ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Marshall Jones

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Editorial Convention

A note on editorial conventions. In the text of these interviews, information in parentheses, ( ), is actually on the tape. Information in brackets, [ ], has been added to the tape either by the editor to clarify meaning or at the request of the interviewee in order to correct, enlarge, or clarify the interview as it was originally spoken. Words have sometimes been struck out by editor or interviewee in order to clarify meaning or eliminate repetition. In the case of strikeouts, that material has been printed at 50% density to aid in reading the interviews but assuring that the struckout material is readable.

The transcriber and editor also have removed some extraneous words such as false starts and repetitions without indicating their removal. The meaning of the interview has not been changed by this editing.

While we attempt to conform to most standard academic rules of usage (see The Chicago Manual of Style), we do not conform to those standards in this interview for individual’s titles which then would only be capitalized in the text when they are specifically used as a title connected to a name, e.g., “Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton” as opposed to “Gale Norton, the secretary of the interior;” or “Commissioner John Keys” as opposed to “the commissioner, who was John Keys at the time.” The convention in the Federal government is to capitalize titles always. Likewise, formal titles of acts and offices are capitalized but abbreviated usages are not, e.g., Division of Planning as opposed to “planning;” the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992, as opposed to “the 1992 act.”

The convention with acronyms is that if they are
pronounced as a word then they are treated as if they are a word. If they are spelled out by the speaker then they have a hyphen between each letter. An example is the Agency for International Development’s acronym: said as a word, it appears as AID but spelled out it appears as A-I-D; another example is the acronym for State Historic Preservation Officer: SHPO when said as a word, but S-H-P-O when spelled out.
Introduction

In 1988, the Bureau of Reclamation created a History Program. While headquartered in Denver, the History Program was developed as a bureau-wide program.

One component of Reclamation’s History Program is its oral history activity. The primary objectives of Reclamation’s oral history activities are: preservation of historical data not normally available through Reclamation records (supplementing already available data on the whole range of Reclamation's history); making the preserved data available to researchers inside and outside Reclamation.

Questions, comments, and suggestions may be addressed:

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For more information about the History Program, see: www.usbr.gov/history
Marshall Jones Oral History

Oral History Interview
Marshall Jones

Petershagen: This is George Petershagen conducting an interview of Marshall Jones on behalf of the Bureau of Reclamation. Mr. Jones was the Chico District Manager before he sought other employment during a period of downsizing by the Bureau in the early 1950s. Today’s date is July 26, 1994. We’re in the Jones residence in Sacramento, California, and this is Tape 1, Side A.

Now, Marshall, if we could start at the very beginning of your life, can you give me the date and place of your birth, please?

Early Life

Jones: January 29, 1915, in Long Beach, California.

Petershagen: And because I forgot to do it before I asked you that question, I need to ask you to acknowledge that you understand this interview is being tape recorded, (Jones: Yes.) you consent to that, (Jones: Yes.) and you understand that in accordance with the terms of the Deed of Gift that you signed, this becomes the property of the United States and is open for historians and other researchers that may be interested in the Bureau of Reclamation.

Jones: Okay.
Petershagen: Thank you. Then, were you raised in Long Beach?

Jones: No. I moved up to the Sacramento Valley fairly soon, and then at age seven returned to Los Angeles, Santa Monica, where I went through high school and the first half of U-C-L-A, two years of U-C-L-A.

Petershagen: And which high school did you graduate from?

Jones: Santa Monica High.

Petershagen: Then about when did you call it quits at U-C-L-A? What year was that?

Jones: Oh, God, this is a problem I have with this damned thing.

Petershagen: About 1935?

Jones: I graduated from high school in ’33 and went two-and-a-half years to U-C-L-A, and then moved up to Berkeley, and went three years, and I graduated in ’39 from Berkeley.

Petershagen: ’39 from the University of California in Berkeley? And your degree is in what?

Jones: Civil engineering.

Petershagen: With any sort of a specialty?

Jones: Structural was my major. I then promptly became an irrigation engineer! (laughter)
Well, my last year I switched and picked up as much irrigation as I could, but the records show I’m a structural engineer.

Petershagen: Well, let me ask you here, something that . . . In the late 1930s there was a lot of interest in California, at least on the part of some people, to develop the Central Valley Project [CVP]. (Jones: Yes.) Was there a lot of emphasis at Berkeley to try to get civil engineering majors involved in irrigation?

Jones: Yes, because there was an old professor, [Bernard. A.] Etcheverry, was head of the irrigation section of civil engineering, and he was a consultant for many years with the Bureau on C-V-P. And so, with him there, I switched to irrigation from structural and off we went.

Petershagen: Then did you go to work for the Bureau of Reclamation straight out of Berkeley?

Finding Work during the Great Depression

1 The Central Valley Project, one of the Nation’s major water conservation developments, extends from the Cascade Range in the north to the semi-arid but fertile plains along the Kern River in the south. Initial features of the project were built primarily to protect the Central Valley from crippling water shortages and menacing floods, but the CVP also improves Sacramento River navigation, supplies domestic and industrial water, generates electric power, conserves fish and wildlife, creates opportunities for recreation and enhances water quality. For more information, see Eric A. Stene, “Central Valley Project Overview,” Denver: Bureau of Reclamation History Program, www.usbr.gov/projects/pdf.php?id=253.

Marshall Jones Oral History
Jones: The Depression was on. Out of a class of ninety, on commencement day nine of us had jobs. (Petershagen: So, ten percent.) And six of those guys were with the Bureau of Public Roads. So, with my general background, I spent six months with the Bureau of Public Roads up in Mount Lassen National Park—delightful place. (both chuckle)

Petershagen: Probably more fun in the summertime, I guess, than when it’s snowed-in in the wintertime.

Jones: From June 'til December. How can you beat that?

Petershagen: You got to see a little bit of almost every season, huh?

Jones: Yeah, delightful.

Petershagen: And what did you work on up there?

Jones: They had a road job in Mount Lassen National Park. I had a surveyor's rating and worked on a survey party—nonprofessional, fresh out of college, Berkeley. (laughs)

Petershagen: When you say “nonprofessional,” you mean at the technician level.

Jones: Yeah, it was just below the professional . . . I don’t remember the terms of those days, but it was a nonprofessional rating, and I
worked on a survey party—chainman and stake-driver and all that sort of thing.

Petershagen: And so, then after your six months was up with the Bureau of Public Roads?

**Going to Work for the Bureau of Reclamation**

Jones: They offered me another job down on the Tule River, east of Porterville. And while I was sweating that one out, I got a call from the Bureau of Reclamation, and came down to Sacramento and had an interview with Leo Mastrofini, yeah. And they hired me as a P-1 Professional Engineer.

Petershagen: So, a beginning level engineer.

Jones: Yeah. That was December of ’39.

Petershagen: Then did World War II interrupt your career?

Jones: Not very much because I got married a year or so after my job with the Bureau, and we had our first child. In ’41, We had a son born, and that took care of me through the war. Although I checked with my draft board at one time, and I was within a couple of months—right at the very end of the war. If it had gone on a little bit longer, I would have been in. But they were deferring men with children up to that point. So, I don’t think they ever took them.
Petershagen: Somebody needed to keep working at the Bureau, too, during the war. (chuckles)

Jones: Well, they were getting deferments . . . Oh, wait a minute. Yeah, I think there was a deferment for me involved. The Central Valley Project had a very high priority. Shasta Dam\(^2\) and Friant [Dam]\(^3\) were under construction, and food was a big item, and blah, blah, blah. Yeah, that’s right. I had a deferment. If I had not been working for the Bureau, I would have been in, I think.

Petershagen: So, you were working for the Bureau here in Sacramento when you started out. Where were you physically located?

Jones: Started out in the old Post Office building at Seventh and K. And then some six months

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\(^2\) Shasta Dam and Shasta Reservoir are key facilities in the Central Valley Project. Shasta Dam is located about nine miles northwest of Redding, California, on the Sacramento River. Built during the seven-year period between 1938 and 1945, the dam is a 602-foot-high concrete gravity dam, which provides flood control, power, and water supply benefits. For more information, see Eric A. Stene, “Shasta Division Central Valley Project,” Denver: Bureau of Reclamation History Program, 1996, www.usbr.gov/projects/pdf.php?id=107.

\(^3\) Friant Dam is a concrete gravity dam 319 feet high with a crest length of 3,488 feet on the upper San Joaquin River in the Sierra foothills of Fresno County, California near the town of Friant. The dam, completed in 1942, forms Millerton Lake and was built by the Bureau of Reclamation, which owns and operates the dam. The lake and dam are about 15 miles (24 km) north of downtown Fresno. The lake storage capacity is 520,500 acre feet for irrigation of the San Joaquin Valley, which is distributed by the Madera- and Friant-Kern-Canals. For more information, see Robert Autobee, “Friant Division Central Valley Project,” Denver: Bureau of Reclamation History Program, 1994, www.usbr.gov/projects/pdf.php?id=103.
or a year [later], we moved over to the California Fruit Building at Fourth and J, and that's where I was until I transferred to Chico in . . . Let's see, after seven years—'47.

Petershagen: In '46 or '47?

Jones: In there, yeah. I was in Chico seven years, I think.

Petershagen: Okay. Now, not everybody that worked for the Bureau of Reclamation was there in that same office building in Sacramento, were they?

Jones: No, they retained the old Post Office building at Seventh and K, and that’s where a lot of the guys worked, and the rest of us worked in the Fruit Building. And then sometime later, I think some ten years, a bunch of us transferred out to the Signal Depot, a military installation way out in the south.

Petershagen: That’s what we call the Sacramento Army Depot now, right?

Jones: I think that’s right, yeah. It was called the Signal Depot then.

Petershagen: What did that do to working relationships, to have you spread around in different places like that? Was it hard to get to know people, or did you feel like you knew everybody?
Jones: Well, the planning people always kept—they were a separate breed. (chuckles) We always thought we were separate. Yeah, it caused quite a bit of travel back and forth—well, some travel back and forth. And that’s the way it worked.

Petershagen: What about telephone lines at the time? Was there as much telephone between offices as we see today?

Jones: Yeah, that was quite accessible. I mean, that was no problem—communications.

Petershagen: So, if you had to talk to somebody in another building, you’d do it by phone.

Jones: There was another office. The Corps of Engineers had an office down at Seventh and Capitol—and, oh God, Seventh and K or L, somewhere like that, down in there—the Corps had an office. Most of our business outside the office was with the Corps because, see, the four projects down in the San Joaquin Valley that were authorized a little later—the Kings, Kaweah, Tule, Kern—the Corps got authorization for dams on those four pretty soon after C-V-P was authorized. And so, then when the Bureau moved in on those four streams, why, they had a lot of the first data that had been gathered by the government, and so, well, we ran back and forth to the Corps as much as anything else.
Petershagen: I see. Now, you said earlier you were part of a planning group. (Jones: Yes.) Do you remember what its real title was, the official title?

**Project Planning Division**

Jones: Project Planning, I think was the name of it. It might have been C-V-P Project . . . I think internally it was known as Project Planning. Yeah, that was it.

Petershagen: You said that you had kind of a special feeling about being a part of this planning group. Was it a feeling of being somebody special, or a feeling that maybe you weren’t part of the rest of the organization? Can you describe that?

Jones: Oh, I don’t know. We just were a separate group. Well, planning is a field itself, contrasted with D&C, design and construction. (Petershagen: Right.) Particularly construction. So, yeah, we were pretty much of a separate group. I don’t know how snobbish we were about it, but probably a little. (both chuckle)

Petershagen: Then you said that after a few years here in Sacramento, you were transferred to Chico.

Jones: Yeah. I was in Chico six years, and I left the Bureau in ’53, so I went up there six years prior to that.

Petershagen: So, about 1947. (Jones: Yeah.) And did
you go there initially having been selected to be the district manager?

Transfer to Chico District Office

Jones: No, there was a fellow named Jim Carr—you’ve probably heard this name (Petershagen: Certainly.)—son of a Judge [Francis M.] Carr from Redding. (laughter) And after that office had been established about six months, something like that, why, good old Jim Carr reached into the Sacramento Office and picked me out to go up to Chico and be the District Planning Engineer. God bless him. And about two years later Clair Engle picked Jim up and took him to Washington. Jim was an ultra, ultra politician. He was a real poli . . . His father—I can't remember his name—Judge Carr, was very active in politics in northern California, so he got connected with Clair Engle about 1950. 4 Somewhere right about then Jim took off for Washington and was on Clair Engle's staff, and I was appointed to take his place as District Manager for the Sacramento Valley District.

Petershagen: Before we get into your job as district manager, you said you had been selected to be the District Planning Engineer. Now was that a one-man Planning Engineer, (Jones: No.) or did you have staff that worked for you?

4 Clair Engle represented the state of California in the U.S. Senate from 1959 to 1964.
Jones: In the district office there was a Design and Construction Section, and there was a Planning Section and an O&M [Operations and Maintenance] Section. There was three guys, each head of one of those. And I was the Planning Section, or headed it up.

Petershagen: And then what sort of projects did you work on as the District Planning Engineer?

Jones: Well, there was quite a bit of C-V-P stuff still going, the original C-V-P project features of Shasta and Friant [dams]. That’s what the original project consisted of. And while I was up there, we took on studies of Trinity [Dam]. I was pretty deeply involved in the Trinity operations with Clair Engle.

Petershagen: You’ve mentioned all the names (chuckles) that sound like they might be pushers of the Trinity Division.

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5 Trinity Dam regulates flows and stores water for various uses. Completed in 1962, Trinity Dam is an earthfill structure that is 538 feet high with a crest length of 2,450 feet. The dam forms Trinity Lake, which has a storage capacity of 2,448,000 acre feet.

Jones: That’s right. And that was my role. I drove from Chico to Trinity to . . . What’s the name of that town?

Petershagen: Probably Weaverville.

Jones: Weaverville! A thousand times (laughter) or close to it. And then, oh, in the process of that, getting it started, we got very strong opposition from the people over in Eureka on the Lower Trinity [River]. They were apprehensive that we were going to take all the water out of the Trinity River and take it south, which is a no-no, very bad. So initially, boy, all hell broke loose. But Engle was on our side. (laughter) That makes a hell of a difference. But I spent a great deal of time on the Trinity River fighting the politics over there.

Petershagen: Now this was as the district manager?

James Carr

Jones: Yeah. Yeah, this was after Jim Carr left for Washington.

Petershagen: I see. People like him supported this “good idea” and then left it with you, huh? Is that the way it worked? (laughter)

Jones: Yeah. Well, Engle hauled Jim off to Washington, which was a real good thing to have a guy like Carr in Engle’s office in Washington—that was a hell of a team,
because Carr is very astute politically—very. He went right along with Clair.

Petershagen: They must have been a great team, because what they did, they got their way. There’s no arguing with results, I guess.

Jones: We got Trinity authorized, and then Clair was over there one time, and he said—we were talking about some of those little streams below Shasta—and Clair called them “suckling pigs” that he was going to add to the Trinity. So, Cow Creek and some of that downstream stuff.

Petershagen: Clear Creek and Spring Creek and Whiskey Creek and so forth.

Jones: Yeah. He added those to the big old Trinity. Let’s see . . . Doggone I have trouble with names. What’s the big creek on the west side of the Sacramento Valley down around . . . about halfway down. (tape turned off and on)

Petershagen: So, Marshall, we had to stop there for a minute while we went over creek names, but you mentioned that you had done some studies on Stoney Creek, so that would have been for some of the add-ons after East Park Reservoir was built.7

7 East Park Dam, which forms East Park Reservoir, is part of the Orland Project. East Park Dam is on Little Stony Creek in Glen County about 33 miles southwest of the town of Orland. Completed in 1910, the dam stores irrigation waters diverted and impounded from Little Stony Creek, Squaw Creek, and Little Indian Creek. For more
Jones: Yeah, it was what Clair Engle called a “suckling pig,” of the Central Valley Project. (laughter) He had suckling pigs everywhere (laughter) in his district.

Petershagen: Okay. Now, can you explain why we had these district offices at that time? I guess what I’m asking is what did you do from Chico that couldn't be done from Sacramento, kind of the way it is today?

District Manager

Jones: Well, I would say that there is considerable advantage, as an example, of having a fairly competent staff in Chico to deal with all the local problems and the local people. I mean, a big project like Central Valley Project generates a lot of conflicts. It causes a lot of disruptions locally. I mean, things have to be worked out with the local people, and that was the real role that I had as district manager, was to keep the people of that district happy, as much as you could. That was about it. And of course, some things, like surveys and stream measuring and all that sort of thing, you got to do it out there. And we had people in Chico, and travel was not very much, and I think it was an excellent move to create that formal organization. Eisenhower didn’t think it was quite as good, but . . .

Petershagen: How many districts did we . . .

Jones: Well, now just a minute, this is an aside.
(Petershagen: Okay, go ahead.) In all the days that I worked for the Bureau, the California Farm Bureau hated our guts and did everything they could to stop the Central Valley Project—they fought it all the way. So, my role as district manager was as much public relations for the Central Valley Project. In fact, that was what it was all about—was to get to know some local people and make the thing go with the opposition that we had. There was a professor at the University of California that I took an irrigation course from. He thought the Bureau of Reclamation was a disaster.

Petershagen: Do you remember his name?


Petershagen: Oh! Okay.

Jones: His name ought to come up a few times.

California Farm Bureau

Petershagen: Great. Well, let's follow that for a few minutes more then, if we can. Why was the Farm Bureau so set against the Central Valley Project?

Jones: The 160-acre limitation—that was it.
Petershagen: And so, can I deduce from this then that most of the members of the Farm Bureau owned more than 160 acres?

Jones: Yes, it was very objectionable to the Farm Bureau.

Petershagen: And so, if the limit had been, oh, I don’t know, say 640 acres or 960 acres . . .

Jones: Same problem.

Petershagen: Oh, still the same problem?

Jones: The big boys would have objected.

Petershagen: So, I’d have to get into several sections before I could get rid of all the objections.

Jones: That’s right. Sure, because a lot of that . . . In those days, before the project was operational, why, there were very large land holdings, particularly in the San Joaquin Valley, and some along the Sacramento River in the valley, and those guys, they could see it coming, that they were going to get caught with the acreage limitation.

Petershagen: What did the acreage limitation do to them?

Jones: They had to sell land off to get down to 160 acres. Well, see, there's something . . . I’m a little fuzzy. I can’t remember the details of it, but there was some way they got around it by contracting with individual landowners, and I don’t remember the
details of that. But as you may guess, there was some means found to get around the acreage limitations in a lot of cases. I don’t remember the details of that.  

Petershagen: Alright. Well, let’s see, other things that I know the Chico District Office did—you were doing canal studies, I think, too, along the eastern side of the valley, were you not?

Chico District Office Projects

Jones: Along the west side. The Tehama-Colusa Canal—that was a big project for us. In fact, that was the main thing we were doing.

Petershagen: I see. And was that looked at as being bigger when it first came up, than what it is now?

Jones: No, I think that’s the way we planned it and thought of it in those days. There’s the big Tehama-Colusa Canal on the west side, and then as Clair said, “We got to find a suckling pig for those guys on the east side of the valley.” (Petershagen laughs) So we dreamed up a couple of canals in Butte County that became a part of the project. They may have been authorized separately from C-V-P. I don’t remember this. Anyway, they got built as part of the whole process.

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8 Mr. Jones is referring to what became known as “technical compliance.” Implemented in the late 1940s, the policy lessened the requirements of the 160-acre land restriction by allowing a husband and wife each to claim 160 acres.
Petershagen: But some later additions—Red Bluff Diversion Dam, and the Corning Canal—those were after your time with the Bureau, weren’t they?\(^9\)

Jones: No, we studied those and developed the plans for those, yeah.

Petershagen: Okay, then you were the Chico District Manager up until ’53. (Jones: That’s right.) And in ’53 they closed the office?

Jones: I left, as I recall, about the middle of ’53, and then it may have lasted another six months or a little longer. It may have lasted a year—I don’t remember just exactly how long.

Petershagen: But by the time that you had gone elsewhere, the handwriting was clearly on the wall, I think, (Jones: Oh yeah.) that the district office was being closed.

Closing the Chico Office

Jones: And the key people had all gone. The guy that was doing the Planning Engineer planning, he left the same time I did. And Joe Carnelia, the O&M man, as I recall, he stayed and closed the office.

Petershagen: And were all the district offices closed at about the same time?

Jones: Yeah, those all collapsed like that.

Petershagen: So, everything just collapsed back in on Sacramento.

Jones: Yeah. Well, in a lot of cases, they maintained what they called field offices. But see, the district offices, they were fully staffed for all functions that the Bureau engages in. We did our own personnel and everything. They pulled all that, particularly administrative work, back to Sacramento.

Petershagen: So, you were pretty much on your own there in Chico. It wasn’t like you were a Sacramento puppet with somebody pulling your strings.

Jones: That was a delightful job, particularly with the personality of the regional director. He wanted you to go ahead and do the damned job and don’t be messing around. That was a delight.
Petershagen:  Good. Right now, I have to interrupt you because the half-hour limit has reached us, and it’s time to fix the tape.

END SIDE A, TAPE 1.
BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 1.

Petershagen:  Now, Marshall, you were talking about your personal feelings, I guess, with regard to your job at Chico and how much you enjoyed it, and you had mentioned that a lot of that enjoyment derived from the personality of the regional director. And who was that at the time? [Tape stopped for Jones to refer to his notes.]

Regional Director Richard Boke

Jones:  Richard Boke\(^{10}\) was the regional director all the time I was in the Chico District Office and particularly when I was district manager.

Petershagen:  And how did he find Marshall Jones to be that Chico District Manager?

Jones:  Well, in the Sacramento Planning Office, I had kind of gravitated to, well, not exactly the management end of it, but I dealt with all the personnel and all the problems of the office, and the head of the office, Stanley Kerr, he turned all the details of the office over to me. He didn’t like to go to

\(^{10}\) Richard L. Boke served Regional Director of Reclamation’s Mid-Pacific Region from 1947 to 1953.
Washington. And so, one year for appropriation hearings, he sent me off to Washington to represent him in all that stuff. Well, right at the end of the war, Mike Strauss, the Commissioner,\(^{11}\) called a massive meeting to talk about and decide what the hell the Bureau’s going to do from here on. My boss, Stan Kerr, said, “Marshall, you go and do it.” Tremendous break for me, because then I got to know the head of the Bureau and Washington and blah-blah-blah.

Petershagen: So, you had a tremendous opportunity there on a number of occasions (Jones: Oh, yeah!) to show whatever you could do. (Jones: That’s right.) An opportunity to demonstrate that, that if you worked for almost anybody else, you wouldn’t have gotten.

Jones: Yeah. Yeah, that was a real opportunity.

Petershagen: That’s tremendous, and obviously, you responded. (Jones: Well, I got by with it! [laughs]) They were certainly convinced they found the right man for the job.

Jones: Well, Carr and I, we understood each other quite well. So, when he reached into the Regional Office and pulled me out to go to the district with him, why, we got along

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\(^{11}\) Michael W. Straus served as Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation from 1945 to 1953.
great. We thought a lot alike, and it was wonderful, as far as I was concerned.

Petershagen: Alright. If I asked you at this point if there was anyone that you considered a mentor to your career at the Bureau, who would that be?

Jones: It would have to be Jim Carr. Well, the Regional Planning Engineer, Kerr, I was doing quite well with him. He set me up to be kind of the administrator of the office, which isn’t a hell of a lot of engineering, but that was alright. I had the rating and that was a real big break for me because in that process I got well acquainted with Carr, and then when he set up the District Office and selected his staff, why, there I was. So, the combination of Stanley Kerr and Carr that did me good.

Petershagen: I see. Then at some point in time in Chico you found out that probably the office was getting closed, and, due to the RIFs [reductions in force] that were going on, you were probably going to be out on the street looking for work again.

Jones: Yeah, I knew that. Well, we certainly knew the office was going to be closed and everything taken to Sacramento, which was going to mean a reduction in force, I’m sure, plus the move and all that.
Petershagen: So, I’ll bet the office rumors kind of started about “Will I be next?” and all that sort of thing?

Jones: Oh, yeah.

Petershagen: And what was your reaction to all of that?

Jones: Well, I decided fairly early that I was not going to go back to Sacramento.

Petershagen: Why was that? You didn’t want to come to Sacramento because you liked Chico as a place to live better?

Jones: That was a big factor, yeah. Yeah, my wife was very happy in Chico. We liked it there and decided, “Well, I ought to be able to find something up here.” Then that little job with the Bureau of Public Roads came along that prolonged things a little.

Petershagen: Okay, before we get into that anymore, if you had wanted to come back to Sacramento to work for the Bureau of Reclamation, was that opportunity available? Or were you just out the door, “You’re one of the numbers we’ve got to get rid of?”

Jones: No, I understood that I could have gone down to the Fresno District Office, at a reduction in rate, at a one lower grade rating.

Petershagen: And that didn’t sound too appealing to you, I take it.
Jones: No. My family was real happy in Chico, and we couldn’t see our way—I mean, moving down to Fresno, that didn’t make sense. So, let’s see . . . (tape turned off and on)

Petershagen: Well, we had a little interruption for that phone call in the background, Marshall. You were talking earlier about what things were like there in the office and maybe what sort of options were available to you. You said that this pretty much coincided with Eisenhower’s election in 1952.

Eisenhower’s Election

Jones: Yeah, I remember on election night when Ike became obviously the next president, I remember saying to my wife, “Well, I think that’s the end of it here.” And it was—took six months for it to happen.

Petershagen: So, it was a period of retrenchment by the Eisenhower Administration (Jones: Yeah.) that really eventually rippled out here to California.

Jones: Oh, not only rippled to California, it erupted in California, because you see, in the Bureau of Reclamation the California Region II was the prime target. Not only that, it probably caused it.

Petershagen: Why do you say, “caused it”? 

Bureau of Reclamation History Program
Jones: Because the Republicans were—the big farming interests in the valley were so unhappy with the acreage limitation, you know, that 160 acre limitation—they were so unhappy with that, that we knew that the minute the new administration was elected, why, that was the end.

Petershagen: So, the big farmers “fought the Bureau,” so to speak, here in California directly, (Jones: All the way) and with Eisenhower’s election they took their battles to Washington, also.

Jones: They won the battle.

Petershagen: I see. So, you found out that the office was being closed and you were going to have to find a job or else go to Fresno in a lower-rated position. (Jones: Yeah.) So, what was it like at that point in your career to have to look for a job?

City Engineer of Oroville

Jones: (Chuckles) Well, this experience with the Bureau of Reclamation, I started as a junior engineer and ended up as a GS-14. I don’t remember being particularly concerned about it. But mostly, why, fairly early in the process, why, the Mayor of Oroville came to me and asked me to be the City Engineer of Oroville

Petershagen: Well now that’s a pretty big job, but somehow (Jones: It’s nothing like . . .) it
doesn’t sound as exciting as what you came from.

Jones: Well, it cost me a little money, and, yeah, it’s a quite different job. And I was there, I think, ten or eleven months, something like that, and the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors of Butte County came to me (chuckles) and talked to me about being Director of Public Works for Butte County. They were going along with the old road commissioners form of government, you know, with a building department and all that. There was a supervisor who’d come out of Southern California, (chuckles) saw new organizational problems much better, and he talked the board into forming a Public Works Department, pulling together all public works—roads, buildings, subdivisions—everything. And they hired me as their first director.

Petershagen: I see. So, you’ve established by that point in time, some sort of permanence in Oroville. Did you move your family to Oroville then?

Jones: Yes. When I became City Engineer, I moved to Oroville and Oroville is the County Seat of Butte County, so there I was. That was fine, a good job. My pay went up quite a bit above what the Bureau (laughs) had been paying me.

Butte County Director of Public Works
Petershagen: So, by the time you became the County Director of Public Works, as far as financial considerations, you had promoted yourself a little bit.

Jones: Yeah. Of course, work-wise, career-wise, so-called, why, that was a real change. The big job there was roads and buildings and that sort of thing.

Petershagen: I’m sure.

Jones: But the Director of Public Works for a county like that, he’s just pure administrator. You don’t have to know the nuts and bolts of engineering. Your job is to keep that five-man Board of Supervisors happy.

Petershagen: They pretty much made all the big decisions for you, didn’t they?

Jones: Yeah.

Petershagen: You didn’t have the political concerns that you did as the district manager for the Bureau.

Jones: That’s right. But, Public Works Director, you sure are handling a lot of people. I mean, you’re getting along with an awful lot of people.

Petershagen: Keeps you hopping, doesn’t it?
Jones: Yeah, it’s a real job. Things happened. There was a major flood. About four days I wasn’t in my office! (laughter)

Petershagen: So how long were you the County Director of Public Works?

Jones: For about four years.

Petershagen: And why as only, or why as long as four years? What happened next?

Jones: I had a feeling that I should get back into water resources if I could. Public works that's mostly roads and buildings. That was not my background, so through a friend of a friend and so forth, I got a connection with TAMS—Tibbetts, Abbott, McCarthy, Stratton—a big international engineering firm. Through another guy from the Bureau that they had hired somewhere along the line, why, they got my name for a job in Turkey that they were about to start. They had a big planning study in southern Turkey. They hired me, and off I went to Turkey for two-and-half-years.

**Going to Work in Turkey**

Petershagen: That has to be a shock to your system, from Oroville, I would think.

Jones: Damn right! (laughter) It’s different—Turkey from little Oroville.
Petershagen: Did you take your family along, or did they stay here?

Jones: No, they all went.

Petershagen: And where did you live in Turkey?


Petershagen: And two-and-a-half years, you said.

Jones: Yeah. We were planning and designing a dam on the Seyhan River—S-E-Y-H-A-N.

Petershagen: Now, was there some sort of a company kind of a compound that you lived in there?

Jones: No, we came in and rented an apartment.

Petershagen: And lived on the local economy, as they say.

Jones: Yes. We did not have privileges, if you know what that means.

Petershagen: Yes, I understand completely.

Jones: We lived on the Turkish economy, except (chuckles) particularly after my wife got there a few months later, why . . . (laughs) There was a very large American air base at Adana, Adana Air Base. In fact, that’s where the attack on Russia started. You remember they sent a bunch of planes over and bombed some . . . Well, anyway, there’s a big American air base there. My wife promptly got a job there as a secretary, and
then, let’s see, I went in about January, and then my wife came over with two of our children in June and got a job. And then my oldest son, he graduated from high school, and he came over and got a job with the maintenance company at the air base. So, we were going like crazy there! (laughs) My wife was anyway!

Petershagen: But some of your children went to Turkish schools?

Jones: That’s right. My daughter went to a Turkish school, and then the son that’s a little older, you know, just one year. They did not have the ninth grade there or something, so we shipped him off to Germany for a year to go to school.

Petershagen: I see. How about language difficulties? How good is your Farsi?

Jones: I learned a little eventually, but all the Turk engineers we worked with, no problem. In fact, the Turks were trying to learn English. They were real gung-ho. Well, it meant a great deal to them. They could get a job with an American company if they knew English. No, language was never any problem.

Petershagen: Did you have any real problems adjusting to that kind of a life?

Jones: No, we lived right at the top of the economy, and we had a good living allowance from
TAMS. No, we were in fat city. In fact, let’s see, how long was it? For most of the time I was there, I banked my salary every month. We had a big living allowance, and my wife worked and my son working . . . (laughs)

Petershagen: I don’t hear any complaint in your voice anyplace. You sound like you enjoyed it.

Jones: Oh, it was a delight—damned interesting country. That’s where the Crusaders wandered through, you know, and raised hell and blah, blah, blah. History! Everyplace you looked was history. It was a delight. Last Christmas, after God knows how many years, I got a letter from a young Turk—then a young Turk—who wants to start corresponding. Well, he worked for us. He was the office guy, the guy that knew how to get things done locally and all that—sharp little guy.

Petershagen: Alright. Then what was next in your career?

Jones: Well, I came home and just opened up a consulting office.

Began a Consulting Office

Petershagen: So, when the Turkish project was over, that ended your relationship with TAMS?

Jones: Yeah. Let’s see . . . No, wait a minute. Yeah, that was it. I came home and hung
out my shingle and beat my way up and down the valley with all those irrigation districts that were in the midst of contract negotiations with the Bureau of Reclamation for water. And I picked off four or five of those districts as a consultant to help them fight the Bureau of Reclamation on their water contracts.

Petershagen: So, you represented users’ groups, irrigation districts, with the Bureau. So that put you, I guess, on the other side of the table from your former friends.

Jones: That’s right. But I knew all those guys, and we got along great. God, they had a little faith in me, and I knew them. That was a delightful working relationship. God, I was real proud of that, really, because those guys . . . I knew what they could do and what they couldn’t do with a water contract and all that sort of thing. It was a very happy relationship. I enjoyed that.

Petershagen: And then that was your principal occupation for the balance of your working life.

Jones: Yeah. Yeah, we came back to Sacramento for six months and then moved down to Fresno because I thought Fresno was a better place to operate from with that kind of business. The big districts were down there, you know, a lot of them.

Petershagen: So that was strictly a business decision. Kids were out of school then?
Jones: No, two of our children went through school down there. Two of them graduated from Fresno High, and the older guy, he went to Fresno State and graduated, blah, blah, blah. That was pretty nice. And then when our youngest child got out through that . . . Well, by that time I had decided that Sacramento was a better place to be doing what I was doing, because everything that I had to do for these people I dealt with the Bureau of Reclamation, and here they were in Sacramento.

Petershagen: About what years did you live in Fresno?

Jones: Let’s see . . . (checks notes) I got ’62 to ’67. Yeah.

Petershagen: Okay, so you came back to Sacramento then in ’67.

Jones: Yeah.

Petershagen: And then how long were you in the business after that, until you finally said, “I'm retired.”

Jones: A little while after we came back to Sacramento—it wasn’t ’67, it was a little earlier that we came back—spent a little time in Sacramento and then took off for Thailand. I’ve got it down Thailand ’67 to ’72 about four-and-a-half, five years in Thailand.
Work in Thailand

Petershagen: And who were you working for then?

Jones: Engineering Consultants Incorporated, E-C-I. Their headquarters were in Denver, and all the key guys were former Bureau of Reclamation.

Petershagen: I was going to ask that next! (laughter)

Jones: Of course!

Petershagen: Now, in your arrangement with E-C-I were you an employee, or were you a subcontractor to them?

Jones: No, I was an employee.

Petershagen: What did you do in Thailand?

Jones: Well, we had several studies underway, two or three large dams and canals and irrigation projects.

Petershagen: And who was E-C-I working for, the government of Thailand?

Jones: The government of Thailand, yeah.

Petershagen: Now there were some other things going on in that same part of the world at the time you were over there.

Jones: Yeah, the war, the Vietnam thing, was on. Yeah, I remember that, because my son got
drafted and did his six months, was it, or a year? (Petershagen: Probably a year.) He did that while we were over there.

Petershagen: So, you weren’t around any activity associated with that, I take it, then?

Jones: No. There was nothing in Thailand of any . . . There used to be troubled areas, particularly up in the northern part of Thailand. We had to be real careful about that. But that wasn’t even related to the Vietnam thing. That was just local people unhappy with their government. (chuckles)

Petershagen: When has that ever happened before, huh? (chuckles)

Jones: Only these guys took rather strong measures! (laughter)

Petershagen: Where did you live in Thailand?

Jones: In Bangkok.

Petershagen: In Bangkok itself?

Jones: Yeah. One time we made a trip way up in northern Thailand to look at a dam project or something with some Thais. I was back telling some American that I knew there about it, he said, “My God, Jones, you didn’t go up there did you?!” (laughter) Oh, he said, “Oh my God, you didn’t go with the Thai government fellas, did you?” “Well, yeah.” And he said, “God, that’s dangerous
country. The locals are so damned mad at their own government guys (laughs) you’re liable to get shot."

Petershagen: How about your working relationships with the Thais? (Jones: Delightful.) Were there any language problems there? (Jones: No.) And once again, you didn’t learn their language, I’m sure, anywhere near as much as they spoke English, right?

Jones: No, I learned a little more Turkish than I learned Thai. That Thai language is a total language, you know.

Petershagen: Well, yeah, both with your experience in Turkey and in Thailand, you’re way off away from English.

Jones: Well, Turkish is a lot easier for an American to pick up than Thai.

Petershagen: Well, I gave it a short try, and it wasn’t easy for me! (laughs)

Jones: What, Turkish? Where did you land in Turkey?

Petershagen: No, I wasn’t there. This was here in California.

Jones: Oh, I see.

Petershagen: So, then after Thailand, then what did you do?
Jones: I returned to California.

Petershagen: And?

Jones: Here I am.

Petershagen: Retired?

Jones: Yeah.

Petershagen: Took your shingle back off the wall?

Jones: Yeah. Let’s see, this is 1994, isn’t it? (Petershagen: Yeah.) Well, I probably did my last job for which I got paid about five years ago, something like that. That’s when I retired.

Petershagen: Okay, let me stop you right here and we’ll change the tape, Marshall.

END SIDE B, TAPE 1.
BEGIN SIDE A, TAPE 2.

Petershagen: Marshall, as we finished the previous tape, you were saying that you thought it had been about five years since you last had a real “paying” job, I’ll say it that way.

Jones: Last job for which I got paid. That’s the way I judge them. (chuckles)

Retirement

Petershagen: That sounds to me like there may have been a few phone calls and perhaps some other
things that maybe got some gratis work out of you along the way?

Jones: No, there’s been virtually nothing, no contacts, with any of these clients for four years, I’d say, something like that. Well, the Central Valley Project contracts are all signed, sealed, and delivered, and the things I was dealing with are resolved. So, there’s been no contact.

Petershagen: So, there’s no need to go back and revisit any of those issues.

Jones: No, at least for the kind of things I was doing for them. If I were an O&M type guy, there might be some work, or management-type things, but no.

Petershagen: Were there a lot of your compatriots with the Bureau that may have left in the early ’50s when you did that followed along in the line of work that you pursued?

Jones: Yeah, there were some.

Petershagen: Any of them go to work for TAMS and E-C-I and some of these outfits that you’ve worked for?

Jones: Not that I know of.

Petershagen: But there certainly was a lot of Bureau talent spread throughout both of those organizations, I’m sure.
Jones: Yeah, I’m sure. And irrigation districts in California picked up all kinds of them.

Petershagen: You certainly have made a lot of notes there. What other kinds of things should we talk about?

Jones: Well . . . (consults notes) One thing that I always remember was the contacts I had with Clair Engle.

Petershagen: Talk about him for a few minutes.

Senator Clair Engle

Jones: He was a real impressive fellow.

Petershagen: How so?

Jones: Well, number one, he had great integrity. A lot of people don’t think . . . You know, they question politicians.

Petershagen: Well, amongst politicians, it’s always easy to see integrity in the person that’s on your same side, but perhaps not so much in your opponents.

Jones: Well, I didn’t work with the opposition very much. I didn’t have any contacts with the Irrigation Districts Association, which was the opposition. I was always very impressed with Engle’s integrity and unwillingness to deviate from things too much.
Petershagen: I see. What other words might you use to describe the Engle persona? What impressed you besides his integrity?

Jones: Well, I don’t know. He’s probably the most competent, well-informed politician on the subject that he was dealing with that I ever dealt with.

Petershagen: And I guess, if I can put a couple words in your mouth, that you’d probably credit Jim Carr with a lot of the reason for Engle’s knowledge and competence in that area, correct?

Jones: Yes. Yeah, they were very close, and Clair was very close to the Bureau. Well, that two-and-a-half, three years that I was district manager—and I had a lot of contact with Engle—to me he was a very impressive politician. I had tremendous respect for his integrity. Don’t mean some other guys haven’t had it, but I was close enough to him to see it, you know, to experience it.

I one time went down to the city and picked him up, and we drove up to Chico and stayed overnight, and then we drove over to Eureka and took on that Eureka Chamber of Commerce gang that was trying to torpedo Clair’s Trinity River Project. We walked right into their den (chuckles) and out again. Then I drove Engle back. I think we drove back to Redding and stayed overnight. Then I took him down to Sacramento. I spent three days with Engle,
very intimate, you know. As I say, he was very impressive to me.

Petershagen: So, you got to know him fairly well.

Jones: That’s right.

Petershagen: You’re not just talking from reading newspapers and so forth.

Jones: That’s right. I think he got confidence in me, and we had a lot of mutual respect, I think. That was a very outstanding thing in my career. I’ve always kind of been a little proud of that. (laughter)

Petershagen: Well, I think you should be!

Jones: Yeah, I think that was one of the real . . . California really got hurt when he got sick and died, quite early. I think things could have been a little different if Engle had lived longer. A lot of these arguments . . . He had great integrity.

Petershagen: What other topics do you have on your list?

Jones: Well, these are just kind of factual stuff here.

Petershagen: That’s fine. We need facts, too.

**Working for Reclamation**

Jones: I just listed a lot of the guys that I dealt with: [Robert] Bob Calland was a regional
director at one time. And then Dick Boke, he was regional director in the last five or six years that I was with the Bureau, when I went over to Chico and was transferred to Chico. Boke was the regional director, and I had a lot of contact with him. I was very impressed with him.

Petershagen: If I could draw an organizational chart, as the district manager, did you report directly to the regional director? Was that the way it worked?

Jones: Yeah, Boke was there, yeah. I just noted names of guys that I had quite a bit of contact with. There was Boke and Clair Engle. [Stanford P.] Stan McCasland, I didn’t have much with him. I worked for him in the Planning Office, but there was no real rapport between us.

I got a note here, I remember Engle one time said . . . Wait a minute, where is it? Oh, Engle said he didn’t want the San Joaquin Valley “green from the Coast Range to the Sierras while the Sacramento Valley was left high and dry,” which the original C-V-P did. And that was what stirred him to get the Sacramento Valley canals, the Tehama-Colusa Canal, authorized. I remember him saying that very clearly. That was his philosophy.

Petershagen: That was also, I think, what was behind the need to get the Trinity [River] water into the valley, too.
Jones: Oh yeah, yeah. Yeah, he really put that thing together, the Sacramento Valley canals and the Trinity River Project, sure. He had to get some water for it, somewhere, for the canal, somewhere. (shuffling papers)

This is nothing. Most of the years I worked there, or some of the years I worked in Sacramento for the Planning Division, Stanley Kerr was the Regional Planning Engineer, and he was a guy that I thought a great deal of. I remember he sent me to Washington one time on a trip that he should have really taken himself. It was right at the end of the war; the commissioner called a big planning conference right at the end of the war to decide what the hell we were going to do from now on. And my boss, Kerr, said, “Marshall, you go do it.” This was a hell of a job, you know, planning what the hell we were going to emphasize and what from now on.

Petershagen: Yeah, a great opportunity.

Jones: Yeah, a very big break for me.

Petershagen: You were a young man with nothing but the future in front of you.

Jones: God Almighty! I got to know guys in Washington who would be of help that I had to know. Geez!

Oh, a little aside from that, when on my way home, I took a United flight, and
another United flight crashed and killed a bunch of people. My boss, Kerr, knew I was on a United flight. (Petershagen: Uh-oh!) His concern over that...

Petershagen: He was probably doubly concerned since he was responsible for you being on that plane.

Jones: Yeah, you know, you can’t blame him. What the hell! That’s the way the system works, and I did it and all that, but he felt a lot of... I remember he said something about, “I don’t know what I would have said to your wife.” (both chuckle)

Let’s see, when did they have the big groundbreaking... When I was in Chico as district manager, the Bureau cranked up a ceremony, a group that they started in Redding and worked themselves all the way down the valley to Fresno with a big celebration. This was to celebrate not the completion, but a major phase, of Central Valley Project.

Petershagen: Oh! Now, I haven’t heard of that one before.

Jones: Yeah.

Petershagen: So, this was kind of a caravan that went from city to city?

Jones: They, a few key guys of the Bureau, drove up to Redding, and they gathered up the local guys like me and so forth. For two
weeks they had a big trip down through the Central Valley and a ceremony wherever they (laughs) had a place to stop. That was, let’s see, I left the Bureau in ’49. It was probably ’48, something like that, that they had that ceremony. (shuffles papers)

Well, this was all after I left the Bureau. Nothing strikes me as spectacular beyond what we’ve already talked about.

Petershagen: Okay. It seems to me that your circumstances surrounding your leaving the Bureau would be something that could be very bitter, but at the same time, I haven’t heard you indicate that at all. (Jones: No.) It was just part of life, I guess, huh?

Jones: That’s right. Well, my personal situation colors that a little. I lived up in Chico, which my family was delight . . . That’s one of the best places in California to live. Chico is something! Before my discharge by the Bureau . . . Well, that wasn’t a discharge. They offered me a job down in Fresno, which financially wouldn’t have hurt me at all, because you know how that system works. It was a lower grade, but you get your old pay. (both talking at once) . . . too high, why, you don’t even lose any pay. (chuckles) But we were thinking about that, and then, I don’t know.

Petershagen: You make it sound as though it was as much your decision to leave, just about, as it was the Bureau’s.
Jones: Oh, yeah, that’s right. Of course, to a degree, that was colored by the fact that the Mayor of Oroville came over and offered me a job while that process was going on.

Petershagen: It’s easier to leave if you know that you’ve got someplace to go, isn’t it?

Jones: You’re damn right! Let’s see . . .

Petershagen: Marshall, even though your career as a Bureau employee is relatively short, you’ve seen the whole Central Valley Project, almost from start to finish (Jones: That’s right.) from various perspectives. What do you think of it? Are there things that should have been done differently maybe?

Central Valley Project

Jones: I don’t really . . . I wouldn’t change very much—I don’t know what I’d change, if anything. You might argue a little about acreage limitations. Let’s see, that’s still pretty hard and fast at 160 acres, isn’t it?

Petershagen: It’s still an issue, too, with a lot of people.

Jones: I dare say!

Petershagen: The Bureau gets a lot of “bad raps,” I’ll say, for lack of better words, now especially from environmental groups. What would you say to those people?
Jones: Well, now, wait a minute—they’re getting big slugs of water down the Sacramento River. And in recent years the environmentalists have done quite well with C-V-P, it seems to me. They got a million acre feet of water dedicated to fish and that sort of thing. Are the environmental people unhappy with it? Well, they’re probably unhappy, but they got something to gripe about. But I don’t know really what environmental people have that’s valid to complain about. They got a lot more than they had in the days when I was working for the Bureau, because we were going to divert all the damn water and spread it all over the land.

Petershagen: Have I worn you out yet?

Jones: No.

Petershagen: Do you think we’ve covered just about . . .

Jones: No, you do what you like. This is a very interesting subject to me, and if there’s some more that you usefully can ask me about or deal with, why, go ahead.

Petershagen: No, I think we’re at the end of my list, so maybe we should bring this to a close.

Jones: Uh-huh.

Petershagen: Are you sure there’s not something that we’ve overlooked?
Jones: No, I don’t . . . Well, I just listed quite a few names. Do you have anything on Leo Mastrofini?

Petershagen: No, I haven’t come across that name before.

Jones: Oh, let’s see, one other thing. How far do you want to go? Have you been given the name of Vernon Hansen?

Petershagen: Oh, yes.

Jones: Okay. He’s my golfing friend. We play golf twice a week.

Petershagen: The next time you play golf, you might mention to Mr. Hansen that I’ll be looking for him in the near future.

Jones: Well, I told him the other day that you had called, but he had had no contact with you yet.

Petershagen: Right.

Jones: We talk about a lot of things. As I told you—or did I?—I had a stroke recently, and in some areas, my memory is terrible. And Vernon Hansen has been pretty good as we discuss things. Let’s see, Bob Calland, Leo Mastrofini, Dick Boke, Stan McCasland. McCasland was a great friend of Hansen’s. For reasons that I have no idea why, McCasland didn’t like me very well for some reason. It doesn’t matter by now.
Phil Dickenson was in Engle’s office, you know.

Petershagen: Dickenson was a point of contact for you in Engle’s office?

Jones: Yes. We had a lot of business. Over a period of time, I probably made twenty visits to Washington offices, where we’d run around to all the congressional offices and then hit the Bureau. Great life, a lot of fun. I enjoyed it.

Petershagen: Well, it sounds like you did. Let me say thank you very much for taking the time to do this, this afternoon.

Jones: No problem.

Petershagen: And I know you’ve taken, from the notes you wrote, you took some time besides this afternoon, too.

Jones: Well, I haven’t got that much to do, and it was interesting. I mean, I was happy to do it. I appreciate you asking me to do this for you—really I do.

Petershagen: Well, it’s been my pleasure. Before I turn the tape off, I need to get you to acknowledge once again that we did tape record this and that you are making this a gift to the government of the United States, and you understand that it will be open for historians and other researchers.
Jones: Uh-huh.

Petershagen: Would you please say that a little louder so . . .

Jones: I understand the purpose of this visit, and it’s fine with me.

Petershagen: Thanks very much, Marshall.

END SIDE A, TAPE 2.
END OF INTERVIEW.