you'd have extra space.

AH: Yeah.

INT: I always think that, it's when you have company -.

AH: When you have people on the floor and the davenport, and it gets really cluttered, and it's not as much fun as if you got rooms for 'um to go in to.

INT: Yeah, but it, ah -.

AH: But we make out.

INT: Well, it's a real attractive house, as you come out.

AH: It's pretty, I think it's one of the prettiest in the country.

INT: One of the things that we could do, I thought, ah, Jo will be getting some -.

AH: Incidentally, that one building that we have out here was moved out from the dam.

INT: Oh, it was; let me take a look.

AH: That's his little workshop out there.

INT: Is it the one that is covered with the metal?

AH: Uh ha.

INT: Now what was that building at the dam?

AH: That was his, the carpenter shop or the workshop there. And, they were going to put a new building up there. And I think they were just going to tear it down or move it off or whatever. So they said we could have it for moving it out here, the contractor that was putting the building up -.

Tape 1 - Side 2:

[Laughs]

AH: They wouldn't like -. At the time I said, absolutely not, I didn't want it in there.

INT: Do you think that the job has changed a lot now?

AH: They don't work nearly as hard at the dam as they did.

INT: Are they referred to as dam tenders any longer. Is that the title that they're given? Or, ah, what do they call them; is it a manager or a - ?

AH: I don't know what they have changed it to.

INT: But was that Ole's, was that his title?

AH: When we separated, we separated.

INT: Really, ok. Who is up there now?

AH: A young fellow by the name of John Zahalka.

INT: Is he from the area or did he - ?

AH: No, he's married to LeRoy's niece. I don't know where he came from to begin with; I really have no idea. But he came up here as a, ah, oh, their summer deals, what do they call those? See, I've really divorced myself from the place. But they would be the ones that would collect the fees; they had to have some college education -.

INT: Like a ranger?

AH: Ranger, that's the word I want. That used to be way back when. Now we're going back into the rangers. So anyhow. They have more people to run the place than what they used to have, by far.

INT: They still live on the site or - ?

AH: No, no. See, they discontinued the use of the big house now.

INT: And they live in Federal Dam or -.

AH: They have their own dwelling. They may have moved; I think they were going to move to Remer, but whether they did, I don't know. I spend all my time right out here.

INT: Yeah.

AH: You know, it's nice out here, you get away from the -.

INT: Was it a pretty hectic life that you, when you lived at - ?

AH: Not for me.

INT: Not for you.

AH: Might have been for him, he had a lot of paperwork. It's gotten more so all through the years, more paperwork for every little thing.

INT: I think that's the way it all is.

AH: Of course, I imagine that's what keeps them all busy. Just wait until they get computers.

INT: That's probably not so far off.

AH: I know it isn't very far off. In fact, I think that will be the next step, that this will all be run by computers.

INT: The actual tending of the dam and - ?

AH: Ua ha.

INT: So, um -.

AH: I don't know how reliable they are. If they're functioning, I think they're great, but, if they aren't functioning, I suppose they -.

INT: Well, that's always the problem. If you can have a backup system, if they tell you it's going to fail but that's -.

AH: I was talking to, ah, the fellow that was talking about the REA; of course; everything is going into computers. It does solve a lot of problems, I'm sure, but when it doesn't solve the problems any longer, then you're really wondering what to do.

INT: You're at the mercy of it.

AH: Yes. I think it's easier to find a human error, isn't it, than it is on a computer?

INT: Unless you're a computer expert. For this human, it's easier.

AH: Exactly.

INT: Were you responsible for, or was your husband responsible for taking water levels and temperature, you know, and wind velocities and things like that? Was that a -; I know in some early, early records, there were some weather data.

AH: Oh, that was one of the main jobs, to measure the snow and water content, the rainfall and so forth. Because all this figures into the lake level and the controlling of the water so they don't get too many cubic feet of it going over to flood down beyond south of us.

INT: Did he have to go out in the winter, um, far away from, or was it just in the vicinity?

AH: Oh, no, right in the vicinity.

INT: Just in the tributaries or some? [Pause] Well, can you think of anything else that you'd like to - ?

AH: They used to have fellows that came up from, ah, Fountain City on snow surveys in the wintertime and they would go to different areas and, ah, measure the water content. And, of course, there was always, they would stop at the dam also and measure there, but they would, I don't know, if it was once a month or something like that where they would take a measurement of their own, too, at the dam, so that they would get the water content.

INT: Do you remember any, ah, you know, really, years that it flooded or there were particularly bad years, you know - ?

AH: We don't have floods up here; if you have floods down south of us -.

INT: Because this is the head -.

AH: Right, we have not really, I can't ever remember of any flooding, maybe along the riverbanks when they are letting a lot of water out you would have a little, ah -.

INT: The lake level gets a little higher, do you notice that, or do you lose a little shoreline or something - ?

AH: I don't think it fluctuates that much; people think they can measure it by rocks and sticks or -.

INT: Oh, interesting -.

AH: It doesn't always work. They think it's really high, & they complain a lot. But according to the dam and the records and stuff like that, I think they watch it; they keep it pretty close.

[Pause]

INT: Well, I think that is about all I have to ask, unless there is something else that you can think of that would, I guess, as we think of the use of this it, as it would enlighten somebody about what the lifestyle was like, you know, the dam tender and his family.

AH: Well, I say life at the dam was pretty much just like it is out here; people who come to visit stay for lunch occasionally. It's pretty much the same; it was nice. You just felt you had to be a little more on the ball at the dam; it's a little more relaxed out here.

INT: And it should be when you retire.

AH: Right.

INT: Well, thank you.

AH: All hours -.

INT: Yes, that's another thing. Well, thank you.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ST. PAUL DISTRICT

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW FORM

Narrator Name: Russell (Ike) and Betty Kolb

Address: P.O. Box 46, Palisade, MN 56469-0046

Date of Interview: 12-15-86

Place of Interview: Kolbs' home

Name of Interviewer: Jo Blatti

Project Title (if any): Corps/Mississippi Headwaters

Narrator Biographical Information:

Full name (including maiden name): Russell (Ike) C. Kolb

Year of Birth: _____

Spouse's full name: Betty Kolb

Subjects Discussed:

Work as dam tender at Sandy Lake, 1947-1970. Dwelling and officers' quarters; 'brushing out' point for campers ca. 1950; flood of 1950; resort owners and summer visitors; intersection white and Indian communities (Seelye and Snetsinger families); additional staffing at Sandy in 1960's; memories of camping visitors, archaeology digs at Sandy.

TAPE RECORDING:

No. of Cassettes: 3 No. of Reels & Speed: _____

Length of Interview: 2 hrs. 10 min.

Release form signed (date): 12-15-86

Restrictions (if any): -0-

Comments:

Kolb family photos give interesting view of 1950 flood and the dam facilities. Would recommend asking permission to copy.

Mrs. Kolb is the principal narrator on many points. Both of the Kolbs describe their memories 'as not what they used to be'.

TRANSCRIPT:

Date completed: January 1987 No. of Pages: 60

Restrictions (if any): -0-

Comments:

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ST. PAUL DISTRICT

ORAL HISTORY AGREEMENT FORM

We X. Ike (Russell) & Betty Kolb, a participant in
an oral history interview recorded on Dec. 15, 1986,
hereby give and deliver to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul
District all the incidents of ownership in that interview, including
copyright, from this time forward.

Signed:

Date 12.15.86

Russell C. Kolb Betty Kolb
Donor

P.O. Box 46, 1
Address

Palisade, MN

Signed:

JD. Beattie
Interviewer

TAPE INDEX
Corps/Mississippi Headwaters Pilot Project
Interview With Russell (Ike) Kolb and his wife Betty Kolb, Palisade, MN
12-15-86
2 hrs. 10 min.

Tape 1, Side 1

- 0 min. RK started with Corps in 1930's on Mississippi River, rodman for survey 9-foot channel, approx. 25 yrs. old
- Both the Kolbs from Wisconsin, originally (RK Hillsboro, BK Buffalo County)
- RK goes to construction and maintenance of Mississippi River locks and dams at Alma and Red Wing
- Moved to Sandy Lake in 1947, following gall bladder surgery
- Description of dam tending, manually operated gages
- 10 min. Description Sandy Dam, 5 gates and fish spillway, officers' quarters at Sandy; system abolished ca. 1955, '60.
- Family's school and shopping arrangements described in Aitkin and McGregor. Social life with resorters, others on Sandy Lake
- RK spent first winter at Sandy clearing brush from point
- Dam tender's dwelling and officers' quarters discussed; BK's duties in cooking and cleaning for visiting officers; increasing rent for quarters
- 15 min. RK took a pay cut in moving to Sandy, no 'differential' (overtime)
- RK returns to initial clearing of Sandy Point over several years
- Annual snow readings, week-long trip
- Visits with other dam keepers, mainly vacations
- End of Tape 1, Side 1

Tape 1, Side 2

- 0 min. Early campers, Ames, Iowa city engineer - Story of tree falling across tent. Story of skunk in biffy.
- Corps-owned telephone line to dam, lights, indoor plumbing at dam keepers
- Flood of 1950 [BK and RK use photo album as reference]
Month-long

10 min. Barn, chicken coop, shop and garage arrangements at dam described
Continue with story of 1950 flood; emergency workers from area; St. Paul office personnel

Local resorter community and scenes during the 1950 flood

20 min. Pre-1950 boat relief to farmers, 1952 high water for resorters.

Friction potato-growers/resorters on either side Sandy Dam

Story of resorter who threatened suicide over high water

RK's ice-fishing

Circa 1955 camping on the Sandy point

RK built a drag for road

End of Tape 1

Tape 2, Side 1

0 min. Story of young bear shot by RK ca. 1948-49

Weekly walk to junction Mississippi River and Sandy - now automatic gages

BK returns to story of clearing point for campers

Gradual acquisition of equipment at dams - boats following 1950 flood, tractors ca. 1968.

10 min. Campers on point. Stories of tent blaze (Ames camper, again), fisher woman shot by stray bullet, lost kitten

Toward the end, rowdy parties

BK questions mosquito spraying, link to RK emphysema

15 min. Indian community at Sandy; some hunting and trapping, boy who helped in 1950 flood

Seelye (Winni dam tender) Indian, partner in snow sampling

20 min. Remembrances of Snetsinger family at Sandy; Mr. S. reputed to have built Sandy dam; Mrs. S. native American; Kolbs' acquaintance with children and grandchildren who returned to lake every summer

RK and staff planted 1,000 trees in one day

Johnny Moran in St. Paul office described as supportive of Sandy Dam recreation

End tape 2, side 1

Tape 2, Side 2

0 min. Communications with St. Paul office, telephone and radio

1960's beginnings of part-time, summertime staffing at Sandy in addition to dam tender

Resorter Clark Wotring as a standby in early years

Ron Smith, son of resorters

10 min. Peak crowds about 70 campers, summer holiday weekends; grocery store at Libby

Return to rowdy group from Twin Cities

Remembers Henry Dart, RK's predecessor at Sandy; went on to Federal Dam/Leech Lake

15 min. Machine off briefly -

Archaeology digs at Sandy. Some carried on by Hart family, summer visitors from Iowa.

Evan Hart, a particular friend of Kolbs, sent them information about Sandy Lake history, including photo of native American group at North Shore Indian village (date unknown) -

End Tape 2, Side 2

Tape 3, Side 1

0 min. Story of Bald-hill, N.D. Turned down promotion offer, 1954. Not their lifestyle

Resorts in area deteriorating, selling off cottages

RK repeats story of 'brushing out' point at Sandy

BK, modernized a little too much

10 min. End of tape 3, side 1

CORPS/MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS PILOT PROJECT
INTERVIEW WITH RUSSELL (IKE) AND BETTY KOLB
PALISADE, MN 12-15-86
2 HRS. 10 MIN. TOTAL

Tape 1, Side 1

December 15, 1986

INT: This is Jo Blatti interviewing. I am in the kitchen of Ike and Betty Kolb in Palisade, Minnesota. We're talking today about Mr. Kolb's experience in the St. Paul Corps of Engineers in the Sandy Lake area. I also hope that Mrs. Kolb has some things to say. I think we are just going to ask her to say things, too, so we kind of get a family portrait here, if she stays with us.

RK: Our experience with the Corps, I started on the Mississippi in the 30's.

INT: And so you were working on the 9-foot channel at that time?

RK: That's right.

INT: You were helping to survey for that.

RK: The original survey was the 9-foot channel.

INT: That was in the 1930's, and how did you come to that? Were you just out of school; how did you get that job?

RK: I started with the Department of Interior, as a rodman.

BK: That was in Buffalo County, where I happened to live, and that is how we met.

INT: Where is Buffalo County from here; that's farther west, isn't it?

BK: That's down near Eau Claire, down in that area.

RK: About straight south

INT: Oh, so it's right across on the Wisconsin side of the river. So you were traveling up and down the Mississippi River, working on the survey for the 9-foot channel. How old were you then?

BK: 25.

RK: Yeah, about 25.

INT: And how did you get into that line of work?

RK: I started on that, there was a survey crew in my hometown.

INT: Where is your hometown?

RK: Hillsboro, Wisconsin

BK: It's between La Crosse and Madison

RK: And my dad had a restaurant, and, of course, I worked in the restaurant, and all of these surveyors used to eat there. And occasionally, I would go out in the field with them, and that's how I got started with them.

INT: Did you go to high school there and trade school or anything?

RK: No, I went to high school in Hillsboro.

INT: OK

RK: But I didn't go to trade school--

BK: He wrote to this Captains Stack in Washington, D.C. to get this job mapping Buffalo County; they just accepted him.

INT: Is that how everybody got a job in those days, or was that an unusual thing to do?

BK: Well, I don't know--

RK: I don't-, well, the fellow I was working with, he was an instrument man; he was a graduate from the University of Minnesota

BK: But I mean before you got in with the Department of Interior, you had no-, you were quite young at that time when you went out with him.

RK: Well, the fact is that I have a cousin that was from the University of Michigan, and this Captain Stack who was the head of these surveys through the State of Wisconsin was a classmate of this cousin of mine, and, of course, I had an inside track there.

INT: Did your cousin suggest you to write the letter or one of the guys on the survey team or something?

RK: No, I wrote the letter and I then sent it to Captain Stack. Of course, he knew where I was from; I think he must have gotten in touch with my cousin, because everything was Ok'd from there on.

INT: I see.

BK: Of course, that brought him in, when the survey was through that fall. Well, then next spring they were starting the 9-foot channel surveys, but he had had a little experience with the Interior Department why-.

INT: So you got hired on to the next crew

RK: Oh, yeah, there was no trouble getting started on the river, and then, of course, after they started building the 9-foot channel, why-.

BK: And when they were done with the surveys, they went on to construction, he was on construction on the Alma Dam and the Red Wing Dam.

INT: I know where Red Wing is. How did you then get to Sandy Dam; what happened that you then became-?

RK: There was an opening there.

BK: He had had a gall bladder surgery, and he just wasn't recuperating very good. And the doctor said that if he could just get on a regular schedule, cause you know down on the dams from the construction, they went on maintenance on the dams. So he asked if there was an opening, if he could get on the reservoir, so they just-.

INT: I see, so you moved up.

BK: The head one down at was up on the reservoir, was up at Gull Lake and, of course, through him, too, they kind of knew that he wanted to be on the reservoir.

INT: How did, when did you make that change?

BK: 1947.

RK: When I came on to the reservoirs, yeah, 1947.

INT: When you moved up to Sandy Lake, just tell me a little about what your job was and how that. What I am curious about, so that you don't think you have to be fishing, is to what extent was it dam tending and to what extent was it recreational.

BK: There was no recreation; he started the recreation.

RK: There was no recreation at Sandy when I came up there.

INT: So what were you doing when you were dam tending?

RK: I came up there as an operator of the dam.

INT: And what did being a dam operator mean?

RK: Well, that involved daily communications with the St. Paul Office.

INT: By telephone or telegraph?

RK: By telephone and they would--

BK: All the gages were read

RK: The gages were read twice a day in the morning and night.

BK: There was nothing automatic at that time.

RK: There was no automatic—

BK: Nothing automatic in lowering your gates, that all had to be done by hand; all your other work was done by hand without any equipment.

RK: Yeah, I even get her out there.

INT: What, so the reading of the gages, it is kind of like milking cows or something, every morning and afternoon?

RK: Well, you kept track; the lake had to be held at a certain level, you know, you had to maintain that level.

INT: How much, was that something that involved a lot of minor adjustments?

BK: It did if you had a lot of rain.

RK: A lot of rain.

BK: Sandy Lake fills up fast.

INT: Is Sandy Lake a shallow lake or a deep lake?

RK: It's a shallow lake, and it draws from an area pret'near to Duluth.

INT: So it's a very big watershed.

RK: It has two rivers coming into it, one on the east and one on the northwest. No, one on the northeast, the Sandy River, and then the other river came in just from the opposite direction, northwest.

INT: What else would you do then? There was the gaging, but what were the operations that you would be doing by hand?

RK: You had to operate those; there were a set of 5 gates and a spillway section in the dam. Originally, they ran steamboats through there, you know.

INT: I know that there was steamboats on these lakes, yes.

RK: And, but—

INT: So, if any boat came through, then you had to -

RK: No, they didn't—

INT: They thought that—

RK: That was closed off when I operated Sandy.

BK: It still could have been operated until you recessed the -

RK: No, they couldn't have been, because they put in a cement bulkhead in those gates on the lock side.

BK: Well, you put, that first fall, you put in the fishway and then you -

RK: The fishway was in the dam part

INT: So, the fish could get in and out.

RK: Yeah.

BK: They, they kind of later changed their minds on a lot of those things.

RK: And they closed that off, too, eventually.

INT: What would be the advantage or disadvantage to being, I mean, why would a fishway be something that would -

RK: Well, a fishway, they figured that after the lock was put out of operation that there wasn't any action, any way of allowing the fish to move. If you were making lockages, they would go through with the locking, you see, but after that was closed off, why then you had to -. Then they put in a fishway that the fish could get in, come up, come through it. There was a continual discharge through this fishway section, but I don't think that -. The fact is, I couldn't tell at Sandy, but over at Gull Lake, that was a clearer water, Sandy was a muddied water.

INT: As Sandy might imply.

RK: Yeah...

RK: But Gull was clear, and they could count the fish when they moved, but eventually, why, we just closed off the fishway and -.

INT: Now, how did, when you were dam tender, what were the years you actually served as dam tender at Sandy, 1947 until what?

BK: Until 1970.

INT: Did you retire officially then in 1970 or did you go on to -? [RK nods]

INT: That is what I thought. Did you live in the dam tender's house the year around?

RK: Yeah.

BK: When we moved there, there was a officers' quarters there. Years ago, of course, with the transportation, any of his officials that came they stayed in the officers' quarters. And they ate in our dining room and I had to serve them meals.

INT: Was that, so, that happened when, that was still going on when you -

RK: Oh, yeah.

BK: While we were there then, one of the District Engineers came up and said, well, in this day and age you don't really need that. So they dispensed with the officers' quarters after he [RK] had spent all winter decorating, painting and varnishing and getting it all fixed up.

INT: Well, would you remember what year it was that stopped?

BK: No, I don't.

RK: When did we leave Sandy?

BK: We left in 1970, but it was quite a while before that.

RK: Yeah, it was a good 10-15 years before that.

BK: So we were there 23 years, yeah, it must have been -

INT: Did you live there year around?

RK: Oh yeah.

INT: You took care of the. Your family lived there with you, did the kids? Was it remote in terms of schools and shopping or stuff like that?

BK: To a certain extent, when we first moved there, the girls had to walk over to the highway to get the bus to go to school. And then, we had our granddaughter later with us, and the superintendent said, well, there was no problem having the bus, because she was small just starting school, no reason why she should have to walk way over to the highway, when the bus could come in there and turn around.

INT: How far was it to the highway from your house or your area there?

BK: Well, maybe a quarter mile or more.

RK: Oh, about a half mile.

BK: Half mile, it was pretty miserable when it would be severely cold and the bus wouldn't show up.

INT: Right, right. What was the nearest shopping town for you for groceries and for, you know, family things?

BK: Aitkin was mainly, of course, the girls -

INT: Is that where they went to high school and stuff like that?

BK: Went to high school in McGregor.

INT: OK. Oh, alright.

BK: But there wasn't too much for shopping in McGregor.

INT: So that where you..How far was it from Sandy Lake to Aitkin by truck?

BK: 35 miles.

INT: Did you essentially live kind of a life that was like you would go shopping once a week in town and things like that? Did you have friends and acquaintances in -.

BK: Just around the lake.

INT: Who else lived there?

RK: At the dam --

BK: Well, not right there, but, of course, around the lake, there was -

RK: Yeah.

INT: Families who lived there year around? Were those mainly resort owners, or -?

BK: Some were resort owners, others were retirees, and some people who lived there most of their lives.

INT: Might have done anything but they chose to live on the lake. Did you, I'm just curious about this, partly because I've interviewed so many farm women in the past year or so, and I'm really curious about what families' social lives are like when they live a distance away from a large community.

BK: Well, I tell you, he put in so many hours working that we didn't have too much of a social life, until when the girls were in high school. Of course, we would take them in for school activities, and then we would go to a movie. We had a theater in McGregor at that time, and, of course, that was before they had TV.

RK: We used to go to the basketball games, too, you know.

BK: We'd go to the school activities, and if it was something that they wanted to do that we didn't want to, then we went to a movie.

INT: That was a good deal, I mean, everyone got out to kind of visit around.

RK: Yeah.

INT: Let me, just a couple more questions about the quarters and the dam tenders. You had the only occupied house except for the officers' quarters?

RK: Yeah, uh huh

INT: Right at the dam. Were there other people who worked with you who came in at the dam, who came in every day?

BK: Not at first.

RK: Not at first, no.

INT: So your family was kind of solo?

BK: After he built up the recreation area, why then he did have some assistance.

RK: See, when I went there, there was no recreation at all. Here you had a big point in the land running out, you know.

BK: He spent the first winter trimming trees.

RK: Also, I cleaned out brush and trimmed the trees.

BK: Built a couple picnic tables.

RK: The Colonel came up on a Memorial Day, and here I had this strip of land and about 50 or 75 people camping out there. And he said, what's that. Oh, I said, that point out there, I cleaned that up and a few people came in and it finally has developed into this. Well, he says, we have got to do something about this; so I got some extra help.

INT: Tell me a little about how that developed, because, I mean, was it just that you came up and saw the possibilities?

BK: Yeah, I just, well, we got this point of land out there and river on one side and the lake on the other. And we came up in the fall, so I spent that winter cleaning this point out.

INT: Kind of your way of keeping busy. Did you get paid year-round?

RK: Oh, yes.

INT: Did you get paid for helping out with the officers or anything like that or helping him with -?

BK: I was paid 75 cents for keeping the quarters clean, officers' quarters.

RK: The officers' quarters clean.

BK: I would get one dollar for a dinner, and I forget what it was, was it 75 cents for breakfast? Out of that we had to send some of it, part of it into the office. I remember that because he'd send it in with his check. Oh, we had to pay our light bill, too, because the situation was, they were billed and then we had to pay our light bill to them. And he'd send the money in from the officers' quarters on the same check, and they said that, well, they couldn't mix funds that way. And it was so little by the time he went and got a money order and sent it separately. It was all that they would get. You would spend as much as they would get.

INT: Did you collect money from the officers if they stayed there, was there some kind of -?

BK: Oh, yes, they were supposed to pay a dollar.

INT: I see. So they would pay you for staying there, and you would get paid an amount for cleaning.

BK: But, can you imagine, 75 cents was all I would get for cleaning.

INT: My father was in the Army, so I know how cheap per diems can be.

RK: So eventually, we had one Colonel that came up and he saw what was happening, and he said, in this day and age this has got to stop. And that was it.

INT: There were probably enough motels and resorts around, too.

RK: So they sold the officers' quarters and moved it out

INT: Oh, really.

BK: Transportation was different then--

RK: In this day and age, that's it.

INT: So they moved the building out, that's interesting.

RK: Yeah, they sold the building and--

INT: Was it a frame building?

RK: No, it was a concrete.

INT: That surprises me that they could move it.

RK: It was stucco, you know.

INT: Yeah, you're not supposed to move masonry buildings.

RK: Oh, they moved that thing just like, moved it way over on the other side of the lake.

INT: Oh, isn't that interesting.

RK: Still there.

INT: Now, was your house stucco, too?

RK: Yeah.

INT: Did you, could you decorate it to suit yourselves and things?

BK: No.

INT: Were there regulations?

BK: There were regulations, When we first came up, I think it was red and green, wasn't it? And you had to change it to a, I mean, white and green.

RK: White and red.

BK: Didn't you have to change it to white and red?

RK: Yeah.

BK: And they had it that way on all the reservoirs.

INT: Could you do what you wanted inside?

BK: To a certain extent, but each time we did anything, they'd raise the rent.

INT: Now, you had to pay rent?

RK: Oh, sure, you didn't live in those houses for nothing.

INT: Oh, I thought maybe it was a benefit of the job.

RK: No. No, you paid

BK: No, the fact is, he took a little cut in coming up to Sandy because we thought maybe it would be a better for his health. Because, you see, you would get night differential down the river that we didn't get up there.

INT: What is night differential, and what does that -?

BK: You get a little bit more when you work nights.

RK: Say you got \$1.50 for daytime work, you would probably get \$1.75 for working nights an hour.

INT: I see.

BK: You see, they had the different shifts, 8 to 4 and 4 to 8 and 12 to 8.

INT: And you just had 24 hours?

RK: Yeah.

INT: Was it, did, were you able to kind of make a schedule for yourselves, or were there a lot of kind of interruptions, unexpected -?

RK: You were your own boss, you know, up on the reservoirs.

INT: Did you like that?

RK: Oh, sure. Fact is, I put in more time up on the reservoirs than I did when I was down on the dams.

BK: Well, it was necessary. He'd even work holidays. Because if the weather wasn't just right, that you would get everything done, you would have to work on holidays to keep it up. Like one former dam tender came to visit us there, and, well, he said, we never kept all this clean, we just mowed around the house. Well, you keep stretching out all the time and mowing more and more and not having the equipment. There was no riding lawn mowers or anything at that time. And we had the only boat when we had the flood in 1950. It was just our own little boat to start with. Well, then, they moved in some boats and afterwards put them on each of the reservoirs. So, we just didn't have the equipment or material at first.

INT: I guess the thing I would like to get back to a little bit is what you were talking about before which is how the Colonel came up, said, well, I guess we ought to make this recreational area legitimate or something. Did people come up often like, once a month or every three or four months or -?

RK: Oh, no, they would come up every Saturday night, every Saturday afternoon.

BK: From the Cities, after you got it going, you know.

INT: Really.

RK: Oh, yes.

INT: You mean people would come from your office in St. Paul every weekend?

RK: No, not from our office, but they would come from St. Paul, you know.

BK: No, not from there.

BK: He means the campers.

RK: Spend the weekend.

INT: Describe to me how it happened, you kind of saw this point in 1937 [1947] -

RK: Well, yeah, it was, that was, here right across from our home, and this point of land run out to a point just, well, you would say eventually it was a fill, is what it resembled, but it was really a point.

INT: It was real stuff.

RK: Real stuff, it wasn't man-made. Here all the brush was in there, like this stuff out in here.

INT: How long did it take you -?

RK: Oh, I spent the first winter we were there. We went up in the fall; I spent the first winter cleaning out that point.

INT: How many acres was it or is it?

RK: Gol, I don't know, 5, 6, 7 acres, something like that.

BK: It took several years before you got the upper part. I used to go up there and pick raspberries and pick wild asparagus, but they eventually cleaned out so much that I didn't have any asparagus or raspberries.

INT: So you would just go out and work in the bush every day in the winter.

RK: Oh, yeah, in the wintertime and trimming trees.

BK: And painting signs and things like that, in the winter time

INT: Now, you could do that partly because there was less dam tending to do?

RK: Well, yeah. I was getting a salary, you know, just something that I, to keep me busy, you know.

INT: So what happened was that there was, I mean, am I interpreting this right? That there was simply less, that taking care of the dam tending duties in terms of reading the gages and doing stuff like, that took less and less time as -

RK: Well, that time, that amount of time was the same all the time and, of course, during your high water in the spring, why then, you spend more time on operation. Otherwise, that amounted to maybe one gate adjustment a week just to hold it stable, see.

INT: Was there time in the fall that also demanded special attention?

BK: Sometimes.

RK: No, it wasn't, eventually, if you got a hard rain, and then you had to take care of that extra water that got into the watershed. So you would have to open the dam up to let it go to hold it to a certain point. So that was one of the main jobs was, to maintain your inflow, to take care of the inflow.

BK: Then towards spring you would go out and take snow readings.

RK: Oh, yeah.

INT: What were those?

RK: Oh, you take some snow samples.

INT: You mean for how deep 't was?

RK: Yeah, the depth of it, and then you bring a sample in, melt it and get the water content from the amount of snow.

INT: Oh, because it would vary, whether it was a fine powdery snow or a real wet.

BK: So, then we could kind of predict—

RK: That's right, there is a difference in snow.

BK: Then you could be able to predict what kind of moisture you would have in the spring.

RK: You go out -

BK: You would go in quite a large area.

RK: Big area, you know, and you take, oh, maybe 3, 4 or 5 [samples].

BK: How far north, you went up to Northome didn't you?

RK: Oh, yes, I went clear up in the northern part, way north to Grand Rapids and then straight west, clear out to the border, you see, you have to take so many -

BK: You'd have to walk in on snowshoes back in those certain fields and -

INT: That was your sample area?

RK: Yeah, sample area.

INT: How long would it take you to do that? Was this a big trip that you would do for a week or something?

RK: Yeah, you'd be gone for about a week. Betty would read the gages while I was gone.

INT: I see, and you'd call St. Paul every day and tell them what was is going on, would you?

BK: I sent a card, didn't I?

RK: No, you—

BK: We used to send cards out.

INT: Now, did you go into St. Paul once a year or once a season or something, to see?

RK: Did I go to St. Paul?

INT: Yeah.

RK: I don't think I was in the St. Paul office half a dozen times all the time I was up there.

INT: Did -

BK: We kind of did at first 'cause we knew quite a few of the fellows there, and, just sort of, I guess, just wanted to visit with them and see them, but towards the end, we didn't.

INT: Did you see other dam tenders, I mean, like Gull Lake. Did you all visit a lot; did you see each other at the Remer office or something like that?

RK: Oh, yeah, not too much, when we went to Grand Rapids, why we'd see the -

BK: Why, we seem, we just seemed to be too busy to do -

RK: Dam tender at Grand Rapids or if we went over to Brainerd, we would go out and see the dam tender at Brainerd there.

BK: That wasn't very often, once in a great while.

RK: Or, if we were on a vacation and came into Brainerd in the evening, why you would call up the dam tender and have him take you to a motel or someplace like that.

BK: Have happened since you retired.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 1

INT: So, you cleared, in 1947, you cleared, began to clear that point.

RK: Yes.

INT: Had there been campers or visitors kinda coming around?

RK: No.

INT: Before that?

RK: No, just maybe one, I think, maybe one or two.

BK: Next spring one or two came up.

INT: And they just were exploring or -?

RK: They were.

INT: They heard that this dam tender was -?

BK: No, whether that was their first time up there or not

RK: Well, let's see this fellow from, ah, he was a city engineer of Ames, Iowa.

INT: Oh my, he was far from home.

RK: Ya and he used to come up, fish for a week.

INT: Mum-huh, would he camp or -?

RK: Ya, he would put up his tent out there.

INT: Okay.

RK: One night a tree fell down.

BK: There was a pregnant woman in the tent.

RK: His wife came barreling out--

INT: Oh.

BK: Oh, we had a terrific storm.

RK: Oh.

INT: Oh.

RK: When that thing went down, the first thing I thought of was that woman.

INT: Oh.

RK: In that tent, and I out there, and, boy, she came digging her whole thing out of their tent.

BK: Of course, all we had at that time was just one little outdoor biffy.

INT: Mum-huh.

BK: And, ah, one time one of the gals came flying out of the biffy with her drawers down. There was a skunk under, the underneath the--

INT: Oh, no! Was this, you mean they would come and use your outhouse or was -this up at the -

BK: One little outhouse out on the point.

INT: Okay. Did you have plumbing and stuff in the dam tender's house?

RK: Yes.

BK: Mum-huh.

INT: You had your own little septic system or something?

RK: Ya.

BK: Mum-huh.

INT: And you had electricity and you had a telephone?

BK: Mum-huh.

INT: So, you had all the comforts.

BK: The government owned the land when we first came there.

INT: Uh-huh.

BK: They had built the line out to the dam in order to have the telephone.

INT: Um-huh.

RK: They owned the line all the way from the dam into McGregor.

INT: I wondered, I assumed that the -

BK: Otherwise, there wouldn't have been a telephone.

INT: That's right. I can understand that, if nobody would have strung a line.

RK: Then they put, of course, they owned all the poles and everything. They put the crossarms up there; well, then the telephone company used our poles, you know.

INT: Uh-huh, kind of wired the rest of the neighborhood -

RK: Yeah.

INT: So, what happened is that people just began to, when do you remember people just beginning to camp, I mean starting to show up?

RK: Well, they, there was one city engineer from Ames, Iowa.

BK: Then a fireman from down there.

RK: And a fireman, well--

BK: Well, I suppose the engineer told--

RK: One told the other - one told the other, see.

INT: Uh-huh.

RK: First, the city engineer came up, and he stayed a week or ten days. And then he went home, and here came the fireman from Ames. And he came up for ten days and that and that started it.

BK: Yeah, and then the one from Chatfield started it.

INT: You began to get some Minnesota custom, huh?

RK: County eng. -, county, well, you know, like foreman out on the highways.

INT: Uh-huh.

RK: He came up, and he spent ten days up there.

BK: And then they, all that bunch came every year then.

RK: And then, of course, when he goes back, he tells his friends, and they, there's a guy up at Sandy there, he's got a point out there, and he'll let you camp there.

INT: It's just real informal, very word of mouth.

RK: Yeah, just that's the way it developed.

INT: When did it, you just said a little while ago that, you know, it began to be a Saturday afternoon people would begin to show up.

RK: Oh, sure.

INT: When did that, when do you remember that happening; would it be 1950 or something?

BK: Oh, it was later than that.

RK: Oh, about, see when we went up there--

BK: When was that many people--

RK: We went up there in '30.

BK: Still, yes, I can remember from the pictures down along the riverbank--
[Mrs. Kolb brings out photo album showing scenes from flood of 1950, house and grounds at Big Sandy Lake.]

RK: Huh?

BK: From the people fishing down along the riverbank.

RK: Oh yes, but I would say it was -

BK: I suppose a lot of people came up to fish, and then they would see somebody camping there. So then they would -

RK: I opened the campground up; I brushed it out, you know. It was just like this out here, you know; I cleaned all that out that first.

BK: You perhaps haven't seen any of this. This was during our flood in '50. This was going down to Libby.

INT: Uh-huh.

BK: And this was how we had to get into our place.

INT: Uh-huh, it was all sandbagged.

BK: And this was the road here.

INT: Uh-huh, goodness.

BK: And this was the lake; it was all ice in the lake, yet.

INT: But the water came up underneath.

RK: Yeah.

BK: So, they built this; this was my garden spot.

INT: Uh-ha.

BK: And they built this and came and brought our supplies and sandbags and so forth with that.

INT: And is that the dam itself?

BK: Uh-huh.

INT: Okay, and then, that's the control gage house or something?

BK: Uh-huh.

RK: Yup, ya.

INT: And there is the water.

BK: That's what they made into the museum [the gage house].

INT: Okay.

RK: Ya, that's the water.

INT: Ya.

RK: That's what, I been, that's what I made the pilot wheel or hung the pilot wheel up on the ceiling.

BK: And see, this was our front yard.

INT: Ya, uh-huh.

BK: And in the basement we had a difficult time keeping the fire going, because the basement was full of water.

INT: Ach!

RK: Had to pump it out, keep pumps going

BK: You can see here, now here's the house.

INT: Uh-huh.

BK: This was going above the dam.

INT: Umm.

BK: See, we had buildings on, here's the officers' quarters here, now.

BK: It shows the picture—

INT: So, in 1950, the officers' quarters were still there, they hadn't had changed.

BK: Oh, ya, it was quite a while after that.

RK: Yeah.

INT: I see.

RK: We had the officers' quarters until maybe about 1970, it was.

INT: I see, before they were actually sold, although you had stopped taking care, in that sense, in the '60s sometime.

RK: Ya, they sold it.

INT: Huh.

BK: This was, fellows trying to plug the roads; they had sandbags there where really you can see how deep.

INT: Uh-huh. That's deep enough that you really wonder if you are going to flood it when you--

BK: Well, a couple of times, they thought they were going to lose the whole dam.

INT: Oh.

BK: But I think this was the spots, because a hole washed through when they had to quick fill them in.

INT: Now did this kinda come real suddenly or did you know you had trouble and begin to—?

BK: No.

BK: No, nobody knew that they had that much trouble.

RK: No, this came, this came -

BK: We had two hard snowstorms in April, and then in May

RK: Got a big rain.

INT: And that was it; that's what made it.

BK: And then it was warm and thawed fast. And then they just couldn't believe it. Well, we couldn't believe it that day; it was on a Sunday. And he kept opening the gates, and he called the office and told them what was happening, called somebody down there, I don't know--

RK: Called Wes [Walters].

BK: I don't know whether there was anybody in the office at the time.

RK: Called Wes at his home--

BK: And told him what the situation was. And we told the girls to grab their things and pack their bags, and we took them into town and left them there.

INT: Uh-ha. How long did this crisis last? How long did it take the water to --

RK: Oh, it took pretty near a month.

INT: Wow, did your kids live in town all that time or, just because you couldn't deal with everything that was happening at the--

BK: Well, we couldn't, they couldn't have gotten to school. We wanted them to be going to school. And they were there three weeks, but they could get home. And they would get home and walk the sandbags to get into the house.

RK: You can see this was a row of sandbags there and water on both sides of it.

BK: And that ordinarily was just a meadow.

INT: Uh-huh.

BK: You can see the sandbags here, just all sandbags along there.

INT: And this is one fellow's dam--

RK: Yeah, that fellow, he was a graduate, that was Paul --

BK: Zeese.

RK: Zeese from Aitkin and he worked in the office; he was a graduate engineer.

INT: Um-huh.

RK: And they sent Paul up.

INT: Um-huh.

RK: And we called that Paul's Dam. He had a row of sandbags coming up this ditch.

INT: Yeah.

RK: To keep the, to keep the road from flooding, see.

BK: The old gatehouse went out three times that year, and you had to rebuild that.

RK: Yes.

BK: Three different times. It went out with the ice coming in and went out with the high water, and I don't remember the other time. I suppose another time of high water. And it seems to me that you rebuilt it three times that year. Now, here we had a lovely big barn there.

INT: Uh-huh.

BK: And this was the chicken coop and, of course, years ago they had to be self-sufficient.

INT: Uh-huh.

BK: We had chickens for a couple of years, but they frowned on that in the office. They didn't want us to have anything like that nowadays, so.

INT: I see.

BK: So we discontinued having—

INT: Did you—

BK: And then they removed the barn. They were at him the last few years he was there to take that barn down. And it was such a beautiful building. And he had, well, they moved out some of the buildings that we had for storage buildings on the other side of the road. So we had to have more storage; so we cleaned out the stanchions and everything were in that barn.

INT: Yeah.

BK: And, of course, the upstairs was like what you would have for barn dances in.. If you have ever been to a barn dance

INT: Uh-huh, yes, such a beautiful floor.

BK: Yeah, it was, and huh. But the downstairs was smelly and stanchions and he cleaned that all up and made it into storage building. And then, when the new house came along, got to get rid of that and have something more modern, you know.

INT: But you never kept, besides the chickens, you didn't keep animals up there?

BK: No.

INT: Never had a cow or anything like that?

BK: No, but see, before we came, years ago, they did.

INT: Yeah, but they probably had horses, too.

BK: Now, here, here, you see, here's the road coming in. This was the building where, uh, he worked in, like a shop.

INT: Okay.

BK: But they removed that building.

INT: I see.

BK: But that was easy to get into, because this was the state highway at that time. They came right across the dam.

INT: Right, no, I know they built roads across most of those dams.

BK: And, ah, so, then we didn't have far to shovel. Well, when they changed that, it was, well, up in here was the building then, that we had to use for the garage. Well, then he had to shovel by hand all that way.

INT: Hum.

BK: I think I have some pictures in here. Had this boom out here, and fellows were working on that, and the next morning, why, there, it had all gone out.

INT: Hum.

BK: They had just put in this new bridge over this highway, put in a new highway over here.

INT: Gosh, there is a lot of sandbags, isn't there?

BK: Oh yeah, there is a lot. Um, I was trying to think how many there were. The most workers we had in one day, I think, was, was 79 in one day, and I believe there was 120 employed in all.

INT: Huh.

BK: Because when it first came, we had to try to get as many as we could.

INT: Um-huh.

BK: Kids were even staying out of school to come out and help.

INT: Now, did you have to feed them or did they -?

BK: I had to feed those that came with, from the office; sometimes I'd have 13, sometimes I had 15, and part of the time electricity would be off. We had a root cellar, which came in mighty handy. And in our car, we couldn't get into our place, we had to leave that over to Libby because we couldn't drive in with it. And, so it was kind of difficult having enough food on hand, too.

INT: Was that your house?

BK: No, that was one of the resorts down the —

INT: That's what I wondered.

BK: About two miles below us.

RK: Yeah, he worked for me.

BK: The gal at the resort came up, and she and I came around and took these pictures.

INT: Uh-huh.

BK: So, that's how come those pictures got in with it.

INT: Ya.

BK: They are getting kind of, they have been in here so long that they are kind of drying out.

INT: Hum.

BK: This was the old, oh, like a fur trading post at one time, wasn't it? Where Lockway was?

RK: Yeah. Lockway's house.

BK: That was the old fur trading post.

RK: Ya, that was the old fur trading post.

BK: That was just down below the dam

BK: There's the old guy from there out here fishing in his front yard.

INT: Look at that windmill.

BK: Now, this was the new highway, and we went up there. I think we saw the first car that was able to get through on the new highway, and you can just see the car. Here I was parked down here, and Mabel was taking these pictures. We had to come up and go over this.

RK: There was the car there.

INT: Uh-huh

BK: And look at the debris that washed down over onto the road.

INT: Now what's this old windmill?

BK: That was down at the end of Brown's Point.

INT: Otherwise, you never see, I mean, the windmills aren't left anywhere. Some of the old farming ones are, but you never see the old grist mills or sawmills.

RK: That was an old windmill there in the logging days. That set there for many years.

BK: Some of these pictures are the same 'cuz when our daughters come up for the weekend, they take pictures. You see, the resorter had his fish house and so forth.

INT: Yeah.

BK: Here shows our building house, and this is the point.

INT: Yeah.

BK: See, and this is the point that he was talking about that he cleaned up.

INT: I can see how you cleaned it up.

BK: And then, when that boom went out, well, then, it was a job getting that out of here because he had to shut the dam off and pull it out of there.

RK: Yeah, I got up one morning and looked and said, where's the boom. And I took a look in and it was right straight across the face of the dam, turned over and right down the bottom, shut the lake off.

BK: You can see here right where the men were working on it just the day before.

INT: Yeah.

RK: God, yes. There were a half dozen old men, there, 70 years old.

BK: There was a lot of current there.

INT: Uh-huh.

RK: I sweat on that.

INT: I take it--

BK: Here you can see how many sandbags there are.

INT: Was anybody injured in this?

RK: No.

BK: No, there was one. One of the fellows from the office got his ring caught on something and tore his finger outside and had to go into Crosby to the doctor, wasn't it?

RK: Yeah.

INT: But nothing -?

RK: Who was that?

BK: Von Lorenz [Jim Von Lorenz].

RK: Oh, yeah, he was stupid, anyway.

BK: And I says, it wasn't your job to be doing that in the first place. He was supposed to be -

RK: Keep your damn fingers out of there.

BK: He was supposed to be supervising.

RK: Tain't often, you can really tell somebody off from the office, but he was one guy - [laughs].

BK: Well, this gives you a little idea how many sandbags there were after it went down. And that's where it almost went out on us. Now the week before, this was the way we were bringing in our groceries.

INT: Yeah, because it was that snowy.

BK: Um-huh, we had to go on snowshoes.

INT: And sled stuff in.

RK: Toboggan.

BK: Bring them in on a toboggan. This was the icehcuse at one time.

INT: Did you actually keep ice, you didn't need to keep ice because you had electricity?

BK: No, you didn't have, you had gas or something in there, didn't you?

RK: Yeah, gasoline.

BK: So, of course, this all had to be shoveled out, because this is where we put our car after they changed the buildings around.

INT: Uh-huh.

BK: First you, well, for a while, you had it down here in the barn.

RK: Yeah.

BK: So there was still more shoveling then.

INT: It's almost like wild ricing, doesn't it--

BK: This was a couple years before the '50's flood and had high water, and they brought in these sort of, what did they call them?

RK: Oh, they brought in the Army. Those are--

BK: They brought in supplies down to the farmers along the river.

INT: Uh-huh.

RK: They were, those boats were small, maybe 6-8 feet long, and they hooked together.

INT: And they -

RK: You could take 15 of those and hook them all and you would have quite a string of boats.

INT: Uh-huh.

BK: This was where I had my garden and you could see where the water came up and flooded that. After that I never had a garden anymore. This was the way the house looked at that time.

INT: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Is the house still there?

BK: Yes, but they have it painted different, and it doesn't -

RK: The house is there, but not the officers' quarters. That is over on the other side of the lake.

BK: Russell planted some trees out here, and he said he'd never live to see them grow up, but they're very pretty, big trees now.

INT: Yeah.

BK: This was when we had high water in July, and the resorters were having trouble with all the high water.

INT: There was too much for that.

BK: They wanted the water let out. So when he did, when the Salvation Army guy came up with his bugle and played God Bless America, that they were letting the water out.

INT: Now, when was that, what year?

RK: Oh, my gosh, I don't remember.

BK: I think it was about '52 or '53.

INT: Did that happen very often? I mean, did resorters ask for something? What happened when they did? I mean, could you say yes or no, or did you have to call St. Paul?

RK: Oh, I'd have to call St. Paul, you know.

INT: And could things get worked out or was there, did people get annoyed with one another?

RK: No, ah--

BK: Yes, yes, they did, during the '50's flood especially.

RK: Ya, well--

BK: Down on the Mississippi here towards the Palisade, between here and Aitkin, there is a lot of potato farmers, and they were flooded out if we let out too much water. Then, if we kept the water back, the resorters were flooded and they didn't like it. So there was always friction between the potato growers and the resorters.

INT: Uh-huh and, did they throw rotten vegetables?

RK: They were ready to come up there and blow the dam.

INT: They were really annoyed -

BK: Oh yeah, there were some -

RK: Well, I said, go ahead, but I said you're going to have the FBI in here; that'll just make your head swim.

BK: We had one resorter, he had just bought the resort not too long before that; he called us up at midnight one night and said he was going to commit suicide. We were scared to death; we didn't know what to do about it.

RK: Now, I said, John, you know damn well you weren't going to commit suicide, and if you don't believe me, you just sit down, and take another drink, and go back to bed. And I thought, oh god, now, I hope he does.

BK: We didn't know whether to call his priest or call the sheriff or interfere or what.

RK: I didn't know what to do, but I just sat there and just hoped.

BK: And then he told him, he says, I think it's going to break tomorrow so. I think it's going to start going down; you better just hold off.

INT: Now what did it mean for the resorters if the water was too high? I mean, how -

RK: Well—

BK: They had no business, they had no—

RK: They couldn't operate.

BK: And then it ruined some of their property. At that time, it was up so, [at] this resort, pianos and furniture and everything was all floating off into the lake.

INT: Oh, I see, so he had serious problems; we're not talking about a high water we are talking about back flooding

RK: Well, yeah, it was over flooding their land, you know.

INT: So people couldn't get in and—

RK: Private property.

BK: Now, here was our younger daughter and I on snowshoes. Now that was just about a week before the flood.

INT: It was a nice Airedale you had; or is he kind of part Airedale and part something else?

RK: No, he was full-blooded Airedale.

INT: That's what I thought. Oh, and look at that conformation he's showing off. I was just going to say, is this one of your daughters.

BK: Our daughter was health champion.

INT: Yeah, uh-huh.

BK: Some of these picture are really -

RK: There is a picture of my Airedale. See it.

INT: Oh, look at the fish.

RK: Yeah.

INT: Now did you go ice fishing and stuff like that?

RK: I speared that.

INT: I wondered, it looks like a fish that had come up from the deep.

BK: He speared, for what, 3 to 5 years. I think three years running he had kidney infection, and the doctor says, what are you doing? Well, he says, when I get through work, I go down and I sit in my fish house for a little while, but I have my heater in there. He says, cut it out, so that ended his -.

INT: Huh? Why would that give you a kidney infection?

RK: Well, you're sitting right up, in the fish house, is small and you're sitting right up back there and it's cold and -

INT: And you didn't get any more infections, either, huh?

RK: No.

INT: Yeah.

BK: This was the dam tender that was at Gull. When he retired and we were over there, all of us, and here's Wes Walters and--

INT: Now, who is that at Gull?

BK: That was--

RK: Erickson [Clarence Erickson].

BK: Erickson.

INT: Okay, because we are going to talk to Mr. Fitzpatrick, who is your contemporary.

BK: He's [Erickson], he's passed away, and she's in a nursing home.

RK: Eric and I worked, Eric was a lockmaster at Lock and Dam Five in Whitman. We worked together; I worked for him down, a Five.

INT: Oh, so you knew one another from the old days.

RK: Oh, yeah.

INT: I see.

BK: Now, here's the house when they moved.

INT: I see, I see.

BK: And here's one of the other buildings when they moved that.

INT: Um-huh.

BK: And this entryway, he didn't want, put in a cement flooring in it and he had to mix all the cement by hand and his back was bothering him. We had more fun with all of those things, had to get a picture to have a record of it.

INT: Uh-huh.

BK: As you can see, they were all out, anxious to get that opened up, so we could get rid of the water on this side of the--

INT: Oh, here's some campers.

BK: That's what I started to get, was when they were starting to -. See here, the opening of fishing, the people along the bank here on the river.

INT: Now, would this also be around 1950, 19-- what do you think?

BK: I -

INT: '54, '55, I'm trying to guess from the cars.

BK: I would say maybe '55, around in there.

INT: That looks like a '55 Chevy, doesn't it?

RK: Hums.

BK: Got fins.

RK: Yeah.

BK: Then, of course, they raised the dike, and so for a while there, we had an awful time getting in and out with the new road; you can imagine how that was. So Ike bought this old truck from one of the neighbors and he built a ramp, something that you could drag the road with.

RK: Oh, a drag.

INT: So, it's like the old days in the farm country when people would -.

RK: Yeah, yeah, sure I dragged that road.

BK: So, he was out there dragging, and I came along, so they kept me out on the road to take a picture.

INT: Oh-ho.

End of tape 1, side 2

Tape 2, Side 1

BK: I think that was about the first year we were up there, wasn't it? He walked up the road to see if he could find a partridge.

RK: I was partridge hunting.

INT: And this is what you found, was it? [a bear cub]

BK: And that's what he brought home on his back.

RK: I heard some rustling in the leaves, and I looked up. And here comes this bear walking right down this point, right towards me. And I waited until he got up there far enough so, I only had #6 shot in there.

INT: My goodness. So he was just a cub.

RK: No.

INT: No, that's—

BK: That's a couple, two years old.

INT: Oh, really. See, I have never seen them in-between baby and and full grown. Now, did this stay with you, or did you just take it right back out in the woods?

RK: What this, I shot him.

BK: We ate him.

INT: Oh, I didn't realize that it was dead.

RK: Yes.

BK: Ya, it was dead.

INT: Ohhh—

BK: See, it's laying here.

RK: About ten minutes after I shot it, one of the neighbors that lived down on the point came along, he and his wife, and I said, wait a minute, help me get this home.

INT: I didn't realize you could kill it with birdshot.

RK: Ya, I did, well, I waited for it. I let him come right -

BK: He didn't want the mother bear to come along, you know.

INT: Ya.

BK: And he used to have to walk way down where the Mississippi and the Sandy met down just below that, they had a gage. And he'd have to go down there every Friday, and it was always the coldest day of the year.

INT: Um-huh, sure enough, -47 below.

BK: The coldest day of the week, I should say, because it was weekly. And he would have to go down on snowshoes, and in the summertime, it was the mosquitoes that were so thick in there when you would go down. But now, they have that automatic; they don't have to do that. I guess that's about all of that.

INT: Well, I tell you, maybe we could—

BK: Well, here it is, you're looking—

INT: Uh-huh, looks nice.

BK: This is the house.

INT: And I can see how much you have kind of grassed, grassed out instead of in brush around the house.

RK: There is my sister.

BK: The former dam tender said that all they did was just around here. Well, we did way out, the full yard.

INT: Is that your daughter?

BK: No, that's a niece.

RK: That's her sister.

BK: That's my sister. And that's a sister of Russell's. And I don't think there is too much more. Pat has taken some pictures and had some more made. This little boy died about a year or so ago. His dad was in the, Porter, what department was he in the office?

RK: He was in property.

BK: They were on construction with us down at Alma and then Red Wing. So I don't think there is anymore there of interest to you. They all go pretty much to other things.

INT: Okay, well, thank you for showing them to me. Maybe--

BK: Well, it gives you a little bit--

INT: Sure does. Maybe we could go back to the point where those pictures are right at, on the point, of the campers. Um, when they're beginning to come in the '50's and so, there was just a grassy campground?

RK: Yeah, that was a, yeah, you know, when did we move to Sandy?

BK: '47.

RK: What time of the year?

BK: In the fall.

RK: In the fall. Yeah, about the first of September, something like that.

BK: First of October, I think.

RK: First of October. Anyway, there's a big beautiful point sticking out there and brush in it and there was a big white birch tree right in the driveway and that was dead. And the first thing I done was sawed that down and got it the hell out of there. And cleaned up that point.

INT: Now, what point did people really begin to -?

RK: We had one wooden biffy way back down this point and I moved that up. We had three buildings out on the road, a carpenters shop, a blacksmiths shop and a warehouse. And I moved that biffy right in back of the carpenter's shop or the blacksmith's shop, instead of having it way back. Well, then, the Colonel come up.

INT: What Colonel was that, do you remember who?

RK: Oh god, came up on inspection trip--

BK: My memory is not too good anymore, either, so we don't know--

INT: That's alright.

RK: I was taking down this birch tree, cleaned that up and opened this point up. He said, well, who told you to do that? I said nobody, sir, but I just figured that's a nice point, and I just thought it would look nicer if I cleaned it up. And I trimmed up the trees you know.

BK: One of his bosses in the office said you'll rue the day that you started this. It did spoil our view after they got it so commercialized and started putting buildings around; we had much nicer view when we were all alone there.

INT: That's one thing I'm a little curious about is, you know, when I started working on this project for the Corps, as you, my father was in the Army and so I'm used to the idea that in the Army, both people use a lot of initiative and also there is some kind of rule that they're, you know working around. I said how did this get started? And the guy said in St. Paul said, well, it just started, and um. But I know that the 1944 Flood Control Act has language in it that says that there is public access, that there should be public access around the Corps of Engineer sites wherever they occur for recreation. Did any of you have that in your minds when you were clearing points or were you thinking--

RK: Yes, that was right there in back of those toilets. I opened this, bladed it out. I got a friend up there with his, he had a tractor and a blade and we bladed this out right down into the lake. The Colonel came up and he said, what's that? And I said, why, that's so the fellows can back down there and put their boats in. Well, who told you to do that? And I said, nobody, sir, I just figured it would be, instead of them backing down over bank, I just leveled it off. Well, he said, it looks pretty nice. And I said, yes, and it works pretty good, too, so they could get their boats in and out. So it wasn't long before we widened that out, and put in a cement ramp going down there.

INT: When did you begin to get, I mean, you've both been talking about how an awful lot of this was done initially, kind of on your own, with friends helping you, just getting a friend in with a hoe or something. When did the Corps begin, for instance, to assign another person to help you working on this? When did you begin to get automated equipment to do

some of this? Can you remember when you first got a snowplow or an assistant or -

BK: You got the tractor about a year, two years before you retired.

INT: So that would be 1968?

BK: Um-huh.

INT: When did you--

BK: And we got the boats because of that '50 flood; otherwise, we just had our own little boat.

RK: Well, you know, we had, I had a 16-foot --

BK: Strip boat, wasn't it?

RK: Strip boat.

INT: What's that mean? I don't know what strip means, is it wooden or is it?

BK: It's wooden.

RK: It's wooden, but I got one setting out there now, but that's aluminum.

INT: Can't quite see around the corner.

BK: This was made with wood, stripping.

RK: And I had the only boat there.

INT: You mean none of the people out on the lakes had, the resort owners -

BK: But for the dam, for when the flood came, see, there was no way of getting in except through that icy --

INT: Slush.

BK: Slush.

RK: Slush, you know.

BK: And there he had just that little wooden boat.

INT: I see.

RK: And boy did that raise, that ice raised hell with that boat.

INT: Yeah, bet it did, really stove it in.

RK: Oh, yeah, so--

BK: So, then they had to order boats, they ordered, I think, 6 or 7, wasn't it, something, 7 boats, I think.

RK: Yeah, we got two at Sandy.

BK: So then afterwards, they distributed them around.

INT: What came next? If you got the boats in 1950 and you were beginning to clear the ground and make camping facilities, mainly for fishermen, is that right? that it was first kind of fisher, people who were doing fishing, and then it became more—

BK: Yeah, there was quite a bit of fishing below the dam.

RK: There was one couple, he was an engineer from Ames, Iowa. He and his wife would come up, and they would come up twice during the year. He and his wife would come up right at the opening of fishing season. And they always camped at the campground. They were the first ones to really camp there.

BK: Sometimes, they generally had a boat and would go out on the lake fishing. And one day I looked out, and their camp was all ablaze, I hollered to him and he grabbed the fire extinguisher and out we went and put the fire out. He [visitor] had been smoking and flipped his cigarette, and then he moved the tent because it was damp. And moved the tent right over where he had flipped his cigarette. So when he was out gone, why, there went up his tent.

INT: Oh, my goodness.

BK: But we managed to save.

RK: Save his clothes and he had a couple suitcases in there.

BK: Clothes and things that he had. He [RK] got the fire out enough so that he could grab the suitcases and save their personal things.

RK: Right beside his car, too; his car sit there.

INT: Oh, goodness.

BK: Oh, we had a lot of interesting things that way. One day, there was a little gal fishing down along the riverbank. It was towards evening, and she got shot in the leg, the thigh. So Russell, you took your own car and took her into Aitkin to the doctor and—

RK: Yeah.

INT: How did she get shot?

BK: Somebody must have been shooting over on the highway.

INT: On the woods—

BK: Never did know—

RK: Took her into the doctor.

INT: It's the kind of thing we always worry about in deer season, you know, when we're tromping in the woods.

RK: Yeah.

BK: Oh, we used to have a lot of interesting, and then some people would come up and lose their cats. And then call me and want to know if I would find their cat and take care of it until they could get up again and let them know.

INT: Seems funny to bring a cat up into this—

BK: Well, a storm came up and the cat got scared and took off. And then they couldn't find it when they were ready to leave, and we found it. But it wasn't too friendly with me. But it stayed around there until they finally did come up and get it.

INT: Oh, my goodness.

RK: You know a lot of things happen up in there. You know when we first started the campground. One of the guys came up from the office, and I forget, Ames, Owen Emsweiler was his name.

BK: He was the one who said—

RK: He said, Ike, you're going rue the day you opened up that campground. Laughs.

INT: Did you ever think he was right?

RK: Oh, yes.

BK: It got to that point towards the end.

INT: Why did you say that?

BK: Well, it was, just, they started having rowdy parties. And, of course, one party went on to about 3:00 o'clock in the morning. I couldn't sleep with all the noise; they were coming in. And, of course, then people would bring their dogs. Well, everybody had a dog that night in the campground. And they came in and those dogs all started barking, and, of course, I couldn't sleep. So I went over to them and I said don't you know..why didn't you stay outside the campground? Now this fireman from Ames would come up, and there was enough space on the other side that he wouldn't come into the grounds and stay there when he would get in about 2-3:00 in the morning. Until morning, and then he would move into the camping area, but they had to move in and start pounding and setting up the tent and—

RK: Waking up—

BK: Waking up everybody cuz they had a dog too and everybody else had a dog. Well, the dam tender said we could come up any time. Well, I said you should realize that you're disturbing everybody else. I said, you're disturbing me and I am way over there on the, in the house, and I can't sleep with all your racket.

INT: So it just got to be, what had been a very peaceful place became very kind of populated. It must have changed a lot.

RK: I started something—

INT: Yeah.

RK: And I couldn't finish it.

INT: Did you find yourselves being happy when fall came and when fewer people were around?

RK: Oh, yeah.

INT: More back the way it used to be. Well, I suppose it just changed the—

BK: One thing, too, our mosquitoes. Of course, then at first, there it was terrible with mosquitoes, you could hardly go outside the door. When I had the garden, I could hardly get out to the garden, let alone work in it. And, so we were glad for that when winter would come, because we didn't have to be fighting the mosquitoes. Well, then they started spraying. Well, then it wasn't too bad for a number of years, with the spraying; but I think some—

RK: The Corps gave me a sprayer.

BK: I think some of all of the spraying that he did didn't help any, though, because he got emphysema, but a -

RK: Oh, I sprayed, I bought spray by the barrellful.

BK: I kept telling him that, cause they don't allow a lot of that anymore.

INT: Right, right. So it would have been in the 60's that, for instance, things changed into camping every weekend during the summer and?

RK: Yeah.

BK: Because it started to get, quite a few come in from even Duluth and Cloquet and from that area, then from the Cities and then a lot of them from Iowa.

RK: Ames, Iowa.

INT: You always had an Ames connection. More and more people from this part of the country as well. When you think about it, I mean, just who was visiting, was it more campers or more day trippers just coming with their boats?

RK: Well, no, I would say there was more campers because, you know, they could walk right down on the banks and fish off the banks, but—

INT: Lot of families with children or was it more grown-ups?

BK: Both.

RK: Both.

BK: It started to get more children, kept getting more children all the time.

INT: Now, did you, toward, by say, 1968, 1970, did you have things like swimming beaches at Sandy or?

BK: No, we was always after them to have a swimming beach and it wasn't until just about year before last, or was it last year, that they put in a swimming beach.

INT: So it was camping and picnicking while you were there.

RK: Yeah.

BK: Got to the point where people were demanding more and more, so now they—

RK: I put in the first boat ramp there. We had, well, let's see, Wally [Ecklund] brought over two, two mixers full, we poured two mixers full and poured it down the slope and shoveled it out you know, and we poured—

BK: There's two grounds there, there's one on each side of the dam and that upper ground was nothing but brush and trees, and he cleared that all out. And up in there was the schoolhouse years ago. I know one former dam tender came there, and they said their children were the only white children that went to that school. There were a lot of Indians at that time there.

INT: Oh, that's—

BK: And there was a great big huge big pine tree there, and one of the Indian gals that was there said that they had a baby die, and it was buried right there under that big pine tree.

INT: Now, this would have been like a country school in those days? But your kids went into town, is that right?

RK: Yeah.

BK: By that time they had consolidated, by the time we moved there.

INT: OK, But, let's talk a little bit about the extent to which the Indians were, I mean, were there Indian people around much Sandy Lake when you were there?

BK: Not too many,

RK: Not too much.

BK: There was a few; some would come in and go trapping, I know one day--

RK: Well--

BK: I was going to walk down to the post office, and this Indian boy had brought his parents up. And they had taken off across the lake to go trapping and, of course, he passed me and wanted to know whether I wanted a ride. Well, I didn't know whether I'd offend him if I didn't accept the ride, and I didn't know whether it was a good idea to get in his car. But it wasn't very far so I got in the car and rode down with him.

INT: Did you tend--

BK: It was hard to understand, but later during the 1950 flood, he was the one that helped keep the pumps going to keep the water out of our basement, so--

RK: Yeah.

INT: Did you have, for instance were there any Indians that worked with you at any point on the, with the dam, besides emergencies?

BK: Just during the flood.

RK: No, there, the Indians worked, there were Grand Rapids, Ole had, wasn't it Ole, or, who was the dam tender?

BK: Seelye.

RK: Seelye is an Indian and wife [Irvin and Margie Seelye].

BK: But there were--

RK: I used to pick up Seelye and then we would go out around the reservoirs on snow survey in the spring of the year to measure the depth of snow for water content. I always used to pick up Seelye and stay one night at his house 'cause it was always late when we got back, anyway. Boy, that damned Indian was a good cook. She could really cook.

BK: Well, most of them had gotten to the point where they were pretty much mixed; her father, I think, was Norwegian.

RK: I think Seelye is retired by now; I guess she could really cook.

BK: Well, she had a stroke about five years ago or more, maybe it was a little longer than that, so things kind of got--

INT: But, he was the dam tender at Grand Rapids and they--

BK: Yeah, Winnibigosh.

RK: Winni.

INT: Oh, OK, From old stories and old pictures, I gather that in some families there was like a dam tender might have an Indian wife or might be an Indian himself, or--

BK: That's what started at Sandy Lake. There was a fellow that built the dam, wasn't it, married an Indian woman.

RK: Yeah.

INT: I've seen her picture and I've seen, Mr. Fitzpatrick, I think [in]. His scrapbook I saw pictures, which was down at the St. Paul office, I saw pictures of an Indian woman who was married to a dam tender. I'm not sure if it was Sandy--

RK: Must have been Sandy.

INT: And I can't remember the guy's name right now, but it was really interesting. They were wonderful pictures of her.

BK: We knew her daughter, her daughter [Margaret Davis]. She taught school down in the Cities and then she went to Washington, D.C. and taught, and then she ended up and had a daughter out in California, and she ended up out there. Well, then she had another daughter that was up in Anchorage. The last time we saw her was up at Anchorage. She died up there; she finally had to go to a nursing home up there. She was close to 90, I think 88, 89 when she died.

INT: I take it that, for instance, wild rice was not a big thing at Sandy the way it was at Leech; or was it?

RK: Well, Sandy produced quite a bit of wild rice, but--

INT: And did you work with the Chippewa at all on that? Were there water level questions there, or--

RK: Oh, no, just across the, well, where Sandy, you know how Sandy comes in, you been at Sandy Lake dam?

INT: I haven't been to the dam itself, unfortunately.

RK: Well, I don't know if I got any--

BK: You know this airplane picture.

[PAUSE while BK brings aerial view of Sandy Lake from bedroom.]

RK: Picture of it or not, but anyway,

[Pause]

BK: Does this help to describe what—

RK: Well—

INT: Over there.

RK: Yeah.

INT: So, is north this way so is this over on the western—

RK: North would be—

BK: It was kind of at an angle.

RK: North would be over here.

INT: So it would be kind of north of the lake, little northeast.

RK: Yes.

BK: 'Cause it wasn't straight north.

RK: There's a house right up in here. There used to be a bridge across here.

INT: You can see that must not be very far.

RK: No, but that kind of got dilapidated, and I tore that out of there. They wanted to get over there, they had to go in by boat here. They always had a boat, they kept the boat—

INT: You mean the tribe or the wild ricers or--

RK: No, there was just one.

INT: A family.

BK: That was—

RK: He was—

BK: The family of—

RK: He operated the dam for many, many years.

INT: Before you.

RK: Oh, yes, before any of the rest of them. He was one of the first dam tenders that was there.

BK: Wasn't he there for building that dam?

RK: Yeah, he was there when they built it.

BK: And then it was his, was her, this woman that he married had been married three or four times, wasn't she?

RK: I don't know.

BK: She had different families; well, one became a, at Walker there--

RK: Oh, a district attorney.

BK: District attorney, and as I say, this one was a teacher. These were all these children of hers. Now I don't know, I don't think he was the father of any of them. But he managed to get them all an education. Well, she was the one though, they said she was.

RK: Snetsinger was the dam tender, and he lived right up in here. And he educated every damn one of the kids. And they all became, well engineers, lawyers, every one of them. The girls, oh, well, there were three, I think. And the last time I saw them, they were all there one weekend. And they were from out in North Dakota, they were out in the West. But they managed to come back every so often. [Note: Kolbs don't know senior Snetsingers' names. The children and grandchildren visited the dam 1947-1970.]

BK: The last we heard of the son [Fred Snetsinger] he was in a nursing home up by Grand Rapids.

RK: Oh.

BK: Wasn't that Mrs. Davis's brother?

RK: Yeah, yeah.

INT: But this was wild rice over here?

RK: No, that was a quite a bit--

BK: Does this show it any better?

RK: No, this would show it; we built this in here after when I became dam tender.

INT: And, this is the camping.

RK: Yeah, this is the camping. When I opened this up, he said, Ike, you're going to rue the day that you opened that up. So they finally had to come and put, they put all this in up to this point up here.

INT: Now, was this done before you retired in 1970?

BK: Oh, yeah.

RK: Oh, yeah.

INT: But you all didn't build it, somebody came in and--

BK: He had help on that.

RK: This was done by contract.

BK: He and one other fellow put in 1,000 trees, though, one day, seedlings.

RK: Yeah.

INT: Where, right around here?

RK: Yeah, all around in this area.

BK: After he cleaned it all up, they kind of wanted some trees.

RK: You know, we planted an awful bunch.

INT: Are there any people in particular that you, you know that helped you do this? I mean, either here in this area or people in St. Paul who were particularly interested or supportive?

RK: No, I don't know of anybody that's -- Johnny Moran

BK: No, he passed away so early he didn't have too much--

RK: He's gone.

Tape 2, Side 2

INT: Now, who was he?

RK: Johnny Moran was a Civil Engineer.

INT: Did he work for the Corps of Engineers in St. Paul?

RK: Yeah, he worked--

BK: He was his next one up, I mean, that he had to go to in the office.

INT: Now, let me just ask a quick question about that. As I understand it, for a long time you all reported to somebody in the St. Paul office and then they built the Remer office, and there was somebody up here?

BK: Uh-huh.

RK: I never reported to anybody in Remer.

INT: Oh, so Remer is since you retired,

BK: Uh-huh.

INT: You always called directly into St. Paul.

RK: Always talked to St. Paul.

BK: Before we left there, I don't know, remember how long--

RK: Owen Emsweiler was a--

BK: Thing is, we had the radio communication.

INT: So, it wasn't telephone, it was radio.

BK: Yeah, it was radio at the end; that wasn't too long.

INT: Now, when did you begin to have somebody, like a maintenance person assigned to help you and--

BK: Well, that was just part-time in the summertime and--

RK: Just part-time.

INT: And was there only, was that in, say the 60's, or the late 50's that you began to have--

BK: I guess in the 60's.

RK: Well--

BK: Wasn't too much in the 50's.

RK: When did I come to Sandy?

BK: '47.

RK: '47, Oh, I used to hire Clark occasionally in the early years.

BK: Yeah.

INT: Now, who is that?

RK: Clark Wotring. He was, had a resort down the lake from us.

INT: And you just had money that you could do that if you needed help?

BK: No, he--

BK: He took over a couple, three times when we took vacation.

RK: Yeah. He was, well, he was one of the old-timers there. And, you know, you worked off and on up at the dam when they needed extra help. He had a resort down there, too, and they could always call on Clark when you needed help. Because he knew everything; he knew what to do and how to do it.

INT: Now, was he, did he live in Palisade or in?

BK: No, he lived just a couple miles from the dam.

RK: Just down the road from us a few miles; so he would come and relieve me when I went on leave.

INT: How much leave did you get a year?

BK: Two weeks, I think it was.

RK: Well, I didn't take it all.

INT: Yeah.

BK: Lot of times you couldn't get somebody to --

INT: Could you save it from year to year if you needed to?

RK: No.

BK: Another thing, we couldn't afford it; so it worked both ways. We made no fuss about it, because we couldn't afford to go, anyway.

INT: Did you have, I won't ask very many more questions, I realize I have been kind of--

RK: Don't worry about that.

BK: Now that I have those pictures done, I better wipe them off.

INT: Did you pretty much manage things? I mean how many people worked with you in the summer? Did you have, when you were building something, did you just hire local boys to help you or did you?

RK: Well, no, this old fellow that used to live down below and used to have a resort down there, his name was Clark Wotring, he was a kind of a standby for --

BK: Well, his sons had even worked at the dam for the former dam tender that was there before we came there.

INT: So, if you, say, if you were clearing brush or building some new camping facilities, that's the family that you would go to for help?

BK: Towards the end, they got to the point where they'd put a lot of things out on contract. Remember, they put that, for the water pump, etc., that house up in the, you didn't approve of the way they were doing it, but it was on contract. And you, Bill Schultz, I think, was the one up that supervised it.

RK: Anything that Schultz supervised, why -

BK: I thought you said, well, it would never have passed your inspection.

RK: What did you say?

BK: I said, I can remember you saying, well, it would never have passed your inspection. But he had nothing to say about it, he was

INT: OK, that's—

BK: Because they were getting in younger fellows, and they had ideas that it had to be done by professionals or something.

RK: Had one contractor said, I sure would hate like hell to work for you.

BK: So they went more for. Years ago, you went ahead and did things, but it had to be done, you did it. But it got to be, had to be professional.

INT: Did you have any rangers? Did your job change to being a ranger or did a ranger come to be part of the Sandy Lake?

BK: Well, he started the first, making a check. He had one of the school kids, Ron Smith, making a, just to test out to see how many campers would come, etc., and that's what started them getting the rangers started.

INT: And when was this? Would this have been in the 60's that you were?

RK: It was in the 70's.

BK: No, it wasn't, you retired in the 1970's; it was in the 60's.

RK: It was in the 60's, then, Ronnie, Ron was, maybe a sophomore in high school [in McGregor].

BK: Junior or senior.

RK: Maybe a junior in high school.

INT: So in the summers he would come around and check the campground for you?

RK: He was brought up, his dad operated a—

BK: Resort.

RK: What'd you say, mother?

BK: A resort.

RK: What?

BK: A resort.

RK: A resort. Yeah, so he was brought up with the public, you know; that's what you had to have. You couldn't just take any kid and stick him out there; you had to know somebody that could talk to the public. [Smith family's resort was on Wotring's Point, Sandy Lake.]

BK: He's a teacher down in McGregor now.

RK: Ronnie was a good kid; boy, you could go away and leave him, and he'd take care of them. Never heard any complaints.

INT: Now, how many, for instance, when he would have been doing his rounds, do you think you would have had 50 campers out there or more than that?

RK: No, I don't think that—

BK: It wasn't too many, cuz it was just the office wanted.

RK: I would think that the most we ever had was about 70 campers there at one time, on a 4th of July weekend or on Labor Day weekend, I forgot which it was. But they would be there for—

INT: For the holiday.

RK: Yeah, for two nights, see.

INT: So that would be 70 families or 70 altogether?

RK: Yeah.

INT: More families.

RK: Yeah.

INT: Did you ever charge? You didn't, did you?

RK: No, no.

INT: It was always free.

RK: It was always free.

INT: And could people get groceries or anything like that?

RK: Well, we had to go down to Libby, see, about three-quarters of a mile. Ole Larson had a store down there.

INT: So, there was water and there were outhouses.

RK: Yeah.

INT: And was there electricity for people in those days?

RK: No.

BK: No, there wasn't any electricity.

RK: Huh? No, no electricity at all.

INT: Is there now?

RK: Yeah.

INT: They have plug-ins, don't they?

RK: I think they have a plug-in out there now. Stuck up a pole, and put a plug in it.

INT: Did the kind of campers change? Did a different kind of person come to the campground over time?

RK: Well, no. Like this one camper, the first one that came when I opened up the campground, he was a city engineer from Ames, Iowa. Then he goes back home and tells his--

INT: Friends.

RK: Head, the construction department. He was a city engineer, see, and he comes up with his family and that's the way it developed you know. Pretty soon I was having the whole Ames district coming up, but they were all fine people and that was and, boy, they get--

BK: There was a boat from down at the Cities that came up. They were the first rowdy bunch. There was a boat group; and we had some from the Cities, too, Doug Volley was there at that time and then Ames

RK: I got up one night, and I went out there.

BK: Yeah, that was the night that you went out.

RK: And there was one war group out there--

INT: A war group? I mean, WWII veterans or something?

RK: And I says, I got out there. It was about 1-2 o'clock in the morning; I walked out there in my pajamas. I says, well, and this gal says Well, and I said that's enough out of you, you climb in that tent there and you stay there, and no more peeps out of you. And the city engineer from Ames was camped maybe 4 or 5 and he says, boy, am I glad that you came out there; we had to close the... He says you really quieted that bunch down.

BK: They were from Anoka.

RK: That's enough out of you; you climb in that tent, and..

BK: They liked to really tear around all night. Doug Volley was there, too, because they were talking about it the next morning. And we went out and they were talking to us, and they packed up their stuff and away they went. They figured they were kind of ostracized.

INT: But I take it that kind of incident was the exception, not the rule?

RK: Yeah, those campers that came up there, they--

BK: Most of the people--

RK: They came up for a nice quiet weekend, and, boy, if anybody got out of line, they damn soon let them know about it.

INT: So people kind of policed themselves.

RK: Yeah, you better quiet down before the dam tender comes out here.

[Mrs. Kolb pulls out a folder of materials about Sandy Lake; most are from Evan Hart, a family friend.]

BK: I had another article that went with this but I don't remember what I did with it.

RK: Huh.

BK: I had another article that kept out about this time but I don't remember where--

INT: Now is there anything that I haven't thought to ask that I've somehow made you think of, that you would want to just put on the tape. I always like to give people, if we are sitting around asking questions for a while, I always want to give people a chance to talk back, since you've been kind enough to let me--

BK: Well, our memories aren't too good anymore.

INT: Oh don't feel, you have said all sorts of really interesting things; don't think that your memories are somehow insufficient, because I certainly don't think it.

BK: When you get up to be 82 years old, you just don't function quite as good.

INT: Well, I always just hoping somebody might remember, or the other thing is, I often think of questions that people might not have ever thought of in that way. You know, nobody thinks just alike about anything, so I don't expect people to necessarily answer all my questions, at all.

BK: Well, we met, had a lot of interesting people that way though, through the years, that we would never have met otherwise. We lived 10 years in Minneiska when he was on the Whitman dam, and there was pretty much people that had lived there all their lives and were very narrow-minded, you might say, or didn't expand much. Where, here we met people from all phases of life; so we had a lot of interesting friends.

INT: I take it you got to know people and would keep up with them. And they would see you every year and things like that. I wanted to ask you if you all knew the dam tender who was here before you.

BK: Henry Dart. He had worked at Alma, and he had worked at Red Wing at construction. And we didn't know them too well because our children were babies at the time. But we had met them and did know them.

INT: Did they retire up around here, around Sandy?

BK: They retired up at Federal Dam; he went to Federal Dam.

INT: Did he stay at Sandy Lake anywhere near as long as you did?

BK: No, 8 years, I believe. I think he was up at Federal Dam 8 years, and I believe he was at Sandy 8 years. He retired a little early, because they wished they had stayed at Sandy; they were never too happy up at Federal. They would have been happier at Sandy.

RK: He had too much Indian trouble up at Sandy.

INT: At Sandy or at Federal?

RK: At Federal Dam.

BK: I don't know what the trouble was, but they weren't as happy there.

RK: You know if you hired them, you hired Indians up at Federal Dam.

BK: I suppose they weren't quite as--

RK: And then they would go out and get holy drunk on Saturday night.

BK: Weren't as quite as reliable--

INT: The reason I am asking is because I am going to be at Federal Dam and in Boy River tomorrow, and I am curious.

RK: Seelye you know, is part Indian.

INT: Well, I understand Leroy Campbell is too. Is that right? Leroy Campbell?

RK: I don't know Campbell.

BK: He's someone new.

INT: Oh, because I understand he worked with Ole Henderson and--

RK: Well--

INT: I may have this wrong; I'm just alert to it, but--

BK: Well, you see, it beyond since--

INT: Since your time.

RK: Ole still working?

INT: No, he's retired.

BK: Don't you remember? We were up to his place that one time. We stopped where he built his new home. And he showed us what he bought with the money that he got from you guys for retirement. We couldn't go to his retirement party; I guess you were sick at the time. But so everybody gave him money, and he bought something for his new home.

RK: Oh, I forgot.

BK: Well, he brought it out when we stopped there. We stopped when Henry Dart came back. That was the reason.

RK: Maybe he bought a fifth Canadian Club or whatever.

BK: Henry Dart came back for a reunion down at St. Paul, and we picked him up and brought him back with us. And then the next day we took him around the reservoir, and that's when we visited them. If we had done it on our own, we wouldn't have. But we knew Henry wanted to see everybody. And that's when Ole showed us. Of course, Henry knew that area pretty well, too. He knew just where to go.

INT: Let me shut this off. [Resumes] When you were working at Sandy were they doing archaeology digs and stuff like that? Were you aware of historical sites or archaeological digs at that reservoir?

RK: We had Prof. Hart. You've heard of him?

INT: I think I've seen some of his reports.

RK: Well, he lived down on the point below the dam on the lake.

INT: Was he a year around resident, or did he have a summer home?

RK: He had a summer home. And one day there was, I noticed a couple of kids out on the point digging.

BK: That was after Hart, I think, passed away; it was his son-in-law, I think, you contacted that day.

RK: I went out there, and, What are you guys doing? Well, there used to be some historical sites on this point and we're just digging to see what we can find. Well, I said, you can just cover them up and move yourself out and leave it alone.

BK: Then this Prof. Hart's daughter's family, her daughter and her husband they bought where the old trading post was down on Browns Point, and they dug it all up and sifted it and that's where most of, almost everything in the museum over there is from there.

RK: At Sandy.

INT: At that point, for instance, when you were working at the dam, they hadn't started bringing in archeology teams from, the Corps hadn't started bringing in contract work?

RK: No, no.

BK: Of course, they came up [from] most of the [severt], they had dug up a couple things that Frank felt was important

RK: Who?

BK: Frank Zink, he was Prof. Hart's son-in-law.

INT: Now was Prof. Hart at the University or did he?

BK: He was in Iowa.

RK: Iowa, University of Iowa.

INT: Because I've seen Univ. of Minn. Professor's reports on some of the archeological and Bemidji--

BK: And his son [Evan Hart] became a very good friend of ours. And he was in Milwaukee; I don't know what business he was in. But any rate, he was so interested in the history and he knew so many of the like Russell Fridley and they hired him as a historical sites supervisor. But, every Christmas we would get information from him on the history of Sandy Lake. It was our Christmas present, and I think I don't know whether that's what he is looking for or; here's one of them. I'm quite sure, a map, look like it.

RK: This is from Frank [Zink].

RK: Mac was just as much as a [Kolbs unable to clarify this.]

BK: When they opened that north campground, they had an Indian pow wow that Evan brought up. Evan even learned the Indian language so he could get history from the Indians.

INT: That's interesting, I think I've heard of his work.

BK: So they were up there when they had this Indian pow wow to open this north campground; it wasn't too much open, but they did camp up there that night.

INT: Now, when was this?

BK: They took off to go over to the old fur traders route with their canoes and we waved to them good-bye. Well, it wasn't quite the last time. I think they were up at Floodwood that night and couple of them came down and had coffee with us that evening and then went back up and continued on their trip. It wasn't shortly after that that he died of a heart attack. I think it was three weeks afterwards that he died. That was the last we saw of him. He was in Milwaukee most of the time he sent us as a Christmas present this information.

INT: And, um, so it would have been in the '50's that this Indian pow wow happened. If he died in 1958.

RK: Yeah.

INT: Oh no, that can't be right then, '64.

RK: '64.

BK: That was when, now the campground was only open about 3 weeks before he died.

INT: So the first campground was open in the mid '50s and the second in 1964?

BK: Uh-huh.

INT: And he grew up in this area at least in the summers?

BK: He was there for the summers. They ended up with two cottages there, I guess, it was. They bought the one because it was on the fur trading post, and they wanted to dig it up and sift all the get all the artifacts.

RK: Yeah, they --.

INT: While we are on the subject of Indians a little bit what is this picture from, do you know, this [8 x 10, male adults posing for documentary shot, children sitting in foreground.]

RK: That was taken of a bunch of Indians on the north shore of Sandy. Used to be what they called an Indian village.

INT: You mean, was it an Indian village?

RK: Yeah.

INT: Indians lived in it.

RK: Yeah.

INT: It looks like everybody, they are all--

BK: Just above the dam was quite an Indian village at one time, before our time. Because different ones would come back and visit, and it made them feel so bad the way it had changed. Cuz there was nothing there that was familiar to them anymore.

INT: Do you know when this picture was taken?

RK: No, I don't.

INT: It looks to me as if it could be around 1900, 1912 or something, just by the way people are dressed, but it's hard to tell.

BK: Is this picture you had?

RK: Yes.

BK: Was that one Evan sent you or?

RK: Yes.

INT: It looks like there's one white person in there, and some white children too. Do you see the guy with the mustache and then there's some children down there that look to me --.

BK: What is that?

RK: That's Dad ['Dad' is written across picture.]

BK: That must have been Prof. Hart then, when he was young

INT: Oh, you mean that was Evan [Hart]?

BK: Evan's father.

RK: Evan's father.

INT: Do you think that Evan was one of the children; do you see the little children down there?

BK: He could be.

RK: He could be.

INT: Isn't that interesting.

RK: Evan was the one who gave us that.

BK: Oh, I didn't remember ever seeing that picture.

RK: Oh, yeah, it's been in there.

INT: The grown-up isn't Dad; it's a little boy. Whose dad would that have been, do you see what I mean? That arrow goes all the way down to that little boy's straw hat.

BK: Oh, maybe that's what, when his dad was little, coming up.

INT: Did his father come up, too?

BK: Oh--

INT: I mean--

BK: When we first were there they came, but then he passed away during that time.

INT: I mean, was Evan Hart the third generation of his family to come up here?

BK: No, second.

INT: Second, ah huh.

BK: But that might have been his dad when they first came up here. They, the first couple years or something Professor Hart was there, but I think he passed away then. We first met--

End Tape 2, Side 2

Tape 3, Side 1

INT: Now, you were just telling me that you passed up a promotion and a trip or a chance to move to another dam. Would you tell me that story on tape just so we have it?

RK: Sure. Well.

INT: About what year was this? Mrs. Kolb said it was your 25th wedding anniversary, so--

BK: We were married in '29; so, 25 years after '29; '54, wouldn't it have been?

RK: '54. Well, we were walking down the street in Valley City.

INT: This is in North Dakota?

RK: Yeah. And the head of the, oh, what would you have called it, city, ah?

BK: Mayor, or councilman or something?

RK: Huh?

BK: Was it a mayor or councilman?

RK: Yeah, probably a councilman.

INT: You were out there working for, I mean, you were out there on a--

RK: No, I was working for the Corps.

INT: But you were out there, helping out or something?

RK: I was out there taking over for--

BK: They had their ideas that he was to move out there.

RK: Who was it, Wes?

BK: Wes came up here; Wes came up for our silver anniversary. And he said, well, I got news for you; you are going out to Baldhill.

INT: Now, this is Wesley Walters from the St. Paul District Office?

RK: Yea, I got news for, you're going out to Valley City, and I said, what? How did that go, Betty?

BK: Well, you drove up.

RK: Oh, yeah, I drove up.

BK: And our daughter was here from Alaska with our first grandchild.

RK: Then--

BK: And we were to take them back to the airport. and your sister--

RK: Here we were having our 25th wedding anniversary, and--

BK: So your sister--

RK: I said that's coming in a wrong time. I said, no way am I going to go to Baldhill.

INT: Seemed too bald, huh?

RK: Oh, God, that would drive, drove me crazy?

INT: What did--

BK: Wes asked me to go out there and try and talk him into it.

RK: And I was walkin' down the street with him.

BK: Well, the main thing that brought--

RK: There was one of the village members that was with Wes or Owen, who was it? Wes was there, I guess.

BK: Owen was out there to see you, too.

RK: Or Owen.

INT: Who was Owen?

RK: Owen Emsweiler.

INT: Also from the St. Paul?

RK: Yeah. He was from St. Paul. And he says to this fellow, we want to send Mr. Kolb out here to take over the Baldhill Dam, but he doesn't want to. And he turned and said to me, why don't you want to come up? Why, I said, hells bells, you can take a French 75 out here and fire it and never touch a soul. He said, yes, and I got a sister that lives in Eau Claire and her next door neighbor 35 feet away from her, you can't even hear her. But he was real perturbed that I—

BK: Well, the city of Valley City is a nice city, but where they had the dam and the way they had the dam built, I didn't think it was just our life-style.

RK: I'd of had to rebuilt that whole damned dam.

BK: The house wasn't, just wasn't built for people.

RK: They had a guy livin' out there, or workin' out there, and had charge of it—

INT: But it just wasn't—

RK: I drove in the yard, and I said, Herb [Stevens], I'd known this kid since he was that high, you know.

BK: He worked on [Mississippi River] surveys with his dad ['Steve' Stevens].

INT: This is all an interlocking -. Everybody knows everybody, I mean.

RK: I said Herb, I don't know what this is all about, but give me the keys, I said, and you could be in St. Paul tomorrow morning by 8 o'clock. You could take that train out there tonight and he does. So -.

INT: Do you think, something that I wondered when we came up here to do these interviews was were there people who, especially people who had been at reservoir dams for a long time, just were very comfortable with this kind of landscape and if, for instance, I noticed that most of you have retired and only one of you goes to Arizona every winter, and

BK: Well, Darts went out to Arizona; it was quite, oh more or less like this out where they moved. It wasn't populated, heavily populated, and they moved out. And Florence told me, because she had arthritis, too, and she says don't come out here for your arthritis 'cus you have your arthritis

here, too. And she says it's a lot different than it was when we came out. And if we weren't so old, we would make a move. So, but she says, we're too old to change now, and it just wasn't the same anymore. Built up so.

INT: And, of course, things haven't become built up here in this part of the country.

BK: No, no.

INT: Some of the resorts have, but not the countryside itself.

BK: Well, even the resorts have deteriorated or they don't have business either anymore,

INT: Oh, really, I didn't know that

BK: There's too too many campers etc. Most of the people--

INT: Oh, people don't go to the resorts anymore.

BK: Most of the resorts have split up and sold their cottages individually.

INT: Oh, now see, you're giving me the bird's-eye view here.

RK: Yes, you want to come up here to live, go some one of these cottages, one of these resorts and ask them if they got any cottages for sale.

INT: That's really interesting; see I'm not aware of that.

RK: You got--

INT: Tipping me off to something to be--

RK: You get lakeside property--

INT: Actually, I guess you know, my friends that live on Lake Vermilion have told me another part of the story which is that people in my generation can't afford to inherit these big old houses.

RK: Well, that's true.

INT: And so there's another, so, I do see that things are changing on several ends for these big Minnesota lakes. And, I guess, part of what happened with the Corps of Engineers is that it got into doing the camping and the RV facilities just when that was going to become important, although people might not have realized how it was going to affect everything.

RK: Boy, and I'm the guy that started it.

INT: Now, nobody else had another, I mean, you were the dam tender who got the ball rolling?

RK: Well, one -.

INT: Ole Henderson hadn't built anything yet or anything?

RK: Ole hadn't made, had no idea.

BK: After they had Sandy going then, they started on the other dams.

RK: And just because of a city engineer in Ames, Iowa.

INT: Who was camping, so you decided -

RK: He was camping.

INT: So you decided you would clear off the point just a little bit.

RK: Yeah, trimmed up the trees, even done some of that when he was there, one night tree blew down, pretnear just missed his cabin. His wife

INT: His next child, too--

RK: His wife was in it; boy, she came bailing out of that tent.

BK: We met a lot of good friends up here.

INT: Oh, I can see that you must have.

RK: Oh, we made, lots and lots of people who became good friends to us, because it was something that--

BK: Well you met people of all--

RK: You'll never repeat itself, you know, that's part of history. And a -, Oh, I brushed out that point, old Emsweiler you'll rue the day, Ike, that you brushed that point out. Next time he came up, I had tents the full length of it. I said, see.

BK: Well, when they had putting up other buildings and everything, they modernized it a little bit too much, kind of spoiled it, in a way.

RK: Well, we didn't dare--

BK: No.

INT: Made it a different kind of place.

RK: We moved the biffy back over next to the launching ramp; it used to be way back on the point.

BK: Well, then they took that out and changed it again, so.

RK: Yeah, afterwards, that was after I'd gone.

INT: You know something I always noticed is that in northern Minnesota an outhouse is a biffy; in southern Minnesota, it's called a backhouse.

RK: Yeah. Laughs.

End of interview.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ST. PAUL DISTRICT

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW FORM

Narrator Name: Edward Sunde

Address: 5377 Gull Lake Dam Rd., N.W., Brainerd, MN 56401

Date of Interview: 12-17-86

Place of Interview: Buddy's Cafe, 371 No. outside Brainerd

Name of Interviewer: Jo Blatti

Project Title (if any): Corps/Mississippi Headwaters

Narrator Biographical Information:

Full name (including maiden name): Edward Eugene Sunde

Year of Birth: 1930

Spouse's full name: Hattie Ann (Pickar) Sunde

Subjects Discussed:

Work with Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Headwaters Reservoirs Cross Lake/Gull Lake maintenance and asst. dam tender (1958-1975); parks manager, Leech Lake (1975-1985). Discusses his own construction background, development of Cross Lake facility, 1960's; Leech Lake dwelling; development of area manager position in Headwaters, 1970's; upgrading of Corps recreational facilities; Leech Lake/Cass Lake Chippewa; wild rice paddies around Leech; transition from dam tending to parks and natural resources; his retirement (medical).

TAPE RECORDING:

No. of Cassettes: 2 No. of Reels & Speed: _____

Length of Interview: 1 hr. 15-20 min.

Release form signed (date): 12-17-86

Restrictions (if any): -0-

Comments:

TRANSCRIPT:

Date completed: January 1987 No. of Pages: 21

Restrictions (if any): -0-

Comments:

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ST. PAUL DISTRICT

ORAL HISTORY AGREEMENT FORM

I, Edward Sunde, a participant in
an oral history interview recorded on 12.17.86,
hereby give and deliver to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul
District all the incidents of ownership in that interview, including
copyright, from this time forward.

Signed:

Date 12.17.86

Edward Sunde
Donor

Address 5377 Bull Lake Dam Rd, NW
Brainerd, Minnesota 56401

Signed:

J. Blatti
Interviewer

TAPE INDEX
Corps/Mississippi Headwaters Pilot Project
Interview With Edward Sunde, Brainerd, MN
12-17-86
1 hr. 20 min. total

Tape 1, Side 1

- 0 min. Began with Corps 1958, general maintenance Cross Lake/Gull Lake, Clarence Erickson dam tender
- Born and raised on farm in Riverton; laid off from mines; worked with contractor, lots of experience with machinery, welding, 'cats'
- 1964 cut 1st brush (4" below ground) for recreation with Ed Fitzpatrick at Cross Lake; remembers Jim Von Lorenz head, of recreation at Corps, as frequent visitor; A, B and C areas
- Gull Lake burial mounds, pottery and bones
- Area manager position, first at Grand Rapids, then Remer
- Goes to Leech Lake as park manager upon Ole Henderson's retirement (1975). Notes construction road, comfort station, fish-cleaning houses, free area there
- Cutbacks as facilities completed and then as Corps requests leaner staffing on and off season
- Describes Leech Lake dwelling, increasing rent, insulation, heat and utilities arrangements; security advantages in on-site housing.
- 15 min. Up at all hours for camper messages and emergencies; 'handy' radios eased camper communications.
- Describes Cross Lake facility ca. 1964 when Corps took over from the village, overflow crowds (meaning 25-30 families) by '68, '69
- Observes that Cross/Gull "family" from beginning, Leech more "fishing"
- Discusses difficulty of putting in swimming beach at Leech, recommends a pool as possible answer

Tape 1, Side 2

- 0 min. Turn away crowds for fishing season openers, 4th of July, Labor Day
- Cross Lake waiting list system compared to Leech Lake system of referral to other campgrounds
- Describes changing visitor patterns at Leech as: 'diehard' fishermen, husband-wife duos, senior citizens, more and more families (5, 6, 7 kids)

Meetings with Cass Lake Chippewa community, hired for general labor, occasional problem with fishing off the dam apron (Leech)

Meeting with Corps/Cass Lake community on wild rice water levels. Questions effects of dam on water level.

15 min. Discusses Waboose Bay marsh, idea for Winnibigoshish-Leech channel

Describes seeing picture of Leech Lake dwelling showing 1876 cornerstone

Project with John Zahlka (then ranger at Leech) on history of town of Federal Dam and Leech Lake, wildlife; pamphlet distributed to campers (late 1970's, early 1980's)

Praises Leroy Campbell as special help first year at Leech; task of setting up new shop

Describes rewiring, building and renovation projects at Gull and Cross prior to Leech set-up

Ole Henderson, retiring at Leech, wanted to let new man set up facilities to suit himself

ES favors Leech, work with public and public relations there

End tape 1, side 2

Tape 2, Side 1

0 min. Misses work. Liked to see people come back in spring. Wintertime bald eagles Mud Lake; sound of the (boat) launches

Discusses changing title, park manager, natural resources

Describes St. Paul-centered dam tending; then more people in the field when parks took over

Praises Fitzpatrick as dam tender and area manager. Describes his working relationship with area manager Jim Ruyak in some detail, notes 100% support.

10 min. Ranger system as "sore spot" for some initially, wore off

His own situation more maintenance into management, another sort of change entirely

Commercial wild rice culture around Leech and Mud Lake, past 10-20 years: Henderson and Lego operations; California competition

Retirement after 30 years (counting military), would've stayed for 40 except health.

Comparison all of Headwaters reservoirs, favorite Leech.

20 min. End of tape 2

CORPS/MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS PILOT PROJECT
INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD SUNDE
DECEMBER 17, 1986
1 HOUR, 20 MINUTES TOTAL

Tape 1, Side 1

Wednesday, December 17, Jo Blatti interviewing Edward Sunde in Buddy's Cafe near Brainerd, Minnesota. Actually, it's almost to Cross Lake, Gull Lake.

INT: Can you tell me when you began working with the Corps of Engineers?

ES: Let's see, it was 19, Nov. 1958, no, August 1958.

INT: And how did you come, what was your first job there?

ES: Ah, I was a kind of general maintenance, you know, around the area, cut the grass, paint the buildings and stuff like that.

INT: And was this at Cross Lake, Gull Lake with Ed?

ES: Cross Lake and Gull Lake both.

INT: Working with Ed Fitzpatrick?

ES: No, it was Clarence Erickson. I worked a couple years with him, and then Ed Fitzpatrick came. Then Fitz, we worked there and I, well, I was a laborer when I first started. Then I went to maintenance man. And then, flood control dam helper, I think they called it. Ah, after Fitz came, I done a lot of maintenance for all the sites -, ah, lawn mowers and stuff like that. And ah, then at Cross Lake, we traveled from here up there pret'near every day, after the recreation stuff started. Before that, it was once, twice a week.

INT: Now--

ES: To check the dam and stuff.

INT: So, at first it was, it was reading the gages and dam maintenance, and then it became, and that was a couple of times a week, and then it became a more, a daily trip then. How did you come to the Corps; are you from this area?

ES: I was born and raised north of Riverton and, ah--

INT: We passed that on our way into Brainerd; so you were born on the river.

ES: Yeah, on a farm there, right along the Mississippi River. And then I came up here, and I was laid off from the mines down there, and we were living up here then.

INT: In Brainerd?

ES: After I got married and I was looking for a job and I was baling hay down there when Paul Novak, he was transferred to Lac Qui Parle. Then Clarence Erickson was looking for another laborer, so he came and asked me if I wanted to apply. So I applied and that's how it started.

INT: I've gotten the impression talking from Ole Henderson & Ike Kolb that the dam tenders were able to choose their men, and that was something that they especially valued in the way that things worked out here.

ES: And then I was probably, you know, I had a lot of experience in a lot of things; I had experience in welding and mechanical work and truck driving, cats, backhoe, drag line, all that stuff. I worked with a contractor for a while. But that all helped down there, and then along with the farm, learning on there with the farm machinery and one thing and another. That all helped. And I believe it was in 1964, Ed Fitzpatrick and I cut the first brush on Cross Lake.

INT: And that's when you began to--

ES: The recreation area.

INT: And do you remember, ah, one thing that I'm, you know, a lot of the reason that the Corps has asked us to do some oral history was, several of you who began to do this work, is that to see where the fit was between what people were writing memos about down in St. Paul and what actually it was like to be working up here and to doing the, the, you know, being at the dams. And do you remember if there were like, memos from St. Paul about this, or did you two just kind of get involved in doing it or--

ES: Well, they, they sent out memos on the area, you know, but I don't remember what they were. But, ah, Jim Von Lorenz,

INT: That's a name I've heard before.

ES: He was kind of head of the recreation at that time. He used to come up here quite often from St. Paul.

INT: Would that be once a month or every couple of months?

ES: Oh, yeah, probably not that often. But he'd be up a couple times a summer, anyway, unless he had to come up for some reason, special reason. But, ah, we, ah, started cutting brush up there, and at that time, we had to cut it four inches below the ground. And so then, we hired a crew. Quite a few of them. It was more than 15 or more.

INT: Would these be high school kids or --?

ES: No, they were everybody, there were some high school kids, and there was some older people, you know. And they would split them up four or five here and there, you know, around the camp area and then the contractor built the A area and B area, and then later, C area, ah, we built.

INT: Now, is this all at Gull, or is this at Cross?

ES: No, this is at Cross. But, ah, after A area and B area was built, we still hadn't done anything down here. But they were working on it, and there was some burial grounds down here and--

INT: OK.

ES: And Jan Streiff headed that; she make 'um out, and they dug into those. And, ah, it had, they found a lot of pottery and bones and stuff you know. And so we fenced that off in there; it was a burial grounds. Well, after we got done with C area up there at Cross Lake, then we started on another area, but, in between, there was a dump station put in and a sewer plant. And then, that was about, after the sewage plant got in --.

INT: Do you remember when that would have been?

ES: Not off hand.

INT: I mean, it's not that important, but I just wondered if you --

ES: Yeah, but, ah, Walter Hermerding came, I think it was the second year, second or third year the sewer plant was in there.

INT: Now, did he come to Cross or to Gull?

ES: Yeah, he went to Cross as dam tender. And, ah, then Fitzpatrick, shortly after that, I think, Fitz, he was on the ground work down here, but I think he was area manager. And Milt Roppe was the dam tender down here.

INT: This is at Gull then?

ES: Yeah. And, ah, the time Milt Roppe came, that was the same time Walt Hermerding came, Walt came just ahead of Milt and, ah, they had a. Then they started Gull down there and a built a campground, ranger station, put in a sewer plant and, starting in later years as they went along, you know, first they had outside toilets. And then Milt was there a couple years, two years, two and a half years, and he took Fitz's place when Fitz retired.

INT: As the area, is it the area recreation manager that he was?

ES: Yeah, and--

INT: Was his office in Remer or, --?

ES: Remer, yeah.

INT: So it is where Jim Ruyak's office is now.

ES: Yeah. Fitz, when he was, first went, he went to Grand Rapids. He was in, he had an office in where the dam tender is, but then eventually, he moved to Remer. But then, Milt retired, and then I applied for the job and Marty Ehrhardt was selected, and he got the job. Well, then, we worked about a year and a half, and Ole Henderson retired. And then I was, I applied for that, and I was chosen for Leech Lake. So I went to Leech

Lake as park manager and, ah dam tender or whatever. They, ah, I got up there, and then we put in, we changed the road going into the camp ground, and we changed, I put in a comfort station and a sewage plant.

INT: This is right in Federal Dam?

ES: And, just on the west side of the road there. And we done a lot of other things; we built fish cleaning houses, playground equipment we put up, and things like that. And then, we built a free area, and oh, they had one free area that they built while I was there that went -.

INT: Free area, meaning people didn't have to pay?

ES: Yeah, didn't have to pay.

INT: Did it have any hookups or anything; or was it just a place to tent?

ES: No, it was just a place to park. It was just like a parking lot, and so we decided to make a game area out of that. So we moved the free area across the road and made it, wandered around through the woods and put in 14 campsites in there. Some pull-through and some aren't. We done that, by ourselves, with a tractor, and we hired some trucks to haul gravel in. And so then, we got that done, and oh, we put in electrical hookups throughout the campgrounds.

INT: Now, did you all do that, or did you have people come in on contract?

ES: Yeah, well, we had contractors come in for some of it; some of it we done. Like the 14 sites, we done that; all we had was Wally Peterson. We hired him to haul the gravel in and 'cus he had two dump trucks and had the gravel. So we hired him and then we bladed it off and stuff like that.

INT: Now, how long were you at Leech; would it have been 70?

ES: It was eleven years.

INT: Ok, so you retired fairly recently then. Because -

ES: A year ago in November.

INT: So you were there from '74, '75 until -

ES: About 75, until 11 November 1985.

INT: Because I remember that Mr. Henderson just retired 12 years ago. So,

ES: Yeah, I took his place. Then, we had four or five laborers working up there, seven, eight high school kids, park technician, four of them.

INT: Got to be a big crew.

ES: We got a lot of work done. Then the work started falling off, and we started cutting back. And then the government started cutting back; so we cut some more. And then, they asked us how far could we cut back; so we cut back as far as we possibly could and still survive and -.

INT: What was a skeleton crew for you in the summer, say?

ES: Well, it was, ah, the least we could go back was Leroy, John and myself and a secretary. That was as far back as we could go without -. You could go farther but there would be work that wouldn't be getting done and, ah.

INT: And that would be in the wintertime.

ES: No, that was in the summertime.

INT: I see.

ES: In the wintertime, Leroy would get laid off now. He was a permanent employee.

INT: Now he works nine months a year, I guess.

ES: Now he's cut back to nine months. And John, he was a park ranger and he was working pretty much full time. Then after the secretary got laid off after Labor Day, ah, probably somewhere between Labor Day and the 30th of the month, and then John would come into the office. I'd bring him in and in the wintertime there, and we done a lot of planning and a lot of other stuff we were going to do. And then there was a lot of paperwork that had to be done and, ah, appendix, we rewrote one of the them, all kinds of stuff, you know. So then, it was good experience for John, and John got my job.

INT: So he is the dam tender now, isn't he, or the representatives, the park manager.

ES: The park manager. Then, see, last year, two and a half, three years ago, they put a boat ramp in down here at Gull, a nice boat ramp, fish cleaning house and stuff. And ah, now they built another parking lot there last fall; so that expanded some more. The dam tender moved out down here and moved over in his own house, by Deerfield.

INT: Now, did you live at Leech?

ES: What?

INT: Did you live in the dwelling at Leech?

ES: Yeah.

INT: Can I ask a couple of questions about that? That's something we are trying to collect a little information about. Ah, you were there then from '75 through '85, in residence. I know now, from talking to the Kolbs and the Hendersons, that people paid rent; it wasn't a fringe

benefit of the job, ah. But I wondered if you and your family, for instance, were you comfortable living at the dam; would you just as soon have had a private house somewhere or?

ES: Oh, yeah, not really, it didn't really make that much difference. Ah, I never seen the money; they took it out of my check twice a month. And ah, there was no problem to pay it, because you never had it. But ah, it kept going up. Like when I first went up there it was \$24, \$25, \$26, somewhere in there, every two weeks. And ah, it was that way for a couple years, and then, when the five-year span was up. Well then, it went up. Still close to a \$100 or a little better than a hundred dollars; I think, it was \$116 or something. I think I was paying \$58 a pay day, and then it just kept climbing.

INT: It's beginning to sound like my mortgage.

ES: Yeah, then it went up; it was up to two hundred and, I don't remember offhand now, somewhere between two hundred and fifty, two hundred seventy dollars, somewhere in there.

INT: Did you think it was worth it in terms of the house?

ES: Oh, yeah.

INT: It was a good house?

ES: Yeah, it was a ten-room house and a nice large bath; we burned wood in it. It was oil, a combination furnace, and there was, we insulated it after we got there. It didn't have no insulation in the attic. The walls were well insulated, but the attic wasn't. So we dumped a lot of insulation up there, and that made a difference. I think it was six cord of wood all winter, you know; so that wasn't bad. And the lights, we paid our own lights, our own phone, although it was an extension from our shop, but we paid our own toll calls. We had to keep a record of everything. Then, it was kind of a good thing for security. They would, right today, I think they'd be better off if they had the dam tender living there, even if they'd give him free rent and ah -.

INT: Just with the visitor and the traffic, you mean?

ES: Yeah, just for, to talk to the public when they come around looking for someone to talk to. Sure, I got up at three o'clock in the morning, two o'clock in the morning, all hours of the day and night, you know. Well, somebody was wanted on the phone, a message for somebody, an emergency, or something like that, why, you just get up and go. Then they came out with those little handy radios; we could get a hold of the park technician then. And so then we would call them and give them the message, and they would round the people up and tell them. And, but that was one of the things that some people didn't like to do, probably. But it never did bother me any, ah, 'cus I was a light sleeper, anyway. I'd get up and read, I still do. But, ah, the thing is, the security, you know, we didn't have vandalism, you know.

INT: Has that become a problem since the dam?

ES: Well, I don't know if it has or not, but I know before, ah, if you'd, ah, didn't tend to keep good surveillance out there, you had people, when I first came up there, snooping around out there and there were things missing.

INT: What kinds of things?

ES: Well, stuff from the launch services, they'd lose some fuel or some other thing, you know, out of their boats and stuff.

INT: You mean from the concessions that were near the -?

ES: Yeah, they were just on the other side of the house. And I kind of missed the launches, too, you know, like when we retired. You know, 6:00 in the morning you'd hear those engines start up, you know. That was -.

INT: Another day has begun on the lake.

ES: Yeah, but, ah.

INT: Do you live on the water now?

ES: No, I--

INT: Have you and your family retired?

ES: I live down this road about a mile and half. We built a home down there about 25 years ago.

INT: Ah.

ES: Then I never sold it or nothing; I kept it. I didn't owe anything on it; I built it as I went, you know. And then a couple of my boys lived there while we were gone for a while, and then my daughter graduated and she moved in there with Mark. They lived there, and now they're both still living there yet, ah, with us. In fact, he works this restaurant with us. He's sleeping this morning, so I'm just down here helping out for a while this morning. Then I take off. Got to do a little something.

INT: I can imagine; everybody I've met from the dams does. I mean, it's not, you don't seem to be folks who retire into doing nothing.

ES: No, we always find plenty to do.

INT: Do you remember, I mean, when you first, you said that you and Ed Fitzpatrick started, ah, clearing the brush in 1964 at Gull, right, or Cross--

ES: At Cross.

INT: I'm sorry, this two-lake thing, I get a little confused when thinking where the two of you are. Did you have visitors, campers and fishers beginning to come around before then, or -?

ES: Well, it was a little village, at least the, a little spot, oh, maybe an acre, I don't know, somewhere in that area, ah, just off the highway across from the main part of town there. They had a well in there, just a shallow with a hand pump and, ah, they had about four or five tables in there and a couple of fireplaces made out of brick. And I don't know for sure just what happened. They had a lease for so many years with the Corps and, I at that time, I don't remember just what it was. I think something about they had to develop so much of the area.

INT: You mean the town had to?

ES: Yeah, and they hadn't developed it for years. They hadn't done anything with it, just that one time deal. And the lease was coming up, so the Corps just the land, and they decided to make a campground out of it. And there was people coming in there and having picnics in that little area there. They couldn't camp there, but they were coming in and having picnic lunches and stuff while we were working back in there. And people would walk back through there and look see what we were doing and ask a few questions. And then, the campground, ah, just kept picking up and picking up; we didn't have campsites enough. And that overflow area, called D area, we'd park 'um in there until you couldn't park any more.

INT: Now this would be by when, maybe 1970, that this would be? Or was it faster than that.?

ES: It was '68, '69, I would think. It was before Fitz retired.

INT: So, in just three to four years.

ES: Yeah, or before Fitz went to Remer. So, it picked up real fast. Gull Lake did, too. Well, Leech, I used to go up there with loads of stuff once in a while, lumber and whatever you know, had to haul up there. I don't know if they ah, just ah, ah, what they had for visitation. I could never find anything on it total [visitation].

INT: Can you estimate what you had at Cross and at Gull, say, in the late 60's?

ES: No, I wouldn't estimate that, because I don't remember. But there was quite a few.

INT: Can you remember just what was, if the campgrounds were full and you were going into overflow, say at Cross, would that be 50 families, or fewer, or more?

ES: Oh, probably anywhere from 20-25, to maybe 30, in the overflow area. It all would depend on how they parked in there, stuff like that. You get somebody who would park wrong, and then he goes out fishing. Why, he takes up an area where somebody could have parked, if you're not right there to direct them in.

INT: Were most of the people who came fisher family? Were they fishing; is that why most of the people?

ES: Oh, they were fishing and, ah, swimming and camping and pret'near anything. They had a pretty good playground there, too.

INT: I see, so is there a good place -?

ES: The edge of town was right there and did a lot of stuff in town there, you know, in the summertime.

INT: Tourist shops and cafes and--

ES: Yeah, where Federal Dam didn't have all that stuff.

INT: It is very quiet.

ES: It is pretty much a fishermens campground. When fishing season slacked off, the campers slacked off, and, ah, but we started getting it so they could get more families were coming in

INT: This at Leech or Cross?

ES: At Leech. We started putting in playgrounds and stuff like that. We didn't have a swimming beach, you know, so -.

INT: I guess they still don't there; it is under consideration but Leroy Campbell was saying yesterday and Ole Henderson was - saying, too, he, it would be dangerous at that dam to put a swimming beach in.

ES: Well, yeah. But, I think before they spend a lot of money on a beach there, there is only one place that they could put it in there. And I don't know if it would work out too good, either. to the boats and stuff. But ah, they'd be better off to put in a large swimming pool. Even if they had have to have a lifeguard, during the hours that they'd be swimming or something. They could put hours on it when it's open, and it would make a lot of difference. That'd make a lot of difference in the camping, too. Yeah, it'd, they'd have a place to swim. That was one drawback up there; there's no place. They'd jump off the highway bridge into the river, the kids would. You'd have to keep after them all the time.

INT: I heard that from Mr. Henderson, too, that that was something that

ES: They'd slip up on the dam when you weren't lookin' and, get, could get hurt pretty bad there. I had one guy skin up his leg a little bit there, but could have been killed but he didn't. But, ah, we're after them all the time to stay off from there. It's, ah, I think, ah, Leech is, the last few years, it has come up quite a bit on visitation. And, now, we started a new game area over there and we have it processed for a couple years there, going on, you know. And they had us cut back; they didn't have funds enough to finish it.

Tape 1, Side 2

INT: You know, to talk about two different dam sites

ES: And its, ah, kind of, ah, the visitation was, it would go up and then it would go down, up and down. There were times during the year that we had to turn people away.

INT: What were, as you remember, were there times of the year that were particularly high?

ES: Oh, yeah, you take opening of fishing season, and, ah, 4th of July, Labor Day. Most generally, we'd have a full campground, and we, lots of times, had to turn away maybe as high as 150, 120 units.

INT: And this would be either at Cross or

ES: This would be Leech.

INT: OK, at Leech.

ES: Ah, then both of these dams, too, we'd have to turn them away. And Cross Lake, they have a waiting list there. But, we never went for that, because—

INT: Oh, you mean people would write in in advance?

ES: No, they'd drive up there and if the park was full they'd sign them up at 6:00 in the morning. And 6:00 that night they'd have to leave, if they couldn't get in. I don't know, I didn't, we didn't do that at Leech; we were full, we told them we were full. We had four or five other State and Federal campgrounds that they could go to and some private ones. And we would give them a list of those. And if some of them were full, we kept in touch with these people, and they would call us if they were filled up. And a lot of times they'd call us and say, hey, you guys full over there? Send us a few. And, we'd do that. So we'd get rid of all of our overflow by sending them other places.

INT: Sending them somewhere else.

ES: And then, there was a lot of them that had come up that said, gee, we never knew this place was here. We were across the lake in a campground. And they, ah, came over there and looked over and left their wife sitting on the picnic table and went back and got their boat and moved it over there. And that was some of the private ones.

INT: What, was there any, ah, competition among, say, the low cost Corps or the National Forest campgrounds and the resort owners? Was there bad feelings about —?

ES: No, I don't think so. Most of your resorts, they rented cabins and when this trend came where campers started buying their motor homes and their trailers and tents or whatever, that kind of cut out this going to the resort and renting cabins. Well, in theory, it hurt them a little bit, hey couldn't build a campground there, you know, and do the same thing.

and they were blaming the campgrounds a little bit. But it wasn't that tWell then, they started putting in trailer parks in the resorts, and you still have a certain amount of people that want to live in a cabin when they're there. And then, you have these trailer park owners; there's one across the lake over there, they're full that are going year around. They just leave the units right there. They have sewer hook-up and everything. So, I don't think it has too much gone down, and it's \$9.00 a night and your campgrounds are running from, I don't know for sure now, but we used to take a survey of it. I would say, roughly, between \$6 and \$10-\$11, there was all different prices. The State is lower than the Corps of Engineers is, but they'll call up and they'll want to stay somewhere near where the Corps is and, usually the way it was when I was up there, it was usually \$.50-\$1.00 or so higher than State was, but then the State didn't have the facilities that we had to offer.

INT: Did you notice any change in the campers? It might not have shown up in the sites at the time that you were doing this, but I wondered if the kinds of families changed any, as the facilities got, in fact, fancier and able to handle RV's? How would you describe that change?

ES: Well, we, when I first went to Leech, that's where I noticed it the most, is when I first went up there. We had a lot of die-hard fishermen, and then after there was some changes made up there and stuff. Why, there was more husband and wife come, and then there was started, their kids were coming and as it went along, you know. More changes came up and then we started getting a lot of retired people that came up, and they lived all winter in Arizona. And they came up there and they would park in these campgrounds up there a couple of weeks, and then, if there were vacancies in the campgrounds, they would just stay. They were senior citizens, and they had a discount, half price, and they set there and done their leather work and all this stuff and went fishing once or twice a week and they enjoyed themselves. But it was, we started getting quite a few families started showing up, large families 5, 6, 7 kids; they all seemed to find something to do. They get along fine, the only thing they can't have is swimming. Well, they can have it if they want to go down the river. But we are up somewhere else, like the resort at the north end, they let you in there.

INT: Today - swim?

ES: Yeah, \$1.00 a carload, \$2.00 a carload, I think it was.

INT: It was a pretty good deal.

ES: Yeah, and they could go in and they had a beautiful beach. You could go out near them buildings over there, and you wouldn't be over your waist.

INT: So, it would be good for kids. Now, one other thing I wanted to ask a little bit about, I know that Leech, in particular, is right on the edge of Leech Lake Chippewa Reservation and I wonder what dealings you might have had with members of the Chippewa community? Did they work with you at the dam?

ES: Yeah. Oh we used to go up to Cass Lake and go to meetings up there with them. And meetings to hire personnel and stuff like that, you know. And they send us down people from their school there, vo-tech school or college or whatever it was they came from. And they worked for minimum wage.

INT: Would this mainly be in the summer season? Were there many jobs?

ES: It seemed that, mostly it was for general labor, most of it. You had your key men for different things, like John was a park ranger and Leroy was an a head maintenance man and sewage plant operator. His title was sewage plant operator, and so those kind of jobs were pretty well filled up. Mankato would send up technicians, and so we didn't have too many other jobs other than the labor jobs and had a little painting and repairing, cutting trees, planting trees and doing general maintenance around the campground. And even after they had contracts for garbage and mowing grass, we had a lot of maintenance; you had tables to paint and tables to repair and fireplaces to repair. Not that the people were breaking them up, but a tree might fall on a table. Or fireplace, say, that's concrete, gets awful hot and somebody not thinking, you know, they think they ought to put the fire out, so they dump cold water on it and the concrete busts or chips out and you have to replace it. It was, as far as the reservation went, they were never no problem to us other than maybe a few would come down and fish off the apron or something. Safety regulations don't allow it; it's pretty dangerous there on the apron. So we would have to ask them to leave. And I never had no problems -

INT: Did you ever have, in the dam tending part of your job, did you have wild rice water level things? Could you tell me a little bit about that aspect of things?

ES: Yeah. See, that was, we had a meeting one time at Cass Lake. I don't remember just who was there, but it seems to me John Seeman was there.

INT: I don't know who that is.

ES: He was the head of hydraulics; he worked the hydraulics then [Note: ES affirmed 'hydraulics' when asked whether hydrology/hydraulics.], for water control. And they have, they worked up over at the Indians to where they would try to maintain the lake so it wouldn't go up too fast or down too fast. Try to hold a steady, if it falls a foot, as long as it would go real slow, it was all right. But if it drops a foot, it would kill the rice.

INT: It would kill the—

ES: Yeah, and so that's what they were kind of concerned about. So they would try to maintain that. And, of course, if you would get 6 inches of rain, you got no choice. It's up and that's it. But it doesn't, on Leech Lake, it takes a lot of water to do much, and it takes a long time to pull it down and it doesn't I don't think, it has much effect on the rice.

INT: Ole Henderson said something similar yesterday, and he also said there's an outlet channel, quite apart from the dam on Leech Lake, that made it hard, it wasn't that the dam was the only regulatory device on the lake. There was a natural outlet, somewhere, that made it hard to control. There was a big marsh that went off -

ES: Oh, yeah, but I don't think that's an outlet; I think that comes in. And, at one time, they talked about and they may do that some day

INT: Putting a dam there?

ES: No, it's over in Waboose Bay, it comes out into the bay there, and it comes from the north. I don't know just where it comes out. You can't get up it; isn't deep enough there unless you walk. And I was back to it, but you got to push through the rice to get back there. And it is kind of a same elevations pretty much. They thought they could dig across there and open that up and put in a channel from Winni to Leech. And if Winni was low, they could hold water back and run the water the other way into Winni, and if Winni was high and Leech was low, it would run the other way.

INT: Okay, I had heard about that plan. I had seen references to the idea of doing a channel between, I didn't realize that that would have been -

ES: But they never, unless they are doing something about it, they never have.

INT: I have just seen references about the idea; I haven't seen anymore than that.

ES: And then Boy River runs into Leech, and Leech River runs out. And the dam there, that's the Leech Lake dam; a lot of people think it's the Federal Dam, but that's the town.

INT: I'm sure it was named after the dam, though.

ES: Yeah, actually the town started about the same time the dam was built. I don't know how old that house is. I never did find out. I tried, but I couldn't find out, nobody seemed to know. But there is some pictures, I think, at home someplace or somebody had them. I seen them somewhere - of those white pine out there by the road, they were about that high, and now they are, I don't know, 40 feet high and that big around and -

INT: How long would it usually take to grow that tall?

ES: It looked to me like they were about a 100 years old and there was a basement running along right there, and there was a flower garden and a little cement deal running along like that. And on the corner of that cement deal had 1976, or 1876. I don't know if somebody just put that on there, or if that was when it was actually built.

INT: Well, I suppose, I mean, they started working in that area in the late, I thought it was 1878 that they started working on the dams, but somebody could have come up there earlier from the Corps.

ES: Or that house might have been there, cuz there's been a lot of people lived in that house before, from up around Federal Dam. A lot of the Legos lived there.

INT: I don't know that family. You mean it was a private house or that -?

ES: Yeah, they rented it from the government. The way I understand it, they leased it or something, but I never could find too much out about it. There was an old man up there, and it seems to me I saved a copy of that. We worked, John and I, one whole winter pretty steady and off and on during the summer, trying to dig up information on kind of a history of the area there. We found out quite a lot of stuff from John Neururer. He's dead now, but he had a lot of old pictures and he had a lot of stuff. We were trying to find out when the town was built and stuff like that. Trying to figure out when all this stuff took place and we kinda got it together and sent it down to St. Paul. They run off copies and sent it back to us, and we were handing them out to the campers. It was everything. It was about the dams, and it was about the town and the railroad and - -

INT: Oh, I'm so sorry that we did not encounter that.

ES: And there was about the natural habitat, the wildlife, and stuff like that in the area.

INT: What about, what year were you two working on that, do you remember?

ES: Oh see, it was about, maybe in the late '70s, early '80s.

INT: We'll try and find that, and see if we can make that part of this.

ES: I might have a copy of that, I don't know. Seems to me, I did.

INT: I'll tell you what, I'll give you my card and if you have a copy, if you will loan it to us, we will xerox it and send the original back to you. We would love to have it. And I am sure, since John Anfinson and Dave Berwick, the people that we've been working for to do this oral history project, don't know about it, I'm sure they would like to see it, too.

ES: Yeah, it was quite a lot of stuff in it, there. It gave all the elevations in the dam, how many acre feet and the lake, I think, it was 11,000 something square miles of drainage area [1,163 sq. mi.] and 120,000 acre feet or something and, I forget, just how it is. All that stuff was in there, when the dam was built. I think, there was something in there on that. See, there was a wooden dam at one time, and they lost a piece of it, somehow, I don't remember, that was long before I was there. [Note: ES unable to locate a copy of the brochure.]

INT: Back in '57?

ES: Well, that was when we lost the last piece, and we lost 16 gates then in '57. I remember that.

INT: You said it would be right before you came on, and everybody up here, I'm sure, knew quite a bit about that.

ES: You see, I went to work the next year, and they were still working on that. They, ah, they were putting in new roads and new highway, and I went up to the dam and I couldn't find the way into the dam. The way I went was blocked off, and so then, I had to back the trailer out and set my trailer behind the truck and back that up the road half a mile and get turned around and then get back so I could get into the dam. I had to go back out to Highway 8 and go in right there by the dam.

INT: It was a good thing there's not a lot of traffic.

ES: Well, there wasn't up there. Some of those roads wasn't blacktop either; they were mud.

INT: Yeah

ES: Boy I'll tell you that Sugar Point road used to be bad. When I first went up there, that was nothing but mud.

INT: Well, you know Ole Henderson and Leroy Campbell were talking about the same thing yesterday, just that the roads in that area used to be terrible and that when they were growing up it was easier to walk or take the train than it was to try some other methods of transportation.

ES: There is one guy there that was a jack-of-all-trades. Leroy Campbell. He's a good man. The guy went on permanent after I got up there; he was working just part-time. But he was, he knew the whole area, he knew it pretty well, he knew what he was doing, with equipment and stuff, could weld a little bit. So we got along pretty good there, you know. It helped out the first year I was there 'cus I had moved into a building that was empty. All the equipment was right in the middle of the floor. Brand new building.

That was a funny deal. I got down here at Gull, re-wired the buildings. There was five of them. We wired 'um and put 'um in plastic wire. And a year or so later, they had to have a change. It had to be in conduit, so we put 'um in conduit. We finished the shop off, put boards on the inside and in the welding area transite [Note: All-purpose building sheet composed of asbestos fiber and portland cement, light-gray in color, impervious to all weather conditions as well as being fireproof. From Building Estimator's Reference Book 20th edition, 1980.], put metal on the floor, so no fires could get started. Then about a year or so after that, we tore the whole works down.

INT: Oh, no

ES: And built a brand new building, 40 x 100.

INT: Now, this is at Gull Lake?

ES: At that time, I was acting dam tender down here. Fitz was gone. And ah, then I was Acting Dam Tender pret'near a year, down there. And ah, so I had, the building was up. I built cupboards, shelving and stuff, started building shelving when Fitz came. But I had built a cupboard in there, probably 20 some feet long for tools and such and workbench and drawers

and doors and all this stuff in it. And then, we added another piece onto that later, and then we put another one over on the so wall. Then we built a welding area in there. Then we had this steel up above; so we put something similar to this in. And, ah, then we had to drop all the lights, because they were different heights, to get them below the ceiling. And then, down at Gull, the dam tender didn't have a garage down there anymore, so they gave him the far end of the building. So then, we had to partition that off so he could put his stuff in there and keep it locked up. So we got that all done. Well, then, we started a building at Cross Lake. Well, then, Walt come in time enough to finish that. But in the meantime, there were sewer plants and all this stuff.

So when I went to Leech, I got up there and up, got up here, and had the campground already to go. Got up there, and the building was there, new building, they tore down all the old ones up there, too. Four or five buildings in there, they put this big building there. But Ole didn't want to hang up anything or put anything away because he knew he was leaving, and he didn't know where the new man wanted to put it. So he just left everything lay there. So then, when we come, we had to start putting stuff away, hanging it up, building cupboards and right back at it again.

INT: You had a strong construction history.

ES: Yeah.

INT: What was your favorite part about the work? I mean, was there a part of it that you just particularly, gave you a sense of accomplishment?

ES: Well, I don't know. I suppose I favored Leech, because we did do a lot of things up there. But Gull Lake, I done a lot of things down here, too, and at Cross. Really, as far as the work went, ah, I was in a pretty much of a construction down here, and up there, and, at Leech, and ah, on a lot of it. So, it was interesting at both places. But Leech had more to deal with the public, you know, with the campers and all this stuff and other public relations. Go to meetings and do this and do that and stuff, you know, which I didn't do down here. So I don't know, I kind of favored Leech on that part. And the fishing was good up there. Ask Jim [Ruyak].

INT: Ah, I've heard a little bit about that.

Tape 2, Side 1

INT: Anything that you particularly favored? Was there anything that you just thought, boy I could live without this part of the job just fine. Were there things that you really just as soon wouldn't have done?

ES: Oh, I don't know. I kind of, just about liked anything I was doing. I just, I don't know, I had been doing it so long when I went to Leech, I guess, I, if I wasn't doing it, I missed it. Like right now, I miss it. That's one of those things, I retired.

INT: Yeah.

ES: But, I don't know. I just, ah, I like to see the people come back in the spring. I hate to see them leave in the fall. I hate to see the launches go out, because I knew there was six months of cold weather and a lot of traveling around and stuff that. In the wintertime, you know, it was cold, and you wouldn't, ah, probably, sometimes you wouldn't enjoy being out 30 below, maybe. But even in the wintertime, there was lots of, you would go to Mud Lake and see a bald eagle sitting up there, you know. Wildlife around. I don't know, I enjoyed it all the way around.

Even with the, sometimes you know, everybody does, they do some paperwork, and something else is added. And it means the same thing. Maybe at the time you say; what do you need this for? Well, maybe somebody else needs it. So I kind of, ah, you got extra work, why I just done it. I mean, it didn't make any difference one way or the other. It seemed like the more I had to do, the busier I was, and the better I felt.

INT: Were the dam tenders or the resource park -, what was the new title you got at Leech?

ES: Ah, now I think it's changed. They were talking about changing, anyway, to natural resource managers or something like that, national resource park recreational, national resource manager, something like that. It was quite a handle they were putting on it. But when I left there, it was park manager and, ah, something to do with natural resource management or something. They called us park managers; in fact, that is what our nametags said, park manager.

INT: Did you feel, as you were doing the job, that you were kind of up here being, ah, kind of independent, that you had a lot of room to move, or -?

ES: Oh, yeah.

INT: Kind of closely tied to St. Paul or how did that feel?

ES: Well, years back, you were out here by yourself. And, if you had any question that you had to have an answer for, you had to call St. Paul. Otherwise, you opened and closed the gates when you thought they should be. They give you a maximum and a minimum, and, ah, you tried to stay in that band. And usually we tried to get a happy medium and stay there. But sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't.

But, then, when the parks took over, you know, they started building parks. Why then, they started putting more people out in the field. Like they had an area manager. First, he was out of the Cities, then they moved him up to Remer, or Grand Rapids. Uno Saari, I think, was the first one up there, and you worked pretty close with him, you know, especially the dam tenders. And then, I worked pretty close with him because he would go around to all the sites, and anything that needed overhauling or fixing or repair or something, he'd load it up and have it brought down to Gull. And during the winter months, that's what I would do. There was times, I had probably had a hundred lawn mowers sitting down there, you know, get them all overhauled and get them ready to go in the spring.

INT: Oh, so that was what you would be doing at Gull Lake before you moved over to Leech, would be helping to service things that needed attention throughout the system.

ES: Yeah, yeah, and then it, ah, got to where we had Fitz and Roppe. Fitz was real good dam tender and a real good manager. And, in fact, he's in the hall of fame and every other thing, so he had to do something. And when he was on retirement, they called him back, ah, on a project out in Valley City. And ah, but Jim [Ruyak] was real good. Now Jim, one day I says to him, I says, well, Jim, what did you want to do with this? That's when he first came. I didn't know Jim very well, other than I knew him from the Cities, you know, from construction. I'd seen him a few times, but never really had a chance to talk to him very much other than when we fought flood out at Minot. He was out there, and he done a bangup job out there. But up here he says, well, he says, I'll tell you, Ed, this is your project; you run it the way you see fit. He says, you got any questions, he says, come to me. If you're doing something wrong, I'll tell you about it. And we got along fine. And, ah, any questions I had with anything, I'd call Jim, and Jim would give me an answer. It was real good and, ah, never no problem. Jim never bothered us.

Or, he used to come up there and camp and take his vacation up there. And he never, he'd see us, he'd talk to us, you know, like good morning or how are you today? have you been out fishing or something like that. But, ah, never interfered with what you were doing, unless you needed help or something. But he was real good and so it kind of helped, I think, when they got those guys up there. Because, you know, you get six, seven people calling the office for different things. This way, you can talk to him, and if he don't have the answer, why, ah, they'd get it for you. And Jim's the type of person, he knows a lot of the answers. Ah, he's a, been 20 some years in construction, and ah, well educated and he's well informed on a lot of things. So he's some kind of pretty good. I mean, if you need some good advice, he's a good place to get it. Yeah, I never had no problem with Jim. He always treated me 100%. And, course, all of us, too, I think we, well, as far as Fitz and all the rest of them, too. You know, Fitz was a real good guy, but I think he's done a good job up there.

INT: Do you think that it was, I mean, as you kind of looked at how things were changing within the system as the parks came in, do you think it was a hard transition for some of the older people in the system?

ES: It probably was. 'Course, you know, like for me, I was young then, you know. And, ah, I didn't, ah, ah, work was, didn't bother me. I could work all day and half the night and it didn't bother me. So it, and I wasn't afraid to take a shovel and start digging or wasn't afraid to go drive a truck or anything else. It was all depend upon what I had to do, I done it. Some people it might have, you know, might have bothered but, ah, you know when they first started in. But I think after they worked a while most of them just fell into a day's work, you know.

INT: I just wondered if when the campgrounds came in, when the ranger system kind of came in, if that created friction for people.

ES: Well, that, that always was kind of a sore spot, I think, amongst a lot of the workers. You know, they used to go out and collect the fees and to do all this work. Then they hired a park technician, and he done that and that's all he done. Because he was riding around out there, collecting fees, and he never had time for nothing else. He had to talk to the public and this and that. And so, the people who were doing that felt that they were left out. But after a few years went by, that kind of wore off and that didn't make any difference to them then after that. Like for myself, I wasn't involved in that too much, anyway. Ah, I was more in the maintenance area in the earlier years until I went to Leech. And, ah, of course, I went up there as manager. Well, then, that kind of changed everything around again. So I didn't, I wasn't, doing the work and going out and getting it done, that was the change that I had to make.

INT: Right, right.

ES: I didn't actually do the work, although I caught myself in there doing it lots of times. But then, you have to, it's got to be done; somebody's got to do it. And so, if you're just going to manage, you'd have to hire somebody else, because to do some of the work you're doing. Cause I know, like I worked in the office, and when I got done there, I'd go out in the park. Run errands or whatever. So it, we were busy all the time.

INT: Let me ask a little pickup question. I forgot to ask it of Ole Henderson yesterday, so let me ask you. And, that is, he mentioned that commercial wild, you know, we talked a little moment ago about the rice, the water levels for the reservation rice. I understand that, commercial paddies now have been set up in Mud and, is it Goose Lake?

ES: Yeah.

INT: On the other side of Leech Lake. Now I wondered when those came in?

ES: Some just down there at the Federal Dam. Over by Mud and Goose, I don't think them are too old. I think they might be ten years, something like that, 12 maybe. But, ah, around Federal Dam there, I suppose maybe 20 years.

INT: Really.

ES: Yeah.

INT: And are those Indian paddies, or are they white people's or?

ES: White people's, in fact, what's his name? Ole's brother -

INT: Well, he mentioned that his brother

ES: What's his name; I can't think of his name now? [Sonny]

INT: I want to say George, but I'm not sure that is right.

ES: That's his son.

INT: Oh.

ES: He lives down below town there on the river. He's got some rice paddies down there.

INT: Now, are his paddies 10 years old or 20 years old? How old are his paddies, do you know?

ES: I suppose they are probably 10 years or better, and ah, the same with Lego's I'd say there's somewhere about 15 years, maybe a little older. Legos is a kind of ah, ah group of people.

INT: Coop or a -

ES: From the Cities and put the money up to build this and Rusty Lego was the foreman

INT: And how do you spell his name, do you know?

ES: Ah, it's L e g o. Lego is the way he pronounces it. Everybody calls it Legoo, but it's Lego.

INT: OK.

ES: But, ah, they had a quite a few paddies down there, four or five of them and, ah?

INT: How big are they?

ES: Oh, it varies; some of them might be five or six acres, some of them bigger, some of them smaller.

INT: OK.

ES: It all depends on the area, you know. It's a lowland that they're in. They can take water to 'um shut them off. They got pumps that are on, pump them out, pump water in. It's a quite a deal, but it's kind of fading out, I think. California is giving this country a bad -

INT: That's where the competition is?

ES: You see, they can raise wild rice year round out there. While they're harvesting one field, they got another one that is coming up. It's, ah, makes it, they're selling it for a lot cheaper than they can sell it here. And, ah, here, it's kind of hard for them to raise.

INT: And here it's down, I notice, as we've been traveling around, it's down to \$3.00 a pound, which is a much lower price than I'm used to seeing.

ES: It used to be up as high as \$11, but couple years ago. No, otherwise, all I can say is the Corps is a good place to work. I liked it, in fact, I wish I was still there. I didn't figure on retiring when I did. Then I got inflammatory rheumatoid arthritis.

INT: Oh, so you had a medical kind of reason to look at early retirement.

ES: Yeah, so I, in September of that year, why I had, with my military I had 30 years. So I thought I might as well quit. The doctor kept after me to quit. And ah, I did. But I'd of probably been there for 40 years, if I'd stayed and felt good.

INT: Yeah. Is there anything else that, you know, that you'd like to add that I might have raised in your mind, that we just didn't get a chance to say anything about?

ES: Oh, not, only that, like when we were at Leech there, we used to, when the Irv [Seelye] would go on vacation there and stuff, we used to take care of Winni too. And, ah, years back, the dam tender at, it was either at Winni or Leech, I don't remember which place he was at. It seems like he was at Leech, he used to take care of both of them. Like you did down here.

Cross Lake, it's a nice place now. It's got three swimming beaches and everything, but if I wanted to go camping, just between you and me, I think I'd go farther north. It's like camping in town. But our campsite up there, you know, we, it was, see, that was the first one and everything was closer together and kind of sticking in as many campsites as you could and still stay within the law or everything. Leech, they put them farther apart. A lot of trees in between and some of those campsites you can't see the other camper from the campsite you're sitting in - you can't even see the rig. It's all covered with trees, spruce and stuff, you know. It's really pretty up there, in the summertime.

INT: The benefit of earlier experience -

ES: Yeah, I don't know, I think of all of them I've been to, I'm not taking anything away from any of them, they are all nice places. Not just because I was the park manager there, is Leech. It's the way it's laid out, the way it sits there, it's just nice in there.

INT: Beautiful country.

ES: Quiet and everything. And you don't have all that, like Cross Lake, you got quite a lot of traffic. Gull Lake, you got quite a little traffic going by and going up two sides of the campground. And you got a private home just across the fence. And then you got Sandy, I just didn't care for that at all. And, ah, Pokegama, that's just a little clearing out there with a bunch of campsites on it. They are all right there, you can see one another, you can see the building and everything, stand in one place and see the whole campground. The one at Leech, you got to drive about a quarter of a mile before you get to the campground. That's after you leave the highway going in, and, ah, then you get down in there, and there's a campground and, ah, it's all wooded pretty good in there. In fact, you don't see the comfort station until you drive by its parking lot there. And, ah, there's trees and stuff in the summertime around there, you, it's really pretty in there.

INT: I think that we feel that, now that we have gotten all the inside dope from you all, we know where to come when we come camping up here.

ES: Yeah, it's a nice place.

End of interview, approximately 20 minutes tape 2.

Appendix B

History Afield resumes

Scope of work

Project correspondence

NAME: Jo Blatti

ADDRESS: 402 5th Avenue S.E.
Waseca, MN 56093
507/835-7107

EDUCATION: A.A. Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri, 1966
B.A. Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1968
M.A. American Studies, State University of New York at
Buffalo, 1975

FIELDS OF
INTEREST: American social and cultural history; interpretive exhibitions,
media and events in museums and related institutions

PROFESSIONAL
EXPERIENCE: *Principal, HISTORY AFIELD, Waseca, MN, Summer 1986-

One of two partners in consulting firm offering creative and technical services to museums and other programming institutions, Upper Midwest and nationally. Initiate client contacts, recruit associates, develop marketing, public relations, contracts and budgets, participate as practicing historian in firm's projects, share oversight for development and direction of firm.

*Director of Research and Interpretation, Minnesota Agricultural Interpretive Center, Waseca, MN, June 1985-July 1986

Overall responsibilities included development, direction, budgeting of interpretive program for 19th and 20th century farmsteads plus associated structures; work with executive director and board on institutional master plan; supervision of interpretive staff and collections; realization of physical sites, exhibitions and visitor programs; coordination with public relations, development and operations staff plus community volunteers.

*Program Officer, New York Council for the Humanities (New York City and Buffalo), November 1978-May 1985

Responsibilities for proposal development and evaluation public humanities projects, liaison with statewide constituents, editing Council publications. In the area of program development, special interests and responsibilities included historical subjects, interpretive exhibitions and documentary media. Special projects included organization of PAST MEETS PRESENT, a national forum on historic interpretation in museums and other public sites, in New York City in October 1984, the Sleepy Hollow Conference on Interpretation in Outdoor Museums in 1982.

*Producer, Historical projects, WBFO-FM, Buffalo, NY, January 1976-September 1978

"The Buffalo Social History Project," a series of 14 specials on aspects of work, education and immigration in 19th and 20th century Buffalo, was funded by the NEH, 1976-77. "The American Dream," 8 one-hour specials exploring ideas about success, social and economic equality, was funded by the New York Council for the Humanities, 1977-78. Both public radio series featured oral history interviews, dramatic adaptations of diaries, newspapers and other primary source materials, vintage fiction and music; portions broadcast nationally through NPR. Responsibilities as producer included research, design, fund-raising, liaison with academic collaborators, interviewing, scripting, editing, supervision of technical assistants.

*Part-time producer and administrator, WBFO-FM, 1972-1975

As administrative assistant to general manager, drafted reports on station programming and operations for State University of New York management, assisted with fund-raising and day-to-day office affairs. As producer, programmed and announced weekly classical music show, prepared special features, live and taped, for cultural and public affairs programs, 3rd class FCC license. Special projects included "The Lower West Side, Buffalo, New York" (1975); "Working in Steel" (1975).

*Manager, Falconer Books, Inc., Buffalo, NY, 1968-1972

RELATED
ACTIVITIES:

Member, Program Committee, 1987 Oral History Association Conference

Editor and contributor, PAST MEETS PRESENT, a collection of essays on historic interpretation for public audiences, forthcoming Smithsonian Institution Press, June 1987. (Sabbatical leave for this project, January-March 1985, funded through a grant from the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation.)

Panelist, Adult and Public Use, Study Center for American Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, March 1985

Contributing editor for public history Oral History Review, 1984-

Editor, "Selected Proceedings Sleepy Hollow Conference on Historic Interpretation at Outdoor Museums and Historic Sites," 1983.

New York State Council on the Arts Production Grant (Media Arts Division) for radio documentary on F.X. Matt Brewing Company in Utica, NY, December 1982

"I Don't Want To Play in Your Yard"
Review of the movie "Reds" in Radical History (Fall 1982)

SITES Seminar on Exhibition Interpretation, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., November 1981

Guest panelist, Museum Aid Division, New York State Council on the Arts, December 1980

Field reviewer, Museum Aid Division, New York State Council on the Arts, 1979

Social history consultant, National Public Radio, Washington, D.C., Fall/Winter 1978 - 1979

Oral history consultant, Milwaukee Humanities Program, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, Spring 1978

Member, Planning Group, New York State Conference on Community History (May 1978)

Outside evaluator, Rochester Genesee Valley History Project, pilot project in the uses of local historical materials in high school and college curricula and community, museum and media programs 1977 - 1978

Contributor, "Down and Out in America," cover story New York Times Magazine, February 9, 1978

Founding member, Buffalo Community Studies Group (Executive Committee, 1974 - 1979)

Course design and teaching, SUNY/Buffalo, American Studies undergraduate core course, "Patterns in American Cultural Development," 1973 - 1974.

PRESENTATIONS: American Historical Association Annual Meeting
Chicago, Illinois
December 1986
Comment, "Scholars and the Media"

Oral History Association Annual Meeting
Long Beach, California
October 1986
Panelist, "Summing Up the Transformation of the West"

Midwest Archives Conference
Hudson, Wisconsin
October 1986
Chair and comment, "After the Interview: Using Oral History"

American Association of Museums Annual Meeting
Washington, D.C.
June 1984
Panelist, "History Museums and Interpretation"

Sixth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women
Smith College
June 1984
Chair and comment, "Not Just Another Pretty Dress"

NYU Graduate Program in Public History
December 1983
Guest lecturer, "Public History and the Media"

American Studies Association
Biennial Convention, Philadelphia
November 1983
Chair and comment, "Social Space in Historical Perspective: New Approaches and Methods"

Seneca Falls Women's History Conference
Seneca Falls, NY
July 1982
Presenter, "Women and Work"

NEH Summer Seminar, "Historians, Universities and Communities"
Cornell University
July 1982
Guest scholar, "Public Presentation of Historical Research"

NYU Graduate Program in Public History
April 1982
Guest lecturer, "Oral History and Community History"

National Meeting of State Humanities Programs
Indianapolis
November 1980
Presenter, Workshop on Radio Projects

Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting
San Francisco
April 1980
Commentator, "The Public Perception of History"

Oral History Colloquium
East Lansing, Michigan
October 1979
Presenter, "Oral History on the Air"

Humanities Media Workshop
University of Delaware
May 1979
Presenter, Session on Humanities Programming for Radio

Empire State College Conference, The Growth and Development of an American City: Buffalo
February 1977
"Using Oral History", panelist and workshop leader

ORGANIZATIONAL

MEMBERSHIPS: American Association for State and Local History
American Association of Museums
American Studies Association
Oral History Association
Organization of American Historians

Peggy Korsmo-Kennon
522 South Oak Street
Owatonna, Minnesota 55060
(507) 451-4719

EDUCATION

- 1984 Master of Arts, American Folk Culture and Museum Studies, Cooperstown Graduate Programs, State University College, Oneonta, New York.
Recipient of a Clark Foundation Scholarship.
- 1975 Bachelor of Elective Studies, areas of emphasis, American History and Folklore, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

EMPLOYMENT

- 1986 History Afield, Owatonna, Minnesota
Consultant, areas of expertise include long-range planning for historical agencies and cultural institutions, grant writing, public relations, collection management, public and school programming, oral history, reseach, interpretation and exhibition.
- 1979-1985 Waseca County Historical Society, Waseca, Minnesota
Executive Director.
Responsibilities included administration, budgeting, grant writing, historical research, exhibit design, program development, public relations, management of staff and volunteers.
- 1973-1977 Ramsey County Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota
Interpreter at late-19th century farm museum operated by the historical society. Other responsibilities included program development, research and writing.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- 1979-1982 Treasurer, Minnesota Folklife Society
- 1981-1982 Board Member-At-Large, Minnesota Association of Museums
- 1982-1983 History Coordinator, Minnesota Association of Museums
- 1982-1985 Board Member, Minnesota State Historic Records Advisory Board
- 1983-1984 Convener, Waseca Inter-library Resource Exchange
- 1983- President, Minnesota Folklife Society
- 1985- Board Member, Southern Minnesota Historical Assembly
- 1986- Member, Folk Arts Advisory Committee, Minnesota State Arts Board

MEMBERSHIPS

American Association of State and Local History
American Folklore Society
Minnesota Association of Museums
Minnesota Folklife Society
Minnesota Historical Society
Norwegian-American Historical Association
Oral History Association of Minnesota

Peggy Korsmo-Kennon

RECENT PROJECTS

Instructor of six week class on Community History for 7th and 8th graders at St. Isadore's School, Owatonna, Minnesota, 1979.

Project Director, "Railroad History Project," a project which combined oral history, exhibits and a conference to examine the impact of the railroad on southern Minnesota, with an emphasis on Waseca County. Funded by the Waseca County Historical Society, Minnesota Historical Society, and Minnesota Humanities Commission, 1980. Received the AASLH Certificate of Commendation in 1981.

Project Director, rehabilitation of Waseca County Historical Society's Museum which involved re-roofing, insulating, the installation of new HVAC System, and up-dating electrical wiring, 1983.

Organized and implemented a workshop on costume and textile care for the Minnesota Association of Museums, July 1983.

Project Director, Community Oral History Project for Waseca County Historical Society; responsibilities involved training, and the coordination of, staff and volunteers in oral history interviews, 1983.

Project Director, two projects for the Waseca County Historical Society on the 1940s in Waseca County - 1940s: A Decade of Transition and 1940s: The Post-War Years. Exhibits, lectures and discussion groups were used to examine the impact of the 1940s on Waseca County, 1983-1984.

Coordinator, "Community History Days," for the Waseca County Historical Society held during summer months throughout Waseca County to collect and disseminate local history, 1983-1984.

Exhibit Coordinator, "Under Foot: Rugs and Rug Making," for the Waseca County Historical Society. Organized and implemented an exhibition of hand-made and manufactured rugs, including demonstrations of rug making. May-August 1985.

Project Director, "Architecture: Design, Structure and History," Waseca County Historical Society and Waseca Arts Council. Included production of a slide/tape show on architectural styles in Waseca County; photograph exhibit on county sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places; lecture on historic buildings in Minnesota by Patricia Murphy; an architecture hunt (an educational program designed to acquaint people with historic buildings in Waseca), June 1985.

Oral History Interviewer and Researcher, Minnesota Agricultural Interpretive Center (Farmamerica). Responsibilities included research, compilation of questionnaire, interview, index of tapes, some transcription. Interviews supplied background information on buildings at the Farmamerica site in Waseca. Dec. 1985 - June 1986.

Consultant, Steele County Historical Society, Owatonna, MN. supplied background research for new collection management system and established plan for implementation of system. Sept. 1985 - Dec. 1985.

Consultant, Steele County Historical Society, Owatonna, MN. curatorial services (accession and document artifacts). June 1986 - Present.

Consultant, Northfield Historical Society, Northfield, MN. curatorial services (accession and document artifacts). June 1986 - Present.

Peggy Korsmo-Kennon

CONFERENCES/MEETINGS

Panelist, "Uses of Folklore in Museums," Minnesota Folklife Society, Eveleth, MN., Oct. 1978.

"Cemetery and Tombstone Research," with Maureen Otwell, Minnesota Folklife Society, Eveleth, MN., Oct. 1978.

"Railroad History Project as Community History," Community Resources and the Museum Conference, Minnesota Association of Museums, Rochester, MN., June, 1980.

"Railroading As a Way of Life," Minnesota Historical Society's Annual Meeting and Conference, Minneapolis, MN., Oct. 1980.

Guest Lecturer, "Small Town Minnesota -- A Comparative Look at Owatonna and Janesville," University of Minnesota course. "The Small Town in American Literature," George Wright, Instructor, May 1981.

"History in Your Community," Minnesota Rural Youth Institute, Waseca, MN, July, 1981 and July, 1982.

"Developing Your Photograph Collection," with Jan Brown, Southern Minnesota Historical Assembly, Albert Lea, MN., Sept. 1981.

"The Other Side of Objects: Folklife and the Museum," Minnesota Historical Society Annual Meeting and Conference, Minneapolis, MN., Oct. 1981.

"Partnership With the Public: There's More to a Relationship Than Money," Minnesota Association of Museums, Nov. 1981.

Panelist, "The Board of Directors - Motivation," Minnesota Historical Organizations Meeting, April 1982.

Guest Lecturer "Community History and Rural Sociology," University of Minnesota, Waseca, course "Rural Sociology," Lynn Herrick, Instructor. Quarterly, May 1982 - Aug. 1983.

"Women in Local History," Minnesota Historical Society's Women History Workshop, St. Peter, MN., Mar. 1984.

"Educational Programming for Small Historic Houses and Local Historical Societies: Doing the Best You Can With What You've Got," AASLH Annual Meeting, Topeka, KS, Sept. 1985.

"Czech This Out: Czech Traditions in Steele County, Minnesota," Minnesota Historical Society's Annual Meeting and Conference, Bloomington, MN, Oct. 1986.

Peggy Korsmo-Kennon

PUBLICATIONS/WRITINGS

Researcher, St. Paul, Saga of An American City, Virginia Brainard Kunz, Windsor Publ., 1977.

Discovery St. Paul: Seven Neighborhoods, with Robert Drake, Ramsey County Historical Society, 1979.

"Teaching and Collecting Folklore at St. Mary's School," with Libby Mahoney and Marcia Britton Wolter, New York Folklore Quarterly, (Vol. 4, Nos. 1-4, 1979).

"Historically Yours," quarterly column in History Notes, Waseca County Historical Society's newsletter, 1979 - 1985.

Researcher, co-author with Jan Brown, Working on the Railroad, Waseca County Historical Society, 1980.

Book review, Light From the Hearth: Central Minnesota Pioneers and Early Architecture, Marilyn Salz Brinkman and William Toner Morgan. Minnesota Folklife Society News, Mar. 1983.

Advisor, Historical Records in Minnesota, Minnesota State Historic Records Advisory Board, 1983.

Railroading as a Way of Life: The Railroad History Project, unpublished MA Thesis, 1984.

Book review, American Log Buildings, Terry G. Jordon. Minnesota Folklife Society News, Mar. 1985.

SCOPE OF WORK
ORAL HISTORY: MISSISSIPPI RIVER HEADWATERS RESERVOIRS

1.00 INTRODUCTION

1.01 The Contractor will undertake an oral history investigation of the Mississippi River Headwaters Reservoirs (Winnibigoshish, Leech Lake, Pokegama, Pine River, and Gull Lake) to preserve important information not contained in or poorly detailed in written documents. Corps of Engineers (Corps) personnel (past or present) who are best able to fulfill this objective will be interviewed by the Contractor.

1.02. This investigation partially fulfills the requirements of Environmental Regulation (ER) 870-1-1. This regulation establishes the general responsibilities and procedures governing field operating activities historical programs. Specifically, it states that each commander will establish an oral history program to conduct interviews with as broad a spectrum of the agency's active and retired personnel as possible.

2.00 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.01 The five Headwaters Reservoirs on the Mississippi River north of Brainerd, Minnesota, are the focus of this study. Winnibigoshish, Leech Lake, Pokegama, Pine River, and Gull Lake Reservoirs were created by the Corps of Engineers in the 1880s and have served many functions over the last 100 years. This study hopes to increase the public's knowledge about the importance of these reservoirs to the history of the Upper Mississippi River basin and the State of Minnesota.

2.02 The oral history should not focus on the physical projects themselves, but on the individuals associated with them and what these individuals can contribute about the reservoirs' history through their personal experiences.

2.03 The Contractor will determine the specific individuals to be interviewed after an extensive review of the literature pertaining to the reservoirs and in discussions with Corps personnel. This scope of work assumes that four individuals will be interviewed. If, after completion of the Phase I report, the Corps or the Contractor determines that additional interviews may be necessary, these additional interviews will be done as a modification to the contract, subject to the availability of funds.

3.00 DEFINITIONS

3.01 For the purposes of this study, the Contractor's oral history investigation will include a literature search and review with an intensive study of the Headwaters Reservoirs.

3.02 "Literature search" is defined as a search for written reports, articles, files, records, etc., both published and unpublished (found in private, local, State, and Federal depositories), that are pertinent to the oral history to be carried out for this particular report. The purposes of the literature search are to familiarize the Contractor with the history of the study area and past investigations carried out in the area, and to provide this information in a summarized form to the Corps.

3.03 "Literature review" is defined as the review and evaluation of the pertinent literature and records examined under section 3.02 of this scope of work. The purpose of the literature review is to provide the Corps with the Contractor's professional opinion on the quality, nature, and extent of the sources identified in the literature search.

3.04 "Intensive study" is defined as an in-depth evaluation of the region under investigation. This evaluation includes using the information acquired from the literature search and review to present a detailed assessment of the relevant Corps personnel to be interviewed and the questions they will be asked. The answers to the interview questions will fill out the history and significance of the Headwaters region that is not revealed in the written record.

3.05 "Oral history" is defined as the interviewing of relevant Corps personnel to complement the written record. The Contractor must make cassette tapes and typed transcripts of the interviews. The typed transcripts will be edited for accuracy, rather than being left verbatim.

4.00 PERFORMANCE SPECIFICATIONS

4.01 The Contractor's work will be subject to the supervision, review, and approval of the Corps of Engineers Contracting Officer's representative.

4.02 The Contractor will provide all materials and equipment necessary to perform the required services expeditiously.

4.03 If requested by the Contractor, a letter of introduction signed by the District Engineer can be provided to explain the project purposes and to request the cooperation of the interviewees. Where an interviewee denies permission for an interview, the Contractor must immediately notify the Contracting Officer's representative and discuss alternate individuals to be interviewed.

4.04 The Contractor must keep standard records that include cassette tapes, written notes, and other records pertinent to the investigation.

5.00 GENERAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS

5.01 The Contractor will submit the following documents, described in this section and Section 6.00: a draft Phase I report, a draft Phase II report, and a final contract report.

5.02 The Contractor's draft Phase I report will comprise the literature search and review, will detail the approach, methods, and results of the investigation, and will include recommendations regarding the appropriate topics and questions for the oral history interviews and the relevant individuals to be interviewed. The Contractor and the Corps' cultural resources staff will jointly evaluate the draft phase one report and determine which topics, questions, and individuals will best accomplish the purpose of the study.

5.03 The draft Phase II Report will include the edited transcripts of the interviews and an assessment of the new and important information was learned from the oral histories. It will detail the approach, methods, and results of the investigation, and make recommendations for further work. It will be submitted to the Contracting Officer's representative, who will review it and forward it to other appropriate agencies for review. Comments will be returned to the Contractor, who will make the necessary revisions and submit the Final Contract Report.

5.04 The Final Contract Report will incorporate the revised versions of the Phase I and Phase II reports in a single volume.

5.05 The Contractor's written notes will include legible copies of important notes and records kept during the investigation.

5.06 A cover letter submitted with the final contract report will include the project budget.

5.07 The Contractor will submit to the Contracting Officer's representative the negatives for all photographs that appear in the final report.

6.00 REPORT FORMATS

6.01 There are no format requirements for the written notes; however, they must be legible. If the original handwritten notes are illegible, they should be typed. All notes and the original cassette tapes will be submitted to the Contracting Officer along with the draft Phase II report.

6.02 Formats for both the Phase I and Phase II draft reports and the final contract report are as follows:

The Contractor will present information in whatever textual, tabular, or graphic forms are most effective for communicating it.

b. The Phase I and Phase II draft reports and the final report will be divided into easily discernible chapters, with appropriate page separations and headings.

c. The report text will be typed, single-spaced (the draft reports should be space-and-one-half or double-spaced), on good quality bond paper, 8.5 inches by 11.0 inches, with 1.5-inch binding and bottom margins and 1-inch

top and outer margins; and it may be printed on both sides of the paper. All pages will be numbered consecutively, including plates, figures, tables, and appendixes.

d. All illustrations must be clear, legible, self-explanatory, and of sufficiently high quality to be reproduced easily by standard xerographic equipment, and will have margins as defined above. All maps must be labeled with a caption/description, a north arrow, a scale bar, township and range, map size and dates, and map source (e.g., the USGS quad name or published source). All photographs or drawings should be clear, distinct prints or copies with captions and a bar scale.

e. References: This section will provide bibliographic references (in Journal of American History format) for every publication cited in the report. References not cited in the report may be listed in a separate "Additional References" section.

f. Appendix: This section will include the scope of work, resumes of project personnel, copies of all correspondence relating to the study, and any other pertinent information referenced in the text.

7.00 MATERIALS PROVIDED

7.01 The Contracting Officer's representative will furnish the Contractor with access to any publications, records, maps, or photographs that are on file at the St. Paul District headquarters.

7.02 The Contractor will be provided a copy of the St. Paul District History: CREATIVITY, CONFLICT, AND CONTROVERSY: A HISTORY OF THE ST. PAUL DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS by Dr. Raymond H. Merritt. It is recommended that the Contractor review Chapter Three (The Headwaters of the Mississippi) prior to preparation of a bid.

8.00 SUBMITTALS

8.01 The completion date for the draft Phase I report for this project will be 17 November 1986. Seven copies of the draft Phase I report will be submitted to the Contracting Officer by this date. Within 2 weeks, a meeting will be set up between the Contractor and the Contracting Officer to discuss the results of the Phase I work. This meeting will be held in the St. Paul District Office.

8.02 The completion date for the draft Phase II report for this project will be 1 March 1986. Seven copies of the draft Phase II report will be submitted to the Contracting Officer by this date.

8.03 Written Notes and Records: One legible copy of all the written notes will be submitted with the draft Phase I contract report.

8.04 Final contract report: The original and 15 copies of the final report will be submitted 60 days after the Contractor receives the Corps of Engineers comments on the draft report. In addition, the original cassette tapes will

be submitted with the final contract report. The final report will incorporate all the comments made on the draft report.

9.00 CONDITIONS

9.01 Failure of the Contractor to fulfill the requirements of this Scope of Work will result in rejection of the Contractor's report and/or termination of the contract.

9.02 Neither the Contractor nor any representative of the Contractor shall release any sketch, photograph, report, or other materials of any nature obtained or prepared under the contract without specific written approval of the Contracting Officer's representative prior to the acceptance of the final report by the Government. Dissemination of survey results through papers at professional meetings and publication in professional journals is encouraged. However, professional discretion should be used in releasing information on site locations where publication could result in damage to cultural resources.

9.03 All materials, documents, collections, notes, forms, maps, etc., that have been produced or acquired in any manner for use in the completion of this contract shall be made available to the Contracting Officer's representative upon request.

9.04 The Contractor's principal investigators will be responsible for the validity of material presented in their reports. In the event of controversy or court challenge, the principal investigator(s) will be placed under separate contract to testify on behalf of the Government in support of the findings presented in their reports.

10.00 METHOD OF PAYMENT

10.01 The Contractor will make monthly requests for partial payment on ENG Form 93 under this fixed-price contract. A 10-percent retained percentage will be withheld from each partial payment. Final payment, including the previously retained percentage, will be made to the Contractor upon approval of the final report by the Contracting Officer's representative.



HISTORY AFIELD

August 17, 1987

TO: Jim Fogerty, MHS
Margaret Robertson, MHS
Hamp Smith, MHS
Barb Sommer,
Ed Nelson, Iron Range Interpretive Center

FROM: Jo Blatti

RE: Corps of Engineers, oral history recommendations.

This is a courtesy note. I've given your names to John Anfinson at the Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District; this is in response to his request for suggestions regarding peer review of oral history procedures and standards in Corps projects.

By way of background, HISTORY AFIELD has conducted the St. Paul's Office's pilot project in oral history, an exploration of post WWII recreational development at the Mississippi Headwaters damsites in north central Minnesota, during the past few months. Our contract included a literature review, field interviews, transcription and contextual analysis plus suggestions for oral history standards and evaluation in future projects.

John may be contacting you in coming weeks. I know he'll appreciate any assistance you are able to offer. We've enjoyed working with his office and believe the Environmental Resources group is taking a thoughtful approach to oral history.

cc: John Anfinson, Corps of Engineers



HISTORY AFIELD

December 11, 1986

Margaret Robertson
Oral Historian
Environment Oral History Project
Minnesota Historical Society
1500 Mississippi Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Margaret:

We are indeed working on a project with the Corps of Engineers in the Mississippi Headwaters region.

Our contact at the Corps is:

John Anfinson, Historian
St. Paul District, Corps of Engineers
1135 U.S. Post Office and Custom House
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1479.

Somebody else you might want to be in touch with (if you aren't already) is:

Keith Matson
Box 132
Deer River, Minnesota 56636
218/246-2123.

He works in cultural resources at Chippewa National Forest and has shared some interesting oral history material (collected ca. 1975) on early fishing-hunting camps and resorts in the Lake Winnie area.

Peg Kennon and I will be interviewing about development of recreational facilities in the Headwaters next week. Let us know if there's any way we can be helpful. John Anfinson was very receptive to the idea of depositing a copy of our final report with the Historical Society.

Good luck with your project and happy holidays.

Sincerely,

Jo Blatti

cc: John Anfinson, St. Paul Corps



HISTORY AFIELD

December 11, 1986

Rosemarie Braatz
Public Information
St. Paul District, Corps of Engineers
1135 U.S. Post Office and Custom House
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Ms. Braatz:

Thanks again for allowing me to look at Ed Fitzpatrick's scrapbook when I was at the Corps office last month and for sharing copies of C-O News and Notes with me. Both have proved helpful as we prepare to interview retired dam-tenders in the Headwaters region.

Thanks again and best wishes for the holidays.

Sincerely,

Jo Blatti



HISTORY AFIELD

December 11, 1986

The Reverend Doctor Paul Fruth
Immaculate Heart Church
Box 155
Crosslake, Minnesota 56442

Dear Dr. Fruth:

Thanks very much for your call and the packet of information you sent about the Corps dam at Pine River. It is very useful background as we prepare to interview retired dam-tenders.

Thanks again for sharing the material and best wishes for the holidays.

Sincerely,

Jo Blatti



HISTORY AFIELD

December 11, 1986

John Anfinson
St. Paul District, Corps of Engineers
1135 U.S. Post Office and Custom House
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear John:

This is a quick note to let you know that Peg and I have arranged to interview Ed Fitzpatrick, Ole Henderson and Ike Kolb in the Headwaters region next week. Each was very cordial, and we're all looking forward to this.

Henry Sharp, the retired dam-tender for Pokegama, has left for his winter home in Arizona.

Our tentative plan for the 4th interview is to go for either Leroy Campbell or Edward Sunde once we get up there. Our thinking is that they're both long-time employees who worked with Fitzpatrick and Henderson in the important transitional period for recreation facilities. Our "fall-back" would be Walt Hermerding as another long-time employee who has participated in the transition.

The other possibility is reserve time to interview J. Wesley Walters in St. Paul. He's getting on in years, and I believe it would be important to interview him soon about his work in the 1960's transition into recreation facilities. However, since he lives in the Cities, it should be relatively easy to pick up that interview through a future contract or a rider to this one. Unless we strike out on interview #4 in the Headwaters, my inclination would be to let the Walters interview ride for a bit.

Please give me a call in Waseca on Friday or c/o Jim Ruyak's office in Remer on Monday if you want to request any alterations in the above.

Sincerely,

Jo Blatti



HISTORY AFIELD

December 11, 1986

Keith Matson
Box 132
Deer River, Minnesota 56636

Dear Keith:

Thanks very much for the packet of information about Lake Winnie resorts and fish camps. It's very useful background information as we prepare for interviews with retired Corps dam-tenders next week.

Thanks especially for keying the maps and editing the oral transcripts to relevant topics only. That was way beyond the call of duty, but very much appreciated.

I've enclosed the MHS Library vertical file citations I mentioned over the phone; there is lots about the north central fish-camp and resort industry in these folders.

With best wishes for the holiday.

Sincerely,

Jo Blatti



HISTORY AFIELD

December 31, 1986

Leroy Campbell
Box 85
Federal Dam, MN 56641

Dear Mr. Campbell:

Jo Blatti and I would like to thank you for taking the time to share your memories about your work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during the interview on December 16

Your comments should add important insight to understanding the job of dam tender in the Headwaters Region.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy new year.

Sincerely,

Peggy Korsmo-Kennon

Peggy Korsmo-Kennon

P.O. Box 704

Owatonna, Minnesota 55060

507/451-4719

507/835-7107



HISTORY AFIELD

December 31, 1986

Edward E. Sunde
5377 Gull Lake Dam Road, NW
Brainerd, MN 56401

Dear Mr. Sunde:

Jo Blatti and I would like to thank you for taking the time to share your memories about your work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during the interview on December 17. Your comments should add important insight to understanding the job of dam tender in the Headwaters Region.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy new year.

Sincerely,

Peggy Korsmo-Kennon

Peggy Korsmo-Kennon

P.O. Box 704

Owatonna, Minnesota 55060

507/451-4719

507/835-7107