

Voices from the Past

A History of Irrigation in Fremont, Madison, and Teton Counties

Interviewee: James Cyrus Young

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Oral Interview conducted by Harold Forbush

Transcribed by: Joel Miyasaki

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Edited by: Jacob Abbott

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Brigham Young University- Idaho

Harold Forbush: On this 22nd day of November, 1980 here at Rexburg Harold Forbush has the opportunity of interviewing Cy Young of Saint Anthony. Mr. Young, I'm going to ask you some preliminary questions, whereby I may receive background information of you and your family before we enter into the big subject of this tape which is water and water rights in the Upper Snake River Valley of which you are an authority. And I express appreciation to you and do so in behalf of all future listeners, perhaps, of this tape who will want to be enhanced in information and knowledge on early water rights of the Upper Snake on the North Fork of the Snake River. As a series of questions therefore pertaining to your background, may I first ask, will you state your full name and your residence and your major occupation?

Cy Young: Well, I'm Cy Young. I was born in Fremont County, Idaho, on December 9, 1905. And I have always lived in Fremont County, and for over forty years I have been interested in water and water problems of the Upper Valley. I served as secretary and director of the North Fork Water Users Protective Association for thirty-seven years and as secretary of the Last Chance Canal Company for forty-four years where I am still serving. And I have served on the committee of nine, an organization of nine men in the state of Idaho to act in an advisory capacity on water problems. I have also had the privilege of serving on the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District board for a number of years as a director from my area. I find the water problems of the state of Idaho to be very interesting, and during the past year I particularly tried to research some of the old, original decrees as they were issued in the Upper Valley. It appears that the first decree was in 1879. Many of these decrees go through the 1880's and the 1890's, and the canal that I act as secretary for at the present time and a director decree is in 1897. However, in going back through the minutes, it's interesting to note that many of these companies drew water prior to the issuance of their decrees.

For instance, on the Last Chance Canal Company, I particularly researched that because the stock's certificates for water in the company carry the date of August 31, 1895, but the decree was not issued until 1897. This was due to the delay of the courts, and probably the delay of the directors in pursuing the issuance of that decree. Now it's quite important, these decrees are, because it governs in many instances the amount of water that can be applied to your land depending on the date of the decree: the older the right, the better the decree. Now the first decree that was recorded in the Upper Snake River Valley dates back to 1879, and on many canals you find that there's several decrees at various dates to make up their total amount of water that was decreed on that canal. Now most of these old decrees were issued for culinary and irrigation purposes, but occasionally you find an old decree that is issued with a stipulation for manufacturing purposes as well.

Now during the past year, since the irrigation season was declared by the legislature to be from the first of April until the first of November, there's a period of time that is not covered, on winter water. Now the old canals in this area were a continuous, the decrees were issued showing the continuous application of water or the right to apply water continuously. But it, in many instances, refers back to the irrigation system. And in so doing, it becomes necessary now. And in 1980 many of the canals have filed a winter

water claim for winter water rights because they feel it necessary to draw water during the winter months, especially in the sub-irrigation system of our county. Now, down on Egin Bench last winter, they were adversely affected by the cut-off of winter water. The Water Resource Board, for the first time in almost a hundred years, shut the canals out on the Egin Bench and in other irrigation sections of Fremont and Madison Counties. Now it's the desire of the irrigators on the Egin Bench to maintain a water level of about twenty feet. And this makes it possible in the spring of the year to bring this water table up to be reached by the crops that they plant depending on the crop they plant depends on the nearness to the surface of the land that they try to raise the sub on Egin Bench.

HF: I'm going to interrupt you, Cy, that we may say that what you have given here has been a kind of a prelude and introductory to the subject matter that we'll be pursuing. I think it's an excellent statement evidencing your scope of the water and water rights and the problems of the irrigator, of the rancher. And before we go now into greater depth of this subject matter, let's focus a little attention on you and your background. Now you indicated that you were born in Fremont County in 1905. Did your parents move into the area? When did they move and where did they settle?

CY: My parents, Stillman Young being my father and Jenny Clark Young, my mother both came from Utah. However, they didn't meet until they met on the old W.D. Williams ranch east of Saint Anthony where father was employed as a ranch hand and assisted with the saw mill that operated in those days, and mother came from Utah to assist Aunt Alice Williams with her family. This is where my parents first met and this was in the late 1880's.

HF: Now did they homestead in some particular area of Fremont County?

CY: After they were married, they homesteaded land next to the old W.D. Williams Ranch. In fact, we still own the land that they originally homesteaded and it is now the home of my son. Long before Idaho became a state, they issued a territorial deed for this land. We have the old territorial deed which is a conversation object on many occasions by people that have never seen a territorial deed. It was necessary to homestead close to neighbors in the early days. Most of the country, of course, was still uninhabited and land could be obtained most any place that you so desired. I chided my father one time, I said, "Dad, why didn't you go down on Egin Bench and take one of those choice pieces of land?" And I remember my dad's statement. He said, "There was nothing but sand and sagebrush on the Egin Bench when I came to this country." And he said that a bird had to take a lunch to fly over Egin Bench until their irrigation system was perfected. Water was obtained from the Fall River Canal for culinary purposes, and the canal was already constructed to the Williams' Ranch when my parents homesteaded their land.

HF: Well now, your folks, did they homestead up around Canyon Creek?

CY: Yes, they homesteaded eighty acres east of Saint Anthony, and then in 1910 they used the balance of their homestead right to homestead another eighty acres at what we referred to as Canyon Creek. In those days there was no New Dale, there were no people

in that area at all. That country was all sage brush, and I can still remember as a young boy seeing the wind blow across that country, and the bunch grass wave in the wind just like a wheat field waves today in that area. And in homesteading in the Canyon Creek area, it was necessary to live on that land for two years to prove up under the Homestead Act. And I remember the hard winters that we spent in living on that land for two years in order to get title to the land. There was no bridge across the Teton River, and when we traveled from Saint Anthony to our ranch up at Canyon Creek, we forded the Teton River. I can remember on many occasions putting groceries on the spring seat of the wagon, chaining the wagon box on with a log chain so it wouldn't float off of the wagon, and the teams would be forced to swim a short distance in the fording of the Teton River, especially in high water. And then there was no other water until you reached Canyon Creek. Our place was sort of the junction for people to stop when they come from Teton County down to Saint Anthony the headquarters of Fremont County.

HF: Was your ranch adjacent to the Teton River being on the south side?

CY: It was about a mile and a half from the dam site where the Teton Dam was finally built. And across the river from our ranch was the C.W. Thompson Ranch. Now Will Edgington, our neighbor at Twin Groves or our ranch east of Saint Anthony, was foreman on the ranch called the C.W. Thompson Ranch. And Mr. Thompson was a visionary man. He had a great concept of water and the value of water in the production of crops on the land. And he attempted to put in the first pumping plant in the Snake River Valley and lift the water from the Teton River up to the land level where his farming operation was done.

HF: Now, was this on the north side?

CY: That was on the north side of the Teton River.

HF: Of the Teton River? And it's in the vicinity where the Teton Dam was constructed?

CY: Yes, very near where the Teton Dam was constructed.

HF: Now what type of equipment did he use in lifting this water, and did he get some water lifted?

CY: He was successful in lifting some water, he constructed a canal. The Teton River meanders down the Teton Canyon and he went up the Teton River about a half a mile from his buildings, his farm buildings, and constructed a canal down the north side of the Teton Canyon and attempted to lift it by pump about three hundred feet. Now he was successful in getting a little water up there, but due to the type of equipment available at that time, it was never successful. It was water-powered turbine lift that he attempted to use. And when the Teton Dam was being constructed, they asked me what I knew about the old parts of the pumping operation that was still left in the canyon. And they were taken out of the canyon and saved as historical equipment for the Upper Snake River Valley.

HF: Did your family live on the eighty acres in the Canyon Creek Area?

CY: In order to prove up under the old Homestead Act, it was necessary that we maintain the home on Canyon Creek. But because the children, the older children, five being older than I was, I being the sixth child in the family, they went to school. And so father and mother, one stayed at the Canyon Creek Ranch and one stayed at the Saint Anthony Ranch. And so we had to maintain two homes. I should have started school the year that they homesteaded this land, but was unable to start school because someone had to stay. Mother stayed part time at the Canyon Creek Ranch and father stayed part time at the Canyon Creek Ranch. During the summer time, several of the children were at the Canyon Creek Ranch.

HF: Did you complete your education in the schools of Fremont County?

CY: I completed high school in Fremont County and then had earned a scholarship at the University of Idaho. And I went up to the university, but I only had one year at the University of Idaho which I appreciated very much.

HF: Do you recall what year that was?

CY: That was in 1924.

HF: And following that year, I'm assuming that you came back and commenced to work with your father on the ranch, and to acquire a ranching enterprise/farming enterprise yourself?

CY: Yes, upon returning from school in Moscow I was actively engaged with my father; my older brother having branched out on his own and left the farm. Father and I operated the ranch, and we also leased additional land. And this started me in the farming operation. And then I married my wife, Vera Broadbent in 1926, and that year I operated about 200 acres of irrigated land about a mile south of my old home near Saint Anthony. And I soon learned from first hand experience the value of water and the importance of water rights in the Upper Snake River Valley. This type of soil being rather gravelly, it's almost impossible to produce a crop without ample irrigation water.

HF: Now Mr. Young, your comment was that when you were farming in 1926, you used water and you learned the great worth of it. What was the source of this water, and tell me about the source, and how it had been developed?

CY: The source of this water was from the Fall River, and it was delivered to my property, the property I was renting at that time, by the Fall River Canal from what they call the middle branch of the Fall River Canal. Now the Fall River Canal covers quite a vast area of land. And it's a large canal and a reasonably early right. It's in the 1880's, late 1880's. But there's the north branch of the Fall River Canal, and this branch is where my father lived and where his irrigation water come from. The middle branch is where

the rented land was that I first operated. And then the north branch, or the south and east branch rather, sends water down into the Wilford area and clear over into the Teton area. But this canal was, had a good, what we termed as a good water right in those days. But still we lost crop. I remember the fourth year I was married in 1926. And the fourth year which would be in the 30's, we lost our entire wheat crop because the water was shut off on the June 23, and we received no more irrigation water. And I lost ninety-six acres of irrigated wheat which had been irrigated once, and I never cut one bushel of wheat. And this made me more conscience of the value of water, and of the value of a method of preserving water for late use in the year in the irrigation season.

HF: Now, sometime later they constructed the Grassy Lake Dam. Was not this a means of storing water and correcting that very thing that caused you to lose your crop in 1930?

CY: Yes, that was the purpose of the Grassy Lake was to furnish water to the canals that serve the higher land under the Fall River Canal Company. Now the capacity of Grassy Lake is not very large, but it has acted as a stop gap from total loss of crop in the district under the higher diversions.

HF: The Fall River Canal where you got your water, did that canal company benefit from the Grassy Lake?

CY: Yes, it greatly benefited from the Grassy Lake. And also after the Cross Cut Canal came across from the dam east of Saint Anthony, the Big Diversion Dam, it was also possible to divert water from the North Fork over into the Middle and the North branch of the Fall River Canal to give them supplemental water and benefit from the reservoir.

HF: Now at a later date in your marriage and your farming operation, did you also have a ranch across the river, the Henry's Fork, or the North Fork and get water from other sources?

CY: Yes, about eight years after I was married, I rented land for eight years and then I purchased a piece of property that was known as the original old C.W. Lloyd property on the north side of the Henry's Fork of the Snake River. And then I acquired water from what was known as the Last Chance Canal Company--that being the canal that is farthest north from the Egin Bench area. It runs down into what is commonly referred to as Egin Bench, and waters the fringe land in the Egin Bench area as well as ranches east and north of Saint Anthony.

HF: And that's a diversion; where is the diversion with the Last Chance?

CY: The diversion was near where the Big Diversion Dam was put in by the Fremont Madison Irrigation Company. And in the construction of that dam, they destroyed the dam which we used to divert water in the Last Chance. And so they moved the head works of the Last Chance Canal up and hooked it in on the north side of the Big Diversion Dam referred to by many as the Chester Dam. And on the south side of the

river, they took out the Big Diversion Canal that took water over and dumped it into the Teton River and also put supplemental water into two of the Fall River Canals.

HF: Now that's referred to as the Cross-Cut?

CY: That's referred to as the Cross-Cut Canal.

HF: Because it cut across what, from a north/south direction?

CY: Yes.

HF: And took water from the North Fork of the Snake River and dumped it over into the Teton River.

CY: Right.

HF: So that water users of the Teton would get that additional supplement for late water?

CY: Yes, it made it possible for water users on the Teton River to purchase stock in the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District and receive water from that reservoir, and also natural flow could be diverted to the Teton River if necessary.

HF: Now, you've referred two or three times to the Fremont-Madison Irrigation Company. But prior to its organization maybe in the middle thirties--I'm not sure of that date, let us say around the middle thirties--prior to that time there were several canals that had been organized and had diverted water from the North Fork of the Snake River. Can you chronologically enumerate for me, Cy, these canals starting with the very earliest as you recall from the North Fork, not its tributaries, but from the North Fork itself?

CY: Yes, there's many canals there. I think one of the older and better rights on the North Fork is the Saint Anthony Canal. This is a large canal that runs down into the Egin Bench area across Egin Bench, and they have several filings on this canal. And then there's the, it's referred to the Saint Anthony Union Canal. And then the Egin Canal is another canal that heads right in Saint Anthony so to speak, and their water is taken out above the power plant in Saint Anthony. It also runs down across Egin Bench Area and brings supplemental water. And of course the Last Chance, being at a higher elevation than either of these canals, it catches the fringe area of the Egin Bench. The outlying area of Egin Bench is supplied by water from that canal.

HF: Okay, now the higher, upstream of the North Fork and maybe on the south side, were there canals organized and did these canals divert water in the south side of the North Fork of the Snake River?

CY: Yes, I remember a number of those canals; some of them headed right near our pasture land down on the river from the old original homestead. That was, we referred to it in those days as the Birch Canal. Now this was quite an early right. The Birch brothers

first took this water out, and then later on they changed the name of the Birch Canal to the Twin Groves Canal because it was being diverted from the river in the vicinity of the Twin Groves Ward. Then in addition to that, there was the Farmer Friend Canal, and this brought water from the main river and went down across. Later on and during my lifetime, the Birch Canal head gate was moved up. And the two canals come out of one head because a concrete dam was erected across the river.

It's interesting to note that the old first dams that was put in the river to divert this water was done by the cribbage method. They made cribs out of logs and they anchored them in the river by filling them full of lava rocks. And the first dam on the Last Chance to divert the water into the canal was a lava rock dam. The Birch Canal had a lava rock dam. And the Salem Union Dam had a lava rock dam out into the river. And by filling this cribbage with rock, it prevented the rock from being washed out in the winter time and washed away. This was a slow tedious job to construct these dams, but just a few days ago after all these years, it's interesting to note that some of those old dams or portions of them are still left in the river.

HF: That's interesting, now going up further north on the North Fork of the Snake way up to the point where I guess we say Henry's Lake--the lake itself. Were there any direct diversions out of the lake that brought water down in the canal system, or did they use the regular natural channel to bring water out of there or what? Maybe that isn't a very good question.

CY: Well, yes, I think it is. Now, Henry's Lake originally was only a frog pond so to speak. It was a very small lake. And some of these reclamation people, and after the survey was made of possible reservoir sights, it was decided that Henry's Lake should be developed into a reservoir. And six canal companies went together and formed what they called as the North Fork Reservoir Company, and they developed Henry's Lake. Now, there's an interesting story to me connected with that the Mackert. The Charles Mackert family was instrumental in the construction of this reservoir, and the head works that brings the water down into the main river or the Henry's Fork of the Snake River from Henry's Lake. Now, land had to be purchased around Henry's Lake in order to accommodate this reservoir, and the six canal companies developed a reservoir that holds 78,000 acre feet of water. 15.3% of this stock is owned by Last Chance. The Saint Anthony Union holds 6.8%. The Salem Union which is on the south side of Snake River owns 24.2%. The Egin owns 6.8%. The Independent Canal owns 26.8% and the Consolidated Farmers own 20.1% of this stock.

Now, the stock has really never been issued by the North Fork Reservoir Company, but it has been maintained--the reservoir has been maintained, and the water distributed to the stock holders through their organization for many years. This reservoir has the distinction of not being placed under the direction of the reclamation department. It was maintained and operated separate to them. Now it's interesting to note also, that they have a working agreement with the Island Park Dam at this time or the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District. When the canals that own stock in the North Fork Reservoir Company call for water, if they don't have enough stock to fill their demands in Island Park Reservoir or in

the Fremont-Madison Irrigation Company, they're allowed to take water from that source and they hold back the water in Henry's Lake. And the Henry's Lake owners own the river, so much water, and then this water at a later date is released from the Henry's Lake water to repay their obligation to the Henry's Fork River. Sometimes it isn't necessary to let but very little water out of Henry's Lake. Now the 78,000 acre feet that is maintained in Henry's Lake is owned by the six canal companies. But if they borrow water, since the Island Park Dam fills and spills each year, it is a good water policy to drain, pretty much drain, what we call the Island Park Dam if it is needed without the Fremont-Madison District which is both Fremont and Madison Counties because it will fill and spill each year. And so they use that water first, then they supplement this water by release from the Henry's Lake Reservoir to repay the Fremont-Madison District.

HF: Now Cy, we've considered somewhat the diversions out of the North Fork of the Snake River. We have mentioned just a little about the diversions out of Fall River, the Fall River Canal Company particularly you mentioned. Are there any other, earlier diversions on the Fall River?

CY: Yes, I believe one of the earliest diversions on the Fall River was known as the Curr Ditch. It has a . . .

HF: How do you spell that?

CY: Curr, C-U-R-R.

HF: C-U-R-R?

CY: Uh huh, the Curr Ditch. Now, it has a little different set up than many canal companies; it's owned by about ten individuals. And Curr was one of the first ones to divert water and then the ditch was enlarged as other people diverted water. But the water in the Curr Ditch is individually owned by about ten men, and it's one of the earlier rights in that area and irrigates an area that is on the north side of the Fall River between Henry's Fork and Fall River.

HF: What would that area be called?

CY: It would be called Chester.

HF: Chester?

CY: Yes, and then they also have coming from the Fall River Canal, or the Fall River and below the diversion of the Fall River Canal, what they call the Chester Ditch which is a later right. But it also takes in considerable land in the Chester Area.

HF: All the available irrigation land has been taken up and utilized now I suppose in these streams?

CY: Yes, I think all the land in that immediate vicinity is irrigated that could be irrigated unless we went out into what we call the breaks or the deserty area that is to the extreme north of the Henry's Fork and applied water by sprinkler irrigation method.

HF: Now, would you estimate that all of the diversions from the North Fork and also its tributary Fall River were completed and made by say 1925?

CY: Yes, they date back later than that. I doubt if there's any of them that doesn't crowd the 1900 mark as far as the decree is concerned.

HF: All prior to even 1900?

CY: Yes, right at 1900. I know that Chester Canal is one of the later canals, and the Fall River and the Curr Ditch are the earlier canals in there. And water is taken from those canals in the Chester Area, but mainly through the Twin Groves Wilford Area. And the Chester Canal pretty well serves the Chester Ward Area.

HF: So by 1900, or a little after that, all of these diversions had been made by separate independent canal systems?

CY: Yes.

HF: Now, at this point in time, was there any type of a program acting as an umbrella as it were, to coordinate the efforts to unify the whole system--any kind of a program to do that?

CY: Well . . .

HF: I'm referring more specifically to the North Fork. Wasn't that what that's purpose was, the North Fork Water Users Association/ Protective Association?

CY: Protective Association, of course it came in to being . . .

HF: Much later didn't it?

CY: Yes, and only in an advisory capacity. The old decrees, many of those old decrees that originally were issued, were issued near the time that the first water was diverted from these various streams. And then in 1910 we have what we call the Rexburg Decree which wrapped itself around all these other decrees and reemphasized so to speak the decrees that were in existence, and some decrees probably that had not been recorded up to that time.

HF: Well that, as I understand it that was a fundamental purpose of that action in the district court, was to enable all water users to come into court and establish in writing their priority date when a diversion and amount of water that they would be entitled to?

CY: Yes, that is correct.

HF: And that had its date in December I think, December something of 1910?

CY: Yes, that was a 1910 action.

HF: And now of course I presume, well, I know as a lawyer after 1910, of course I adjudicated a lot of water rights, and it became, these later adjudications became a part in effect of the water rights adjudicated in 1910 and 1916. The 1916 water right was a high water right?

CY: Yes.

HF: Pretty much, but I suppose even today there are some water users in the Upper Snake River Valley who have not had their water rights decreed of record. Is this so?

CY: That is correct. Now under the direction of the Water Resource Board, they are making a plea to the irrigators who claim a water right that is not a recorded water right that they come forward between now and 1983 and establish their water right with the water resource board. And they warn these people if this is not done, then their claim will not be recognized after 1983.

HF: Well now, we've talked about two drainage systems, the Henry's Fork or the North Fork of the Snake River and its major tributary, the Fall River system. Let us now turn our attention to another tributary, a major tributary in the North Fork, that of the Teton River. Can you tell me a little about that system and the diversions from the Teton River? Let's talk about the system, where it has its origin and how major a stream it is?

CY: Well, it is one of the major contributing streams in the irrigation system in the Upper Snake River Valley. And for many, many years at our meetings with the North Fork Water Users Protective Association, we had an organization within the organization that was called the flood control board. And Mr. D.W. Hollist was chairman of that board for many years, and each year they would issue a resolution at their annual meeting calling for the erection of a reservoir on the Teton River to control the flooding that took place generally late in the spring

HF: Mr. Young, you were commenting about the Teton River, its natural flow and some of its propensities, and this river, this tributary, as a tremendous source for irrigation purposes. Go ahead.

CY: There are many diversions that were made from the Teton River to furnish supplemental water and of course one of the great benefits that can be derived from the Teton River is to store this early runoff that occurs on the Teton and has caused flooding for many, many years in a reservoir. And so, it was decided in 1935 that we should petition Congress and ask them if we could have funds to construct a reservoir on the Teton River. A site was selected and approved by the reclamation people that would hold

approximately 40,000 acre feet of water. Now this site was down the river a considerable distance from the site where the Teton Dam was finally erected. And it's interesting to note that in 1936 a Senator DeWorth Clark was serving. And he assured the water users that in 1937 we could start construction of a Teton Dam that would control the flooding that was being experienced in the area each year, and that he would get an appropriation of money of about two million dollars to construct this project.

Now at that time, this project would have been mainly a flood control project, but it did have a storage capacity of about 40,000 acre feet. In 1937, I also have a clipping in my files and a letter accompanying the clipping stating that no funds were made available by Congress, and that there was a fund that was about four million dollars that Mr. Clark was going to try to get some assistance from this particular fund. It was a flood control fund that had been set up by Congress and not been used. But in 1937, we have another report from Senator Clark that he could not get the money for the construction of this dam. And although we had the approval, at that time construction never took place. And after the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District was in operation, once more they experienced flooding in 1962. And at that time a group of men was selected to go back to Washington D.C. and see if it would be possible to get funds to help with this project and get the bill out of what we call the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee of the House where it was being held for further information.

HF: Okay, now at this point Cy, I want to interrupt you. I think there are some items that should be mentioned before we get into this more recent history of the Teton River and the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District, etc. For example, I think we should bring in, try to bring in how important the Teton River was as a source of water and diversions from that. And can you help me on that, can you give me some data, some of the diversion points on the Teton River? Now of course, I appreciate your comments about what a devastation that occurred occasionally, well, quite often in the spring of the year from the Teton River, flood control had to be a primary concern, but the river also provided a tremendous source for irrigation. Now I want this little interview to say, to show, that at this time Mr. Young, and I have tried to enumerate the various canals, the diverted waters out of the Teton River proper and the North Fork thereof and the South Fork thereof. And we had a feeling that the number was perhaps more than ten, and we telephoned a Mr. J.P. Davis who has been quite a knowledgeable man on some of these canals from the Teton River. And he enumerated six canals, diversions at least from the North Fork of the Teton River and four from the South Fork. Now of course, a major diversion was the Teton Feeder, and it provided a canal head where there were three diversions were made. Is this your understanding Cy?

CY: Yes, at the present time, where the two Teton Rivers divide or the main Teton River divides into the two Teton Rivers, they're now constructing a big control on this river. In the past even before the flood, the control on the Teton River was not all it was intended to be because there was never a good control on the rivers, the two rivers where from the south and the north branch of the Teton River. But at the present time they're constructing a good control on this point of separation of the two branches of the Teton River.

HF: To control the flood waters?

CY: It will control flood waters, and it will also control the amount of flow coming down those rivers for irrigation purposes. The Teton River also played an important part in Teton City by furnishing water for the Teton Milling and Manufacturing Company. We often refer to that diversion as the Driggs Diversion, The mill that was actually operated by the water power from the river.

HF: Now apparently, that particular diversion was just above where the river forks. Is that my understanding?

CY: Yes, that's correct. Yes, it comes from the main stem of the Teton River.

HF: Right. Now, Mr. Davis suggested that he could think of possibly seven diversions from the North Fork of the Teton River and four on the South Fork which would make a total of eleven or twelve diversions from this stream suggesting that the Teton River is a tremendous source of surface irrigation water. Now we've considered the three main sources of surface irrigation water, and if I understand correctly, virtually all of these diversions had pretty well been done by 1900, A few after 1900.

CY: That's correct. I think most of them were before 1900.

HF: But still there were problems weren't there?

CY: Yes there have always been problems on the Teton River. I remember one resolution that Mr. Hollis sent back to our delegation in Washington where he described the tremendous damage done by the river. How when a thaw period or a warm period during the winter months and the river had been iced in, how it would, the ice in the river would block the river and throw the water out on farmlands washing away bridges and roads and drowning livestock in some instances and doing a great deal of damage. It's been one of the most damaging streams that we have in the Upper Snake River Valley because we had no way of controlling it without a dam on that river.

HF: And so, something had to be done to correct the flood situation even on the North Fork of the Snake River. There are periods where we needed the flood control. And now let's turn our attention to go back, to see what was done in the history of supplemental irrigation and control and so forth by other systems after our pioneers, our founding fathers as it were of irrigation had made all these diversions and so forth. They saw the need of storage water sites. And it's my understanding, and I'm going to have you confirm this Cy and give me the benefit of your great knowledge of it. What was done to locate good storage sights? Did the North Fork Water Users Protective Association play a part in that?

CY: Yes, they played a very important part of it. Now about 1915 is when they first started to realize that they must have another source of water other than this just natural

flow water. And so in the early twenties the North Fork, owners of water stock in the North Fork, decided that they would like to have a survey made of the area and determine where feasible storage rights were. Now, money was hard to come by in those days, and according to the best information I have, between 1915 and about 1923 or four, a number of canal companies, the North Fork Water Users Protection Association taking the lead under the able leadership of Frank Miller, asked that the reclamation engineer make a survey of all possible reservoir sites in Madison and Fremont County. Now this survey was to cost the area about fifteen thousand dollars, and the county commissioners of both counties were asked if they would participate. And even the city of Idaho Falls helped participate, and a survey was made.

And the results of that survey that was made showed the approval or the disapproval of possible sites that they thought were within the district. Now the Henry's Lake Site for instance, Henry's Lake at that time was a very small lake and they visioned that a great reservoir could be constructed at Henry's Lake at a very reasonable cost. And this particular site after sufficient study was approved by the reclamation engineers. And the Fall River Meadows Site was approved. Now Fall River Meadows, we don't refer to it as Fall River Meadows today, but in them days they referred to it as Fall River Meadows. It's now called Beckler Meadows, and it was also approved by the engineers as a possible site. A site was thought to be at Flat Rock. It was rejected by the engineer. The Shotgun Site was rejected. The Island Park Site on the Buffalo River was approved. Winegar's Hole was rejected. Boon Kirk was rejected. The Teton was approved. However, the site approved on the first Teton, on the original Teton survey was down from where a dam later was erected on the Teton River. Horseshoe was rejected. And Bitch Creek was rejected as a possible reservoir site.

HF: Now did they name that report? And what kind of a document was that submitted by the engineer? Did you know?

CY: Well, the engineers submitted this information to the North Fork Water Users Protective Association. And the Protective Association then--they sent this information to the various canal companies who showed an interest in the development of reservoirs. And six canal companies went together and formed what they called the North Fork Reservoir Company. And these six canals were the Last Chance Canal, the Saint Anthony Union, the Salem Union, the Egin, the Independent, and the Consolidated Farmers. And these six canals then undertook to develop the Henry's Lake Site. Now when you start to build a reservoir, especially in the early days, in the early history, it took considerable money.

And an estimate of the cost of the development of this site was about \$200,000. And in reading back in an old history of the Last Chance Canal Company, it told how they had to call three meetings to try to get the stock holders out to give them authority to mortgage the canal so to speak and to execute an agreement with the North Fork Reservoir Company that they would subscribe for 15.3% of the stock. And it's interesting to note some of the statements that were made. The first date that they were supposed to assemble, there were only three of the stockholders showed up at that meeting. And so

then they had to call another meeting. They had to have authorization from the stock holders and on the back of the notice that went out to the stock holders, it said this:

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the order of the board of directors of the Last Chance Canal Company, a special meeting of the stock holders of said company will be held at the principle place of the business of the corporation DeWitt, Saint Anthony, Idaho, in the probate Courtroom on the May 19, 1922 at 4:00 for the purpose of considering and acting upon the proposition of authorizing the officers of the canal company to issue jointly with the North Fork Reservoir Company and the corporation of the stockholders therein a joint trust deed or a mortgage of the property of said reservoir company and its stockholders for the purpose of securing bonds for the North Fork Reservoir Company in the some of \$200,000. The transaction of other business is promptly pertaining to and in connection with the interests of this corporation in the said reservoir company.

And it was dated May 3, 1922, and was signed by C.E. Lloyd as secretary of the Last Chance Canal Company. Now later on, these bonds were issued and they were sold in California. That seemed to be where the money was, and then during the big depression in the late 1930's and the early 1940's the North Fork Reservoir Company engaged the service of an attorney in Saint Anthony by the name of Frank Soule. And many times I went to Frank Soule's office and talked with him about acquiring this \$200,000 in bonds that was sold. And they were purchased by the North Fork Reservoir Company at fifty cents on the dollar, but it was not a bargain even then because of the depressed condition of the big farm depression in 1930. Now Mr. Soul engaged a broker in California to pick these bonds up at fifty cents on the dollar and send them to him, and he reimbursed this attorney in California. They worked as a team in acquiring these bonds. All the bonds were acquired by the North Fork Reservoir Company. My last visit to Frank Soul's office, he told me that there were still three \$1000 bonds outstanding that they could not locate.

HF: Well that's a tremendous history isn't it? Isn't that interesting? Well, now, this all pertained of course to the Last Chance Canal, is that right? Or did it pertain to these six companies?

CY: All six canals--the division of stock was made as follows: The Last Chance was the smallest canal and they acquired 15.3% of the stock. The Saint Anthony Canal, the largest canal only took 6.8% of the stock. But the Saint Anthony Canal had a very excellent natural flow water right. Then, the Salem Union acquired 24.2%, the Egin 6.8%, the Independent 26.8%, and the Consolidated Farmers 20.1% of this stock. Of course right of way had to be purchased for the enlarging of the reservoir--land adjacent to the reservoir. And Henry's Lake was increased in capacity about three or four times the original amount of the lake. And the holding capacity now of the lake is 78,000 acre feet of water which is the size of a reservoir.

HF: What did they have to do, put levees up maybe on the lower side; did they do some of that, levees around to store in the water?

CY: No, it wasn't—what they did, it was a natural reservoir to begin with, but they had to construct an outlet for the reservoir and put in concrete gates to control the water. And as the water rose in the old Henry's Lake in the new reservoir, it flooded the land adjacent to the reservoir and this land had to be purchased. And this is where the \$200,000 was used. And then an outlet for the reservoir had to be constructed, and I wasn't present at the time, but I was told that that was quite an event when the Mackerts, who were in charge of this construction, blew a canal with dynamite in one shot, and blew a canal for a long distance. They said that was quite a red letter day in the history, in the water history of the Upper Snake River Valley when they were able to do that. And they also were responsible for the construction of the holding gate and a fish ladder was put in. I don't think it was ever too successful, but it was put in to assist fish coming up to enter the Henry's Lake Reservoir. And of course now it's one of the great fishing spots of the Upper Snake River Valley.

HF: Are fish able to go up the North Fork of the Snake then and through this canal into the reservoir? Is it your understanding that they can go in there and grow to six, eight, ten pounds?

CY: Just about a year ago, the fish and game come out and said that they were going to handle the fishing on the Henry's Lake Reservoir as a trophy fishery. And of course the limit on Henry's Lake during some times of the year is only one fish, and in most of the year it's only two fish and sometimes during the year the fishing is completely closed. Now, it was a natural fishing stream and many of the fish in the reservoir originally were the native trout. In fact, I have the distinction of catching the largest native trout that was ever taken on Henry's Lake Reservoir. I caught this particular trout in what they call Targhee Creek which empties into the Henry's Lake Reservoir. The trout was 35.5 inches long, it weighed 17.5 pounds, and had it been a fat fish it would have weighed in better than twenty pounds. But it weighed 17.5 pounds and was 35.5 inches long and it's one of the largest fish, native trout that was ever taken in Southeastern Idaho.

HF: That would be a specimen, and I suppose you made it a trophy did you not, did you?

CY: I kept this fish all summer, and I took it to a locker plant. And in order to show the fish because of the length of the fish, they had to take out a partition between two of the storage boxes, and they kept it in two boxes. And the tourists almost wore it out going to see that tremendous fish. The teeth were so long that it would hang suspended if you hooked the teeth over a wire. It was really the grand-pappy of all native trout.

HF: Isn't that interesting? That is exceedingly interesting. Well now, then from what you have advised of the various sites that were selected, the one at Henry's Lake was developed first.

CY: Yes, Henry's Lake was the first site that they developed. Now they did give consideration to getting additional water from the Beckler River. Now, they from Montana there was water available there, and they thought that it could be tunneled through the mountain. It was held in the Hebdon Lake, and it could be tunneled through the mountain and dumped into Henry's Lake and thus be made available for water users on the Henry's Fork of the Snake River. This water could have been purchased at that time from a utilities company which had title to the water, and they thought that it could be tunneled through and dumped into Henry's Lake and then take taken down Henry's Fork of the Snake River. And they estimated that it would cost six million dollars to make this particular tunnel. And 500,000 acre feet of water that was available was owned by the Montana Power Company at that time, but because of the expense and because of the reservoiring of Henry's Lake, this project was never tried or never completed.

HF: But it appeared to be feasible?

CY: It did appear to be feasible at that time. It could be brought around the mountain and tunneled through and dumped into what is now known as the Henry's Lake area and brought on down the river. But today, of course, I'm sure that that water is all subscribed for.

HF: And Montana as a state would probably be just as jealous of keeping its water as Idaho is keeping its water from being diverted by Colorado and California. Wouldn't that be true?

CY: Yes, I think so. You know there seems to be a constant threat about water and water diversion from the state of Idaho. My wife and I had an experience a few years ago. We came up from Saint George, Utah, to Salt Lake City. And while in route, in traveling through a vast area of productive looking land, I pointed out to my wife that there wasn't a single homestead or single church or a school out in this agricultural area. There were no dwellings on the land; the land was being dry farmed. And we stopped at a little country store and went in. It was a hot day, and we wanted to get a cool drink. And the lady that operated this little country store looked out and saw the Idaho license on our car and she said, "Oh, you're from Idaho." And I said, "Yes we're from the Upper Snake River Valley." She said, "Oh that's the area that has all the water." She said, "What we wouldn't give for a stream of your water." She said, "If we had a stream of your water, you would see churches and schools and towns and residential areas on this land where we're only producing a scant living." She said, "It's hard to even make enough money on this land under dry farm conditions to justify in the operation of the land."

HF: Well, that's a very interesting personal story there and of the great significance, the importance of water and how others would like to get the abundance or some of the abundance of water in the Upper Snake River Valley. Well now, the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District was organized, and what can you tell me about its organization? Why was it organized?

CY: Well, after the erection and the completion of the North Fork Reservoir, or the Henry's Lake Reservoirs other canal companies wanted to participate in reservoir water. They could see the great benefits that come through storing water and having it available to mature their crops. And so in 19—around 1962, they begin exploring the possibility of forming a reservoir company. And what could be accomplished by a reservoir company that would take the lead in the development of a reservoir on the South Fork of the Snake River. And of course one of the sites that they selected was the Island Park Site near Pond's Lodge. It was a feasible site, but the backwaters would back up into what was known as the Island Park Land and Cattle Company land in the Shotgun Valley.

And many of the leaders in the reclamation and irrigation projects of the Upper Valley were instrumental in bringing this group together and organizing them. Now Mr. J.C. Siddoway was president of this group for many, many years, and then he was replaced by Mr. Walker after Mr. Siddoway's death. And they in turn had to send a delegation back to Washington D.C. to get authorization for the Teton Dam later on, but they also had to send delegations back to get authorization for the Island Park Dam. And in order to spread the benefits of such a project over the entire area, they also erected a small dam that's known as the Grassy Lake Dam just in the borders of Wyoming that feeds into Fall River. There was many—Jack Fisher was instrumental in the early organization of this and Fess Fuller of Ashton. And many of these early leaders were designated to work together to form an organization of the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District and to erect these dams. And later they were instrumental in erecting the Teton Dam.

HF: Now, I don't know if you have a specific date when through the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District the water users signed the contract whereby they would agree to pay for the construction of this dam. I think you advised me today, Mr. Young, that in 1979, in the spring of the year of 1979, the final payment of the installment program covering forty years was made whereby the water users through the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District did complete the payment for the construction of the Island Park Dam. Is this correct?

CY: Yes, on June 22, 1979, the final payment of \$33,506.57 was made for the money that was borrowed from the government in the construction of the Island Park Dam. Now, the cost to the irrigators there was \$2,702,417, and this is a unique reservoir. Most of these reservoirs get credit for flood control and fish and wildlife and recreation and all these other things, but this particular reservoir—even though it is one of the choice fishing spots in the state of Idaho and a great recreational spot for the tourists coming into Idaho, the irrigators paid the entire cost of this project making the last payment as I said on June 22, 1979, the fortieth year of this repayment contract.

HF: Now this particular dam has been of tremendous worth and value to the farmers of this whole area of these two counties. I know that tax wise, the farmers when they would pay their taxes in the fall of the year, of course there's that annual assessment to be made that was placed on the land, Fremont-Madison Irrigation District. I've made out a lot of deeds, and I've made out a lot of contracts. And this particular clause is always or most usually found in these instruments conveying land because all these lands of Fremont

County and in Madison County were benefited from these waters out of the Island Park Project; were they not?

CY: Yes they were. It really meant the difference between profit and loss many years on these farms. It was one of the greatest investments I think that the farmers of the Upper Snake River Valley ever made--when they invested money in the Island Park Dam with the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District. This dam has been a tremendous source of supplemental water supply in the area, and the dam always fills and spills. Even in the dry years we still impound enough water to fill the dam at Island Park, and so it has been a very beneficial project for the Upper Snake River Valley.

HF: Do you have any idea of the total cost?

CY: The total cost of the dam and the head works was \$2,702,417. According to the report that was put out at the time, the last payment of \$33,506.57 was made to the government.

HF: Do you have any idea how many acres of storage water the dam holds?

CY: The dam, the Island Park Dam itself holds 137,000 acre feet of water. Now if your land lies within the district, you can subscribe to any amount of that water which you want to purchase. On my farm, I had around 250 acres of irrigated land on the farm. And I felt that I needed at least 220 acre feet of water to supplement my present water supply. I also have a reservoir right in the Henry's Lake Reservoir which gives me supplemental water. But many lands have two acre feet of right in the reservoir: some lands have only one. It's left up to the individual, and I subscribe for 220 acre feet in the Island Park Dam and I felt that it was a good investment for me over the years to have that supplemental water, and now I hand it down to my sons who own the land. I have deeded my land to the family, and each of those sons has a certain amount of that water that they're responsible for.

HF: Mr. Young can you give me a date when the first water from this great reservoir was used?

CY: It would be approximately—I believe the delay on this caused a one year delay on it when they thought it would be--in either '39 or '40.

HF: When the waters were first used?

CY: When the waters were first used from the dam.

HF: Now, this other little supplemental project, the Grassy Lake to which you referred, which collected the waters that would flow down Fall River; that was a couple of three years before was it not?

CY: It was not a difficult dam really to construct up there. I've visited the head works up there many times. They did provide quite an expensive overflow outlet for the Grassy Lake Dam. And that water, they try to hold as much of that water in reserve as possible in this dam because it doesn't have the ability to refill as readily as does the Island Park Dam. And so Grassy Lake is held in reserve and is used by the canals that head above the Big Diversion Canal that goes from the Henry's Fork of the Snake River over to the Teton River.

HF: All right, now with this system being completed in the late '30's, early '40's--then it brings us up to a time when perhaps we could do something about the control of flooding and so forth on the Teton Dam. Excuse me, on the Teton River and determine just what can and should be done about controlling and getting additional benefits from this stream of water, namely the Teton River. Go back and share with us just what some of the—you talked about a Representative Dewitt was it? Dewitt Clark?

CY: D. Worth Clark, yes.

HF: D. Worth Clark, he was a visionary person I suppose, and he had aspirations of doing something with that in his day. And during the time he served as a congressman really nothing too much was done. Is that correct?

CY: That is correct.

HF: So what's some of the history that got this thing in operation?

CY: Well, Senator Frank Church and Congressman Ralph Harding, as I remember, were both serving at the time in 1962 when the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District decided that they would take and initiate some action on getting a Teton Dam. And so they had a bill introduced in the Senate, and it passed the Senate and went over to the House for consideration. And in 1962, it was being hailed in the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee of the House. And it seemed to be bogged down there, and they wanted additional information before letting it have a run on the floor of the House. And so the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District, acting under the able chairmanship of Mr. Siddoway, picked six men to go back to Washington D.C. and see if we couldn't get this bill out of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. And the men selected to go back was R. Willis Walker, Cy Young, Marvin Myers, Andy Anderson, Orville Mortenson, and LaRue Frandsen.

HF: Now Mr. Young, you have enumerated six men, the names of six men including yourself. Would you tell me just a little, give me a little biographical sketch of each man?

CY: I'd be glad to do that. R. Willis Walker is recognized as sort of the father of the Teton Dam because he was serving as chairman later on of the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District. And he led the delegation that went back to Washington to get the bill out of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. Now Mr. Walker I'm sure needs no introduction to the irrigators of the Upper Snake River Valley. He operated considerable

irrigated acreage. He lived near the city of Rexburg, and I have worked with Mr. Walker on irrigation problems delightfully many times. Mr. Walker was often referred to as the father of the Teton Dam. And of course, his ranch being right on the Teton River, he knew of the devastation of the Teton River when it was at flood stage. I have helped Mr. Walker many times to give testimony at hearings at Boise, and I also served on the Fremont-Madison Board, and I attended many of the yearly meetings with the Reclamation Department.

Now I am Cy Young, a farmer and rancher from Fremont County and I have lived in Fremont County all my life--Lived about three miles east of Saint Anthony. We operated a dairy there. I owned a band of Columbia sheep that I built up from a few head to twelve hundred head when I sold my sheep holding a few years ago. And I have been interested in irrigation and reclamation because this was the source of my livelihood. Now I'm sure that Marvin Myers needs no introduction to the people of the valley. Him and his brother Wayne Myers operated the Myer's Feed yard for many years where they fattened beef cattle and also lambs. I remember that Marvin handled the lamb end of their operation, and when I was in the sheep business I sold lambs many times to Marvin Myers. I appreciate that we had an outlet for lambs. At the time of this Washington trip, Marvin was on call by the LDS Church to assist them in their livestock operations. And when we flew back from Washington D.C., Marvin Myers flew to Texas to give some help to the church in their operation in Texas. Andy Anderson, as he was prominently called, his name being L.C. Anderson, was secretary for the Fremont-Madison Irrigation Company for many, many years.

And I always appreciated working with Andy on problems. He had a good knowledge of water and the importance of water. And he was also very accommodating. Many times he has take time out to prepare special information to be presented at canal company meetings. Now Orville Mortenson, he also lived originally near Rexburg. He was river water master, and Orville had in his charge the distribution, according to the decrees, of the many water rights in Madison and Fremont Counties. And working under his direction were river riders during the irrigation season. Now LuRue Frandsen was a member of the Fremont-Madison Irrigation Board of Directors. He lived near Ashton and he was the go between the farmers of that area and the Fremont-Madison Irrigation Board. When a problem arose in that area, he would first meet with the individual then he would bring the information to the board meeting of the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District. And these were the six men that went back to represent Fremont-Madison before the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee.

HF: Thank you Mr. Young for the biographical sketch for each of these individuals. There's one more request and person of whom I should like you to make appropriate comment: your legal counsel for the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District.

CY: The legal council for the district was Mary Smith of Rexburg. And I have appreciated the interest and the help that Mary Smith has given not only to the district, but to the North Fork Water Users Protective Association. She has prepared many resolutions and been very helpful in that organization as well as the Fremont-Madison

Irrigation Company. Now on occasions, when hearings was being held and she felt that she needed some assistance to take care of the legal end of this job, many times Ray Rigby was consulted or Bill Holden was consulted. And she has performed a very valuable service to the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District.

HF: Now, your mission was to go back there and represent this irrigation district, tell them the serious problems, what had to be done, what should be done and get this bill out of these—it was kind of buried in this committee I guess, wasn't it?

CY: Yes, it was.

HF: So you had to unbury it and get it out there to be voted on, were you successful?

CY: Yes, we had a very successful meeting. Not only did we get the bill out, but we had assistance from other people. For instance, Mr. Hunter, who was the attorney for the Utah Power and Light, was in Washington D.C. at that time and he gave very valuable testimony before the Interior and the Insular Affairs Committee of the House. And the bill was then moved from committee onto the floor and passed, and we had approval for the erection of the Teton Dam.

HF: There were some individuals that played quite a part in those years. I think you've mentioned Ralph Harding as Idaho's Second Congressional delegate; also Frank Church as Idaho's Senator. But there were others and as I recall, there were certain road blocks presented so that the construction of the dam would be frustrated or no appropriations would be obtained. There's quite a story about a delegate from the state of Pennsylvania. Why don't you review for the record, Mr. Young, this story?

CY: Yes the ranking member in the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee was very prominent and very influential in keeping control or a finger on reclamation projects. And one of the things that I thought was a highlight: after we had given testimony then we were available for the members of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee for questioning about any phases that they wished to question us about. And I remember the statement that he made. He rose to his feet in the chamber and he said, "This is the kind of a project that I can wholeheartedly endorse." He said, "Not only does it cover reclamation and irrigation, but flood control and power and fish and wildlife." He says, "It has all the good phases that a project should contain." And he said, "I can wholeheartedly support this type of a project." I'm sure that his statement had a great deal to do with the attitude of the other members of the committee and getting this bill on the floor and having it considered by the entire congress of the United States.

HF: Now here was a man who was positive and pushed the program. The man that I refer to is Mike Kirwin who I think as far as this area of Idaho is concerned, he was sort of negative towards our ideas of getting water improvement.

CY: Yes, I think your right. Now, they planned a boat trip down the Teton River to impress Mike Kirwin, Senator Mike Kirwin, with the importance of this project and also

for the need of the control on the river for flood control. And I sat in the back of the boat on the same seat with Mike Kirwin coming down the Teton River. And Ralph Harding told me, he said, "It's your job to sell Mr. Kirwin on this project." And so we conversed as we came down the river and I pointed out the different lands and the different formations and pointed up the need of this particular project to control the flooding of the area sometimes during the winter and sometimes during the spring. And Mike Kirwin made a statement to me that many people probably never heard. I doubt if anyone else in the boat heard. But he referred to Ralph Harding as being one of the most influential congressmen in Washington at that time, and he said, "They owe Ralph Harding this project because of the important role he had played in other project that was brought before the congress."

And at the appreciation dinner that night, after we had spent the day coming down the river, it was held. And there were many people at this appreciation dinner and Mike Kirwin was speaking, and he said, "If you want this project, reelect Ralph Harding to the congress of the United States." Well, this was rejected; his statement was sort of rejected by the people there. You could just feel a chill go over the crowd when he made this statement. Had he said what he told me, "If Ralph Harding can carry this project for you; he will probably get the approval of it because he has been so helpful on other projects. They owe Ralph Harding this consideration." I think it would have been successful. But he became angry at the attitude in the meeting and some of the statements that were made, and he told them that as long as he held the purse strings, that he would not release money for the erection of the Teton Dam. And so for many years this remained without any action being taken, and the cost of the original project was estimated to be \$45,000,000.

But by the time of the construction of the dam, they spent \$98,000,000 on the dam, and they were just putting the finishing touches on the dam when the dam broke. And of course after the dam had broke, almost \$500,000,000 had been spent in trying to reimburse the people who lost property, homes, livestock, businesses, everything was washed away. You can't imagine that water rose to a height of about seventy-five feet as near as I could tell by the debris that was deposited on the banks of Hog Holler, and I have had the privilege on several occasions going down the river of no return, the Salmon River. But I never saw anything as foreboding as this flood that came out of the canyon of the Teton Canyon uprooting trees, wrecking the buildings, washing away livestock, everything in its path. Trees as large around as the base of a washtub were de-limbed, washed out of the ground, and just went tumbling in that water. It would have taken a man on a saddle horse to have kept ahead of that flood that went down through the country.

My wife and I followed along the edge of the flood and watched the devastation that occurred. The railroad track was picked up and stood up like a picket fence, and the rails, heavy duty rails, were actually bent till they were not even usable again. The most devastating thing that ever happened I guess probably in the entire United States. In the Wilford area only 154 homes were destroyed. My grand-daughter had a new home and all they ever found of their home was about a two foot square piece of roof that they

thought came off of their house. It was the most devastating thing that could have ever happened to an area. And of course, not only did we suffer the loss of the dam, but people lost things in that flood that could never be replaced. No amount of money would ever compensate them for their loss.

HF: I believe that the active part and role you played in authorizing them, and then I suppose getting it off of high-center that is to say, the appropriations for its construction, getting those delays and so forth corrected so it could be built. Then for you personally to witness this thing that after it was all done, virtually done, filling up and so forth, to see this burst, this dam burst and the terrible damage that was wrought in its wake. I imagine it was quite a loss for you in a personal way?

CY: Yes, I felt that it was a great personal loss even though my farm wasn't damaged by this great flood. In traveling along the edge of the flooded area, the debris and the homes were washed away and the cars were washed away. Eleven people lost their lives in the flood and had that flood occurred at night, I hate to think what the results might have been. Neighbor warned neighbor. We had excellent cooperation and assistance from the police department and from the National Guard. Many people spent days on Rexburg Hill in the facilities of Ricks College that couldn't return to their homes. It was one of the greatest tragedies that ever occurred in the state of Idaho or in the United States. Even though the loss of life was small as compared to some of the floods and things that happened, it was still a great tragedy in this Upper Snake River Valley.

HF: I would like to complete this report and this interview by having you share with us on tape the article which you've prepared a year or a few months ago Mr. Young. It's come to my attention that after many years of service with the North Fork Water User Protective Association and the years on the other canal companies the Last Chance and others that this man now has determined that perhaps it's best that he retire and let younger people assert themselves. And so he has prepared rather a synopsis of some of the history connected with irrigation in this great district of thirty-six. Now we haven't talked too much about Irrigation District Thirty-six which embraced this area of Idaho and which is now referred to I guess as District One. But surely Cy Young has played a very prominent role in protecting the rights of water owners and furthering their rights and enhancing them. And I'd like to have him close by reading this. Now it may be Cy, that you would have some other statements that you would like to make. Before you read this and maybe after you have read this written statement that you have made and prepared.

CY: After my years of service on the protective association, many of the water users urged me to write a little history of some of the observations that I had made. And so I went back through the old records and did some research, and I entitle this, "A History of Idaho's Greatest Natural Resource--Water."

Some of the earliest information in my possession dates back to 1895 and points up some of the struggles of our founding fathers to construct the canals and establish water rights in the Upper Snake River Valley. It is interesting to note that a board and a spirit level

were used in place of surveying instruments in laying out the construction of many of the canal systems. Men were paid a wage of a dollar and fifty cents a day and as much as three dollars per day for a man and a team. I was told by one pioneer that many of the men working to construct the canals worked in cold weather with their feet wrapped in gunny sacks to protect them from the freezing cold. When money was not available, some men received water stock for pay for their labor. The important thing was to get the water to the land for domestic and irrigation purposes. As new land was put to the plough, and new families homesteaded in the area, additional fillings for water had to be made.

But early in 1915, farmers realized that some methods to supplement their natural flow water rights were needed. This was when the North Fork Water Users Protective Association was first being considered and organized. Men like Frank Miller, L. Eric Johnson, Joe Anderson, Jack Fisher, Jedy L. Stoddard, W.D. Hollist, Eph Ricks and many, many others played an important part in this organization. Through the efforts of the many canal companies and the North Fork Water Users Protective Association, a contract was made with the department of reclamation engineer to have a survey made of all the reservoir sites in Fremont and Madison Counties at an estimated cost of \$15,000. County commissioner, canal companies, and even the city of Idaho Falls offered to participate with funds to assist in this survey. Several years were spent in completing this survey with the following results. The Henry Lake Site was approved, the Fall River Meadows Site was approved, the Flat Rock Site was rejected, Shotgun was rejected, the Island Park-Buffalo River Site was approved. Wyneger's Hole was rejected, Boon Creek was rejected, the Teton Site was approved, Horseshoe was rejected, and Bitch Creek was rejected.

After the survey was complete, a mass meeting was called of the water users at the old LDS tabernacle in Saint Anthony, Idaho. As a small boy, I attended this water meeting. 500 people were in attendance. Senator Robert M. Stanfield of Oregon, who was chairman of the committee of public lands, presided and the governor of Idaho, C.C. Moore and Addison T. Smith both spoke at this meeting. It was pointed out at this meeting that the Fall River Meadows, commonly known now as Beckler Meadows, was in Yellowstone Park, and that a reservoir development would affect 5,500 acres of park land. Frank Miller spoke for the water users and pointed out the crop loss occurring each year because of the lack of water to complete mature their crops. Mr. Miller said, "In one year, a loss of \$780,000 was experienced by the C. P. Industry, and then in another short water year \$550,000 loss was again experienced by the C.P. Industry. He further pointed out that in one year a loss of alfalfa, grain, and seed peas in this area amounted to a \$1,528,000.

In attendance from Washington D.C. was W.C. Grey who said he represented 28 societies who went on record as being opposed to the commercializing of park resources or any change in park boundaries. Because of this opposition, this project was abandoned. The next project considered was the development of Henry's Lake by six canal companies. The Charles Mackert family played an important part in developing this project. In order to secure the necessary funds, bonds was sold in California through a

bonding company. Many years later Frank Soule, an attorney in Saint Anthony, was hired to act for the North Fork Reservoir Company to retire these bonds. This was during the big farm depression during the late 1930's. Mr. Sole had a broker in California working with him, acquiring these bonds for fifty cents on the dollar. These were difficult times for the farmers. Wheat sold as low as thirty-five cents a bushel, hogs, three cents a pound; lambs, three dollars a hundred; butter fat, thirteen cents a pound; yearling steers, eighteen dollars a head; wool seven cents a pound; eggs, ten cents a dozen. And fifty percent of the face value of these bonds was still not a bargain because of the depression.

Once again we see the struggle made by our fathers to supply the necessary water for our lands. As this water was available, many other canal companies went together and formed the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District for construction of an Island Park Dam and reservoir. A site was available on the North Fork of the Snake River near Pond's Lodge, and this plan called for storage not on the North Fork, but also a small reservoir to be located on the head waters of Fall River known as the Grassy Lake with a crosscut canal from the North Fork of the Snake River to the Teton River. This was to extend the benefits of this reservoir to the water users of the Teton River. This project is one of the few projects financed with federal funds where the water users payed the entire cost of the project. Nothing was allowed for recreation, power potential, or flood control. Even though this reservoir is considered one of the great recreation spots in Idaho, The water users paid the total cost over a forty year repayment plan. The last payment of \$33,506.57 was made on June 22, 1979 and the total construction cost being \$2,702,417.

The property that was flooded by the reservoir back waters was owned by individuals, but the largest block was 3,928 acres owned by the Island Park Land and Cattle Company commonly known as the Railroad Ranch. This block of land was purchased for \$110,000 from the railroad ranch. 600 inches of water from Churden Creek was also purchased with a priority date of 1889 for an additional \$66,000. Each year at the annual meeting of the North Fork Water Users Protective Association, Mr. W.D. Hollist, chairman of the flood control committee offered a resolution calling for construction of a dam on the Teton River. A site had been approved that would hold 40,000 acre feet of water. This site was below the site where the Teton Dam was later constructed. In 1936 letters in the files indicated that Congressman D. Worth Clark promised the water users that all necessary preparations were made and that the construction would start on this project in 1937.

He was requesting \$2,000,000 be appropriated for this project, but in 1937 no appropriation was made by congress. And Clark tried to acquire funds enough to start the project, but was unsuccessful. Even though Congress had approved this project, no appropriation was made for this project's construction. In 1962, under the direction of the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District, six men were selected to go to Washington to promote a Teton Dam. The men selected to represent the district was R. Willis Walker, Cy Young, Marvin Myers, Andy Anderson, Orville Mortensen, and LaRue Frandsen. When this delegation left for Washington, the Teton River was once more flooding the area north and east of Rexburg bringing damage to crops, home, roads, and livestock. A bill calling for the construction of the Teton Dam had passed the Senate that was being

held by the Interior and the Insular Affairs Committee of the House. We were successful in getting this bill approved by the committee, and it received favorable consideration by the house members.

This bill called for a much larger reservoir on the Teton River that would furnish irrigation water to 62,000 acres of land on Rexburg Bench with supplemental water for the district and also a generating plant at the dam. The cost to the irrigator was to be \$3,980,000 with an estimated cost of \$45,000,000. The total capacity of the reservoir was to be 315,000 acre feet with 115,000 acre feet for power head and a gravity canal to be constructed that would carry 500 second/feet to the Rexburg Bench. 27 replacement wells were to be drilled with a pipe capacity of 24 inches. This was to ensure a firm water right during dry years. Then another unexpected roadblock developed to place in the way of the construction of this dam. Senator Mike Kirwin came to Idaho to view the proposed project. We planned a boat trip down the Teton River during the day and an appreciation dinner for Senator Kirwin in the evening. At the appreciation dinner Senator Kirwin become angry and said, "No money would be available for the Teton Dam as long as he held the purse strings." Congress gave final approval in 1964, but construction was not started until 1972 when funds were available and appropriated.

The cost of the project had more than doubled and \$98,000,000 was spent in the construction of this project. Just as the finishing touches were being done on the dam and the dam was being filled for the first time, the Teton Dam collapsed on June 5, 1976. The Dam collapse sent water down the river approximately 300,000 acre feet of water. This wall of water ten feet high spread out through the valley, through the Wilford area destroying 154 homes. Entire farms were destroyed, livestock drowned, bridges, roads, and businesses were swept away. Everything in its path was destroyed. Eleven people lost their lives. Not only was this entire project destroyed but the government paid out close to \$5,000,000 in damage claims alone. In the search for supplemental water, it is interesting to note that consideration was once given to tunneling the Madison River into Henry's Lake at an estimated cost of \$6,000,000 plus the cost of the water.

Title to 500,000 acre feet of water was held by the Montana Power Company much of which was stored in Hebdon Lake. This project was never attempted but was given careful consideration. Water is the lifeblood of the great state of Idaho. I often refer to it as Idaho's liquid gold. It is a great renewable natural resource and should be used wisely. My hat is off to the wisdom of our founding fathers who recognized the wise and prudent use of this great natural resource, water. With our water rights being threatened on every side, the question I would like to leave with you is can we maintain the heritage left us by our founding fathers in the years to come, our water rights?

HF: That's a good question, and I suppose I could put to you a question parallel to that. Are there yet a number of sites, potential sites in the Upper Snake River Valley in the same area on the North Fork of the Snake River, maybe on Fall River or Teton River where other sites can be made and dams constructed, the so-called multi-purpose dam? Now, that's a question, and I'm not going to ask you to answer that. But in the same vein,

I'll ask you the very searching question which is being asked again now that some forty years have past. Will the Teton Dam that burst on the June 5, 1976 ever be replaced?

CY: That is the \$64 question. However, in answer to your first question, there is a good reservoir site here where Warm River empties into the Snake River. And the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District has had a filing on this site for many; many years thinking that some day, maybe, a reservoir would be erected there. This site would store about 150,000 acre feet of water. Now on the Teton Dam, of course we have hopes that in the future that a dam will be reconstructed on the Teton River, and because we had pledge water from the underground to pump back into the river to replace water stored in the Teton Dam on dry years. We came out in opposition to the pumping of water from our underground and taking it on to the Salmon Falls tract. A few weeks ago I had the privilege of sitting down with the governor of the state of Idaho, Governor Evans, and explaining to him why our attitude was that we could not allow 440 square feet of water to be pumped from our underground because it would destroy not only the sub-irrigation system on Egin Bench and the surrounding area, the area on the south side of the Henry's Fork of the Snake River that depends on sub-irrigation. But it would also destroy a vast irrigation system in the Mud Lake Area.

Now in this report that I have before me here, it was interesting to me to see what happened after the sub-irrigation system was developed on Egin Bench. After they found that the entire area could be subbed and had to be subbed in order to make the ground productive, the water in Mud Lake began to increase and it went from a small body of water to a body of 62,000 acre feet of water and the wells become recharged in that area. And according to this report that I have here, he specifically gives credit for what happened in that area with the irrigation system that was developed on the Egin Bench and the Egin Bench Area. It took almost ten years for Mud Lake to raise from a frog pond to a 62,000 acre foot reservoir, and that water now is being used to irrigate much of the land in and around Mud Lake. And also the wells, some wells the pressure is so great, the underground pressure, when they drill that the water almost will flow out of the wells. And the lift is very low in that area. Now last winter for the first time, the winter water was shut off in the Upper Snake River Valley in holding the water level at a reasonably high level and that affected Mud Lake. I received a call from the water master out there, and he said how it was affecting them. Had it not been that we had an exceptionally wet spring, I think it would have had a devastating effect upon the whole area and our water system during the 1980 irrigation seasons.

HF: That's very, very interesting. We all realize, don't we, that this Upper Snake River Aquifer, underground reservoir and reservoirs, are just tremendous. And there surely must be a relationship with what is down there and what's on the surface. And the way we do and apply the water on the surface and use it has a bearing, I suppose, on what is done underground. And the amount of water that we take from the underground will have an effect on what will happen let's say from one area to another area. There's a relationship.

CY: I'm sure that's true. I clipped this clipping out of the paper. It was most interesting to me; it says "Hagerman Valley Recharge Proposed." And this was issued in the Post Register on March 25, 1980. And in reading this, they realized that much of the recharge and this water that comes out of Hagerman Valley and goes into the river in the form of the spring flow. To be contributed . . .

HF: A thousand springs?

CY: Yes, a thousand springs can be distributed to this area of the State. Here's where we start the big recharge. And of course, they now are considering also attempting to recharge the area to accommodate and enhance the fish farmers as well as the irrigator in that area. It's a most interesting article and observation that they make. And I have maintained for a long time that the first water that's being added to the recharge of the underground originates right here in the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District. I think also the Ashton area adds to this recharge and clear down across the desert they are now successfully drawing from this underground water and irrigating vast area of land that a few years ago was desert. It has added materially to the wealth of Idaho. Many of these people can now produce row crops or produce grain in abundance on this land. Alfalfa and livestock operations are also available to them because of the addition of irrigation water from the underground. And I have felt for many, many years, that we were one of the main contributors right out of this area and that every opportunity we have that we should be diverting water to the underground through the Quail Lake and other lakes in that area. Now, it has been considered in the past that they might construct even a canal from the Henry's Fork of the Snake River as a recharged canal out into the area and dump this water that can be taken out as it is in the reservoir, this vast underground reservoir, and be put to beneficial use in other areas of the state.

HF: Well, it's—perhaps in its initial formative period, Mr. Young, what this all means, I feel that the Upper Snake River Valley has a great future. We have the source for so much water. The Targhee National Forest which is to the north of us, with its tremendous area where the snow is, the snow pack lies. And where all this water comes down in the spring of year and funnels, and we not only use it on the surface. But as you're suggesting, it percolates down into this underground reservoir, and we're right at the head of it. And there's a natural flow or a natural dropping, decline that seems to go here right on down the Snake River clear across the state, four or five hundred miles. And this aquifer is seemingly one of the largest in the whole country.

CY: Yes, I think that's correct, this water that comes out at Thousand Springs. It's interesting to know the development that they've had in fisheries in and around that area. And they still would like to develop further, but they're limited with the amount of water. But it is a great source of water for those farms in that area.

HF: And now, I know that in your life, sir, you've worn a number of hats. You have been a rancher and a very successful farmer in the Fremont County Area. I know that you've been a legislator, representing Fremont County in the Idaho Legislature. You've been involved with the Fremont-Madison and with these other canal and irrigation districts and

had and thrown your support and weight for the better use and utility of this great natural resource of water. To conclude, would you have any comment about these other hats that you've worn? The legislature for example, would you like to make a little comment about your years over there?

CY: I was asked many times during my life if I was interested in politics by both political parties, but I never become interested much in politics until in the late 1950's. And then they encouraged me to run for the legislature. The first time in 1956 that I run for the legislature, it was interesting to me. I didn't have a very good knowledge of politics and I challenged a man that was serving in the Senate, the Idaho Senate. And there were seventeen voting precincts in Fremont County at that time, and I run strong in sixteen of those precincts. But when the seventeenth precinct came in, that was his home precinct; he had me beat by six votes. And I said, "Well, you beat me by a comfortable margin. I'll go out and help you to be reelected." The man I refer to was Ralph Litten of Saint Anthony. Ralph and I had always been good friends; we're good friends today. And I did just that. The next year, or the next time two years later in 1958, Ralph wanted to run for the Congress of the United States. And he came to me, and he said, "You run so well last time as a newcomer in politics, why don't you try it again." I said, "Well, I got beat once, that should be enough." But he just insisted that I run again. And so I filed, and I was elected for the first time in 1958.

And I've often said it would be wonderful if every person could serve in the legislature. It's an education in itself. I worked mainly on agricultural, reclamation, and things of that nature of which I had a knowledge, a good working knowledge the first two years. And then I run again in 1960 and was elected for another two year term. And in 1958, the Democrats were in control of the state senate, and with the control goes all the chairmanships of the various committees. But in 1968, the Republicans had control and so then there were no chairmanships available for any of the Democrats. They were the minority party. But I worked very closely with Mr. Cooper from Caribou County. He was a fine gentleman; he had a great knowledge of water; and he and I worked very closely together. And I was interested in many of the bills that come before the legislature, and I always tried to stress the importance of our water to agriculture and to the state as a whole.

And as I have said before on this program today probably, I referred to it as the "liquid gold" of Idaho. Without water, we wouldn't have too much left here for us. But with Idaho—with water in Idaho, Idaho is a state to be reckoned with. And I was very much interested in the legislative process. In 1960 they came to me and insisted that I serve on the Finance Committee because I was a conservative, I was always conservative; I never felt it should be easy to spend the taxpayer's money. And they said we need more conservative thinking people on this committee. And that in itself was an education because all the budgets have to come before the finance committee and be approved. And then they have to be introduced on the floor of the House and the Senate and action taken on them. And this was an interesting experience for me. I never tried for reelection in 1962. In fact, just at the end of the legislative period in 1962, I resigned and accepted a position as a field man for the agricultural department of the federal government. And I

traveled in this assignment; I traveled all over the state. They'd give me a good understanding of problems in other places of the state of Idaho. In north Idaho, water is looked upon as a destructive element. Not too much irrigation is practiced, very little utilization of the streams in that area.

HF: What do they have, somewhere around twenty-five to twenty-eight inches of annual rainfall?

CY: Yes, the rainfall in the Palou Sweet Country, on most years, is sufficient to bring forth a very excellent crop, but in this end of the state with our rainfall curtailed to the extent that without water, we couldn't contribute much to the economy of the state of Idaho.

HF: But with water we contribute handsomely, do we not?

CY: We certainly do. It's the life blood of Idaho, and the nice part about it is that it's a renewable resource; it renews itself year after year.

HF: Now, in the field of church service, you've been involved in Fremont County have you not?

CY: Yes, I've always been involved in the church. I had the privilege of serving seventeen years as a ward clerk in the Twin Groves Ward. And then later I was bishop of the Twin Groves Ward, and I served another nine years as bishop of the Twin Groves Ward. And during that time we erected a new chapel for the Twin Groves Ward. And since most of the people in the ward were poor financially, it was quite an undertaking. And one of the things that impressed me about this undertaking was the fact that every person contributed in the ward, even people that were not members of the church. I remember on one occasion I stopped at a home that was not a member of the church. A bachelor lived there by the name of Ray Stocker, and I went in. And I said to Ray, I said, "We're trying to erect a church building Ray, we need some help." I said, "What about giving us a good steer to aid us in revenue for this church erection." Now I said I picked out a good steer, I said, "That steer would bring \$200." And he laughed, he didn't say whether he would contribute or not, but the next day I received his personal check in the mail for \$200. He didn't want to give up the steer, but he made a contribution of \$200. And I thought that that was really an outstanding contribution for a non-member to make. Later he joined the church. After he had come to Rexburg to live, he joined the church and they say he's been a faithful member of the church, but I have always been interested in the church and the impact it had upon the lives of the individual.

HF: Now one more question, did you ever serve as a county commissioner of Fremont County?

CY: No, I never served as a county commissioner. I had a brother that served for about twelve years as county commissioner, and I was interested very much in the things that were accomplished during the time that he was a county commissioner. For instance, it

was during his tenure in office that they started a program of raising the roads in the Fremont County area so that the snow would blow off the roads in the wintertime and save thousands of dollars in snow road removal. And I have been very close and worked with the commissioners on many projects, but I never had the privilege of serving as a county commissioner.

HF: I suppose with the amount of time that we have both given to this project today that there should be an ending time. And after being together from 9:30 to 2:30, it's time that we quit. I thank you very much Cy Young of Saint Anthony, Idaho.