

Interview with Chris Jouflas

Intro: First thing I want to do is identify the tape. Today is Wednesday, August 2, 2006 and we're here in Grand Junction, Colorado doing an oral history interview for the Colorado River Water Users Association and I'm doing the interview. I am Pam Stevenson and our camera operator here is Bill Stevenson, and I'd like to let you introduce yourself so you can pronounce your name correctly.

A. I'm Chris Jouflas. I've been a rancher all my life and a farmer and an irrigator and that sort of thing, so that is my real connection to water.

Q. Let's start with a little bit of just the facts when were you born and where were you born?

A. Oh my goodness I was born right here in Grand Junction, Colorado in 1926. Now I'm giving my . . . my gosh I didn't realize I'm that old. But anyway, time and water flow along I guess on the same plane.

Q. So you're a native.

A. I'm a native. I'm one of the few natives of old Grand Junction.

Q. How did your family end up here? How did you happen to be born here?

A. My father and mother both immigrated from Greece in the early 1900's, my father around 1907. His name was Peter Jouflas. My mother was Dorothy Anaortis. She came with her family to New York. He came on his own and worked all over the west, did whatever he could. Then he started out with sheep out of Carbon County

in Utah and he came this way and he acquired land up around Eagle and around the Salt and in that area on the Frying Pan River. I have one brother George he was born . . . my parents were married in January of '24. He was born in November of '24 and I was born in November of '26. We're the only two boys that they had.

Q. Any girls?

A. No girls. Oh boy, it's been a long hoe, but anyway we've been ranching, sheep ranching mostly. We did cattle for a while, but my Dad was strictly sheep and we did that. We acquired these lands back in the 30's, in the depression from homesteaders. Now they've become fairly valuable because they're up around Vail and in that area. That was just good sheep grazing at one time. Now it's good skiing I guess and everything else in the world. But like if you happen to be in the right place at the right time you're brilliant. If you're just off a little bit you're just stupid as you can be. We were just lucky to be in the area where they decided to build Vail and do all that. Land prices came up and pretty soon Eagle County has become . . . you just can't raise sheep up there, you can't raise livestock there. It's just recreation completely. Our outfit, we would come in the wintertime, we would come down to the desert west of Grand Junction and winter down here. So it was kind of a nomadic life but we were born here, went to school in Grand Junction. That's about it and we're still here.

Q. And summer in Vail?

A. Well yeah we had a second home before they called it a ranch then. Now it would be a second home. Yes we did.

Q. That's not a bad life at all, huh?

A. No it wasn't a bad life, really. It was a good life and it was a great way to raise kids. We've got four kids, two girls and two boys. They worked on the ranch and they worked down here on the desert and I'd pull them out of school on weekends which was terrible and they'd go down and build fence or do something down here on the desert, but that's building work character I guess. Anyway they got a pretty good work ethic.

Q. Why did your father want to raise sheep? Everyone else around here raises cattle.

A. Right. When he came from Greece and that's what he did part-time in . . . boy this is another century, back into the other century and he worked with sheep there and he knew what he was doing. That's what he could do here and it was an opportunity and the opportunity was magnificent then because no schooling, they couldn't compete with . . . they could work on the railroad, they could work on everything else, but he started with sheep. Then he came across the desert and into Colorado others went up toward Craig, others just didn't, others stayed back there in Utah. We were lucky enough that he came across here and was adventuresome enough and the bankers liked him, I guess. He was very honest so they liked him. During that time ranches would become available and homesteads and he'd just buy them and he'd built a whole outfit that way, two outfits actually which was good. He was good for not having gone to school.

Q. How many acres did he end up owning?

A. Oh gosh, we ended . . . we had about four thousand acres down here on the desert of deeded ground, besides the permits, the Federal permits to graze on and about seven thousand acres of deeded ground up in the Wolcott area in Eagle County

besides all the permits. So it was a nice outfit. He put something together that was really good at the time. The timing was . . . that's when he could do it. That's when you could buy land for a dollar an acre and that's what all it was worth. Now you can sell this desert here for heaven knows how much. It's recreation. It's scary.

Q. You've seen a lot of change in your time.

A. Oh my gosh, oh my gracious yes.

Q. What was it like growing up in this area?

A. It was kind of neat. It was about like anywhere I guess. Everybody was, during the depression, everybody was poor, but nobody knew it. There was just one class. At least we had meat because we had the sheep. My dad would make his wine, I mean he brought those habits, well that was his background, and that was in the cellar. I spoke Greek before I ever went to school. I still speak Greek fluently because of that background I learned it and I kept it. When I got old enough to run the sheep or when my father passed away, we brought herders from Greece, so I had to really sharpen up on my Greek. I'm a very good conversationalist in Greek. There's nobody around to converse with, but it's OK. It was a nice time to grow up. Like I said you didn't know you were poor. I didn't know what poor was. You went to school like everybody else did. I went to high school in Mesa. I even went to Colorado University for a little bit. Always the ranch was the practical thing. Whenever spring would come and the sheep started latting (?), I would have to leave school and come back and work. So mine wasn't that great of an education. I learned a lot just being around people that really knew a lot of things.

Q. So you actually grew up going to school here in Grand Junction. What was Grand

Junction like? Was it a pretty small town in those days?

A. Yes a one-stop light on Fifth and Main. I remember when that when in. Then North Avenue and these other streets, there was only about four paved streets in the whole thing. One of them was Main Street then you came over to Grand Avenue and then you came to Gunnison and that was it. That's the only paved streets here, the others were dirt. Yeah I remember that and it was just a nice place to grow up in really. And it's still a nice place to grow up, it hasn't changed. It's changed tremendously but it's still the same atmosphere here. There's a little farming and some ranching and people are just nice. A lot of people are moving in here that seem to appreciate that.

Q. Where did you actually live then did you live in town or did you live out on the ranch?

A. We lived in town. We had a house down on Gunnison Avenue. In the summertime we would go up to Basalt, he had two outfits one was on the Frying Pan River at Basalt and the other one was at Wolcott. So we lived at Basalt. He bought a ranch there and we lived in that house. We spent all summer up there. You'd never come down, oh my gosh, never come down in the summertime and if you did you would die because it was so hot. He sold the Basalt property and bought another property at Wolcott that was adjoining. So he made one nice outfit over there. We ran about four thousand sheep most of the time and that was about it. Our permit was Vail, Vail Mountain, one of our permits was the mountain. That was a sheep mountain there. It was kind of neat to see Vail grow. I didn't ever think it'd make it, but it did. I'm gone and they're there, so I guess it worked their way, which is alright.

Q. What was Vail like when you were growing up?

A. It wasn't. It really wasn't. There was no Vail. It was just a dirt road going up to . . . I can even remember Vail Pass being built. That was in '37 or '38 because the sheep were up in there. I'd go there up and stay at the camp sometimes and you could see the bulldozers working up and down on Vail Pass. Now today it is a four-lane road and it's about a three-hour jaunt from here to Denver. Back then it was an all day trip. You had to think about it before you'd ever go. Then there were about ten ranches, and this was up there in Eagle County, there were about ten or twelve ranches that just ran sheep, cows, whatever. We had a camaraderie that was just marvelous to have. You knew your rancher, you knew if you ever lost sheep you might get them back from the other guy, but anyway that was part of life. Vail came and started little by little and it's taken over. Recreation is the whole thing and you've got to look at it that way. I could moan and groan but it's there. They're there and I'm here.

Q. And I assume you sold some of that land to them.

A. Some, yes and we still have some up there. It's an ongoing thing. But it was a good life, let's put it that way.

Q. As a boy growing up and going to school here in Grand Junction did you ever think about doing anything but ranching?

A. Oh you dream a lot. No, you couldn't, the whole thing . . . your table is set before you why are you going to run off and do something else. So ranching was going to be my life, that's about it. None of my kids are into ranching. I saw to that. One's a veterinarian, that's as close to ranching as we could get. The other guy, he's in Denver. He's doing other things. The daughters are married. One is right here in Grand Junction with us, with the little grandchildren. The older daughter lives with

her husband up at the ranch in Wolcott, we still have that. We lease it out.

Q. Why didn't you want your children to go into ranching?

A. You could see the, shall we use the term "golden age" was in the 40's and 50's and then people started . . . it started to go down hill. Regulations started. The use of land, you could see the uses were coming . . . the environmental movement grew up and they didn't like sheep and they didn't like cows. You could just see that it wasn't going to happen. So they all went off to college. I didn't want them to do this sort of thing. Because it was dying, you could see that the "golden age" was in the 40's and 50's and after that it was gone.

Q. You said you went off to college too. What did you go to college to study?

A. Business and some Spanish. Language and business and that sort of thing, that's all I ever had time to do. I'd only go for two or three quarters at a time because the ranch was more important than school was, at least that's what I thought at the time.

Q. Did you think business was going to help you run the ranch? Is that why you studied business?

A. Yes and one should be background in business on anything they do, whether you're a doctor or lawyer or whatever. You'd better have a business background I think, because that's where it really is.

Q. Why were you studying Spanish?

A. Because I'm in the southwest. I live in the southwest and most of the herders that we had were Spanish or Spanish origin. You had to converse with them so I thought I'd. . .and then they accused me of speaking Castellon Spanish rather than their Mexican Spanish, whatever language it was. I can converse pretty well; I could; now I'm out of it. I haven't been with sheep for, oh gosh, fifteen years, so I'm out of that. So you've got to know everything.

Q. Did you have Basque. . .?

A. Had Basque, yes Spanish and French. They're different ones.

Q. They're different dialogues.

A. Oh my gracious yes and they were good workers. We all got along really well. I mean you talk about whose doing what or race. That doesn't exist, not in my life it didn't exist, it couldn't. There was a job to do and the sheep didn't recognize what color you were or who you were, they just had their demands. You had to do them and that was it.

Q. And they didn't care what language you spoke.

A. That's exactly right. They understood them all.

Q. How did you first get involved with the water issues up in this area?

A. Oh, the River District?

Q. Just water as an issue, when did you become aware of water as an issue?

A. Water has always been a part of your life. First irrigating fields and all kinds of things, building ditches and having decrees you had to use, that was on the high country. Then down here in the desert you had to haul water to the sheep because sometimes nature wasn't so wonderful, and rain and fill ponds so you had to haul water. I was very aware of the value of water all my life. It's been one of the guiding principles of my whole life, really. Whether you got it and if you don't have it well you'd better go some where else, you'd better go back east I guess, or where ever it rains, or down south and I don't want to do that.

Q. The land that your father bought, did that come with water rights?

A. Yes, that's the only way you could really buy land, ranches. That's what they were based on.

Q. Were they pretty early?

A. Oh, very early decrees. Back in the . . . some are even 1892, I mean, just when Colorado was becoming a state. They're old decrees. They're on the river and they're on the streams and they're kind of nice to have. They are a part of the land. Without the water anywhere you . . . on the western side . . . in the west without water you've got desert. And that's just as simple as it is, I'm afraid.

Q I know in interviewing farmers in Arizona everybody always knew which water rights they had.

A. Oh my, yes. There's an old saying that more people were killed over water battles than the outlaws ever shot in the old west and I'm sure there were and more lawyers were made rich with water cases than anybody.

Q. You didn't advise any of your children to study law?

A. No, I didn't. They did what they wanted to do.

Q. So you always been aware of water rights?

A. Oh my gracious, yes. Oh yeah, your whole life's build on that.

Q. As a rancher then how did you get involved with some of the organizations?

A. The way I got involved in the River District was, the composition of the River District is . . . how many counties, about fifteen counties, I think on the west slope. The commissioner appoints somebody, some representative to go there and they have their expertise, what ever it is. In my day, it was mostly ranchers and lots of lawyers, but mostly ranchers. People that knew what water really did, that it runs downhill to gravity and uphill to money, obviously. I was appointed . . . well, Andy Williams one of the best water lawyers I've ever known and a school chum, he said "I'm going off this River District, why don't you just go on there. They just meet once every three months. It won't take much of your time." My gosh that turned out to be the best job I ever had, or the biggest job I ever had. My gosh, there was all kinds of places to go and things to do. There was always lawsuits, my gosh, I didn't realize there were that many lawyers in the world. But anyway I did get on that and that was in 1981 I was appointed and I stayed there till 1990. I had about

nine or ten years and I was President of the organization for two years and Vice-president for another two or three. It was kind of nice. It was the highlight of my life, let's put it that way. I enjoyed it more than anything else, because you could get things done. There were ways to get things done. During the 80's and 90's we built two reservoirs here in Colorado, the River District actually built them, which was just phenomenal. Nobody else . . . it'd never been done. There was one at Rangely and one at Wolford Mountain that we built. That was just marvelous to be apart of that with that particular board. They were thinking that way and it was nice to get your hands on to something that you could really do. So that was the highlight of my career, I think, watching those dams being built.

Q. Now all those other years before that had you been aware of that River District Board?

A. Oh yes, but I didn't know what they did or how they did it because that came into being in 1937 and everybody seems to think they're to protect Western slope water but it's not. It's to protect Colorado water that means Denver and everybody else because everybody has rights to this water including on down with Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, California and good grief all the way down. But there are certain rights Colorado does have and they have to protect them. I think the only way . . . I'll do my own thing now, I think the only way they can protect them is to build reservoirs to get their decrees in and they can let the water go down after they use it. It's a lot of money and a lot of time and I don't think anybody thinks that way any more.

Q. Let's go back a little bit. When you were appointed which district did you represent?

A. Mesa County, I represented Mesa County. That was in 1981 I think I got on there.

Q. Where you still ranching at that time?

A. Oh yeah, I was ranching. It was a good thing, my family was just about right where they could take care of the sheep in the winter time, the boys, because I would have to run off where ever, Denver or Washington even, my gosh it was just a fantastic thing. They, Connie and the kids, they'd run the whole thing while I was gone three or four days at a time, which doesn't sound like much but in the sheep industry, you know they're animals, they're alive and you've got to be there. You just don't go wait, hold on till I come back. They won't do that. The family was the biggest part of my being able to do what I do with the River District.

Q. Like you say, being a sheep rancher, you're probably pretty tied down. Did you get to do much traveling before that?

A. No we didn't really know that much. We'd go to whatever conventions. Well, we did take trips; I don't know why we did or know how we did. But we did take some trips to Europe and that sort of thing. And that's the time you do them, you don't do them now when you can't even move. Now that you can afford them you don't do them. Anyway we did take some nice trips and it was a nice time. It was a nice part of your life, really

Q. When you came on the River District in 1981 what were the big issues?

A. Oh my, Denver mostly, trying to steal our water, which they had decrees for, but anyway. The bigger ones were, there was an on going battle with Denver trying to . . . and we settled. We settled two or three of them, which was really good during that time. The big one was Denver trying to build a diversion at, build a dam,

then tunnel it just like they did in 19 whenever it was, tunnel it back through the mountains to the Continental Divide over to Dillon and then down through Roberts Tunnel for their water. Those are just lawyer battles. They were just awful all the time. So we finally got together, it was in 1985 or '86, Denver Water Board, the Northern Water Conservancy District, they all had a piece of the action there. We got together and finally settled, got a memorandum of understanding that we wouldn't sue each other. When the time came they would build a reservoir, we would be compensated, the West Slope would be compensated, the Northern District would be compensated and Denver would be compensated. It was a win-win situation. It was quite a deal at that time. The River District ended up with ten million dollars to get off of . . . we had a decree in, oh gosh where was it, on the Colorado River in a canyon there and the Northern District paid us ten million dollars to abandon that and they would get water out of Granby, I'm rambling now, but that's how that goes, over on the East slope and we would end up with a reservoir on the West slope to compensate. So we finally did that and that's Wolford Mountain. They put in the money. Denver put in the money. It's the River District's reservoir and it's about a sixty thousand acre feet reservoir. It's a good one. Denver is guaranteed so much water up further when the release to take care of the decrees below and the Western slope has an amount of water thirty thousand acre feet for the farms, for the peaches, for the grapes, for whatever. So that was a great solution. To me that was good. That was the first time that we had really gotten together done that and made everybody winners.

Q. Was that a period when you were the president?

A. Yea, uh huh. Well it was all these other . . . all of the board. It was a good board. Everything came together just right. Everyone was willing to talk and to be reasonable. Generally, we're not.

Q. Where most the people on the board of ranching and farming background?

A. A lot of them were. There was, well gee, I've got my list here. Charles Hallenbeck was out of Delta, he was a rancher type. Dave Mott was out of Eagle. George Petry, out of Garfield, he was a lawyer. Gene Reshard was a rancher out of Grand County. Rial Lake was out of Gunnison County and I think he was a lawyer, probably. Then we had a judge on there. Jim Pugh, out of Moffat County, up around Craig, he was a lawyer and Ted Brooks, Montrose, a lawyer. Gosh, Bob Child, out of Pitkin County, I don't know what Bob did, but he a nice man, but he was out of Pitkin County, Aspen. Ken Kenny who was out of Rio Blanco and we built another reservoir there on the Rangely built that just before, I think that was in '83 or '84. In there some time, we built that one. River District had two reservoirs to their credit, which is good, pretty good size. Wes Signs out of Routt County, I don't know who you are going to talk to, he's quite a water man, really, very nice man out of Routt County. Bob Erbie out of Saguache County and Judy McBride was out of Summit County, which is Dillon and where the lake is and all that business. It was a good board and we all got along fairly well together and all kind of went the same direction and that's why we could accomplish anything. That was good.

Q. There's just one woman on there?

A. Well, this is along time ago. That's interesting. I don't know what their make-up is now.

Q. Was your major concern at that time just about the supply of water? Was that the main thing you were working on?

A. Yes, because we're growing, right here at Grand Junction is growing by leaps and

bounds. Denver's growing and that's one of the problems that I don't think we really think of because ten years ago there was a solution and you could've done this. Now you've added another million people here in Colorado, so you've got another demand on water and they're all on the East slope. That's where all the money is and the water is over here so how do you get these things together so it works for everybody. That's the problem. I think we've almost gotten to that point now where, when, if they do a major reservoir somewhere everybody's going to have a piece of the pie. They're all going to help build it and they're all get a piece of the action. It's kind of a win-win situation. That's the only way it will work anymore, I think, and that's the way it has to work.

Q. I see a lot of growth on the West slope, too.

A. Oh tremendous and if we don't have the water it's going to be too bad. We're not going to grow. The growth here in Grand Junction, especially, my goodness this is tremendous, in the last five years just growing terribly.

Q. Montrose, I hardly recognized Montrose.

A. I know, isn't that something. Gee, Montrose is a going concern. They've got that nice reservoir up above there. Oh what do they call that, Ted, Ted Brooks was in on helping build that one. It's just above Montrose towards Ridgeway. The Ridgeway Dam that's what it is. It's about a 60 thousand acre foot dam. It's really nice and the recreation is unbelievable. In the old days when the Bureau was doing it, the Reclamation, the recreation didn't have any thing to do with anything. Now that's coming to be a part of our culture, the rafters, the fishermen, everybody's got a piece of the action. Everybody has to be taken care of as it were and there are ways to do that if people, reasonable people get together and do these things.

Q. Back in the 80's when you were the president, were you thinking about recreation by then?

A. Yes, because you could see Dillon, well actually that the, yes recreation was a part of it but today it's a bigger part of whatever plans anybody makes. That's got to be one of the big things. But the recreations have to also . . . I mean nobody gets a free ride. Everybody has a piece of the action, fine. You want water released, and then you'd better be able to pay for that water being stored here before they release it. My theory, again, I think that's how it should be done and it will be done that way because that's the only way that works.

Q. Although it seems it's a lot easier to have the farmers and ranchers pay or to have the urban people pay, how do get the tourists to pay or the rafting companies?

A. Well, that's the part of it, they demand all kinds of things and they don't want to, I'm sure they want to be, but they demand all kinds of things and they want to change laws that would rob somebody else of some water that is rightfully theirs and that's really not fair. These are long court things and that's what you want to get away from. That's why I say reasonable people get together and they can solve all these problems. In my opinion, let's qualify that.

Q. Back in your period what were the biggest problems or challenges that you confronted?

A. Well, it was just mostly these lawsuits that went on, California wanting their share, more than their share, so it was always something that you had . . . there was . . . water flows and that's how everybody's mind works too. It's always working

everybody wants a piece of the action. Las Vegas, my goodness gracious, they've got more demand for water than anybody else, I think, the way they're growing. It's demand on the Colorado. It's just the whole system that comes down through, starts up in, wherever it is, in Granby or wherever. Comes down through, you'll see that it's a little stream there and boy by the time it gets down to here it's running lots of water and by the Green comes in and everything else, the Gunnison, there's a lot of water here. Then you're getting the endangered species business, you've got to provide water for them. Right here in Mesa County there's a . . .they call it the Fifteen Mile Reach, supposedly the squaw fish lay their eggs along the river at a certain time and they have to water in August or whenever it is so their fry will live. So they're making demands on that water and that means you're going to release water or you're going to get it from somewhere. So they're apart of the action, too, and they can hold up building anything. Well, life has gotten very complicated in the water business. It always was, now it's even more, but it's a fun thing. It was a fun thing really, for me anyway.

Q. What did you like about it so much?

A. The people you worked with and there was always something going, always somebody making an inroad, somebody wanting something, somebody needing something. You had to figure out how that would work. Taking care of everybody else, because the water law here in Colorado is you can't injure the other guy down below you. So you've got to somehow take care of him before you do any great thing with whatever you're doing. That's how it should be. That's all I've ever known anyway. You can't just dam up the river and nobody else gets anything. You just can't do that. I think we've progressed mentally and politically to where maybe we can do some rational thinking and build dams that work for everybody. That's the only way . . . we have all this snow in the mountains in the wintertime well, come May, June it's gone. It goes right by that state line and we're done. If you had reservoirs to hold that run off and then let it go in August, September when

everybody needs it, I think that would be wonderful. I mean that just makes sense.

Q. Some of the places need it all year round now with the urban development like Las Vegas.

A. Oh sure, well they have Lake Mead there. They can drink all of that, I guess, I don't know (laughing). No, they're under the same gun; they've got to prove that they can't injure California and California is the big dog in this thing. Mexico, good grief, we've got to take . . . This river takes care of everybody.

Q. It seems like Mexico gets forgotten a lot.

A. They sure do. They have been, but I think now they are coming away from that. They're starting to demand their share of the water and somebody has to release it.

Q. Back in the 80's, were you thinking about all those other places when you were working at the reservoirs and things? You talk about working with Denver, were you also thinking about working with California and Mexico and Arizona?

A. Well, that's always going to be in the back of your mind. It's always going to be a part of the equation, because you can only use water so much because it's finite they take the water over there, it's gone. It goes into a different drainage. So they have to compensate and they would do that. They'd have to compensate here. And then it's just a chain reaction all the way down. New Mexico has their call, Utah has their call, Arizona has their call and the water has to be there. So it's just a lively interpretation of law, I think is what that is, of water law. The water, some of us, I've heard that it's finite and all that but if you use it wisely, store it and use it

when you can and realize that you're not going to just grow expeditiously, just grow wherever you want, we don't have the water for that. You have to think about it a little bit, think who you're going to injure before you get injured yourself. I don't envy the board what they're doing now or any of these boards, water boards, because they've got to protect their rights but then they can't just say I'm the only one and I'm going to get it and you can die. You can't do that. They've got to realize that we're all in the same drainage and we've got to live together.

Q. Who did you see as the people that were your greatest allies when you were working on these projects? Who was on your side?

A. Oh gosh, we would work with the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, which is Greeley, Fort Collins and that's where growth has been tremendous there. We'd work with that group. We'd work with the Denver Water Board people. We got to know them pretty well, because that was your main antagonist, or whatever. We worked pretty well together I must say during that period and I assume they're doing the same thing now, because there is just certain things and the growth, as I said before, the growth that's come in the intervening years makes more demand on water for urban things. The farmers own most the water here, but they kind of waste it, according to the city folks. The farmers are the ones that are going to have to . . . they're going to have to take from the farmers somehow compensate them, reservoirs, somehow, somehow. Compensate them and not dry up the land. Good grief that's the worst thing you could do. Also take care of this growth that's going on. I would hope there would be a way that people could get together that are in the right places that could make these decisions and make them right for everybody. That would be kind of neat.

Q. In some cases the farmer's lands are being taken over by houses so. . . .

A. Well, there it is, yeah. Down here especially you get back here into the farms and you see little five acre deals all over the place and the water stays with that particular piece of land so they've got pretty good water. You're right the farmlands are being taken up by cities so they might as well get the water. But then there are other farms, ranches that have rights. They have to be taken care of; it's just a matter of everybody working together.

Q. What do you see as the opponents, the people that were the most difficult that you had to deal with to try to get things done?

A. Oh, they'd be local folks that had their own little thing, their own little project or their own whatever, their ax to grind. These were the people mostly with . . . dealing with the water board and these people were a lot easier than dealing with this local little thing. They were represented. They had their representative on the board. They wanted to do some small project which did or didn't do good for everybody. Those are the things that kind of get to you, the local individual things.

Q. Any specific project or things?

A. Oh, not really. They built . . . they've done quite a few . . . small, small projects, I don't even remember. Over here on Gunnison I think they've done some . . . they're small projects take care of . . . they really don't involve that much money or involve that much water but they do take care of a local situation and without that you're not going to build into the bigger situations.

Q. How did you see your role in all of this?

A. Oh I don't know . . . it was kind . . . try to think on what my role was. It was kind of

in between . . . how should I say. I'm not a statesman but that's the word you want to use I think. You try to get people together that were really suppose to be getting together and get things done and that was my role in my opinion. Talking to people and not being antagonistic, but trying to get everybody to see one way.

Q. A diplomat?

A. That's the word. I couldn't think of it, but I'm not that either. That's what I saw my role as working with anybody we could and not antagonizing anybody and trying everybody to get together to come to a solution that worked for everybody.

Q. Looking back over all of your years in working with water and things, what are you the proudest of? What accomplishment are you the proudest of? What do you want to be remembered for?

A. Oh, I don't know if I want to be remembered. Just being on the board and being with these people that were really, really good, good people, very in their fields. There were just excellent and trying to work with them. That period of time, that was my best accomplishment is working with them and being one of them really. As far as building things, that was the whole group. We built the Wolford Mountain Reservoir. That was a highlight there to at least be there when they were building and be part of the organization. And the Kenny Reservoir over here at Rangely, that was the first thing that we saw. Getting together with Denver and settling all these lawsuits that every time you'd turn around there was about a hundred thousand dollar lawsuit. My gosh, if you bought a bulldozer you could do better than hire lawyers, good grief. That's was the main thing I wanted to do is to get out of lawsuits and see if we could get any kind, any kind of resolutions on all these problems. It worked for some. It didn't work for others I guess, but it was fun.

Q. You talked about the reservoirs that you helped build or were a part of, do you think those kinds of projects can be done again today?

A. Everyday the area becomes less and less because farms are going out, ranches are going out and they're building houses. Once you get houses built and roads built the price goes up so high that the water you can't afford it. So I think yes, I think they can build, I think they have to build projects. They really have to, somebody has to come out and say this is necessary and we have to do it. Forget all the politics and all the moaning and groaning and just do it. They're very few that you're going to do. You're not to do any on the river, like they did in the old days, dam up a whole river. You're not going to do that and it doesn't make sense to do that. You better be very selective on where you build and the accumulation could be smaller projects and when you accumulate the twenty acre feet here and the forty here, you're going to get quite a bit of water storage.

Q. Every time you build a reservoir you're flooding somebody's land.

A. Yes, that's just a fact of life. So you pick where you do the least damage, that's what I would say. There are projects that can be done, but they have to be sold. They have to be . . . the politics have to be just right. That's the tragedy now. It's not the common sense that works, it's the politics that you . . . everybody going in the same direction and they have to do that. Water runs down hill and we're not going to keep it, if we don't have a place to keep it we're not going to need it. We just won't that's all.

Q. You're talking about the growth in this area, what about the Vail area where your land is?

A. Oh, magnificent. All of that, they're the ones that have a problem because the Denver Water Board owns most of the decrees in all of those creeks up there. Those are all ranches there so those are not industrial, they're just ranching type water use and that's the last one on the totem pole.

Q. You were talking about the Vail area.

A. Oh, the Vail area, yes. As I said the Vail Mountain was our sheep range. We would take one band up there all over that mountain. When they first come in, Pete Sibert and who else was there, there was two of them that came up there. They were up in the summer time and saying we're going to build a ski area here. I said, "Really when are you going to do that?" He said, "It's going to happen." I didn't believe that. In about two years here they come. They start cutting timber. They start cutting runs and they did it and they got it done. That's so unusual for something like that to happen.

Q. What year was that?

A. In 1961. From then on it was 'Annie bar the door' with this kid. Coming on down, oh my gosh, it's just golf courses and horse riding academies and that sort of thing. People love it and it's all second homes there. I don't know if they're great users of water, but they don't have the water to really use. There's a fellow there that's thinking of building six thousand homes, I don't know where he's going to get the water. He will though I'm sure. They're out of Texas. They're these big time guys that come in there and they just build these huge developments. Anymore this second home thing, and these second homes my gosh they're five, ten million dollar homes and you live in them maybe two weeks out of the year or something like that.

Q. Crazy isn't it?

A. It is, a little bit.

Q. Especially when you look back. . .

A. Oh my gosh, you could have bought the whole valley for one of those homes, with the people, I mean it had everybody. It came on slowly at first and then little by little it caught a hold, the romance of Vail. Charlie Vail was the highway engineer, the Colorado State Highway Engineer that built Vail Pass. They named Vail Pass after him and they named Vail after him. That's kind of neat I think, because that's a magic name anymore. They've just ended up coming all the way down to Gypsum to Dot Zero where the canyon shuts them off. It's just insane really. Not insane, what had to happen, happened. If people didn't like it they wouldn't come there.

Q. Are there some laws in place that when somebody wants to build six thousand homes they have to have water?

A. Oh yeah, the county commissioner, oh yeah, they have to show what they're going to do, everything's in place. It's just if you got enough money you can do anything, I guess and most these guys got a lot money and they want to do that. Sometimes it's an ego trip maybe, who knows what it is but if you got enough money you just do whatever you want to do. The county does have their guidelines in and everything else and they're pretty tough to do anything. But it gets done little by little there's not many open spaces left anymore.

Q. So you go back to your boyhood ranch what do you think?

A. It's still like it was. It doesn't have any buildings or anything on it, but I don't know how long that's going to last. I mean there's pressure on it. Well I don't go back; I really don't want to go back there because everybody I knew is gone. They sold out or they died whatever they did. They're all gone. The people I knew aren't there. The land is still the same, it's still the same rocks and trees and everything but it's different, for me it is anyway. I really don't, I really . . . it's not home to me anymore. That's sounds awful doesn't it, but it's not. This is home here, even if it's a hundred degrees.

Q. What do you think will happen with your ranch?

A. Oh, every year we have somebody wanting to buy it, every year, but we're waiting for the right guy to come along that's really going to do it the way we want to do it, because it's just open space, it's quite nice there.

Q. You're not going to do it yourself or let your kids do it?

A. Well, if they want to that's fine, but I'm not. I don't want to do that. I don't have enough brain to damage anymore to go through all that stuff. If they want to do it, that's fine. Somebody's going to come along and do it. You just can't leave land with the river running here and an interstate here and an interchange here. That has to be development I guess, someway from somebody's eyes as they look at it.

Q. Looking back at all the things you have been involved in would you have done differently?

A. No, I don't think so. No, I had a . . . being in sheep ranching, fine that was a way of life that was a good life. As I said the table was all set, my father did all that.

He did the hard work getting it altogether. My job was to hold it together and I happened to do that. I was lucky enough to do that. No there's nothing I would change. I've been on enough boards and enough things, that I think I've . . . it's been good, it's been good. The neat thing is all the people that you meet doing these things, really fine people. That's the best part of this whole thing, I think. When we'd go to Las Vegas these water user's meetings, you'd meet people that are just marvelous. You've just heard of them. Just to meet them and to talk to them they're just great people really. Then you read that they're nasty guys and all that and you know they're not. I guess they'd read that about me sometimes if I ever did anything. It's been just the good, nice people that you meet going through the whole thing.

Q. Are you still involved in some of the water user's decisions?

A. Not really I, no, no, no. Who was it. . .you got to know when to hold'em and know when to fold'em. You've just got to leave or otherwise you're trying to put your imprint on somebody back here and you don't want to do that. You did your thing, good. Get off the stage and let the other actor come on. That's my theory anyway. I don't want to hang on and do things. If somebody wants to talk me fine, I have some knowledge of some of these things, but otherwise I'm not going to go out and do these things.

Q. You've got quite a bit of knowledge.

A. That's just by being there at the right time that's all.

Q. What's been the greatest surprise for you in regard to Colorado and the water issues?

A. The growth that we've been experiencing, speaking Western Slope now, and in my lifetime Aspen has become Aspen, because I knew Aspen when it was a deserted nothing. Vail has become Vail. Steamboat has become instead of a little cow town it's become a big ski area. I've seen all of these happen and all of these things have changed Colorado, the West Slope at least. It's brought people in that would have never come here for no reason, maybe passing through. Now down here in Grand Junction we're getting a tremendous growth, which is just phenomenal I think. We've got to have . . . they're here, they're going to be here and it's all working quite well. We have good people in our governmental things. It's working out, I think. It's going to be a nice place to live. It was a nice place to live, even with all this, up here around Rifle with all the gas and that business. They're drilling like crazy. When you go through there you'll, boy that is wild. So even that, we're going to absorb that and that's going to be tremendous growth because that's here for a long time. You know Grand Junction's been boom and bust, uranium, what else did we have, the oil shale in the beginning when Exxon pulled out and everybody went broke. We weathered so many of these things. So this time I think it's kind of permanent. We're just diversified and you've got a bigger base now. You've got a lot more people than you had before. You'll have your ups and downs but I think it's pretty nice. Everybody accomplishes what they want to accomplish I guess. If you go broke, you go broke. If you want to make money, you make money and that's just about it.

Q. And the farmers just sort of just stay here and . . .

A. The farmers just kind of stay and then if they're lucky somebody wants to buy there to build houses and they're great.

Q. Well I know today they're doing all these projections about population growth and

water supplies, how much they're going to need and how much they're going to get. I'm sure they did that fifty years ago.

A. Yeah, but not on this scale, I don't think, not on this scale. Dividing the river between the Upper Basin and Lower Basin was done in 1922, whenever that was done. Whether that was right or wrong it doesn't really matter that's the law. Lower Basin gets so many feet and Upper Basin gets so many feet. Most of the water that comes up in Colorado and Colorado's got fifty percent, I think a little over fifty percent of the waters, of the Upper Basin States, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, whoever, Utah. They were brilliant people in their time as they came along they knew they had to do something and they could foresee what was happening. This is just happening now, this tremendous growth and all of this activity because the East Slope is just unbelievable now and their needs for water are tremendous and they have to get it somewhere. I mean you can't just take a civilization and say no you can't water and that's it. You can't do that and they're going to get it. They're going to get it, where is it - it's over here so the only thing the West Slope can do is say OK, you need the water, you take care of us. Don't dry us up we've got enough desert west of Grand Junction to last us forever. To last us to Las Vegas or California for that matter. So we don't need any more desert but we've got to somehow build projects that compensate everybody, that work for everybody. That's my hope and I believe they'll do that.

Q. Do you think they can be good enough at predicting that it'll happen or do you think at some point they'll just have too many people and there won't be enough water?

A. Well, no I think that's going . . . the growth is here in the west now. It will go somewhere else; it'll go up into the northwest. When people see they can't live here they won't come here, but now they see they can and as long as the water providers can take it to where they can provide for more people, wonderful. But the day's going to come when they really can't so they're going to somehow realize

that the growth is not going to be there forever. We're not a Chicago and who wants to be, actually. Not about Chicago, I love Chicago.

Q. Greg mentioned to me, to find City Hall, to look for the ten-story building. It wasn't to hard to find the only ten-story building in town.

A. That's right and that was built quite awhile ago. Now St, Mary's is going to build another ten-story part on the hospital deal. So we're little by little we're going to grow. With all this energy here we're going to grow whether we like it or not, we're going to grow.

Q. Some people are talking about the energy development taking water to get the energy?

A. Oh, yes oil shale. I think it's five barrels of water for every two barrels of oil if they ever get it done. Now they're refined it down to two for three, you get one barrel of oil for two barrels of water or something like that. Yeah, there'll be a big demand on water, so if they develop that oil shale, it's varying the way they're going to do it, it would be wonderful for the United States. I don't know what it would be for us. It would be wild.

Q. A lot of people think that water is more important than oil in some ways.

A. In some ways, yes, but you can't run your car on water yet. If you could do that, that would be great. A Stanley Steamer, there you go.

Q. Do you think it's going to become a battle between energy and water?

A. No, I think that everybody's lawyers are smart enough to know that's its got to be a win-win situation for everybody. We've passed the time when they would underhandedly get water rights. The old days were was really wild and crazy. That's what made Denver so successful when they built all their reservoirs and they'd come over here and buy decrees from farmers and ranchers and they could use that water because they didn't need it. Then when the time came to develop anything that water's ours, it's not yours. People didn't realize that was going on, or they did, but anyway, that happened. But that day is gone I think. The day now is if oil companies need water they're going to have to build a reservoir. They're going to have to get in line. They've already got their water rights. They've been busy a long time. They're going to need reservoirs to hold these waters to take care of everybody else's decree. They realize that. We have kind of awaken a little bit, we as the common man here on the West Slope, we've awaken a little bit to realize that we're not going to take it and you can't have it. We can say, no you're got to take care of us here. They're getting laws in the State Legislature, it's changing. We get enough people aware that you've got to compensate a basin when you take some water out. You've got to do something for them, either money or water, better water because money goes, the water you have.

Q. Looking at Colorado and water resources today what do you see as the most critical issues that are facing the water people today?

A. The growth and the supply of water it's not infinite it's finite. The growth is coming, it's here. There's an old adage "the wolf's right in front of you, why are you looking for his tracks, he's right in front of you". They're here. The water providers have to find a way to provide for the people that are here and the people that are going to come because you can't just shut the door. There is enough water if it is used wisely to do that, I think. That's their challenge now, that's their challenge along with all the industrial development and all that business. It's going to be very

interesting these next ten years I think, here in Colorado.

Q. There's enough water if it is used wisely, do you think in most cases that it is being used wisely today?

A. Better than it was fifteen or twenty years ago. Yes, people are more aware. They're just aware that water is a commodity that you're lucky to have. It's not just a god given right that you can have water and nobody else can. That's not how it works. It's everybody's water. That's hard for a rancher to get over with because you've done the water, it's your creek, it's maybe even named after you and you think it's yours. Well, it's not really yours, it's everybody's water. There are people below you that are depending on it. I think that awareness is starting to come into our thinking. As people come, possibly they come from states, wherever, there's all kinds of water that's not a problem. They're starting to see this, that it's got to be used wisely and that's all there is to it. You can't waste it. It's not a resource to waste.

Q. You don't think as long as people turn on the tap and there's water that they're not going to be worried about it?

A. Well most are until finally the tap doesn't show anything and then what will happen. Then they'll holler at Greg.

Q. I've heard people say that water is too cheap that people don't value it because it's so cheap. If they had to pay for it like you do for gasoline by the gallon. . .

A. Yeah, well they do. They buy it at the grocery store, those little bottles of water, my gosh they're more expensive than gas ever thought of being. So they're getting

to them. So it's just an awareness that has to come. We can do these things, but we have to do them together. It's not going to be I'm going to do this over here and you can do whatever you want over there. It can't work that way because we all press on each other. One pushes here, it's just a hydraulic principle; it's going to push over here. We just have to get along in doing these things that's all there is to it.

Q. Thinking about that, how do you see the whole southwest region, particularly the Lower Basin States are going to impact Colorado and the water resources here?

A. With that 1922 compact, there's so much seven and half million acre feet go down, but there wasn't that much there, never has been that much. That's not an average. There never was that much water in the river. That's the first call on the river whether anybody knows about is the Lower Basin States seven and half million acre feet or cubic feet whatever it is. We have to realize here in Colorado that the Lower Basin can call on us. One day they will and there is a huge civilization, if anybody hasn't noticed. They call it Southern California and it's got lots of, how many seventy or eighty in the Congress. Representatives, that's where the muscle is and that's where it's going to happen and we have to be aware of that. They could change, politically they could change things. That's why I always bring up this politically feasible thing to build dams or anything, it's politics. It's not reality, it's not common sense, because common sense you just take a bulldozer and build a dam and that's it. It's who you're going to injure, whose got an axe to grind over here, whose got whatever. I think we all, including the Lower Basin, the whole drainage has to come to grips with the reality there's so much water and there's just so much we can do with it. The rafters, they'd love to raft year round I'm sure, but nature doesn't do that. She shuts the springs down and the water doesn't run like that. To me the only reasonable conclusion is that you build reservoirs where they should be built up high in the drainage so everybody uses the water down below. That's too simple nobody can follow that line of

reasoning I don't think.

Q. Well Colorado is using up, sounds like more and more of their water with the growth?

A. Oh yeah, we have too. We're being forced into that.

Q. What if there isn't any water left over? What if Colorado uses it all?

A. Well it's not that we are going to use it all. It's just that we use it wisely and that comes again from building reservoirs so you can use it late in the fall when you need the water. That's when nature shuts down before the next snow you replenish all your springs and all that business in the high mountains and here comes your water flow again. To me it's very simple, you just build a reservoir and it holds the water till you can really use it. Once you use it here it's going to go on down and everybody else is going to use it to. It's just sense that's all, Somehow we've got to get to that point, somehow.

Q. What about making better reuse of water?

A. Sure, you've got to do everything. We're going to have to do everything. I think, Denver which is more under the gun than we are they're starting to reuse and all of that stuff there. Take their waste water and all that stuff and recycle and that sort of thing. They have to do that. The West Slope is one thing with the Colorado River and then you've got the East Slope the water they take from here dumps into the Platte River and that goes to Nebraska. Nebraska and Kansas and they need their water or whatever. It's just an unending thing and Colorado is just in the middle of it. That's why we have use it a little bit so we can really make good use

of it and then pass it on to the next guy.

Q. What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the state? Is it water or is it other challenges?

A. In my opinion it is water because without water, well, driving along the interstate you can see that side, the north side of the interstate doesn't have any water it's desert. This side, it has peaches, it has grapes, it has alfalfa, it has everything. Without the water we're just a continuation of that desert coming up from Thompson, from Las Vegas, it's the same desert just mountains dispersed here and then desert again. We've got to come to grips with that. We're just a desert state if we don't have the water the desert would go right up the Continental Divide. Pretty easy. That's why we have to get a plan, not a plan. We have to realize that water is our life blood. That's what we have to take care of. To me that's more important than anything else they're going to do. They can pass laws that you can't come in and live here and that sort of thing but that doesn't work. You've got to take care of your water and then if there is enough water that's going to dictate how big Colorado's going to get or any state. I don't care where it is. That's what caused California to get where they stand on top of each other, because of the Colorado River. That's really how you build civilizations. Well, go back into history, all civilizations along rivers. They're not sitting out on the desert someplace. If the desert had water that's where they were.

Q. But we've seen some of the Native American civilizations that were here thousands of years ago and they all disappeared.

A. They did yes. Drought, that's one of the theories, I guess. They just dried up and they had to go somewhere else. Either they died or went somewhere else. We've got to come to the point where we understand what water is. How we can use it

and how we can extend its life span as it were. How everybody can get use out of it, a better use than, just bingo, just wasting it. I think we're becoming aware of that.

Q. Do you think the average person is becoming aware of that?

A. No, but they're going to become aware of it little by little. The ones that should be aware and a lot of them aren't, are your leader types, because every time anybody runs for the State Senate or for the Representatives here they say "We're going to protect your water". Well how are you going to protect my water? That's their key word we're going to save your water. Well that's fine and then they get over there and nothing happens. But that's one of the key slogans "we're going to protect your water". I don't know how they're going to do that.

Q. Maybe some of your water organizations need to do a better job of educating them about what they need to do.

A. They try, they try but it's a long, long, long educational thing. In the mean time here comes the rafters, here comes the fishermen, here comes the everybody that wants to use that same water. The use of water is just . . . what is does is just tremendous if one would think of it.

Q. I guess the rafters and the fishermen are going to say well we use it but we don't use it up.

A. Right, we just use it for a little . . . but they want a certain amount of it and once it goes it's gone as far as we're concerned, as far as Colorado is concerned. Once it gets into Lake Mead or whatever it's gone.

Q. That's OK with California

A. Yeah, oh no they love that, you bet.

Q. It won't go to waste.

A. No, no they'll use it. They know how to use it.

Q. Down in Arizona the big issue too, is the Indian Water Rights. The Indians going back and fighting for all those water rights that were taken from them.

A. Oh, it's just a big, big, thing. The West is water and that's all there is to it. The water that was . . . the dam that they built down here in Durango, they're building it now; I've forgotten the name of it, that's Indian Water Rights. That's a Federal Dam, that's probably the last Federal Dam that will be built. Ben Knighthorse Campbell, our senator, pushed and shoved that and got it through and they're building that and that's to take care of Indian Water Lands. Now what the Indians will do with it, they'll sell it to somebody, who knows what will happen. Man is very clever on what they do.

Q. The Indians, that's what they're doing in Phoenix in the desert areas. They're selling it back to the cities. One of the Indian leaders told me that they're going to make a lot more money on their water than on their casinos.

A. Of course, water's the most valuable thing. That's brilliant, I think. They've got some smart lawyers getting them to do that and that's fine. That's good.

Q. Do you have any advice for people that are operating Colorado Water Resources today?

A. Not advice because everybody is going to do their thing, however it's going to be. The whole has changed. You can't step in the same river twice said Thomas Wolfe or who ever it was or Socrates. Somebody said that. Everything changes so advice that I would give would be based on the last century. But the principle is still going to be the same you've got to cooperate rather than fight, because fighting everybody loses, cooperating everybody wins. That would be my advice to any water user. They've got to be aware of what they're doing and how they're doing it and they've got to take care of the next guy. They've just got to otherwise it will not work. The only way we ever built anything that the River District did was through cooperation. Everybody won on that deal and that was good and that can be done. That principle is still there if you can get the people to go with it. That's really what you need is cooperation.

Q. I think I've covered most of the questions I had. Is there anything that you want to tell me that I didn't ask you?

A. No, just thank you so much. It's been a real pleasure really meeting both of you and being part of this, whatever it's going to be. You still don't know?

Q. Well, it's going to be an archival record. Whether they do something more with it, I loved to see them do something more.

A. Thank you very much. I'm honored and privileged that you would call on me.

- - - End of interview - - -