

Stonewall Jackson Dam Removal  
John Reed Oral History  
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Interviewer: MK – Michael Kline  
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Michael Kline: Today is December 19th, 1984. Steve Rogers and I are about to interview John Reed, head of public relations for the Corps of Engineers, who's made a special trip down to the Stonewall Jackson Dam from his office in Pittsburgh.

John Reed: Yes. You can get some shots today. But it could be obviously blooming and overcast. At least you can see some of the areas. I thought we'd take a look at the dam construction itself and then go look at Roanoke. In the area where there are still some buildings and the schools out there. Then the ranger said he thought the interior wouldn't be too bad either. The construction site itself is on the dam. Well, the major construction site from the road relocation might probably be a little too muddy and confusing. But we could probably go back to the interior.

MK: What do you mean by interior?

JR: Interior is the project map back here. I'll just stay in one location as long as you want me to figure out what part of the bigger view.

MK: Yes.

JR: Back to this area.

MK: Yes.

JR: Yes. Some of the areas are kind of remote. But on the other hand, you have to consider that a lot of this has been gas storage areas for a long time. Like the Skin Creek Compressor Station, that it was going to be underwater when the dam was in, and it was replaced. We paid for their contractor to replace their station. That dates back to around 1914. I'm not sure whether that was the date it was constructed or the date it was dedicated. But that was the date we had available. So, some of those things. A compressor station of course doesn't change the entire complexion of the community. But it does mean that some of these back roads have been around here for a long time and that people have been back and forth and gas wells have been around. So, it hasn't been the totally isolated type of rural community you associate with, say, some of the back reaches of Kentucky or even some places in West Virginia where they're probably miles and miles and miles and miles away from a paved road.

MK: You mean like the Sutton Dam area, for example? Must have been some failure.

JR: Yes, probably. I'm not that familiar with those areas because those projects are not a part of our district. But Bill Woodburn could probably draw some comparisons for you later. He's the construction manager here on site. He actually works for the Huntington District in West Virginia. We're in kind of a unique position in that two districts are working on this project. It's a Pittsburgh district project. But in an effort to streamline our operation, a few years ago they assigned our construction and real estate missions to the Huntington District in support of our projects. So, we don't have our own construction and real estate elements.

MK: Did it in fact streamline the project to do that?

JR: Probably in the overall view from division headquarters in Cincinnati, I suppose it streamlined it, reducing number of personnel, that sort of thing. It did create some unique challenges, I guess, is the optimistic word to use as far as work on any of the projects that we're both involved in. It's not just Stonewall, but like all of our major rehabilitation of locks and dams in the Pittsburgh district, and it involves Huntington construction. But I suppose from a public standpoint, the one advantage of that is that means we have to talk about what we're doing a lot more than you would if you're talking with just your own construction division to make sure that each one knows what the other one's talking about and that we're all on the same track. In that sense, it sort of makes doubly sure we know what we're doing when we start doing it. Now the other thing, of course, that's impacted this area has been the interstate, which has been here since the mid-seventies. I don't know, you'd have to talk to somebody in Charleston to find out what sort of relocations that involved in terms of people and property and that sort of thing. But the interstate I'm sure created some changes in this area at that point. Of course, the discussion of this project goes all the way back to the thirties and when we were first asked to take a look at flooding problems in this area. Not a lot really came out of that early effort, some initial study. One of our public perception problems did come out of that. Back in the very early studies, they made some really rough estimates based on some old real estate criteria at that time that indicated, oh, it'd probably be maybe 1,900 acres or something like that would be involved. Well, the project that we finally came up with, of course, involves much more than that, a little over 20,000 acres at this point. Contrary to some people's opinion, that is not a matter of deception or anything of that sort. It's just that early estimate was a very early estimate without any real grasp of what sort of project was necessary or what other interests would be represented in this project. At that time there was no discussion with the state about their interests in recreation or anything of that sort. Back in the thirties, recreation was not really recognized as a project purposed for Corps projects.

MK: Right. The people could afford it, I suppose [laughter].

JR: Right. Well, recreation was not a big thing in the country at that time, except for a few major national parks, most of which were originally under Corps control too, by the way. Few people realized that. But back before they had a park service. But then I guess it was in the sixties, we came back and looked at the area again. Looked at various alternatives and came up with a study that recommended a flood control project with a dam located in the current location and indicating it would provide necessary flood control benefits to Weston and to Clarksburg and some additional benefits further on down river even as far as Pittsburgh. Most of those benefits would be associated in the operation of the dam in conjunction with other reservoirs that we operate throughout, well, with Stonewall's sixteen reservoir system. The benefits that would be attributed strictly to Stonewall would seem rather small, but they're significant when they're combined with the operation of, say, Tygart and up Allegheny and a lot of the other reservoirs we control that have some impact on Pittsburgh.

MK: I get the feeling that this is part of a much bigger picture.

JR: Oh, yes. That's one of the basic problems that people have in understanding how we operate a flood control reservoir. That they will prepare a document that will give the basic guidelines

on how to operate the dam here at Stonewall in terms of various elevations and rainfall and that sort of thing, how much you should release. If there are any great changes expected in releases because of rainfall or whatever, we usually put out a notice to people to let them know, "Hey, if you're down river from the dam, don't go wading into the creek tonight. Because it's liable to rise a couple of feet on you, and you might lose your boat or your picnic basket or whatever." But that operation is built into a system of flood control reservoirs. What happens here could change depending on what's going on at Tygart or one of the other flood control reservoirs. The control is based not only on the immediate needs of Weston, but on what is needed as far away as New Orleans. When they were having the floods on the Mississippi River this year, we were getting information from them indicating what they did or did not need from us in terms of reservoir releases all the way up to the Allegheny Reservoir up in the Allegheny National Forest. Now, generally, when you're having flooding down in Mississippi, what they want us to do is store as much as possible, which is what we try to do. Now, we had a different problem later in the year down near Carroll, Illinois, where there was not a sufficient flow in the Ohio River for the commercial tows to get past the last two blocks and dams on the Ohio River, which are the only two old-fashioned wicked dams still in operation. So, they asked us to release as much water as possible to raise the flow of the Ohio River as far down as Carroll so the tows could get past.

MK: So, how many dams actually were releasing water to comply with that request?

JR: I am not sure of the total number. I know we have sixteen in the Pittsburgh district that would have some impact on that. Yes. Some reservoirs may not have been releasing anything more than their normal release because they may not have had enough capacity to have really contributed. Others like say, Kinzua or the Allegheny Reservoir, it could have changed their release by a substantial margin and have an impact on that. We have all sorts of charts and schedules that indicate when you start the release, how soon it'll reach such-and-such a point on the river so that you can get notices down as to when it's at.

MK: I'm sure all that is computerized by now, isn't it?

JR: Oh, yes. Not only computerized, but satellized. We have a satellite that takes a lot of our readings for us and provides us a lot of the data that we need to regulate this kind of control. You throw into that the interests that developed even back in the fifties, and I guess the public law even dates back into the forties, that authorizes recreation and other purposes for Corps projects in addition to flood control. Then you find that there are a lot of things that impact on how we operate a reservoir. You have to be careful on how quickly you change the releases in terms of their impact on the fishery. Like I say, putting out notices to the public so that you don't catch fishermen or picnickers by surprise.

MK: Is the downstream patrol after the warnings or issues?

JR: No. Not unless it's a very unusual circumstance. I know of nothing that's happened in the five years I've been with the Pittsburgh District that would have warranted any sort of patrol. Usually in addition to a public notice, we'll alert county emergency managers so that they can be on the alert too for anything unusual. But we pretty much know what's below the dam as far as

what would be within the bounds of the river. Nothing of a permanent type would be in that area, which is really talking about are the people that are in the area for fishing or hunting or picnicking or have a boat dock or something like that. That's the sort of thing you're really looking for. We normally do not get the sort of problems where we have to make such a drastic release that we're actually going to flood areas that we normally protect. That just doesn't happen.

Steve Rogers: When this came up again in the sixties after only going through the proposal stage and the initial study stage before that, who initiated that? Was that part of a normal Corps reevaluation of the whole system?

JR: No, it was a request, and I'm not sure exactly who. I know Senator Randolph, of course, was involved in it. But it would have had to been some of the people in this area talking to Randolph and perhaps some of the local congressmen saying, "Hey, we still got a flooding problem here. The Corps hasn't come up with anything yet. We want them to come back." Another thing that most people don't understand is that we do not initiate our own work. There has to be some sort of legitimate request from the local community or local interest through their congressional interests. Congress has to tell us to go back and study an area or to go in and study an area. All our projects are specifically authorized by Congress. It's not something where we just get a budget and say, "Go out and do what you want to do." We have to go forward with a report saying, "Hey, this is what it looks like. This is what we think the solution would be. This is how much we think it's going to cost." They will then authorize or not authorize the project. Generally, when they don't authorize the project, it just means they don't take action on it for years and years and years. After about seven years – well, no, that's a different thing. But they just won't take action on a project. But if they authorize the project, then you go back, do a more detailed study, and you come back with a little bit more firm cost estimate. You tell them, "This is what it looks like now after we've gone back and looked at it in a little more detail. This is what we're going to need for next year to start work on it." Then they'll appropriate the funds if they feel they have funds available to do that. Then when we get the appropriation, we go in and start the construction. That's why it wasn't until 1977 that we actually started work in this area. Then of course, most of the work for the first few years was basically real estate acquisition, getting the property we needed to start first with relocations. In this case, I mean things like roads and utilities and that sort of thing. Now, you start on that type of stuff first. You keep buying the property you need throughout the life of the project over a long-range schedule so that if they just handed us all the money at once that we needed to buy the entire amount of real estate, the national debt would be a lot worse than it is now. You're talking immense sums if you took that approach on every project that the federal government is involved in, whether it's a Corps project or any other project. So, you work out a schedule, what you can reasonably accomplish in a given fiscal year. You go forward with the budget request, and they say, "We'll give you so many million this year to get so many tracks of land and to do so much relocation work."

SR: But how do they choose which tracks to spend it on first if they know there's money?

JR: It's based on what work we think needs to be done first. When you're talking the early stages of a project, you're talking relocation work and moving roads and railroads and utilities

and in this case, gas wells that you know will be underwater when the project is completed. Then as to which sections you buy first, which road you relocate first, you have all sorts of variables that you look at. In this case, probably one of the first things we look at is where are we going to put the project office? We need to do some work in that area so we can get to the project office. Which sets of specifications can we get done the quickest to get work underway? That sort of thing. Generally, what they did was worked basically from this site on out through the project saving the –

SR: The site near Brownsville.

JR: Right. Brownsville was one of the first things to go. That community just doesn't exist anymore. Whereas with Roanoke, it's a little further on up the reservoir, there are still some buildings there. The school is still there and operating and will be until the new school is complete, which is another thing we're paying for. The state and local community is going to end up with probably the most up-to-date school in their system. Therefore, it's age category. I'm not sure exactly what ages that they cover in the local school there.

SR: Where is that being built?

JR: I'm not sure the exact location, but it's in this area further up in the hills somewhere. I don't know –

SR: So, the kids won't have to go into town to school.

JR: No. It's supposed to be a beautiful site, although I understand the school board liked it. I think the superintendent said he thought he knew of a better location. But he was still pleased with the building he was getting, so he wasn't going to fight it. Even at this stage where we're actually pouring concrete for the dam, we're still acquiring some of the additional real estate we need.

SR: Part of that is just spreading the money out fiscal year by fifteen years.

JR: Right. Spreading the money out and also the workload out. There's only so much you can do in a given year. We couldn't complete the entire work that we needed to do as far as plans and specifications within a short period of time. It takes a long time to do a project like this. The real estate process itself is a very long painstaking process. It's not the sort of thing that you see on TV where the federal government shows up overnight and throws somebody out of their house. Now, we have unfortunately had to go through a couple of evictions here. In most cases, they were squatters, people who didn't actually own the property. We had already bought the property. In one case, the owner rented it to an individual after selling it to us. That person lived there for a couple of years before we finally decided, hey, we need to get in there. "You need to leave." The guy wouldn't leave. Unfortunately, when we turned it over to the judge and the sheriff, they made the mistake of trying to evict him in the middle of winter, which is not a good idea for someone who has a kid that's in school. They're all in elementary school.

SR: Who were those people?

JR: I forget the names off hand. But I think the gentleman is still in the area somewhere. If I remember later, I'll let you know.

SR: So, this eviction was conducted by the sheriff?

JR: No. The eviction was postponed, and the guy left before the sheriff had to come back after the school term was over. It just wasn't a good thing to do it that way. Then of course, we had the problem with Mrs. Heavner who felt that God had told her the dam was going to be a disaster if it was finished and that she should not leave. She absolutely refused to leave. The sheriff went up there. I don't know if somebody slipped or took a swing at him or whatever. But he felt he was being attacked. So, he put them in handcuffs to get them off the property.

SR: You mean the federal marshal?

JR: Yes, federal marshal. Right. That's right. Sheriff wasn't involved in that one. That was an unfortunate case too. The money had already been deposited. I don't know if it was in her lawyer's account or her account. But now she had money for the property. We had offered relocation assistance, and she had refused it. A lot of people were complaining about the way it was handled. We should have had friends up there to help her and this sort of thing. But most of the people that were talking about coming to her rescue were people who'd been in outright opposition to the project for some time. We're talking about removing personal property like pipes and water heaters and this sort of thing that were not our personal property. So, we had no way of judging what was going to happen if they came on site. Plus, we really had no control over it at that point. It was really up to the judge and the marshal.

SR: Oh, wait a minute. People wanted to take out water pipes and –

JR: That's what we heard.

SR: Oh, and you didn't want them to take out the water pipes?

JR: No. That was not personal property. But the marshal made arrangements for a mover to come up there. Mrs. Heavner's belongings were packed up, and she was located with – not sure if it's a friend or a relative. I guess things were being taken care of at this point from that standpoint. There was also some misunderstanding. There was a bulldozer up in the area that the marshal had requested to help clear the road, so we could get into the house. Apparently, people were afraid that we were going to bulldoze the house as soon as she was gone whether the possessions were out or not. That's not our policy. Any of our people that tried to do something like that would find themselves in trouble within our organization. We do not –

SR: So, how long was it before the house got bulldozed?

JR: It's probably a few days. I'm not really sure the house has been bulldozed, but I suspect it has. We don't like to leave structures up that long unless they're of a historical nature and need to be cataloged. But just to leave a house standing up that long or a shed or something like that,

you're inviting vandalism and whatever else. So, we try to get them down as soon as possible. But we don't do anything until we're guaranteed by the Corps that both the owner is out and that their personal possessions have been properly taken care of. We just don't operate that way. We wouldn't be in business very long if we did. But fortunately, those incidents have been fairly rare. Of course, like any major project including the interstate, the hardest thing for any of us to deal with is the real estate problem, because eventually real estate means you have to move people. I know the opposition is throwing around numbers like nineteen hundred people have been moved or have to be moved or whatever. But the figure is closer to a little under a thousand. Most of the people have been moved if not outright willingly, at least cooperatively. They haven't had to be evicted. They've accepted the government offer. While they may not have liked the idea of having to move, they've accepted it. They moved and have gotten relocation assistance and have new homes. It's not a comfortable thing to deal with. I don't know of anybody in the district that really likes the idea. I'm sure the state had the same problems when they put the interstate through, not just in Lewis County, but throughout the state. I'm sure they didn't particularly like to have to do that sort of thing either.

SR: One difference I think that makes your project more sensitive is, because you're doing a river, you're doing the bottom land, you're doing farmland, right?

JR: Well, that's true.

SR: Interstate is generally – certainly right here in Lewis County – they cut through.

JR: Right. We cut through a lot of mountains and everything. Well, yes. When you do bottom land like that, you find a lot more of the older homesteads where the family has been there for years and years and years, and that's hard to give up. I know I would have difficulty giving it up in that sort of situation. I don't know if anybody has ever really determined just how productive the farmland is here. I'm sure a lot of that acreage gets flooded out when the floods come through. But then again, that provides you with a lot of good topsoil too. Majority of what you're talking about here, there are probably a few good-sized farms that produce income above and beyond the immediate family needs. But most of them are just really family plots. But again, that's a difficult thing for somebody to give up, particularly if in relocation, they're going to have to move into a town somewhere. They're no longer able to do everything for themselves and have got to find a different type of job and this sort of thing. It is rough. Like I say, fortunately, we've only had a small number of evictions.

MK: Have you been faced with evictions in other projects as well?

JR: Oh, yes. I don't know if that – yes, you want to sit down?

MK: Let me check the window really quick.

JR: Our rangers are the people who are responsible for operating the projects. Well, when they become operational, handling the regulation of discharge, supervising the areas that are still under our control. Depending on the particular project, getting involved extensively in interpretive programs with the general public handling, as they are here now, permits for things



like hunting, fishing, and whatever else is a particular interest at a given project. Generally, camping, although we're not allowing any camping here except for the hunters, right?

Male Speaker: Yes. We set up a campground typically around deer season. But that's the only time we've gone camping.

JR: There's just too much construction activity right now and limited personnel to really allow any general camping in the area at this point. Eventually, there will be a lot of recreation facilities here. But most projects in West Virginia, the majority, probably 99 percent, will be under state management of one sort or another, state parks or fish game or whatever. We will operate. We'll be at the dam itself and a visitor center somewhere in this area. The area associated immediately around the dam; I think we'll have a day use area as part of the plan.

MS: Yes. There'll be approximately 300 acres right in this area around the dam site that we'll be maintaining ourselves. Then the rest will be turned over to the West Virginia Army.

JR: Well, our rangers are really a multidisciplinary force. We have biologists, foresters, interpreters. Some of the old timers that have been around for a while will come up out of the maintenance ranks with additional education along the way and are asked to do just about everything that needs to be done in the area. They even administer small contracts for garbage pickup and things like that if we needed it at some of our bigger projects where we have our own recreation areas like in Pennsylvania and Ohio. You want to get out for a minute or no?

MK: Yes.

JR: That illustration you were looking at in the office, what you're looking at now is the green area on that or most of the green area. The first part of construction started I think it was sometime in June. Around that timeframe, we started pouring the first concrete. Part of what we had to do here, of course, is put in a couple of small earthen dams to divert the flow of the river and dig a diversionary channel which is this pit right in front of us and in front of the construction area, so that the river would flow around the work site. You certainly don't want to stop the river. You can't really stop the river. Eventually it's going to overflow your work area. So, that's the first thing you do, is provide a diversion to get the river around the work area. When they have most of the first segment done, they will then do a new diversion allowing the river to flow over a portion of the dam that was not built as high as it eventually will be and start work on the other side. Then eventually, it'll get to a point where they'll finish it off and start releasing the water through the dam itself. Somewhere in the area, of course, they'll also have an emergency spillway, or I guess in this case, an overflow where – is what they're calling it. So, if we ever get to a point where the reservoir is at maximum flood storage and the water is still rising, it will have a planned way of exiting the dam without necessarily having to release everything in the reservoir through the gates. To the right of where we're standing now is what used to be the community of Brownsville. So, we're just within a couple hundred yards of where that community existed.

MK: What was that community like before this project started?

JR: That I'm not really sure. I know it was a fairly small community. It was a one room schoolhouse was there and just a few other buildings. There wasn't a lot there. I'm not sure how active a community it was. Probably a couple of other people around here that could tell us a little bit more about that later. But that was one of the first things that we had to do is relocate that community because there was no way that we could continue having those buildings with people living in this immediate area once we got into the construction of the dam itself. There's just too much activity here, too much risk.

MK: What do you mean by relocate that community?

JR: Well, buying the land, buying the property, and giving the people relocation assistance if they needed it.

MK: How was that determined?

JR: That was determined through the real estate process. Appraisers coming out, determining the fair market value for the associated properties. You wouldn't buy out the community lock, stock, and barrel, the entire community in one lump sum. You approached it on the basis of individual tracks, individual properties, individual landowners, and deal with each person individually.

MK: But the relocation assistance, how was it determined whether or not that was needed?

JR: Basically, I guess on the basis of the income of the individuals involved and whether or not they asked for it and if they were relocating in the immediate area. I don't know if there is a basis for refusing relocation assistance to someone other than the fact that they just typically indicate they don't want it. Relocation assistance is primarily trying to help them find a place to live. If it appears there are going to be some problems, maybe providing them with some additional funds for temporary housing, that type of thing.

MK: So, where the community was will actually be above the dam?

JR: Yes. It'll be above the dam and underwater.

MK: How high will the dam be above the community?

JR: It's what, 90-some-odd feet above streambed. Community, of course, is on a little bit of a rise behind the dam. But it's going to be under at least 60 feet of water.

MK: I guess the offer of a new school didn't apply for Brownsville, did it? Or what?

JR: I am not sure what the story was there. I think probably that the student population was so small that it was just consumed by the other school or an existing school in Weston. I'd have to ask about that to find out for sure. Like I say, when I first got to Pittsburgh district in 1980 and came down to see the project, the building was still there without doors or windows. It was very small.

MK: A wooden structure?

JR: Yes.

MK: When had it last been in session? Do you know that?

JR: I have no idea.

MK: So, the Brownsville community was not relocated, it was sort of scattered out. Is that right?

JR: Yes. That's basically what's happening in terms of relocation here. I understand a lot of the early sellers have relocated from Jane Lew and a few have relocated to Weston. I'm not sure if there is a majority location now or not.

MK: I could go up a little higher up there.

JR: Yes. I really didn't make arrangements for that today. But either later this afternoon or possibly again at a later date, we could go over to the real estate office in downtown Weston and take a look at their map. I seem to recall they have a map of pins in it indicating where most of the people have relocated.

MK: I'd like to see that. The rangers?

JR: Yes. It was probably as much as anything else. The rangers are our naturalists. A lot of the work they do on a project once it's established is related to wildlife management, natural resource management, a lot of work with visitors. They say they do a lot of interpretive programs that we call them, explaining to people the history of the area, where they're at, the relationship with the environment to what they're doing. Just trying to help them understand what's going on around them. Not just the operation of the dam itself, but in terms of the natural environment around them too. Corps Reservoir is unlike a lot of other reservoirs in that except for a few of the early ones where there was a lot of early development when we went into build a project, very little gets built right up by the reservoir itself as far as private development and housing developments or commercial developments. Most of the land is left either in a near natural state or is used for public development of some sort, picnic area, campgrounds, depending to some extent on whether the area is being leased by us to another federal or state agency. The state of West Virginia goes in for fairly elaborate state parks, lodges, and the whole bit. In other places we have a few picnic areas, some campgrounds, and then a lot of it is natural area. Allegheny National Forest, most of it is forest land with a few camping areas and that sort of thing operated by the Forest Service. So, it's not like some places people may be used to where the entire lake perimeter is taken up with some recreation resort where you buy a timeshare plan to get in on it and this sort of thing. That's just not the sort of thing that goes on at our projects.

MK: Is there going to be a lodge here, a hotel or a –

JR: As I understand it, the state is planning eventually to build a lodge in I think the Roanoke Recreation Area. Of course, the big attraction to the state is that we're right off the interstate. So, this is going to be one of the most accessible reservoirs in their system as far as state park system. They have two major areas. They're planning Roanoke and Vandalia Bay as the major recreation areas. The development there will be gradual too, but there will be some recreation facilities available probably in [19]87 or [19]88 when the reservoir is filling up. In fact, [19]88, we should be fully operational as far as the reservoir itself.

MK: While we're here at the dam, did you get a description of the type of dam, what it's called?

JR: Oh, it's a concrete gravity structure.

MK: Gravity.

JR: Concrete is embedded into the earth. We have solid rock, not going to move. Our construction man can give you a better definition when we get back. As I was explaining, when you're out there taking a picture, they're getting ready for the bad weather. They're covering everything up.

MK: This is concrete material.

JR: Finish curing. Yes, they're doing some more pouring. But I suspect they'll close down for Christmas. They probably won't come back, unless the weather is exceptionally mild, until the new construction season starts. Did you get what you needed?

MK: So, you've been with the Corps five years, did you say? Or you've been with Pittsburgh?

JR: Well, the Pittsburgh district five years. I was with the Memphis District in Memphis, Tennessee for two years before that. Then with a research lab in Northern Virginia for about five years prior to that.

MK: But your expertise is in the area of public relations.

JR: Yes. Journalism degree. A few other courses after that, government training, that sort of thing.

MK: You started to tell me about some evictions in other projects or other areas you've had difficulty.

JR: Oh, no. I was just making a general statement there that evictions are not solely a Stonewall issue. We don't run into that problem at every project. But Stonewall is not alone in that respect. Now, I don't know the full story in West Virginia as far as other Corps projects. There are only two that Pittsburgh District is responsible for. Tygart, which has been in place for a while, and Stonewall. So, I don't know if there have been other evictions in West Virginia necessarily. I'm not sure if evictions were involved in a couple of Pittsburgh projects, but I know that there were

some long protracted negotiations over the Kinzua Dam up in the Allegheny National Forest. Of course, there you're dealing not only with local people, but also with Seneca Nation of Indians, which is a separate nation. It's a very interesting organization to deal with. We've had a working relationship with them for a long time now. There were certain special provisions that were made, things that we had to do to accommodate Indian burial grounds and cemeteries where they suspected some Indians were buried and this sort of thing. Plus negotiating all the various rights as far as what could be done once the reservoir was built. Like I say, we've had a long working relationship with them now because we've also gotten involved with some other events up there that were not projects of our doing. State of New York is building an expressway up there. Part of it went through the Seneca Nation. In order to do it, they had to fill in some wetlands. To do that, they needed to get a permit from our district saying they could do it. That thing was getting pretty nasty until we got involved in it. Our people suggested, "Well, hey, why don't we get all the interests involved, the local communities, the state, the other federal agencies that have an interest, and ourselves, put together a little task force, and let's work on this for a while and find out if there's a way to do this that meets everybody's objections or at least provides something in exchange." That task force, I think, went on for quite a few years and finally came up with a resolution to allow expressway to go through. They made, I think, a few changes in their design. Then in areas where there was no reasonable change that could be made and yet serious damage was going to be created, came up with a rather new and novel idea to do a test project. A contractor in the state of New York was responsible for doing the test project to develop new wetlands. We're part of the team that is continuing to monitor that process to see how successful it is. But part of that went through the Seneca Nation. So, the Senecas were involved in that whole process too, including representation on the task force.

MK: Were there certain areas that they regarded as being sacred lands?

JR: It wasn't a question of sacredness. It was a question of whether they were going to get enough out of it for the lands that they had to make it worth their while to let it go through their nation. Interestingly enough, there wasn't even an agreement among the Seneca. We found out at a public meeting we had after the task force was basically done and had their report out, we had a public meeting to review what the recommendations were. We found out that there was a small group of Seneca in part of the area where the expressway was going through that really didn't like the tribal leaders. Felt they were not representing their particular interests. This was, like I say, it's a small handful. But they were bringing up more of the traditional arguments about, "This is really our land. We shouldn't give it up, and we're going to sacrifice some of our traditional values for this." Whereas the tribal leaders were looking basically for just compensation, and they didn't feel whatever money they were being offered initially was just compensation. They wanted more than that, including some interest in the development of the new wetlands. So, that was kind of an interesting conflict to see develop particularly at that later stage because they had not surfaced those concerns with us or any of the other agencies prior to that time. So, we thought when we had the tribal leaders involved that the Seneca Nation was being represented. Apparently, the majority of them were. But there was a group that felt that was not speaking for their interests.

MK: Do you find generally that communities are unified in their view of what ought to happen?

JR: No. I think it's impossible to get complete unity on any sort of a major project. What you look for is, yes, some sort of common ground. When you talk about a flood control project of course, you have to provide something that's going to provide enough benefit to the community to be worth the cost of building the project in the first place, what we call a benefit cost ratio. Which is something that's difficult for a lot of people to understand exactly how it's derived. It's a really complicated process.

MK: Yes. How about we talk about that a little more when we get out of this noisy vehicle?

JR: Okay.

SR: No. I mean going from an original Corps of Engineers project flood control to this.

JR: Well, we coordinated with the state from the first in terms of telling them what we were looking at and what we were thinking of getting their views. Because one of the things, of course, when you came up with a final proposal, one of the things you had to do was talk with the state environmental agencies about their concerns.

SR: Well, specifically then the recreation component and something like that.

JR: I am not sure how far back the big state park scheme got involved. I'm sure recreation was a part of the discussion in the sixties because we were already doing recreation in a lot of our other projects. I think I'm not sure how long the state has been really pushing tourism and recreation as a major industry. But I'm sure that goes back away too. So, the discussion has been going on for some time. I would say it's been probably the last ten years that there've been a lot of active involvement in terms of specific plans, developing a recreation master plan that gives a pretty good outline of what it is that's going to be developed, what we're going to develop, what we're going to cost share with the state, and what the state is going to develop on its own. Even those developments, the state is planning on its own at a hundred percent state costs are a part of the master plan because they'll have an impact on the project and the impact on those developments that we're at least partially responsible for. So, we need to have some idea what they're looking at and where they're planning to put things. The state, of course, is already involved. A whole set of regulations and guidelines. Some of them are federal regulations, some of them are engineering guidelines accepted by professional engineering societies and organizations. Congress is aware of all of this. Now, some congressmen may not know that much about it as far as personal knowledge of what this means. But they have staff that work for them. They know how we do business. They know how the formulas are calculated. They may not understand them completely, but over the long run they've accepted them as a valid way of doing business and they keep authorizing projects. As far as whether or not Corps projects are pork barrel, I think that's a political problem of political decision. The Corps turns down more projects than it recommends to Congress in terms of our own internal proceedings. Things that we're asked to look at, and we say, "Well, no. Can't really justify it. This solution won't work and it's the only one that's economically feasible. This solution's too expensive." So, more things are turned down within the house before they ever get to Congress than Congress ever authorizes. Congress doesn't necessarily always go along with the Corps. Sometimes they have not authorized projects we've recommended. There's a process too after seven years where they

do authorize a project but never get around to the appropriation process and decide they don't have enough money to fund it. We are mandated to go forward with a report to Congress asking for deauthorization of that project, so it just doesn't stay on a shelf somewhere forever, which is another misconception. People keep thinking we pull these things off the shelf. They've been sitting around for years. Now, well, we have some reports that have been sitting around for years that we look at again when we're asked to because we've never gotten an authorized project out of the original report. But if a project is authorized and not funded for seven years, we are mandated to go back to Congress with the report on that project asking for deauthorization or explaining why it should be kept and considered for appropriation at a later date. Some projects, it may be a case where other interests that need to provide some of the funding, we're unable to provide the funding originally and now it looks like maybe they will. Like the state is going to pay a part of the recreation cost for a particular project or the local community has finally come up with the rights of way and access necessary for a local protection project, that sort of thing.

SR: So, in the case of this project, it had been on the shelf for seven years. So, you said that this request for this project was resurrected by the community?

JR: The resurrection is probably the wrong word. We did some early studies in the thirties and nothing much came out of them. Then we were asked to come back and do a thorough study. Oh, I'm not sure how far back that went really. Seventies are when we got the construction money finally and all went forward with a report that said, "Hey, this is what it looks like. This is what we recommend." Congress gave us an appropriation. So, in [19]77, we came in and started acquiring real estate.

SR: It was authorized in [19]66.

JR: Right.

SR: But it had once before been authorized.

JR: I don't think.

SR: It was called the Brownsville Dam, right, at one point?

JR: Brownsville was one of the original considerations. I don't think that was ever an authorized project. I think that was a study.

SR: Oh, it was just the title of the study was Brownsville Dam. By the time [19]66 came –

JR: I think that's where some of the confusion came out about the stability of the dam too. There's been some nonsense about that, about a bad foundation. Well, that was one of the original sites that was looked at, and that's why that site was dismissed. There's nothing.

SR: Where was that?

JR: I think it was upriver somewhere from current location. There's nothing wrong with the stability of the place we're working in. Which reminds me, that's the other question for Bill, the

explanation of concrete gravity dam.

SR: Oh, right. Yes, the technique and everything. Have to come back to him. All right. So, it was authorized in [19]66. Then seven years would have made it [19]73 when you hadn't begun any actual acquisition or anything by then. So, you must have had to go back in that period right around [19]72, right?

JR: Let's see.

SR: I think done in Congress. As matter of fact, I think in [19]72 was when Jennings Randolph grandfathered in the old water quality standards to get around the new clean water or the Water Quality Act of [19]72 or something like that.

JR: I don't think it's the Water Quality Act. You're probably talking about the water quality benefits for the project.

SR: Maybe and pollution control and how you calculate that.

JR: Right. Well, I'll talk to you a little bit about that too. I'm trying to remember exactly what transpired in that era. Well, I'll have to look that up and retrace the project history a little bit there. But [19]77 was when we got the money. Now, there are two water quality issues at state care for this project. The one water quality issue that you're involved with any project these days, the state water quality certification, which under the current laws, even the federal government, any agency of the federal government is required to get state water quality certification before it initiates a project. We needed it for Stonewall. We have it. That was another area where they challenged procedure the state went through in granting us water quality certification. Corps decided, "Well, yes, it wasn't mishandled, but it wasn't handled strictly to the letter of the law. You ought to redo it." So, they went back and redid it. It was not a question of stopping the project. It was a question of going through that process again. As a part of that process, you have settlement control plans that you're supposed to provide the state. That's what I was talking about before with sedimentation ponds and the period of time that contractors were not allowed to work in the river. So, we've met those requirements. We've worked with the state in that regard. In fact, our people have heard comments from some of the fish people from the state and this sort of thing that prior to actual construction of the dam itself, the water quality in this area was better than it had been in a long time, even though we were working on road relocations in a road. Now, I don't know. I don't think that's a result of the road relocation. But it certainly indicates that the requirements we placed on the contractor are sufficient to prevent any deterioration of water quality. The other water quality issue and the one that I think probably Randolph got involved with, is the fact that water quality is an authorized purpose for the project and part of the benefits attributed to the project. Now here, basically it's a disagreement with EPA. I'm not sure if they still hold fast to this attitude now or not, but at the point that we were talking about project authorization in the seventies or project purposes in the seventies, the feeling of EPA was the best way to deal with water pollution was with point source discharge. In other words, you go to the source of the pollution, and you treat it there, which means you put it on the factories to take care of their discharges and the cities and the county governments and this sort of thing, which is fine when you can identify that sort of a source. But



the argument – and it's not just the Stonewall. But the Corps argument in terms of water quality benefits from a major reservoir anywhere in the country, is that there are certain areas where you cannot really identify a single source like that, where you can treat the pollution at the source. That's particularly true if you're dealing with something like the acid mine drainage. You talk to Bureau of Mines and all the other folks that are involved in reclamation projects, and they'll tell you that the sort of things they're doing with reclamation and with treatment of source are only going to get a part of the problem. It's not really going to solve the country's big problem with acid mine drainage. So, what we're saying in the case of Stonewall is that the sources of pollution that we're dealing with are so diffused that while some of them may be susceptible to the EPA approach, not all of them will be. That there will be a sufficient amount of improved water quality provided by the dilution of pollution through releases from the reservoir that it does add to the benefits of the project.

SR: How do you calculate time to do that, and how did that go along with flood control on the whole system of rivers?

JR: Well, basically you're talking about adding additional cubic feet per second of water to the river when it's reached certain levels, basically, low levels or in certain seasons when you have exceptionally high runoff, and a lot of pollution is entering the river. The determination is basically made by monitoring the quality of the river. We do it, and we take readings from the state people that do it and all of that. I'm not really qualified to give you a complete detailed explanation. That's essentially –

SR: Yes. Well, I'm certainly not qualified to ask the best questions on it. It just seems like here again is potential conflict. You've got to maintain a certain pool in order to be able to dilute at that time, but you also have to maintain the pool for other purposes.

JR: Well, yes. They calculate that into the operation of the project when they're figuring out the overall benefit cost ratio as best they can. They're not going to be able to preconceive every possible conflict, but they should be able to determine that at certain times of the year when we're maintaining such and such a level in the reservoir and maintaining such and such a discharge, we would also be providing this sort of a benefit in terms of the reduction of the pollution that would normally occur during that time of the year because of your normal runoff from abandoned mines or something of that sort. That's a very generalized explanation.

SR: Right. One of the things you can do with this much water, if you've got it, you can dilute pollution. You can raise the level at the old blocks in order to make navigation possible.

JR: Right. You can supply water to people who need it, yes.

SR: Incidentally, is the cost going to be to the City of Weston for –

JR: I don't think that's actually been determined yet. I think that's going to be based pretty much on what they finally decide they want in terms of storage, in terms of cubic feet, and whether or not it's going to be a constant supply or whether it's going to be a reserve supply. Most of the contracts we have in our district for water supply at our other reservoirs – and there are only a

few of them really at this point where we actually have existing contracts – are basically for reserve supplies. The city has a regular water supply from some other source. But in anticipating future needs, possible droughts, and other situations where they might exhaust their resources or come so close to exhausting their resources that they need emergency supply available. They'll enter into a contract with us to maintain a certain amount of cubic feet in our reservoir, and it's their water. When they need it, they can come and get it, and they pay for it. I'm not sure if they pay a flat rate plus cost of actually supplying the water when they need it or how the formula is determined. But that's how most of them work. Now, it is conceivable that there may be a community where they're going to look at one of these reservoirs as maybe being their major source, and we're going to be supplying it on a constant basis. Now in terms of figuring out the needs for the project in terms of pool levels and reservoir size and everything, contacts were made with local water companies and communities and this sort of thing to get some general idea of their anticipated needs and whether they would be looking for a primary source or a backup source. I'm not absolutely positive, but I think in the case of Stonewall it's pretty much a reserve supply type of situation. That need was factored into our requirements in terms of pool size. Again, to your question, how do you figure that out, you've got conflicting interests. Well, you try to anticipate as much as possible, which is one of the reasons why it takes us so bloody long to plan these projects in the first place. That could have been the reason why it took [19]66 to [19]77 to get construction money. It may have taken that long to go through the complete planning cycle once the project was authorized to come back with a final plan saying, "Hey, this is what we're really talking about. This is what it's really going to cost, and this is what we need next year to start it," type of things. You have to talk to everybody and their cousins. You have to anticipate all potential needs. You have to determine what you can realistically do to meet the needs of the people in the local area. There are probably some agricultural needs around here for water or industrial needs for water that we probably couldn't meet with the project. Either that's not an authorized purpose for the Corps to pursue one of their projects or it's something that we can't really meet with this project because of where we have to locate it for the primary needs like flood control and that sort of thing.

SR: On the cost side, you've got the basic cost of construction and all that. But as far as what was here before, you basically figure that out as an appraisal of acreage and buildings and that sort of thing?

MK: Right.

JR: Business income, if it is really an income-producing property. Now, a lot of these tracks in this area really did not produce substantial income. Some did.

SR: But a self-sufficient community essentially has no value when you can calculate other than what you were going to put in it.

JR: Well, that is a difficult question defining just how self-sufficient it was too.

SR: The question that haunts me, brought down to a keener focus, is how Barbara and Bobby Heavner were independently functioning people. They had a little business there. They didn't have a lot of income from it, but it kept them going. I think she had a little veteran's pension

check, not very much, but a little bit every month. But they lived in a community where they could get along, and they were not dependent. They were not burdens on society. What haunts me now is that they may well become dependent people. They moved into a place, I understand, where there's no land for their nursery. They weren't able to purchase anything that was comparable with the 30 acres that they had been removed from. Probably the only hope for the boy – he's man, he's twenty-three years old – lay in some kind of small agricultural pursuit. He was very good in FFA. He was awarded prizes and recognition of all kinds. He could conceivably have functioned in an independent way. It looks to me now as though as a result of being removed, he will become a dependent person. When you multiply that by the number of situations involved in this project, how the project is like. I'm just trying to figure out how something like that can be assessed.

JR: Well, in the first place, I don't think you can really multiply the Heavner situation because I think that is fairly unique in that you're talking, one, about an older woman who probably unless she is a lot more independent than most even what we would consider independent women of her age, probably does not have much opportunity to restart a career or business regardless of what she was able to purchase in terms of property. A son who, as you've indicated, has some problems besides just the relocation problems and the job problems. You don't face that situation with most of the relocations. Most of the relocations involve people who are able to reestablish their lives whether they really want to initially or not. To get into a new business or get together with relatives and expand the other family farm somewhere else that one of the cousins or other relatives has. Or is at the point where, well, fine, I can't do this anymore, but I got a pension check coming to me anyway, so this is my opportunity to retire.

SR: Barbara lost her pension check as a result of all this. So, she doesn't even have that income now.

JR: I don't know. If I were you, I'd double check on that. I fail to see how she could have lost the pension check as a result of this.

SR: Well, the VA and the Corps don't really work together. The VA says, "You've got now got a lump sum for your farm. Therefore, that's money. We were giving you your husband's pension check for the veteran's thing based on the fact that you didn't have any other income."

JR: Well, understand, I'm not speaking for the Corps right now. But my personal opinion on that is who. Now, I don't know what VA requirements are on pension checks, how much rights a widow has to a pension check in perpetuity. But all she was compensated for was the property that the federal government required from her for an authorized federal project. I don't see how in any way that should affect her other benefits from the government that she's entitled to. If I were her lawyer, I'd challenge that. If I were one of her friends or her relatives, I'd write my congressman, and I'd write my senator. I would think that's even something Jennings Randolph, the supporter of the project that he is, would probably want to question. That's certainly something against now speaking for the Corps, that I'm sure the Corps, none of our agents were aware of at the time the eviction took place or in any of this process or had any influence on one way or the other. That is a different agency taking separate action. Again, speaking for myself, I frankly don't understand their action. But as to your original question, I can understand what

you're saying. But in the process of dealing with a project like this, how do you go about sitting down and evaluating that kind of really fairly unique situation? If duplicated at all, it will be duplicated in one or two instances among a thousand people.

SR: Well, we've heard of quite a number of deaths which have been attributed to this project as a result of older people who have not been able to face leaving homes which have been in their family for generations. Have not been able to face up to starting over. We've heard of cases like that where people have been relocated and have died a short time later. That it's been a heartbreaking proposition for older people.

JR: I haven't heard of that. I can understand where it'd be traumatic, particularly for some older people. But I suspect that, again, we're talking about an exaggeration of what may have been one or two instances.

SR: We've heard a figure. Now this you may regard as an exaggeration too. But we've heard a figure that over half the people in the area were over sixty-five years old. This is an older community in years.

JR: I don't know if anyone has done an age profile on the community. I'm not sure who ever brought that figure up what they're basing that on, except maybe personal knowledge. Of course, a close-knit community, that might be sufficient. But again, when you're talking about this community, you have to remember too that really Weston is a part of this community that we're talking about. You've got Brownsville and Roanoke. But obviously Brownsville was so small, the school was closed by the county or whoever before the project ever came about. It's not because they weren't able to support it. Most of the truly functioning farms were functioning in relationship to Weston. The rural communities you're talking about were largely residences, a church, and maybe a store. But they were not – I think at the point of time we're talking about with the Corps coming in and starting to acquire real estate – really all that self-sufficient any longer other than the individual homesteads themselves where they were able to raise most of what they needed and sell.

SR: Could it be seen that they had in a sense lost their right to exist as a rural community?

JR: No, I don't think.

SR: They were not living any longer?

JR: No, they didn't lose their right to exist.

SR: I'm interested in how we're evaluating as our appetite for land increases in land use.

JR: All I'm saying is that at least portions of the community were being assimilated into a little larger community in terms of, they were building up relations with Weston. They still existed as a community, and they certainly still had a right to exist as a community. But along came the project. Now unfortunately, they were in the area that was needed for the project.

SR: But it was the people in Weston who were consulted about that need and who raised the question. It wasn't the people on the Upper West Fork and Skin Creek and Brownsville and Dailey. It wasn't those people.

JR: I don't think you can make that kind of a generalization. I'm sure a lot of the people in the project area were involved in terms of some of the initial contacts. Now, I'm not sure how far back we had any public meetings. But it's not like you got one or two people in the biggest city near an area and decide on that basis what you're going to do. We would have come into the area. In terms of conducting our study, we would have talked to a lot of people in Weston and throughout the area basically gathering data on what they'd experienced in terms of floods and this sort of thing. Like I said, this project goes back so far. I'm not sure what kind of public meetings they had way back when. I know they had a truly disastrous real estate meeting where they did not do a very good job of explaining the real estate process.

SR: In Weston?

JR: I'm not sure where that was located.

SR: Did you read minutes of that or how do you know it was a disaster?

JR: Something from talking to the people that were involved. That was a mistake at the time. I don't know that any one particular individual was at fault or whether the Corps or the opposition or the supporters or who was at fault. I think it was just, like I said, a mistake at the time. People were in an uproar. We just didn't do a very good job of explaining the real estate process. It was not –

SR: Was that corrected later in subsequent meetings?

JR: I think with most people, those misperceptions have been alleviated primarily through personal contact. Our real estate people generally go out and try and sit down face-to-face with people and talk to them about the process and what they're going to be doing and how they're going to evaluate the house and property and this sort of thing. It's been a little difficult in some areas here because some of the opposition has been so vocal among some of the people. But the other thing you've got to remember too is the Upper West Fork does not represent all the people who were in the project take area. Now, I can't give you specific names without doing a little research on it. But we had people in the area that came to us and said, "Hey, come and evaluate my property. I want to sell and get out of here." Others were very passive about it and didn't seem to express themselves much one way or the other.

SR: That reminds me of something we were starting to talk about before we ever went out. We were first talking about a series of acquisitions and how acquisition goes along year by year simultaneous with other things that are going on. Was there any advantage in talking to people that had smaller pieces of property first and acquiring those relatively cheaper parcels earlier on?

JR: No. The decision on the parcels was based on construction needs. What are you going to do when? How soon do you expect to be able to get a contract out to relocate this road out here?

The question comes back, well, how soon can you get us the real estate for it? That's a constant discussion here. "Well, we need to award this contract next spring." "Well, we're having some tough negotiations here. We won't be able to get you all the parcels until the following spring." "Well, that's not good enough." "Well, it's going to have to be." We go back and forth and finally decide on an acceptable schedule. So, there's no truth to the rumor that we took the easiest things first or the smallest parcels first or any of this other stuff. The acquisition was based on basically construction needs and where possible requests when I said the people who said they wanted to sell. If we had a willing seller, we would go ahead and deal with them as soon as we could, mostly in fairness to them. If they were willing to sell, there was no point in delaying.

SR: So, people like the astronauts who were way up at the head of Skin Creek have a large farm there. Are you familiar with that at all? They were right on Dailey.

JR: Yes.

SR: Have not even officially been condemned as far as their understanding goes. Certainly, haven't settled with the Corps.

JR: Do you know if they've been approached at all yet?

SR: Yes. They haven't approached somebody to talk to them.

JR: I suspect it'd be a while before they be condemned unless they've absolutely refused to talk and thrown the folks out the door. Negotiation is our first choice. No, they are at the end of the process because that's the end of the project. Now, if you look at where the dam is located and where they're located, that's going to be the last area that's going to be filled with water. As I mentioned earlier, you start with the dam, and you work on out through the project acquiring what you need for specific project purposes, construction time that it's going to be filled with water and that sort of thing. The last thing you want is the thing that's up the creek at the area where you're going to see an inch rise in water. But you still need it in order to control the overall project. Like I said, there'll be a few variations in that, if you get a willing seller or if you have a unique situation where you've got to relocate a gas well, or like the Skin Creek Compressor Station, from point A to point B, even though they're dislocated by several miles. You're going out, and you're buying some isolated parcels. You'll fill in the gap later when you need the area in between later.

SR: I guess you've already answered the question about the Heavner's. What specific construction or need applies to their land that meant that was due?

JR: Well, without going into detailed analysis of all the plans and everything, I couldn't really say that specific track what exactly was going there. But I assume that part of that's going to be part of the Vandalia or Roanoke Recreation Area. I'm getting myself confused here. But again, my point there was that the question was not at this point the immediate need. We're at the point now where every last parcel is something that we're going to need within the very near future. We'll be starting the recreation construction next construction season. There'll be a lot of activity

throughout the project. As soon as we can acquire what few parcels are left, we really need them. Unless there's a very compelling argument on the part of the owner that they need a certain amount of time to relocate. That's part of the –

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