

CAP Oral History

Interview with John Rhodes

February 11, 1999

(C: being interviewer Crystal Thompson)

C: I was just describing your background a little bit. Were you born and raised in Arizona?

John: Sorry.

C: Were you born and raised here?

John: No, incidentally, my ears are reasonably good for 82 years old, but they're 82 years old.

C: Okay, I'll speak up.

John: As my children keep saying, dad you should get a hearing aid. I said no I don't need a hearing aid; I just need for people like you to articulate better and face me when you speak.

I was born and raised in Council Grove, Kansas. My parents were. My father was a retail lumberman and he was born in Kansas also. My mother was born...he was born in a little called Colony and mother was born in Emporia which was a fairly good size town.

C: My grandmother was born in Emporia.

John: No kidding.

C: My mother was raised in Lacygne.

John: Oh yes, L-A-C-Y-G-N-E there aren't too many who can spell Lacygne. My mother's family was Welsh. In fact my maternal grandparents were both Welsh immigrants. It's coming from about the same part Wales and when Betty and I were in that part of the world once upon a time, we rented a car and drove to the town where my grandmother had lived. I was pretty close to her. And she had pictures of it, and so as we were driving, I said we got to find this place pretty soon. I just turned the corner and there it was, just the way grandmother said.

So, it was very nice. Anyway, Betty was from the same town and I'm 3 years older than she. People say were you childhood sweethearts? No. The age gap was just a little too big for that.

I went to Kansas State University. But, when she was a junior in high school, she was invited to come up for a sorority party at Kansas State and I was in a position to be invited to most sorority parties at that time so I would see this cute little girl for Council Grove and I'd dance with her and so on and so forth. And she was tiny kid. She said she was a slow grower upper. Then, when I went to law school, I went to Harvard Law School, and at the end of my first year I came home and went down town to be with the old gang and where you go for cokes and things like that. And the door opened and in came this beautiful girl. And I said to... who's that? That's Betty Harvey, you've known her all your life.

But, she just grew up.

C: She didn't look like that when you knew her?

John: I asked her for a date the next night. She was busy. And the next night, and she was busy. And the third night, I finally got a date with her. And so we kind of went from there.

C: So how many kids do you have?

John: We had four children, three sons and one daughter. I think we're probably getting a little head of ourselves because the way I got to Arizona was this. I took ROTC at Kansas State and had a commission when I graduated. Then when I went to law school, I kept up the commission by correspondence and so on. So when I graduated, I almost literally got my orders to active duty in one hand and my diploma in the other hand.

I was stationed Mattherfield, California. I was an infantry officer, but I went into the Air Corps because they needed people, officers, to relieve pilots from administrative duties so they could train other pilots. So, the Air Corps was expanding so rapidly. And so that's what I became, Administrative Officer in the Army Air Corps. I served for five years practically all at Williams what later became Williams Field. During that time, Betty and I were married. We were married in May of '42. And decided we like it, so when we'd been here long enough we registered to vote and I decided to take the Arizona Bar. I'd never taken a bar because I just graduated you know and then wasn't anyway to do it.

So we, I finally did get the Arizona Bar behind me in January of '45. And so I started to practice law after I got out of the service. I was a sole practitioner in Mesa. There on Mesa was not a huge city at that time. I think there was supposed to be 17,000 people but some of the old settlers told me in Mesa they were lying like dogs - they didn't have over 12,000. Anyway, there were two lawyers and I became the third. It was, looking back, it really wasn't so slow getting established, but it seemed like it was at the time. Arizona was really a Democratic state at that time. I was born and raised Republican. So when we went to vote, the old justice of the peace in Chandler said, major you want to register to vote as a Democrat, and I said no as a Republican. He said Mr. Rhodes you look like a nice fellow, he says I want to give you some good advice you won't amount to a damn as a Republican. Well, Mr. Cheek you know my father may turn over in his grave for a few things I do, but this isn't going to be one of them so you just put Republican there. I got the old boy later and we used to laugh about this, he turns with his form at his typewriter, his old LC Smith typewriter

and he said I don't know whether this typewriter will write that whole word or not. It did.

Anyway, we got established here and lived in Chandler all during the war. The Chandler development come in and had gotten enough priorities to build some houses for the officers at Williams Field and we rented a house from them. And then they decided to sell them so we bought one and lived there for about five years. And I opened an office in Chandler and one in Mesa. I was in Mesa most of the week and in Chandler for two days. Chandler was quite a small town then. I was not doing well there but I was doing quite well in Mesa so I finally just decided I'd stay in Mesa. So we built a house in Mesa, in the old downtown Mesa, 240 N. MacDonald. And started to practice law and also I started looking for other Republicans, and it wasn't easy to find them. There were several lawyers, and you know you get to know other lawyers, I ran in to a couple three. So we started Young Republican Organization. And in 1950 we had enough to have a sort of a convention. I think there about fifty of us there. And Howard Pyle spoke to us. Howard was a radio personality of some note. In fact, he was the person the pool picked to broadcast the surrender of the Japanese on the Missouri in the Tokyo Bay. And when he spoke to us, he really became really eloquent as far as Arizona needing two parties was concerned. And he said he would do anything for the Republican from ringing door bells on up and down.

So after he left, somebody said we ought to draft him to run for governor. So we did thinking he wouldn't do it, you know he did. He appointed Barry Goldwater as his campaign manager. Barry was just in business at that, well he was running his family business, a huge department store for those days. About four or five weeks later, my secretary said there is a Mr. Goldwater on the phone who would like to talk to you. I'd never met him. So, I picked up the phone and he said, "Mr. Rhodes I understand that you are a lawyer." I said, "Yes." He said, "I've been appointed by Howard Pyle as his campaign manager." I've been drafted he said. And so he said, "In Arizona, we have the straight vote. One action and you vote for all Republicans or one act and you vote for all the Democrats. And we

can't get the straight vote for Republicans unless we fill the ticket." So he said, "Howard Pyle is running for governor and I've been drafted to manage his campaign so, Mr. Rhodes I'm drafting you to run for Attorney General." I said, "Well Mr. Goldwater there's something you should know, I don't want to be Attorney General." He said, "Well Mr. Rhodes there's something you should know, you won't be Attorney General. This place is so Democrat that Republicans don't have a chance to win." Well, that was mainly true. But, Howard Pyle did win. Arizona was not ready for a woman. Ana Frohmiller, who was a great gal and the State Auditor, stayed in the State Auditor for years was nominated by the Democrats for governor. And Howard Pyle finally won by about 3,000 votes so, he served as governor for two years. In 1952, he was running for his second term. I had been an alternate delegate to the Republican Convention in Chicago that year. They nominated Eisenhower. I was very much taken with General Eisenhower. My good young Republican friends decided that I should run for Congress. To make a long story short, I finally said, "Well it didn't hurt me to get beat once before, I guess I can do it again." So we did it, but this time with the coattails of Eisenhower and Pyle, Barry ran for the Senate and we both won. And we served from there on out.

Well, the man I defeated was John Murdock, who had been there for 16 years, and he was chairman of the Interior and Insular Affairs committee. And that is the committee that the Bureau of Reclamation, the Department of Interior, and of course the Bureau of Reclamation being part of it, who are in the jurisdiction of the Interior committee. And so people were saying this is too bad we had the chairman and we would have eventually gotten the Central Arizona Project authorized and I don't know now. That decides what I have to do. I have to get that CAP authorized.

C: I have to prove myself here.

John: That was it, I jumped right into it and so we had to do it. In 1954, Stewart Udall was elected. We only had two congressmen at the time. And when I was

elected, Harold Patton was the congressman. He was from Tucson. And, he was a good guy. We were friends. He was a Democrat, but he - we didn't bother about politics too much, there were only two of us. And he used to - the state was finally divided into districts and Maricopa County became the first district and the rest of the state was the second district. As Porky, his nickname was Pork, he said,

P-O-R-Q-U-E, well when he was in college, they called him Porky because he was kind of big. Well, he said, "Well it's easy to see what they did, they gave me the donut and gave you the hole." It could be.

Both of us introduced bills at that time to authorize the Central Arizona Project knowing full well we were a long way from that because the Interior Committee had had hearings on the CAP twice. And not voted out the bill, and the last time John Sailor, who was a Republican from Pennsylvania, and you would call him an early day environmentalist I guess. He said, "I'm getting tired of hearing about this project." And they were..... (Unintelligible).....how firm Arizona's right to water really was. And they passed a resolution in that committee. They wouldn't consider a bill to authorize the Central Arizona Project until Arizona acquired title to enough water from the Colorado River to make it feasible. Well, Howard Pyle, being governor, he appointed the Arizona Interstate Stream Commission, Hub Moeur M-O-E-U-R by the way, was the attorney. And Ray Killian who was from Mesa and one of my really good friend and supporters was the Secretary. And the Interstate Stream Commission hired lawyers to file suit against the State of California based on the Colorado River Compact to prove that Arizona had the title to enough water to do the Central Arizona Project. It was 2,500,000 a.f. it was what we were supposed to have. And one of the issues, which was later decided by the Supreme Court, whether that 2.5 million included the water from the Gila River or whether that was water from the mainstream of the Colorado.

That's as I say that's one of the things that the Supreme Court finally decided.

Thank God that the Gila's water was not included in the 2.5 million, that 2.5 million that might not be it.

C: 2.8.

John: Was it 2.8, thank you. My memory, I just lost 300,000 a.f. So we...realized thing that we had to prepare for the time when that suit would finally be settled. They said it might be 10 years. Well, it was, more than that. I think it was 16 years. All this time, of course, we were legislating in the Interior Committee and Stewart Udall was elected in 1954. He decided that he wanted to be on the Interior Committee too. Which, at the time, I thought was a waste because when you only have two and you're both on the same committee; you must be leaving a lot of territory up for grabs. But anyway, it turned out to be a good thing to have happened because we worked very well together. One of the things which had come up was the Upper Colorado Storage Project. This was the project which corresponded to the Central Arizona Project except it was for the upper basin states. The linchpin in that was Glen Canyon Dam and a huge project which was needed to store the water and to generate the power both of which would be used to build the Upper Colorado Storage Project. So Stu and I decided, we're going to need a lot of help when we get this lawsuit over, and the best way to get it is to be helpful to somebody else. And so we jumped right in to help the upper states get the Glen Canyon Dam built, and it was touch and go. It was not an easy thing to do. When we actually had it on the floor, Stu got - I think he only had 10 minutes in the debate and I probably had about the same amount, but he was very innovative. And one of the issues was whether or not the soil and rock formation where the dam was to be located could actually sustain a structure of that size. The soil was made up of what they called "Chinle Shale" and people said that the Chinle shale would crumble in water. So what Stu was to get a little core of Chinle shale and when he started to speak, he took a glass of water and he said now this is Chinle shale. This is the same material, in fact, this material comes from the area in which the Glen Canyon Dam will be anchored. As he started to speak, he put it in this glass of water. And he talked

about the project, and the amounts of money that would be needed, and so on and so forth all the while holding this glass of water with the Chinle shale in it. And when he ended up, he said and they are saying that Chinle shale will crumble in water. He said, "My colleagues, that is not true." And he picked the water up and drunk it and everybody went, "It didn't crumble!"

C: It didn't dissolve?

John: And later, I said, "Stu, how did that water taste?" He said, "Man, a little murky." So that's the way it was finally passed and the Glen Canyon Dam is now there. There are a lot of people that wished it weren't still, but it is. So in the meantime, I began to look at my position as to where I could do the best for the project assuming that we won the suit. We felt we would, that was not a foregone conclusion because our case was pretty weak until Mark Wilmer was hired to take it over. And he's the one who decided that the old laws of the river wouldn't suffice as far as Arizona was concerned. Our theory was that there had been filings on the Colorado River for our use, but the problem was nobody had ever put it to use. You just filed. And Mark Wilmer was sure that that wouldn't work for the Supreme Court, and I thought he was right, absolutely. And he was. So he changed the thrust of the Arizona case right in the middle of the stream, but it was necessary to do it to the point of proving that the various actions by the states and by the federal government had molded itself into a contract with Arizona for the...well between the states, to settle the title to the water from the Colorado River. And of course, the Colorado River compact was the linchpin, but in that, after that - was the Boulder Canyon Act. The fact that our Senators, Hayden and Ashurst, had filibustered that act until the State of California had agreed to limit itself to four million, four hundred thousand acre-feet of water. And when they did, after they did, the Boulder Canyon Act was passed. Well, that California Self-Limitation Act was very much part of the Law of the River. And I don't think it would be helpful to go into any of the details of that lawsuit, but it was a long drawn out lawsuit. The court had appointed a master to hear the evidence. As you know, when one state sues another, the Supreme Court

has original jurisdiction. You don't go to a Federal District Court; you go right up to the big boys.

C: Right.

John: The Supreme Court and this case did. So...I don't remember the names now of the master. They were two of them. One of them died while he, he had barely started. But the master who was appointed, was a very famous New York lawyer. He did all of the work of taking the testimony and doing the things that were necessary for the court to decide the case. Well, finally they did decide the case and decided that Arizona had titled to two million eight hundred thousand acre-feet and California had four million four hundred thousand acre-feet and Nevada had three hundred thousand acre-feet and this was all decided by the Supreme Court. (end of Tape One Side A)

(Beginning of Tape One Side B) . . . now, wait maybe it's a - that could be that California was guaranteed something and they were.

C: Do you mean the guarantee that California is um . . . that they have authorization to use water if it's not being used and that CAP has junior priority?

John: Yeah, no it is not.

C: It's not the same as the Self-Limitation Act.

John: What you just mentioned actually probably was part of the law that authorized the Central Arizona Project.

C: Okay, okay.

John: I think it was, yeah. Because we did guarantee, no we didn't. We did. We, part of what was, if there was - if they were shortages on the river that the California guarantee would come in ahead of the Central Arizona Project. And we didn't like agreeing to that, but we...

C: No choice.

John: We needed them. And we needed them because of the plans that Stewart Udall and I had made to get allies in the upper basin proved not to be a viable thing because, by the time they had gotten their Glen Canyon Dam authorized, they had a change of heart. They said good-bye former friends. They were not in favor of the Central Arizona Project at all. And they had a lot of power; the chairman of the Interior Committee was Wayne Aspinall from Colorado. And they kept bringing up the availability of water, although we had title to it, if it ain't there well it's not there.

C: Right.

John: And they were casting doubts on whether or not there was really enough water in the basin to do all the things that the basin was supposed to do. And that was a very hard-fought situation.

C: Did you think that the way that worked out with the California guarantee that was the only way to get California's support?

John: Oh yes, there's no doubt about that. That was the way it had to be. And California's support was absolutely necessary. When we were turned on by our former friends and allies in the upper basin, there we were standing alone with California on one plank and them on the other. And there we were a very small state with two members of the house and two senators. Thank God we had Carl Hayden who was very important indeed. And that's also when Stewart Udall became very important because when he became the Secretary of the Interior

in the Kennedy Administration, he was able to get California to come over to our side. I don't think it would've happened if we hadn't had somebody in that place. The Metropolitan Water District leadership also came to the conclusion that, you know, if that water comes down that stream and we only get four million four hundred thousand, plus whatever we can use if it isn't used, is going to go into Mexico. And after all, the southwest is the southwest and as somebody once said if you spend a dollar in Phoenix, ninety cents of it goes into Los Angeles.

C: That's great.

John: They began to look at the economics of the southwest in a different light and realized that it would be much better for them and for us if we had the Central Arizona Project so that Arizona could develop.

C: Well, after you obtained California's support, did you ever envision the state of Arizona would ever be threatened? That is allocation would be threatened by California, again?

John: Again? No, and it isn't. It really is not. The thing that is happening now, of course, is that Nevada is, needs more water and it does. And the question is where does it come from? Well, California is going say it doesn't come from us.

C: No doubt.

John: And they look at the California guarantee. Well, but the other side of that picture, of course, is that California has never just drawn four million four hundred thousand acre feet. And that they were going to have to make plans which is the main reason why the California water plan that it came into being with the realization that they were eventually going to have to go down to four million four.

C: Ahh.

John: This again is where Stewart Udall came in to play because in order to have the California water plan work the way, the most economical way, you had to have what they called the "Peripheral canal." It would bring some of the water from the Sacramento River around; they called it "peripheral" because it went around the bay and into the San Joaquin actually. And so that was very important to the California water plan and we helped them to get the "Peripheral canal" we're saying we never were able to get because the people in Northern California wouldn't have any part of it. But anyway, the... I guess now I can skip ahead a little bit to what we did after the lawsuit was over.

C: Would you like one of these? They have the seal on the top. (candy)

John: That is a great idea. Whatever we write, I would like to clear it with Stewart Udall as to be sure that...I'm only going to tell you anything I don't think he would agree with, but nevertheless, as you can see I am taking liberty with him.

C: Absolutely, however you like.

John: I was with him last month in Tucson for the services for Mo.

C: Oh, yes.

John: And we talked about it briefly. And we're on good terms. I am sure he will cooperate.

Now, I guess at least with a wink and a promise talked about everything up to the actual Supreme Court decision which was, of course, was almost completely in favor of Arizona and immediately we introduced bills to authorize the project.

And in the interim, before the Supreme Court handed down their decision, we were able to get the Interior Department to continue the study of the Central Arizona Project. In the early days, there were all sorts of different ideas about how you would physically bring the water in. There was one theory that you would build a dam at Marble Canyon and then dig tunnels through practically all of Northern Arizona and bring it into the Verde. And the water under the Verde, and have it flow down the Verde and into this area. Well, you know, on paper it looked pretty good until you looked at the terrain and realized that it was mostly volcanic.

C: Right.

John: And it was not going to be all that easy to figure out where you'd actually build, dig a tunnel if you were going to dig a tunnel. Well, of course, the other rut was the one which we finally did use to go from Lake Havasu and bring the water up many, many feet many hundreds of feet through Buckskin Tunnel and then by a series of canals in to do the job in Central Arizona. And that was what the Supreme Court, not the Supreme Court, the Interior Department was working on during that time. And we finally, well actually the CAP authorization had passed the Senate; twice that I knew of and maybe even three times. I don't remember exactly. When we first started, after Arizona ratified the Colorado River Compact there was a bill introduced into the Senate. I'm not sure the first bill passed but the one finally did pass to authorize the project. The position of Senator Hayden and Senator McFarland who was then the majority leader of the Senate was such that there was just no problem. But in the House, we only had John Murdock and Harold Patton and California had, I think they had four members on the Interior Committee and lots of power which comes from a huge delegation.

So it was obvious that it was going to take a draconian effort to get it through the House. And as I mentioned before, the House committee considered it twice and then the third time said no way we are not going to talk about this anymore until you go to court. So that - with that scenario having the bill having pass the

Senate at least twice and never in the House, never get it out of a committee in the House, that showed how our work was cut out for us. Again, repeating what I had said before, while we were waiting for the Supreme Court, we did what we could to get friends and allies in the upper basin which really didn't help any because they turned against us. And then after that, and what I'm doing is trying to put the sequence together here.

John: After that, the Supreme Court finally made its decision and then we introduced a bill another introduction of the bill in the Senate in 1962 I believe. I'm not sure it was '62 or '63. But anyway, the bill was introduced in the Senate and in the House and there were hearings. And the bill passed the Senate as usual and in the House hearings were finally held. The chairman of the committee was Wayne Aspinall of Colorado and the upper basin introduced testimony from hydrologists and people who were supposedly knowledgeable in this area to show to bad Arizona you won the Supreme Court but there ain't no water for you fellow. So we had to of course to introduce other testimony which would indicate that there was actually water there that we could use to justify a project of this magnitude. And we had hearings and you know, one reason I'm sorry I didn't get around to this was to get the dates firmer in my mind. But we had hearings in one Congress and did not vote the bill out and then we had hearings in another Congress. Now, this is the way I'm remembering it and I want you to check that to be sure. We finally had the necessary background to bring the bill out but, and this was in 1968, when Wayne Aspinall, I think he realized he didn't have the votes to keep the project from being reported out decided he would just leave town. We had a law that said if the Congress would adjourn in July of the even number of years. And that was a law and you were supposed to do it. Well, it was honored more in the breach than it was in the implementation but nevertheless, Wayne said I'm a law-abiding man and this is the law of the land; I'm adjourning. And he just left and the committee couldn't function at all without him. That's when of course we were really in a bind because Senator Hayden had announced that he would not run in 1968 and his clout was very important, not only in the Senate but in the House also. Well, prior to that time we

had put together Mo Udall had come into the picture and very effectively. He carried the ball in the Interior Committee. And we decided that we better do something heroic to get this to the floor of the House in 1968 because Hayden wasn't going to be there next year. And uh, so Floyd Dominy was the Commissioner of Reclamation, and Floyd was a real Washington operator. And a good friend of Arizona, and one night and we were at a reception and he motioned me over to the side. And he said John, why don't you get the Central Arizona Project authorized on the Appropriations Bill for Public Works. Well, by that time I had transferred from the Interior Committee to the Appropriations Committee and I was the ranking Republican on the Public Works Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee. Carl Hayden was the chairman of that Appropriations Subcommittee in the Senate. He said you got Hayden can get it done in the Senate but you are going to have to do it in the House.

C: I'm sorry, you were what?

John: I was ranking Republican on the ranking minority of course, on the Public Works Subcommittee.

So I said let me talk to the Senator. So I went over to talk to Carl Hayden and Roy Elson was Hayden's Administration Assistant, and a very capable man. And Roy was there and the idea was, you see the Senate rules are different than the House rules. In the House you could do this without a rule, you can do anything with a rule, but if you don't have rule you can't do it. So, in other words, the Public Works Bill, Appropriations Bill, comes up in the House and if I would've tried to offer an amendment to authorize the project there, a point of order would have been made and the amendment would have been stricken, not even considered.

But in the Senate it was different, so Carl Hayden actually got the authorization of the Central Arizona Project made a part of this Public Works Bill which had already passed the House, and he made it a part of it, the authorization of the

Central Arizona Project. Well in the meantime, Wayne Aspinall had adjourned - gone home to Colorado. And we, some of the other machinations that we did, we realized that if this was successful and it would pass the Senate with all, with that amendment aboard, that even so it would have to come to the House. And again, it would be stricken by a point of order in the House unless we can get the speaker to get the Rules Committee to issue a rule taking up that Appropriations Bill waiving points of order. And so, we went to John McCormack who was the Speaker of the House. We talking about Mo and that was interesting because Mo had run against John McCormick for Speaker. He had no chance of winning and knew it but none the less, his buddies got him to do it. So Stu went with us because he was Secretary of the Interior and we asked, we told John McCormick what we would like to do. And he said what would Aspinall say and I said, frankly my Speaker, he will go ballistic. I don't know whether I said that. I'm sure that was a good word back in those days. I said he would just climb up the wall. And he said good. I found out something I didn't know, the speaker didn't like Wayne Aspinall. Wayne had apparently...Wayne was fairly arrogant and so was the speaker and they had clashed several times. So with that, we really had things pretty well shored up and when the bill came out of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee with the CAP on it, unnaturally, Wayne Aspinall heard about it and he starting making phone calls. And he found out that he was completely boxed in and that the CAP was going to get authorized and he wasn't going to get his pound of flesh. And so he came roaring back to Washington called his committee together and uh submitted to the committee a list of projects in his district that he wanted to be authorized as part of the Central Arizona Project authorization. And the people said how can we handle this and I said don't worry about it. Our power is in the Appropriations Committee and if we can get the Central Arizona Project authorized don't worry about anything else, just do it. And so we finally said, "Okay Wayne, if you want those projects we'll go for it."

And then about that time, Clinton Anderson realized that he hadn't gotten anything and he wanted to authorize a dam on the upper Gila River. And how can we do this? Well, same answer, do what you need to do to get the

authorization and that's exactly what we did. And it all worked out so amazingly and a lot of it was due to the fact that there was some opposition that sprung up from some of the conservative members of the House on the basis that this was a project that might not be feasible economically speaking. And there was a possibility that there would be some opposition to the project from the standpoint. And so I called my friend Barry Goldwater, who of course was not in the Senate at that time, and said, "Barry I need you." He said, "What do you want" and I told him. He came back and we had a series of lunches with various members of the House who were influential and knew who might be against us. And Barry he knew the Grand Canyon like he knew the back of his hand and was very influential in getting the kind of support that we needed. And it all worked so well that when we finally got it to the floor of the House; we got it passed without even a roll call vote. It was passed by voice vote. And that's the way it worked.

And the next chapter, of course, has to do with the financing of it. And I told the chairman of the Public Works Subcommittee at that time was naturally a Democrat from Ohio. I was on very good terms with him. He was chairman of the Democratic Congressional Committee so his business was to defeat Republicans if he could but he never tried to defeat me. So I told him that it was going to be necessary for us to put some money in the Appropriations Bill in 1968. (Tape Change)

And he said what did you have in mind, and I said a million dollars. So he said okay. And so when the bill was marked up I had a million dollars appropriated hard cash money to begin the Central Arizona Project. There were people who said now this can't be. You know when you authorize a Reclamation Act, it's usually about 17 years before you get it built. And I said I don't want to stay around that long, we're going to beat that one. So we got a million in the first year and the second year, I was in hopes that it would be, there would money in the budget for it, but there wasn't. And so I put another, I think two million in the second time, and Paul Fannin was the former governor and then he was in the Senate. And uh, I said to Paul would you go to the Office of Management and

Budget with me and talk to Roy Ash who was the Director and try to get him to give us a schedule of appropriations for the CAP to completion. And he said sure. So we went up and talked to Roy Ash who was a good guy and a good friend and it just happened that he had some things that he needed to have done that he wanted that Paul Fannin was very key in.

C: Perfect timing.

John: The whole thing just came together just like somebody, the Good Lord maybe, had planned it that way. So he said, "Well I understand what you mean," and about six weeks later, Roy called me and said, "Could you and Senator Fannin come down and talk to me?" And I said of course, and we did. He handed us this schedule of appropriations for the CAP to completion. And it's been followed. It really has, yeah.

We couldn't say we had really won until that was accomplished but that did it - that was the ice that frosted.

C: The cake?

John: On the cake, yeah right.

C: What year do you think that was?

John: Well, I'm pretty sure it was 1970. I can look it up and I...but somewhere in the archives, we would have that schedule which he gave us. And, of course, the amounts changed depending on the order of completion of the project and also depending on inflation and things like that. But nevertheless, the principle was there. It was done.

C: Wow.

John: That's the way it is.

C: Okay.

John: And the water is flowing and whenever our children crossed the CAP canal they'd say well "There's daddy's ditch!"

C: It's a glorified ditch though. Let me see, I want to go through some of my questions here and see if...you've covered most everything that I have on here. Oh, here's something. At the time that you were pushing so hard to get the bill for CAP passed, during that whole time when Aspinall was really threatening things, if you had been able to choose an ideal outcome for Arizona, would it have been how things worked?

John: Would it have been what?

C: How everything worked out? Would it have been different than how it worked out?

John: Well, I don't see how I could've planned it any better.

C: That's what I'm thinking. It just worked out the way it happened.

John: It just happened. If you needed it, it was there. It was fantastic. And you know one of the things, Wayne Aspinall and I had a very good personal relationship we're both Beta Beta Phi fraternity, both 33rd-degree masons, you know that sort of thing, good friends, but you know he had his job to do and I had mine.

C: During that time, did you think, I mean if you were to compare how important you think CAP is to Arizona during that time, versus how important you think it is today, would you say the gravity of it would be similar or did you envision that it would be as important as it is?

John: Well, yes I think it's probably even more important than we thought it was in a different sort of way. You know, the project really started out as an agriculture project. We were going to put water on the desert and grow crops. And as the project came along, it was obvious that the expense was going to be so great that it would not be economical to do that. And then the growth in the metropolitan areas was so great that the water was going to be needed for M&I anyway. So that part of it changed almost completely. Of course, I have had very little to do with the negotiations with the government on repayment and things like that. There was, I've seen was- I there for two years, I guess I was, where I was the council for the CAWCD and uh, during that time there was various negotiations with the Department of the Interior that I took part in after I left Congress. And I, I was impromptu to run for governor when Evan Mecham was impeached and would have except the Supreme Court decided, and I think wisely so, that you couldn't kill a man twice. He'd already been impeached so you couldn't recall him. And so they aborted the eight (?) recall election which I fondly and confidently believe I would've been elected governor. So anyway, when that came up I resigned as council as the CAWCD because I was a candidate for governor and I felt that it would be a conflict of interest if I didn't.

C: What year was that? I can look it up.

John: It must have been '78, '77 or '78 I forget which.

C: Okay, I can look it up. **(Note: Evan was impeached in 1987)**

John: Fife Symington, well, Rose Mofford was the Secretary of State and in the succession in the Constitution Secretary of State took over and she did.

C: Oh right.

John: So, and I believe that Fife was elected in '80 no not '80 no, no, no certainly not '80. I didn't get out of Congress 'til '82. I've lost about 10 years somewhere. I think that.

C: I can check that.

John: I think that Mecham was impeached in '78, I mean '88. I can't get that 10 years back. I think that's when Rosie became Governor and Fife was elected in '90.

C: '90 because he was re-elected right?

John: I don't think he was. I think he must have been elected in '88 so probably occurred in '86. I'm sorry to be so hazy on those dates.

C: No, don't be. Okay, so what is your opinion of Bruce Babbitt's management of the river?

John: Of who?

C: Of Babbitt's management?

John: Oh you mean now.

C: Yes, today.

John: As Secretary of Interior, I don't understand him.

C: No.

John: I don't get it. He, well, I do in a way because after all he is the Secretary of the Interior for the whole country and there are needs in the Colorado basin particularly in Nevada that he probably feels he wants to address himself too. But, I think that probably the way he has handled the Indian rights bothers me about as much as anything. I have been persuaded that there is a possibility that we could help Nevada out by storing the water. I think that probably is feasible and very likely it will work. And uh, but I've got to tell you that I'm not cognizant enough of all the things that are going on now to really be what I would call an authority.

C: Aside from the construction changes that took place during the Carter administration, is there anything about CAP today that is really different than what you thought it would be?

John: Very different because the original plan of course called for the Orme Dam and when Jimmy Carter decided that we're not going to use the Orme Dam, we had to go to Lake Pleasant. And it's terribly expensive. I think it's going to cost, oh I don't know the figure I have in my mind that it's going to cost 200 million more than it would've to build the Orme Dam. And uh, the problem with Orme was not only Jimmy Carter, it was the Fort McDowell Indians. The...and this is a long story but it's rather an important one.

Stewart Udall and I had foreseen that if you built the Orme Dam that we were going to have to do something to get a better place for them than the Fort McDowell Indians, because a lot of their reservation would be inundated. One of the things we were going to do was to be sure that they got the rights too for boating and fishing and doing the things that you do on a big lake like that for profit. And uh, and decided also that if they had agreed to it that we would move their reservation up away from the river and the lake and be on the side of Fountain Hills. We didn't want the saw company, what the hell is the name of that company from Iowa that got the - with the forestry service, well the Department of Agriculture to exchange land and then give them the area in

which Fountain Hills now occupies. Well, this is amazing because Stewart was Secretary of the Interior and it was my district and we didn't want that land division to go through because we had other ideas for it. We're going to put the McDowell Indians up there.

C: That's what I understand.

John: And uh, Orville Freeman was Secretary of Agriculture and without paying any attention neither to his buddy Stewart Udall, who was Secretary of the Interior or to the sitting Congressman, he just gave it to this company. So that is one of the reasons why Jimmy Carter felt that he had to do away with the Orme Dam because he didn't know what to do with the Fort McDowell Indians. And we didn't either after that was done. So uh, we had no place to go, but to Lake Pleasant because you had to have a reservoir to store the water which would be used in the Phoenix Metropolitan area. And you know when we finally decided that we had to give up on Orme Dam, I made the remark I said, "Alright I'm not going to build a dam at the confluence of the Salt and the Verde. I would like to but my grandchildren will not." And it happens just shortly after that, that we had a series of quite wet years and they were having us fill the dams, the water from the dams of the Salt River Project. And they were all boiling down the Salt River channel and going into Painted Rock. Well, I had quite a bit to do with authorized Painted Rock but we really thought of it as just being part of the Mexican Water Treaty. The water was to go down into Mexico needed to be regulated because of Yuma. There would be floods in the Wellton-Mohawk area and Yuma and things like that so Painted Rock was built by the Army Corps of Engineers. So it was never, we didn't have to get it through the Bureau of Reclamation and we just went the other way and went to the Corp of Engineers and they did it. As I say, there were several wet years and nobody ever thought that Painted Rock Dam would have a lake in back of it. And we finally had lake in back of Painted Rock Dam of a million acre-feet otherwise would have gone into Orme Lake. So it was a very wasteful that was done but it had to be done. And then Gila Bend which was in Maricopa County, it was in my project, my district. And I go down

there rather frequently and uh, and once when I went down, one of my friends said, "John do you have a little time?" I said, "Yeah, we skipped my car." So we went and got into his car and went down to the Painted Rock Dam. And he said, "Look at that pond." The pond was on the downstream side of the river from the dam. I said, "What the hell is that doing there?!" He said, "Well it's come through the underground, the underground flow of the Gila River has come through." And it was the prettiest little lake there. Those people were so ecstatic.

C: I can imagine!

John: Gila Bend has a lake. It was...they actually had boats and they stocked it with fish.

C: Wow.

John: Nobody ever dreamed it would happen.

C: How long did it last? How long was it there?

John: Well, not long, unfortunately. It's probably real fortunate that it didn't work out. But it's one of those little sidebars to this whole thing that was rather interesting.

C: Yeah, so when did you realize that Jay was getting interested in the water and wanted to pursue...

John: Well, when he first ran for...see he was a member of the Board of Directors of the CAWCD. He was elected. That's when I realized he had an interest in it.

C: So he hadn't really talked about it before he actually ran for it.

John: Oh yeah, oh sure, yes. In fact, he was nice enough after when the election results were announced. He called me and said, 'Well dad, you won another election.'

C: How nice.

John: And of course, he went right on through the Interior Committee and his specialty when he was in Congress was water and public lands and things like that. And he did a good job. He was a congressman. It's too bad the way politics turn out but that's the way it was. But he was and is very well equipped by experience and knowledge to do what he is doing now.

C: When you were raising your kids and in the midst of all of this going on with your career, did you talk about it at home?

John: Oh yes, oh absolutely.

C: That's great.

John: We really did. I said we have three sons and one daughter.

C: What are their careers? What do they all do?

John: I'm sorry.

C: What do they all do?

John: Tom was our number two son and he's in stocks and bonds here in Mesa and on the Board of Education. He had to run for that and won. You know a little side bar, oh I guess I'd been in Congress for oh maybe 10 years or something and we were having sort of a family discussion. And I said there is one thing I want to tell you children, if you somebody will probably say to you at some time you ought to

run for this or that. And I said watch out. What you should do is to be as smart as your father was and if you run for something, run for something where you are twenty five hundred miles away from your nearest constituent.

C: That's great.

John: So when Jay called me, he was on the Board of Education in Mesa too. We were at the Republican Convention in Miami Beach and he said in his cryptic way, dad I'm running for the Board of Education. I said are you asking me or telling me. He said I guess I'm telling you. I said alright let me tell you something kid, I don't want anybody named Rhodes losing any elections. No, he said I understand. Well, he didn't lose of course.

C: No.

John: Well, our daughter is the number three and Buffy, Elizabeth. My wife's name is Mary Elizabeth nobody remembers the Mary but that is her name. So Buffy is named Elizabeth and her middle name is Campbell which was her grandmother's maiden name, Elizabeth Campbell Rhodes.

C: Is it with an "s" or a "z", Elizabeth?

John: It's "s" no excuse me it's "z", E-L-I-Z-A-B-E-T-H, yeah right. And she, well all of our kids went to - graduated from private schools in Washington or Maryland. We started them in public school, but for one reason or another, the reason is different for all four of them, we realized they weren't getting the kind of education we thought they needed. So the two boys went to Landon School which was a prep school in Maryland and in suburban Washington actually. And Tom and Elizabeth went to Sidwell Friends. And they all got really good prep school education. But uh Elizabeth then after she graduated from Friends, she and her mother went out looking for colleges and Betty had gone to Baker University in Kansas. I went to Kansas State and she went to Baker. So they drove

out to and looked at a school Stephens College in Columbia and they were on their way to Baker and Betty all of the sudden fainted and passed out on the floor of her uncle's house in Topeka. She had had a stomach ulcer and she had almost bled to death.

C: Oh my goodness.

John: So anyway, I went out right of way of course. And after we got Betty pretty well situated and enough blood put back in her so she wasn't going to die, I took Elizabeth over to Baker to see it and she liked it. So she went to Baker for one year, but this kid was born and raised, well she wasn't born in Washington or was she? No she was born in St. Joseph's Hospital in Phoenix but anyway, she was raised in Washington and she couldn't handle this town of 1100 people and ball room dance. So she left, didn't leave no, she finished the year. And she was initiated into Betty's sorority and all that. But she came home and decided she was going to get a job. So she went to Woodward and Reuther which was the large department store and worked there for better part of two years. And then she decided alright I'm going to go back to college. So she had met students at Whittier College at a summer camp she had went to in Arizona. And so she thought she'd like to go to Whittier, well she did. She you know always had problems with weight and her pediatrician who was a great old boy, used to say to us don't worry about Elizabeth when she meets the man she wants she'll lose weight. And you know what, she did.

C: I bet.

John: And she met Frank her husband at Whittier after they graduated they were married and about oh about four or five years of poor old Frank commuting between La Habra and the San Fernando Valley, they decided to come to Arizona. And they did and Frank is with Allied Signal and Elizabeth was for 10 or 12 years was head of the Woman Services in the Mesa Lutheran Hospital. And she, well the thing that changed her job was dinner given by the Arizona

Chamber of Commerce for my wife and me. They had one a year for people they want to honor usually it's just one person but they had two this time. It was agreed that Elizabeth would tell about her mother. They had a video for me but she did and she did it so well that Jane Hull was there. And Jane says why John Rhodes didn't tell me about that girl. Well, she called Elizabeth the next day and interviewed her and she is now head of a very important division in the Governor's office. And she loves it. And she and the governor have a really good relationship.

Now that comes to number four, Scott. Scott went to Landon Schools and he was mister everything. And he really did a good job. He went to Yale.

Graduated cum laude, fell in love, and married a very lovely girl that we all liked. She developed a brain tumor.

C: Oh my goodness.

John: He was after he graduated he taught in Tucson for a time (less than a year).

Because when this occurred, he went to the Board of Education and said please said let me out of my contract because I want to be with this girl until we cure her or we don't. They didn't. She died and Scott was broken up of course. And Betty and I, I'd left Congress and we decided to go to South Africa. We'd never been there and so we just went as tourist with a group. The Arizona Club put the group together and we asked Scott if he wanted to go. And he did. But, he left us in Johannesburg and went up to Nairobi because he had some friends there, then he went to Paris. (Tape Change Tape 2 Side B)

To make a long story short, about a year later they called us and said could you come over for our wedding so we did. And it was great. She, Adalaine, our daughter-in-law's stepfather was a painter of some note. And he died and Scott and Addy were the only ones capable of doing this. They cataloged all of his

paintings and were able to get the French - the French government put death taxes on estate that you wouldn't believe, but they were able to get that worked out and got them to take some of the paintings that were so huge that nobody else would want them.

C: Wow.

John: And after that, Scott was trying to get a job and although he graduated from Yale cum laude, it didn't - the French were not impressed.

C: It figures.

John: So they were there for about eight years. They had this beautiful apartment. At the top of Montmartre, and you looked right across on the Basilica of the Sacre Coeur and it was great. They still own it. When he said, I decided I want to be a lawyer. He was in his early 30s by then. I said well okay, I'll talk to the dean so I called Dean Morgan and told him about it and he said send him over.

C: Wow.

John: Yeah, and uh, he said his age is no problem. We have quite a few people that are older than that. Well so, we helped them buy a house in Mesa. They had three children by then. They came over and settled in Mesa. Scott went to ASU law school, graduated three years later as uh with honors and he's now an associate with the jet firm of Jennings Strauss. And you know, those three little kids have taken to the United States just wonderfully. And they are doing so well. And of course Adalaine, we just love.

C: So how many years have they been here now? John: I'm sorry.

C: How many years have they been . . . ?

John: Alright, this is 1999 I believe that they came in 1991.

C: Oh, not that many - I mean eight years.

John: No, not too many. But Alynn, the little girl, they have one girl and two boys. And Alynn is 11 and she was born in France of course. They all were. And so James is 7 so they've been here about '92.

C: Wow.

John: And Addy told us after about six weeks, they put Alynn in one of the Montessori schools.

C: Oh right.

John: And uh, they said she, of course, they have spoken in English and French, so there was no real problem as far as language was concerned. And he said, laughing, this morning Scott was, had pulled the car up to get Alynn and take her to school and he said she went out swinging her little books bag, (singing) this land is your land this land is my land.

C: That's priceless.

John: She was a quick convert.

C: That's precious. So how many total grandchildren do you have?

John: Twelve.

C: Twelve okay.

John: Twelve, Alex is Addy's oldest son. She had Alex before she and Scott were married. And she had a previous arrangement. And we just love him. He's just a wonderful young man. He's now, I guess Alex is 15.

C: High school.

John: Yeah he is. And he's a good kid.

C: Well I appreciate this so much. I definitely have the right stuff here.

John: Well you might.

----- End of Interview -----