

SOUTH DAKOTA ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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NAME OF INFORMANT Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Bice
ADDRESS 1220 Creek Drive (Cleghorn Canyon) - Rapid City, South Dakota
DATE OF INTERVIEW July 6, 1972
NAME OF RESEARCHER John Watterson
OTHERS PRESENT
LOCATION OF INTERVIEW 1220 Creek Drive
ADDED NOTES:

SEQUENCE LISTING OF SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS INTERVIEW:

Rising water in Cleghorn Canyon; evacuation of family and neighbors; observations during flood; remains of personal possessions; Mr. Bice's rescue activities;praise of many individuals and organizations

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON INFORMANT

AGE 45 & 49 SEX M & F COUNTY Pennington
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS
OCCUPATION
EDUCATION
RELIGION
DATE FAMILY ARRIVED IN SOUTH DAKOTA
WHERE?
FROM WHERE?
NUMBER OF MOVES IN SOUTH DAKOTA
REASONS FOR MOVES

Q. I'm talking, this is John Watterson, July 6, 1972. I'm talking with Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Bice, who lived in Braeburn Addition, which is in the southeast quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 8, Township 1 North, Range 7 East. This interview is taking place at 1220 Creek Drive in Rapid City, er, outside of Rapid City I guess.

A. _____.

Q. Yes...

A2. Well, to start with, we'd, we'd went out to supper. We were on our way home and, and we got to, near the fish hatchery or fire station on Highway 40 west, and they stopped us and said that there was, had been some heavy rains and that, that there was a wall o' water coming down and we couldn't go through. And I, our, both of our boys were out there and I said, "Well, we're, I'm going through whether you want me to or not," and he says, "You can't go through," and I said, "Well, I'm going anyway," and I just went on through. And, but they said it was coming down Cleghorn..

Q. Mm-hm.

A2. ...which would've missed us like it did in '62.

Q. Mm-hm. About what time was this, would you say?

A2. Oh, I would say about 9:30...

A. I think it was around 9:00 or 9:30, I'm not sure...

A2. About 9:30.

A. ...exactly we weren't really watching the time, you know.

A2. We weren't, we weren't...

Q. I know, it's...

A2. ...overly concerned because...

Q. ...it was coming...

A2. ...it was coming down Cleghorn.

Q. Yeah.

A2. And from there, we went on hom, and we knew the creek was up, and so we went down to the creek instead of listening to the radio and the T.V. and one thing and another, we went down to the creek, and Don Taylor, the builder and (realator), he and his mother and his wife, and Bill Hixson--Dr. Hixson--and now man..who else was there...

A. Billams and Geibs.

A2. Billams and Geibs were all there, and we were talking about it, and when it reached the '62 crest, we were talking about it, and finally we decided to go on home.

Q. About how many blocks was this, er, this was...

A. A block...

A2. This was about a block...

Q. About, mm-hm.

A2. ...and we got home and, and we didn't turn the radio on like we should've...

A. Well, the reason we didn't was, the minute we walked in the door, we discovered that water was coming up in the basement, through the sewer.

A2. From the sewer, yeah...

A. So Stan rushed down there, to try and plug that sewer.

A2. I, I couldn't get the plate off--the cast-iron plate--so I took a hammer and broke that, it was coming up like a fountain. And all I could think about was the sewer water gettin' in my basement.

Q. Yeah.

A2. So I plugged that, and while I was plugging it, I had just got it barely plugged, and my youngest boy who's seventeen, Sam came down, and said, "Dad, we've gotta get out of here," and I said...

A. He had turned the radio on.

A2. "Well, just a minute 'til I get this sewer plugged." He turned the radio on...

Q. Mm.

A2. ...and he'd heard some reports. Well, this was about, I would say about 25 to 10:00.

A. Yeah, it was about 10 minutes after we got back from the creek.

A2. I don't know, I didn't look at the time.

Q. Mm.

A2. The second time he came down he was getting desperate and he said, "Dad, we've gotta get outta here, right now!" And, well, I said, "I wantta plug this, this is, I figured it wouldn't flood, you know, and I, I wantta plug this..it'd started to come up the...

A. Stand pipe.

A2. ...washing machine pipe, what do you call it. Stand pipe, that was about two foot from the floor. So I went over and started to plug that, and he came down again, and he was cry..he was, he had tears in his eyes that time, and he says, "Dad, we gotta go, just right now," he said, "We can't wait any longer." I says, "Well, I'm, I'm coming. You, you take the Bronco and Dave take the Mustang and mom and I'll come right away." So they went out the front door and I came upstairs immediately. And I would say that was about a quarter to 10:00, wouldn't you?

A. I don't think it was over fifteen minutes at the most.

A2. I didn't look at my watch. I don't have my watch on.

A. From the time we left, from the time we were down at the creek, you know.

A2. I didn't have any shoes on. And when we, when I looked out the water was coming, and I says, "My gosh, let's get outta here!" So I, she, Faye says, "Let's take..."

Q. The water was coming?

A2. Yeah. It started to come...

A. You could see the water coming off across the street.

Q. You could see a...

A2. It started to come...

A. It was about, about like that, and you could just see it movin' toward...

Q. You could see...oh...

A. He, he did...

Q. ...a kind of wave of water?

A. Yeah, just kind of a...

A2. No, not, it just, uh, just raised about a foot, _____.

A. The first I saw, the first I saw was when I, I ran out into the garage and he came and opened the garage door, and here was this water, about that deep, just coming right down the driveway toward the garage.

A2. Well, you didn't have the story here...

A. (No, I'm not.)

A2. I said, "Let's go right, now!" and Faye said, "Well, let's take the T-bird." We had a new T-bird, and I says, "No, let's leave it!" She says, "No, we might as well take it." So she, she says, "I'll get in it and go." And so I opened the door, and she backed out, and by the time she got out in the

driveway...

A. Before I got in the...

A2. ...there was even debris coming then.

A. And before I got in the car, it, I was up to my knees in that water coming down the drive.

A2. And while she was backing out, it raised probably five or six inches and she couldn't...

A. I could hardly get the car out.

A2. ...car out. Debris was piling up, of course, I was beating on the windshield to "get out of here, get out, hurry up..."

A. It wouldn't hurry...

A2. It wouldn't hurry, because there was stuff behind it, well, then, she, I watched her out into the drive and get started off, and watched her to the corner, actually is what I did. And I got in my, and I had a pickup there and...

A. But he dashed back in the house and got the dog.

A2. I got in and I started, and I thought of the dog.

Q. Yeah.

A2. And I run in and got the dog, and it was, and when I came out it was up to the bottom of the door.

Q. Yeah.

A2. And that took me about...

A. Few seconds.

A2. ...oh, I'd say 15 seconds or so. I wouldn't say it was any longer than that. Well, then I started up on to Highway 40, and I got on the approx...

A. Which was just...

A2. ...out of the water...

A. ...just one house between us and the highway, that's all there was, it was that close to the highway.

A2. ...and I see Mr. and Mrs. Frank Watson looking out the window. So I just pulled the emergency on, left the pickup run, and I run in, run in and I said, "Frank, we've gotta get out of here, right now." I said, "You're liable to get caught here, this looks bad to me." And Frank says, "Who are you?" And I says, "Well, I'm your neighbor, Frank." He didn't recognize me, see, in the excitement...

A. All excited.

A2. ...I guess he was. And I says, "Well, I'm your neighbor, Stan. Let's go, let's go." And, and, and, they were kind of in a daze.

A. Hesitant and reluctant to leave.

A2. ...and reluctant to leave.

Q. How old were they, do you know?

A. Well, they're..I'm not sure, I'd say 60-ish.

A2. Yeah, 60-ish.

Q. Mm-hm.

A. You know this is (regular)...

A2. And I said now, "You take my hand," because I could see the water coming up so fast.

Q. Mm.

A2. And she said, "No, you help Frank." And I said, "No, I'm helping you." And when we went out the front door, it was just starting to come in the front

door. And there was a low spot, but the water had just, the wall had just started to come, and it was, there was a backwash behind Bourne's house there, it, it was about chest deep or we'd a never walked in it. We was coming out of the house in a kind of a backwash, see.

Q. I see.

A2. And another, another, 30 seconds we wouldna made it out.

Q. I see.

A2. But while we were parked there, Marnie Thomas passed us, and she was clear over on the lawn. She was getting out.

A. She washed clear up in our yard.

A2. She had a four-wheel drive and had it in four-wheel drive, and her folks were behind here and they were lost. Her brother...

A. And her brother.

A2. ...was behind them and they were lost. When I got Watson's in the car, Owen Emme and his family with a four-wheel drive were backing out, and I just barely left room for 'em.

Q. Mm-hm.

A2. They backed in front of me and they just, there was just a touch and go to get out of there. We was just...

A. The wheels would just touch once in a while, you know.

Q. Who was this behind you?

A2. Owen Emme, Summit Construction.

Q. Oh, mm-hm.

A2. But he backed out in front of me, so actually I was the last vehicle...

Q. Uh-huh.

A2.to, to pull onto the road.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. But to, to tell you, to demonstrate how fast this happened, the Thomas family had three cars and they left at the same time, only Marnie was the first, was ahead and she had a little higher vehicle, with a four-wheel drive.

Q. Uh-huh.

A2. The two four-wheel drives got out, but the cars didn't.

A. She got out and her parents and her brother didn't. That's how fast it happened.

Q. Hm.

A2. And...

A. You know, it was just a matter of seconds.

A2. ...when, by the time that...

A. Probably 30 seconds sooner, they mighta gotten out.

A2. By the time I pulled up on the road, it was on the north, the low side of the road.

Q. Uh-huh.

A2. That's how fast it came up.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. And this road is...

A2. And then I got...

A. ...built up very high out there, there's a big retaining wall.

A2. I got Mr. and Mrs. Watson out, and they were trying to decide what to do, and I said well, let's go to, to Ha, to, not (Verning) but, uh...

A. Gary Harms.

- A2. ...Gary Harms. And this was the thing to do, and they climbed the bank and it was about a foot deep on the, on the low side of the road then.
- Q. Uh-huh.
- A2. And we didn't sit there, I don't imagine, over 20 seconds making up their mind.
- Q. Was this on, on...
- A2. Highway 40.
- A. Up on the highway.
- Q. Up on the highway.
- A. Just got the pickup up on the highway...
- A2. In that area adjacent to the _____.
- A. ...and they could see the water was coming clear over, way up over, high over...
- A2. And they made it down...
- A. ...the Cleghorn bridge. I got over the bridge but he didnt.
- A2. Faye and the kids got over Cleghorn Bridge, but when I got there, the water was plugged, and there was water 20 feet high, and I was just seconds behind her.
- A. He, he probably couldn't a been more than three minutes behind me, or four.
- Q. Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
- A. And I was the last car that got over that bridge...
- Q. Mm-hm.
- A. ...and into town, 'cause there was nobody behind me, and I just barely got by, by the fish hatchery because it was very bad there, at that time.
- A2. But to, uh, Don Taylor was there with me.
- A. He had walked down the hill, he lives up on _____.

- A2. And it wasn't 15 minutes earlier that his mother was down on the creek and he took her home. And she, she had, she lived in a trailer house and he took her home and he and I sat there, and the water was coming up, and he wanted to wade out to his mother, and I said, "There's not a chance, Don. There's not a..."
- A. There was wading then 'cause it, Stan went outta there chest deep.
- A2. ...there's no way, I said, "You might as well.." I said, "You'll be lost, Don, if you go out there."
- Q. Where was the trailer home?
- A2. It was just...
- A. It was back of our, you know...
- Q. Mm-hm.
- A. ...low, below our house...
- A2. We wasn't over, we wasn't over 150 feet from it, and it went about 60 feet...
- Q. Uh-huh.
- A2. ...and, uh...
- A. She had a flashlight in the window.
- A2. ...it floated about 60 feet. And she had a flashlight in the window, and Don was quite upset, of course, his mother, his own mother, flashlight in the window and everything, and he had her in the car 15 minutes earlier, or 20. And he'd come back once in a while, "Do you still see the light?" And I'd say, "Yes, I still see the light." Well, then it...
- A. The trailer got up against a tree...
- A2. Then it went against a tree, intact, and the south side or the right side of the trailer, was about two foot higher, well then I could see the light on

the trees...

A. On the other side of the trailer.

A2. ...she got on the high side...

Q. Yeah.

A2. ...she was 80 years old and you could see the light up on the trees (even), and he came back one more time, he says, "Do you still see the light?" And I says, "Well, she's on the high side of the trailer, if it doesn't get any higher, I think she'll be all right." Well, he says, "There must be something we can do." And I said, "Don, I, I just don't know what it is, I, I'm..I said, "There isn't a chance of swimming it." It seemed to me, that wat, I don't know anything about it, but it seemed to me the water was going 30, 30 miles an hour. And, of course, Row's house, Mac Caldwell's house, (Gall's) house, and Taylor's house, all went before our house went, but they went off in a debris pile to the south.

A. Not Taylors, Stan.

A2. No.

A. Thomas?

A2. Thomas's, and they went into a debris pile towards the creek. Well, then, my house floated off later, and it came back by Enna, Emme's and while Don and I was standing there, I said, "Don, there's my house." And it took the whole side of his mother's trailer house out, it hit, just took the whole side out, and she was gone.

Q. Oh, my gosh!

A2. And, oh, it was..then the last house to leave...

A. That you saw.

A2. ...and that was Corwin's.

A. Which was a brick house.

Q. Yeah.

A2. And he, he was saved, but all the, his family are gone. But it was a brick house, and I suppose that's the reason it stayed as long as it did.

Q. Mm-hm.

A2. But, those, one, two, three, four, five..there was six houses went.

A. But when it went, it just literally exploded.

Q. Did it really?

A. Mm-hm. It just, the bricks, there were just bricks everywhere, I don't think there was two bricks stuck together in the whole place.

A2. But, we, we never found a board, a piece of siding, a piece of shingle...

A. We have never found one, one single thing.

A2. Everything we found you could put in two garbage cans, and we got most of that out of the basement.

A. We put the front, this little front end loader, this little thing we've got out here, put it down the basement with a boom truck and scooped around in the mud and found some odds and ends.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. But it washed all the big things out of the basement, you know, the big furniture and the freezer, and but, it left some little things like clothes...

Q. Of course.

A. ...and you know, and all the jars of food and bottles of pop and...

Q. Mm-hm.

A. ...unbroken.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. And real, it was very strange. Just things you wouldn't expect to stay, stayed.

Q. Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

A. We found Sam's, our boy's two guns down there, he'd had 'em hanging on the wall in his room downstairs. And just, just some odds and ends, some of 'em we're real happy to see, but nothing too valuable.

A2. This, this Japanese Buddha...

A. That was down there.

A2. ...I'd brought hom from Saipan...

Q. Uh-huh.

A2. ...27 years ago, and it was in the basement. We had it on our front step.

A. It was on our front step, and it just fell right in the front part of the basement when the house went.

A2. And we found an awful lot of Virg Schoenhard's things...

Q. Yeah, he was saying that his golf clubs...

A. Yeah.

Q. ...and things, like that.

A. Yeah, things that...you know, his house is right across the street, and when the things came out of his house, they dropped in our basement, so...

A2. We weren't, we weren't in near the torrent, or the main flow, because we didn't have near the boulders in our basement.

Q. Mm-hm.

A2. The Rows and the Caldwells and the Thomases and the Galls were...

A. Ours were smaller rocks and mud...

- A2. And Corwins...all, all the rocks in our basement were, there were very few, and not too many of 'em, and our basement wasn't completely full like the other basements.
- A. It was, it just had it on one side, you know, on the, on the side where the water came from, there was, there was mud, and the other side was just swept clean.
- A2. But when our house went, when our house went, it got, it went through that narrow by the bridge, and then, of course, there was so much water down there, it just disintegrated...
- Q. Uh-huh.
- A2. ...just exploded practically...
- Q. As it went into the higher pressure area?
- A2. Yeah.
- A. Yeah.
- A2. There was about a 20-foot area there, that I think the water was ten feet deeper than it was up on the road, it looked like to me.
- Q. Uh-huh.
- A2. It just looked like it swelled into it.
- Q. Huh.
- A2. And, and, oh, it was..but all the time we stood there, of course, the Smith's are gone, and a lotta people in Dark Canyon, I never saw one person on a piece a debris...
- A. Well, see the, all the people that bordered our back yard,the whole circle, there was six houses back there, and seventeen people died there.
- A2. I never say any, I never heard any yelling except, no yelling at all, but we

could see flashlights later on, on the debris pile, well, we could see three lights in Braeburn...

Q. Mm-hm.

A2. ...three flashlights, but...

Q. Who'd they belong to?

A2. Well, we're not, I never did find out, there was something, a lot of those people rode it out, next to the creek there in those big trees, see, 'cause...

Q. Oh, I see...

A. Those houses...

Q. ...from, from Braeburn?

A. Those houses, the ho..the houses right next to the creek that had a lot of older and maturer trees around 'em, those houses stayed, they, they got filled up with water and mud in the lower part...

A2. And debris, the debris diverted the water.

A. ...many of 'em were two-story houses, and, and, of course, they got out, the main stream got diverted and went around 'em more, and the, the trees protected them from the debris.

Q. How old was your house incidentally?

A. Ten years.

A2. Ten years old.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. We've been in it exactly ten years. Ten years about two weeks.

A2. And we moved in it new.

A. Yeah.

A2. But then from there, Marnie Thomas, of course, she, her folks didn't get out,

you know, she was quite hard, quite hard on her, you know.

Q. Yeah.

A2. And we went up, then we went up to Taylors, right during the crest, I was the last one to leave the road, and I couldn't, didn't have any shoes on, I couldn't stand up, it was a little over waist deep and I hated to try and swim 'cause I thought it might carry me down...

Q. Mm-hm.

A2. ...but I finally mana, I, with the dog and I we finally managed to get out of there and, but, we stayed up there, I'd say about 45 minutes. Of course, Marnie was, her folks gone, and Don's mother gone...

Q. At, at the Taylor...

A. Taylor residence, right.

A2. Taylor's residence, yes.

Q. Who lived...?

A2. Up on top _____...

A. Up the hill, right up above on the hill.

Q. I see, yeah.

A2. Then, they, I put, they gave me some dry clothes and I went back down and when I got there, why (Kerrie) Conner--I tell you that boy, he's a brave soul, I can't say enough for him--but he was there, with a four-wheel drive, and a bot, and there was some firemen there with another four-wheel drive, two four-wheel drives, got through the bridge, there was about four foot of slit on it...

Q. Yeah.

A2. ...and there was somebody setting out on a debris pile, and it happened to be

the Leighs and they're a young couple, he's a real strong young healthy man, and...

Q. The Leighs.

A2. The Leighs, yeah.

Q. Yeah, I talked with them...

A. Yeah, they had an awful experience.

A2. So Kerry and I, we got in this boat, I asked him where he got the boat, and he says, "Well, you know, I stole it out of a guy's yard." He said, "I just seen it and I knew I'd need a boat." But he and I went out there in this boat, and went to this first debris pile, and then we put a rope--we had, fortunately had two-hundred-foot ropes in there--and when we got to the debris pile, we couldn't get the rope off the boat, he wanted to go the rest of the way in the boat, and I said, "Kerry, we'll never make it in that boat." I said, "Let's go to the debris pile and try and wade it." It had started, it had resided probably ten feet by that time, but it was raining so bad that I, you know, you have visions of it coming back up again, you know.

A. It was just pouring.

A2. And, but I hollered to the Leighs and I said, "What's your name?" And, and we couldn't hear 'em...

Q. Uh-huh.

A2. ...but they could hear us...

A. They knew they were there, but...

A2. ...so finally I said, "Spell it." And he did, and then I knew it was one of Sam's customers, I didn't know him, but, and I said, "Are you alone?" And

he said, "No, my wife and baby are here." Well, I knew they had a six- or eight-month-old baby.

A. Just a little thing, I don't know how old it was.

A2. So we got out to the debris pile, I don't know how I ever kept from stepping on a nail, but I went across that debris pile several times...

A. He was still barefooted!

A2. ...and I knew every step where there wasn't a nail, I...

Q. Weren't they in a tree?

A2. Yeah, well...

A. Yeah, they were out there on a debris pile in, up in some trees...

A2. Yeah, see they were in their care, in their van, and the back window happened to lodge with it up...

Q. Yeah.

A. In this debris.

A2. ...so they broke the window out and got on the debris pile...

Q. Yeah.

A2. ...but, then Kerry, we put the rope around Kerry and I said, "Now, if it gets over waist deep, you let me see if I can pull you back," because I was, I was afraid maybe I wouldn't be able to pull him back. Well, it got up to, just about to his chest, and he was in Ga..Galls basement...

A. No, not Gall's, Fiddler's...

A2. Fiddler's basement, is what he was in, and it was filled up with debris, and he said, "WEll, there's something here." Well, then he stepped up about two feet, and he was only about waist deep the rest of the way, and he tied it on that end, and I stretched it up, and we brought 'em out, they followed the

rope acrost.

Q. Mm-hm.

A2. And I always remember that little baby was, he knew something was wrong, but he was sure being good.

A. All he had on was a diaper, and he felt just as warm, you know.

A2. He was just as warm as toast, I was cold as could be, wet, and cold, and that baby was just as warm as toast. And then, from there, I went down, I took them up to Hickey's, she said it was her...

A. South Canyon.

A2. ...her mother or something...

A. Yeah, it's on...

A2. We tried four or five streets and we finally got 'em up there...

Q. You lost your glasses, didn't you?

A2. Yeah, his shoes and his glasses.

Q. Yeah, they, they remarked about that...that you were driving without your glasses.

A. Yeah, he hasn't got his new glasses yet.

A2. But why, anyway...and then I went down on 32nd Street, and Kerry wanted me to go down there with him, because I've been around the old Missouri all my life, and I was real good in a boat, and they, he had already rescued one person. My, I saw him out there in that, I couldn't believe that (he could get back alive).

A. Stan said they had him about how, far out there in that mess on a rope.

A2. Well, I don't know, but it seemed it was between 200 and 300 feet at least and--on the end of a rope--and about 20 guys on it, and I stood there in that

water and my legs just were paralyzed, and I, there was a lot of people there, of course, by that time. And, so I decided, that I'd better go and report in, because Faye didn't know whether I was, was alive or...

Q. Yeah.

A2. ...what, you know. But that, that's about the size of it.

A. He got down to where I was about...

A2. That was 3:30, quarter to 4:00.

A. ...3:30, 4 o'clock in the morning.

Q. Where were you?

A. I was at, over on Evergreen, at, I went to Ralph Taylors, he's Stan's partner...

Q. I see.

A. ...and I, I went to this house, it was the closest place I could think of to get out of the...

A2. The Leighs handled themselves very well, I was real proud of them, they were young people and they, they were glad to get out of there, I'll tell ya, but we were glad to help them, too.

Q. Yeah, yeah.

A2. But, it took, it took, that's the first time in my life, when I walked down to that boat, because the water was still coming, awfully fast, you know...

A. We had no light, you know.

A2. ...and, and I'm really not afraid, I wasn't afraid, but I thought to myself that this could be it, but after we got in the boat, I wasn't a bit afraid, I mean...

Q. After your going out to get the...

A2. Yeah, it didn't bother me a bit. We had a job to do, and we did it. That's

all, it...

Q. Well, that's, that's interesting, oh, what was I gonna ask...the, now, your, your neighbors you lost?

A2. Caldwell's, we lot 17 immediate neighbors...

Q. Mm-hm.

A2. ...counting the, the Hogans across the creek...

Q. Mm-hm.

A2. ...but there was two in the Caldwell's house, there was seven in Gall's, there was three in Thomas's and three in Corwin's.

Q. Mm-hm.

A. And Mrs. Taylor.

A2. And Mrs. Taylor.

Q. Mm-hm. Had you ever thought that you might be flooded living here near Rapid Creek?

A2. Yes, we talked about it many times, and who should know any better than I... I know as much, probably know more than average about alluvial fill how it got there, and the reason it was there, and..but I didn't feel that there was any danger, so, that's the reason we lived there, we liked it...

A. Well, you know, when we moved there, for instance, the Harms had lived there I don't know how long but I know the boys lived there all their life and they're in their 30's, and I'm sure that the Swiss Chalet Motel's been there longer than that, and they've never had any problem, you know, any, any serious flooding.

A2. Well, tell him what Bernie said when you called him just before we left the house.

- A. Just before I ran out the front door, I, I had kiddingly said something to him earlier about leaving and I called him just before I went out the front door, and I said, "Bernie, you better get out of there," and he said, "Oh," he said, "I'm not goin' any place," he said, "I lived here.." what'd he say...
- A2. "I was born and raised here."
- A. ...35 years, and he said, "The water never got high enough to hurt anything yet," he says, "I'm staying right here," and he did. (Laughter)
- Q. This was the...
- A. Motel operator there...
- Q. Oh, I see.
- A. ...the Swiss Chalet, right, just right...
- Q. Oh, I see, the Swiss Chalet and, and he rode it out.
- A. He stayed there, yeah...
- A2. But, if I'da known a little earlier, of course, I'da went over..and Matt Caldwell was a very good friend of mine, a great person.
- A. Their back yard just bordered ours.
- A2. And, I, I feel so bad about it. And, of course, the Galls now, Sam says that they were getting ready to leave, but they were just a minute too late.
- Q. Mm-hm.
- A. They had little children in the house, they had their daughter with her little...
- A2. They probably (were in bed).
- A. ...two little children, they probably were in bed, and they had to get 'em up, and just took a couple minutes too long.
- A2. Just took a, just took a minute too long.

- Q. And, is it possible that if your son had not been so persuasive that you would have waited...
- A2. Yeah, I'd a probably been...
- A. It's more than possible, it's probable.
- A2. It's more than possible, yes. He, of course...
- A. Stan said to him, "Well, you boys go ahead and go and well come right out." He said, "I'm not leaving unless you do, Dad." And that's, that's when he came upstairs and we decided to leave.
- A2. I immediately came upstairs, I knew it was pretty serious then, and I, and when they drove out, they weren't five seconds ahead of Faye, Sam says that the water was coming then just...
- A. I didn't see it. The first I saw it was when Stan lifted that door, and it was coming down the driveway, and I just looked at it, I couldn't believe it, it was just like that, and it was just coming right down the driveway.
- A2. But the, the Frank Watson's I was real glad they left, they might've lived through it, but...
- A. Their house did stay there, but the water was, was at least up to here on them, because they're not very big people, and it washed everything right on through, and you know it just sucked all the furniture and everything out. And I doubt if they woulda made it...
- Q. Yeah.
- A. ...because they're older and they were very frightened, and..
- Q. Yeah.
- A. ...you know, and the water was very cold.
- A2. Yeah. It seemed...

- A. And I just doubt if they would have survived.
- A2. It seemed warm to begin with, but it got awful cold before the night was over, I know that.
- A. And all that, and they were so frightened. He didn't, he, he told one of the neighbors that, that somebody told him that it was Stan that helped them out of the house. He didn't even know who it was even...
- A2. The next day.
- A. ...after Stan went out and told 'em, you know, he was so upset.
- Q. Yeah.
- A2. But there was a lotta courageous people, and it's, no matter how bad anything is, there's always some good comes out of it. It sure brought the town together.
- Q. Do you, is that your general feeling on the way in which the flood was handled?
- A2. I think that probably...
- A. Yes.
- A2. ...Ron Stevenson is, is the, the man that brought the town together...
- A. Well, I'll tell ya, I feel that the sheriff's department..
- A2. ...organized, he's a very good organizer, I think Ron Stevenson and...
- Q. He's a...
- A. He's a councilman...
- A2. A councilman, yes, and...
- Q. Mm-hm.
- A. A commissioner, I don't believe he's on the council now.
- A2. And see, they didn't have communication over to the...
- A. Police department...

A2. ...police department.

A. ...of course, lost all their communication...

A2. And civil defense was..done an awful lot.

A. I really feel that, that were a good many citizens that..

A2. There was a lot of them...

A. ...got themselves down there, and really contributed tremendously. And I think the sheriff's department and the civil defense really did a tremendous job for the situation they had to deal with.

A2. Yeah, yeah.

A. I mean there was mistakes made and there was things that weren't, naturally they weren't prepared, how could you be prepared for something like that?

A2. Yeah.

A. But I really feel that under the, under the circumstances, that, that they did real well.

A2. Yeah.

A. And I think the Guard was great. We were out there watching them several days, while we were out there looking and picking up and so forth, and I thought they were great. And the Salvation Army was, was really good, they were always right there. And I think medically...

A2. I was...

A. ...they did a tremendous job of getting every...

A2. I don't...

A. ...shots to everybody and, and taken care of the water situation and everything, I really felt that it was...

A2. I think they done a beautiful job. There was two, Nila Cannon is, Ila Cannon,

works for the Civil Defense and she said there was two Air Force boys came in, they couldn't get back to the base...

A. So they came in and offered their services...

A2. She said I don't know what we woulda did without them. They just come in and volunteered. They, they were...

A. Well, they, they knew about communications and this kind of thing and she said they stayed right there...

A2. I'll help put the phones up...

A. ...really, were really great...

A2. Of course, Glen, I think, Glen Best's department did a real good job, I don't think they're any question about it...

Q. What department's that?

A. The sheriff's department, yeah.

A2. The sheriff's department, and, but all in all, there was, I think this Ron Stevenson probably was the man that eased the situation more than anybody else in the town of Rapid City from all the firsthand reports that I've heard and he should be given some credit.

Q. Yeah.

A2. We need people like him, he's a good organizer, and...

A. Of course, you always hear some complaints, and there was some, there was looting in there and sightseeing, and things that shouldn't've been going on, but you just, it's, you always have some of this, and it's terribly hard to prevent it completely. With the, with the personnel that's available you know, that there, there, there was so much demand for their help everywhere, that it was bound to happen, you know.

- Q. Yeah.
- A. After all, you know, people, there's always all the different elements...
- Q. Yes, that's true...
- A. ...and groups, and...
- Q. What, what have you there?
- A2. This is one of the things that went through the flood here, that's, that's one of those radio-controlled model aircrafts...
- Q. Oh, yeah.
- A. What's left of it...
- A2. What's left of it. The funny part about it, it tore this part of the wing off, but left the servo sitting right there...
- Q. Left the what sitting there?
- A2. The servo.
- A. The control deal...
- Q. Oh, I see...
- A2. I'll, I'll get it real quick...
- A. He found that down here.
- A2. We know that as far as the flood is concerned, it was a terrible thing, and we expected to come down, you know, and see our shop gone and all of that but (we were) right up to the...
- A. Well, we're so much closer to the creek here than we were, than our house was. And we had all our, our drilling equipment and our shop full of stuff down here, and we thought probably that'd be gone, but the water went that way.
- A2. The damage was (minimal).

- A. So fortunately we, we have that left...
- Q. And these were the controls of...
- A? This, this is the radio control servo...
- Q. And, and so at any rate, this, that was...
- A3. Still on the wing.
- Q. ...that was still on the wing there?
- A? On the very end...
- Q. That's amazing, no way to explain it.

(END OF INTERVIEW)