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Deed of Gift and Release: Next of Kin

In accordance with the willing participation of Leonard Swanson [name of Interviewee], in the South Dakota Oral History Project [name of oral history project or program] on 1 July 1972 [date], at which time he/she provided an interview/s to The South Dakota Oral History Center [name of receiving group or individual] for which no legal release was executed. As next of kin, I Stephen M. Swanson [name of next of kin] herein do permanently donate and convey to the South Dakota Oral History Center, on behalf of the Department of Native Studies at The University of South Dakota, and its agents or employees the interview/s with EARL HAUSLE [name of interviewer]. In doing so I understand that my Father's [relationship to interviewee] interview/s will be made available for use in, including but not limited to, research, academia, and historical/cultural preservation, of both hard copy and electronic forms.

I further acknowledge in making this gift that I am conveying all right, title, and interest in copyright to L.F.S.'s [initials of interviewee] interview/s to the South Dakota Oral History Center, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, South Dakota.

I, Stephen M. Swanson, hereby release the State of South Dakota, the South Dakota Board of Regents, the University of South Dakota, the South Dakota Oral History Center, the Department of Native Studies, their employees, agents, successors, assignees, licensees, together and individually, from and against any and all claims, liabilities, demands, actions, causes of action, costs, expenses whatsoever, at law or in equity, known or unknown, anticipated or unanticipated, which I now have, or may hereafter have by reason of or a rising out of my agreement to allow for the use of oral history as herein provided. I further acknowledge that I understand that this release shall include a release of any liability that could be alleged or which could arise as a result of the disclosure of any information by the recipient of the information to be provided in my oral history or unto law enforcement if the same relate to or could be deemed to contain information of criminal activity, whether or not the same has previously been prosecuted or will be investigated for prosecution in the future.

I am 18 years of age or older and I am competent to contract in my own name. I have read this release before signing below, and fully understand the contents, meaning and impact of this release. I understand that I am free to address any specific questions regarding this release prior to signing, and I agree that my failure to do so will be interpreted as a free and knowledgeable acceptance of the terms of this release.

I have read the release, understand it, and intend it to be a binding instrument.

Stephen M Swanson

Signature of Kin

1-8-2013

Date

Ely M Mearns

Signature of Authorized Agent

8 JAN 2013

Date

Summary of Restrictions: _____

_____ [See Deed of Gift: Restrictions]

SOUTH DAKOTA ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Library Cataloguing Service Data

Name of Informant Leonard Swanson

Address 139 Cleveland, Rapid City, South Dakota

Date of Interview July 1, 1972

Name of Researcher Earl Hausle

Others Present _____

Location of Interview City Hall, Rapid City, South Dakota

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Subject Headings under which you feel this interview should be filed:

Activities as City Director of Public Works on the night of the flood and days following; Observations of flood damage; Water supply; Disposal of debris; Comparisons with past floods; Afterthoughts.

Demographic Information on Informant

Age 49 Sex M County Pennington

Socio-economic status Middle

Occupation Director of Public Works, city of Rapid City.

Education College grad. and P.E.

Religion Catholic

Date of Arrival of Family in South Dakota _____

Where? _____

From Where? _____

Number of Moves in South Dakota _____ Reasons for moves: _____

EH Rapid City, South Dakota, July 1, 1972, Earl Hausle interviewing Director of Public Works, Leonard Swanson. Leonard, would you please ~~xx~~ define your responsibility as Director of Public Works for the city of Rapid City?

LS As Director of Public Works I'm responsible for all the public works activities that are done in the city of Rapid City, such as water and sewer department, the streets, engineering, airport, parks, waste collection and sewage disposal..

EH In other words, almost everything except police and fire come under your direction.

LS Police and fire and the other administrative offices, and my primary duty actually, just briefly, would be to , for the construction and maintenance of public works projects in the city of Rapid City.

EH When did you first become aware of the danger of the flood on July, or June 9?

LS I received a call from the police department, which is a standard order of procedure that we have here in the city, that if there, if reports do come in from the weather bureau, or from any other source that might come into the PD, they alert me that such a storm or whatever it might be is impending, and I think it was around 7 0'clock on that evening that the police department called me up and told me that , that the weather bureau had predicted the possibility of heavy rains, and that they had reports that it was raining very heavily at the Johnson Siding area which is about halfway to Pactola on Highway 40.

EH What action did you take at that time?

LS At that particular time I called all of my department's heads in public works to alert them of the impending rains and told them to alert their foreman, and of course they foreman here to alert the men. And my instructions to them at that time was the department heads to report to their respective areas, that is street superintendent to the street office and so forth, and so that they could be in contact with their foreman by phone and by radio so that if this thing did develop as was predicted, then we'd call out the men and have them stand by.

EH When did you realize the magnitude of the disaster?

LS There were, actually, as far as I was concerned, two particular times that I was aware of the magnitude; the first one was when I , I was out at Canyon Lake and I'd been

LS called out there to take a look at the spillway, and the water was starting to rise in the dam and I found that it was coming around the back of the dam over by the Canyon Lake Club. And at that time I knew that we were in for some sort of a flood. I didn't exactly at that time really consider to be the magnitude that it developed into, because we did have a telephone connection with some people living in Hisega, street superintendent was talking to them at, from time to time, and they weren't reporting any water of the magnitude that we finally received. However, at that time, I was positive there was going to be flooding and I met the mayor at that time at the Canyon Lake Club, as a matter of fact, in that vicinity, and he had got a report that there was considerable more water than we had expected, and so we knew that the people should get out of the low-lying areas. I still didn't, of course, expect anything like we did receive, and really didn't, really didn't know that it was going to be as bad as it was until I would guess about 11 o'clock. I was out in the Baken Park area when I received word from the , the water plant that all of a sudden they had three feet of water around the plant. I was proceeding ^{west} west on Main Street at that particular time, and I got to Baken Park, and I could go no farther, I met this water that was rising quite rapidly, and so I turned, I ~~didn't~~ do not have radio contact with the ~~mayor~~ mayor, because I'm on the public works frequency and he's on the police frequency, so I turned around and went back down to the police department to see if I could make contact with him there. At that time, of course, fires broke out and the police department ..and I discussed this situation, and so I decided that I'd reconnoiter a little bit and see what was happening. And of course then by twelve o'clock the police department was completely inundated. And it was about 12 o'clock that I came back and they had evacuated. And I went up on the, I went up to then where they relocated, up on top of Star Hill and talked to them a little bit and decided then that probably we should open up Defense headquarters. So I went down to the courthouse and Ron Stevenson and the sheriff were there, and the Civil Defense girl was setting it up, God bless her, she started almost immediately getting that thing set up and she was really had everything all ready for people to sit down and get that thing going.

EH This was Ila Cannon, the operations officer.

LS Yes, yes. Mm-hm. And my first, my first thought of course was to get water and blankets if we had any to places such as , well, the auditorium where we were going to bring people, and we did that, and my next thought, as far as public works is concerned is the plant was, was of course put off of commission, I found this out by that time, and instructed people to shut their water off, decided that that's what we'd do, shut their water off where it came into the house, .And then they could use the water that they had stored in their heaters. And then the next thing was to try to figure out how we could (put) equipment to go at whatever it was we had to go at when the flood receded. I didn't , really, in my own mind, didn't have any idea of what we would face in the morning, but I did get two or three contractors in to help us get started on this type of thing. This would, in my mind at that time, would probably clean up to get into where people needed to be rescued and this type of thing, also to get the water plant going as soon as we could. Still, I really didn't realize what we were up against. I just couldn't sitting in the courthouse couldn't comprehend the damage that we'd finally received and the deaths that we'd finally ended up with, possible at all. And of course I suppose it was , I imagine it was about dawn when I really realized that we really had a terrible thing on our hands.

EH And you talked about the water coming over the spillway, or not over the spillway but over the dam at Canyon Lake earlier in the evening. About what time was that?

LS Well, that , as I mentioned before, at seven o'clock or thereabouts when I got the call, and I came down to the PD and the mayor was here, and I mentioned also that I had called all my superintendents. When I called the parks superintendent, his wife answered, and she said, "He's already, he's at the lake." I assumed that she meant he had already gotten the report and gone to Canyon Lake, because our standard order of procedure on, on the , on Canyon Lake was to, where we had a report ~~xxxx~~ of such a nature, flooding that is that we'd go out and open the ~~px~~ spillways to let the lake down so that when the, crest came in, why , then we could shut the gates down somewhat and , but at least temporarily temper the water. And so it dawned on me some time later, let's say, oh, quarter to 8 or something like that, that she said he was at the lake, but I didn't question her as to what lake and maybe she meant he was fishing. So I went out to Canyon

LS Lake myself to check to see that he was there. And ran into quite a bit of rain, and the park department employees were down at the , at Canyon Lake, at the spillway, and they had opened up the spillway gates a little bit. And incidentally, Bill had gone fishing at another lake, and that's what she meant, but when he ran into the rain he returned, and so .. we , I made sure then that the spillway, the park department was opening the spillway gates, letting the water through, and then I returned to city hall to talk with the mayor and the police chief. And about that time, why, I'd no sooner gotten back than they called me and asked me to come out to the park again because they opened the gates wide open as I had instructed them to do, and the water was coming through in such a quantity that it had a...made a hydraulic jump in the chute out of the spillway. And this means that the water is actually rises up in the air quite rapidly at some point. And they were afraid this might be endangering the spillway, and that's why they asked me to come out and see what I, what my judgment was on the situation. And it did look like probably should shut the spillway gates down, but I said before we did that we should check to see what was happening to the water in the lake, whether we were in actuality lowering the lake or whether it was raising, and actually, we weren't doing anything, the water was coming in as fast as we were letting out, the water was just holding steady. And so I remained there for a while to watch it, and all of a sudden the little boat dock that we had for the paddleboats came downstream and jammed into the spillway. And there was, there were quite a few park employees there, there was some fire department men, and a lot of people that had just come in to actually give their services, some I suppose were there just to watch, but anyhow, they all pitched in and tried to dislodge this dock from the spillway, and they couldn't get the job done. And the water started to rise immediately. So it was at this point that I told Bill Nordemeyer, the street , or the park superintendent, that I thought we should go out and check to see what was happening ~~about~~ around the beach end of the lake, because the water was getting pretty high in the dam, and I thought it might be coming around behind us. By that time it was raining awful hard, so I drove out there and I told Bill that I would let them know what was happening when I got there. By radio. And I got up there,

LS and you couldn't see anything because it was raining so hard that I drove on the road to one beach and actually drove right into a lake, it was , I would judge a foot to two feet high. At that time coming around the end of the dam up by the Canyon Lake Club. So I radioed back to them to evacuate the park, and by this time I suppose it was , maybe 9:30. Time escapes me a little bit on that . But ..the water was coming around the end and I didn't want the men to get trapped in there. I Really at that time hadn't had any reports that would indicated that the dam would be taken out. Any reports of such vast quantities of water. I did feel however, coming around the end quite deep and probably flood some area,s but my main purpose was just to get the men out there so they weren't trapped in the park. And they did get out immediately, and as far as I know, none of them went back or stayed in there, Bill said they got them all out. But I think that was about 9:30.

EH Then after, I presume you stayed up all through the night at Civil Defense headquarters.,

LS Yes. Yes, this is correct, I stayed up , stayed at Civil Defense headquarters all night, as a matter of fact, somewhere around dawn I went out and to look around and see what was happening, and actually, water was still high, and so I went back to Civil Defense headquarters, and then I actually stayed there from then on, for the next , that night, the next day, and I guess the next night. And the next day, I think.

EH How did, how did things look to you when you did go out around dawn? Could you see much at that time?

LS I was, well, actually I had a strange thought when I went out that morning, course the reports were coming in ~~xxxxx~~ how, you know, how people were lost and , and how they were in trees, and that sort of thing, so it was kind of a sad thing, and I went out, at dawn, the birds were all chirping and singing, and I thought, well, they're about the only happy thing there is around. But , so I went down and looked like East Boulevard and other places, and the devastation was just beyond anything I could have possibly comprehended. I just didn't think there could be that much damage done in that short a while. Sometime, I forget, when it was now, but I did look at the area, or look at the flooded area from the air. The corps took me out in the helicopter, and I looked at that. I believe it was around noon that day. And ~~they had been~~ may have been afternoon, but I

LS could see then that from the damage done above the lake, as compared to what was done below the lake, that the dam had very little significance, the breaking of the dam had very little significance in the total flood picture downstream from the dam. And also, in inspecting the dam, it's my opinion that the water probably came over the top of the dam for a distance of probably 400 feet, for probably 20 minutes, looking at the part of the dam that didn't go out that has erosion on the downstream face of the dam. And what I think happened was that the water did come over the dam for that twenty minutes, eroded, weakened the dam so that ~~xxxxxxx~~ when this big water did come into the, into the lake it just exploded the dam. Now, that's my theory on how it happened, I don't know that, I haven't talked to anybody that really saw it go out, although there must have been someone in Falls Drive area that saw it happen. Another, excuse me, a little calculation that I've made mentally, I haven't taken time to make any calculations, exact calculations, I don't even know that it's even possible, but I think there was about 640 acre feet of water in the dam at the time it was going over the top of the dam. If you put this in terms of something else, such as the original townsite which is a mile square, that's 640 acres, so put an acre, foot of water on the original town site, you have 640 acre feet which is equivalent to what was in the dam. You look at the devastation that we had and area we had, it covered about half the original town site and some of it as much as twelve to fifteen feet deep, probably. So you can see that the water in the dam was insignificant. The other point is, and I haven't checked this out, but they tell me there's 64,000 acres in the Rapid Creek drainage area between Rapid City and Pactola. Put a foot of water and it would be something less than that probably, but put a foot of water over that and 640,000 acre feet. Again, another good comparison as to what came through as compared to what was in the dam. Now, we didn't have a foot of water over all that dam, according to the reports that they were able to gather, it was probably a minimum of six up to a maximum of a foot. So probably had an average of three quarters of a foot, still tremendous amount of water compared to what was in the dam.

EH now, I've heard people talk about a wall or walls of water. You mentioned water rising rapidly in the Baken Park area when you came through there at one point. This was no

EH wall of water that you saw.

LS No. The reports that ..thzt I know of as far as wall is concerned is the, really not a wall, actually dispell the wall and that was by the water treatment plant, a nd they said the water rose very rapidly in a matter of a few minutes was up to three feet around the plant. Did not come down there in a wall. The wall, the water that I ran into at Baken Park, acutally it was on West Main just east of Baken Park. The water was ~~going~~ coming from the west on Main Street, and it was just a blanket of water that was going down the street and it, by abserving it you could see that it was getting higher, but there was no wall of water. I would assume when the dam broke, however, that there probably was a roll of water that came out of that dam when the dam broke. But one of the reasons that that roll wouldn't continue is because of all of the houses and the trees and the bridges and everything that are in its road that it would slow down and disperse itself as a wall. So very shortly thereafter, there wouldn't be any wall I'm quite sure. People , I talked to Harold ~~Burke~~Buckingham who said that the water rose very rapidly at his house, but there was no wall.

EH Now where was his house located?

LS Now, his house is located..right across from, south across the creek from the park department building in Sioux Park. You know, he's halfway between, let's see, 32nd Street and Sheridan, yeah, Sheridan Lake Road and 32nd Street.

EH Did the water take his house out?

LS The water didn't take his house out, it wentright through it, it busted in the front door, the water got up I think about , oh, I believe four or five feet high and then it busted the front door in and , and went through the house and broke out the windows in the back and just flowed right through the house. His house is of masonry construction and that's why it stayed.

EH going back to your actions after you made this tour about dawn the mrrning of Saturday Jun 10 and came back to Civil Defense headquarters, what did you begin to do at that point?

LS At that point the, the , tried to put together then was as to how to get the water plant in operation as soon as possible, get help to ...or try to organize to get

LS some crews together, equipment crews together, to go out with the people that would be looking for bodies. And we tried to decide what would be the best equipment, such as a truck and maybe some kind of a , a motor along with that, and tried to equipment, find it, so that we could put it out with a crew, as these, as the volunteers come in for the search for bodies. Course the decision had been made that first thing was to look for the deceased. And course we hadn't, felt we had to have some equipment to assist in this effort.

EH This, this was after the initial search and rescue for people living, after..

LS Yes, that's right, that was after that. This, this, this of course , the attempts to get these people, course, was started almost simultaneous with the flood.

EH And that went on through the night.

LS And that went on through the night, that's right. And as dawn came, fo course there was more of them that, you could see them, but the fortunate thing about it was that the National Guard was here and they helped immensely here with the heavy equipment and getting these, and also there was quite a few volunteers with boats and this type of thing which, tried to rescue those people.

EH The decision was made, and you've mentioned it, to have people turn off their water because of the danger of possible contamination. But evidently the water supply at least system never became contaminated.

LS Well, yes, as a matter of fact, there wasn't any of our supply that was ever contaminated. And at the time that we directed the people to do what we did, that is, shut their water off, it was , we had, again , no idea whether the water was contaminated or not. We also did not have any idea as to when we would get the plant back in operation. We also did not know how many mains were broken and this type of thing. So therefore, we decided the astute thing to do was to say the water was contaminated and act accordingly. The worst thing that could have, worst thing that could have happened to us would have been that we'd have some kind of an epidemic because we didn't take all the precautions we possibly could. Actually, we have three level system in Rapid City under water system, the high, the low, and then we have what we call the very high. And the very high system was not hurt at all, and those people did have water all the time, and I imagine

LS that , that they probably used it all the time. ~~XXXXXX~~ Some of them probably ~~needed~~ heated it, but , and on the high system, actually, there was water in that system most of the time. The low system, however, is where, well, just because of its nature of being low is where the creek crossings were, and of course these were, some of these mains were broken. And ..also, this is where all the services were interrupted, so we had all of those leaks which completely depleted the lower system. We could have told people in the two high systems that they could use that water earlier than we did, the plant actually was in operation , I believe, I can't remember now whether, I believe by Sunday night we had the plant operating. But of course we had a little problem of building up some pressure, and it, we felt that , well, we knew that not all of the people knew what system they were on. And so to say that A could use it and B could not just wouldn't work, and so until we got final clearance and acceptance by the tests made by the state of South Dakota, we really didn't give an all clear on our water system until that happened, which I think was seven days after the flood.

EH Well, whether by design or by accident, it was also somewhat important in the public safety standpoint, to have some stored water for firefighting purposes in some of these areas.

LS You surely, you want that, so if you can save, this is, this is the thing we wanted to build up our pressure in our system so that at least we had our storage at least half full, and of course we had high level system by the seventh day, we had a high level system completely full, and the low..

(end of side 1)

EH During the time that the water, then, was really not available for use, even though some people might have used it, how was the water problem handled?

LS The, we didn't, of course, ~~we~~ know when we'd get our supply going, let's, let's say this is the morning of the tenth. And we knew that we couldn't, we did have cans of water that we had put out to the emergency station, but this didn't take care of the other people when their supply in their tanks had, was, became depleted. So we knew we had to do something else, and we decided to tanks of water then that we would get from ~~the~~ wells

LS that were on high ground and that we knew about, that water we knew wouldn't be contaminated. And the water to strategic spots in all parts of town so that people could come to those spots and get some water. Our problem was where we could get the tanks, and we decided that we would clean out, get the contractors watering tanks and clean these out, and, for this purpose, so that they would, so that we put water in them, we wouldn't pollute that or have non water there. And so we ~~had~~ decided on, we decided on doing it in this way when the, the man that hauled water for a living come in and offered his tanks to us. And then the, the creameries and milk producers came in and they offered theirs and it was really a godsend the way people responded, and actually where we ~~xxxxxx~~ thought we'd run into a problem, they'd solve it for us. And incidentally, along this line, I had talked to some people in EPA about this, and they said that they'd be, probably want to set this up as part of their organization in order to handle it, and they wanted to know how we ~~xxxx~~ handled the situation because they had, in other places people had been at a loss as to how to cope with this, and they wanted our advice to see how we handled it, and the point that I told them was actually, ours didn't happen by design; actually, the people responded so well that they solved the problem for us, and I, there was a lot of inconvenience as far as water was concerned, but nobody went without water. And the other thing that we did, is that we asked the Guard to bring in their water company, and they had two or three (airgulators) and we felt that we may need this also to supplement our supply. And so I believe that their company was down in Nebraska, and so of course it was going to take them a couple of days to get in here, and they did come in and they did set up, and actually how much water we used from their source, I, I don't know. But we're sure thankful that we had a resource like that to draw on, whether we used it or not. And I think this is important for other people that might have such a thing to consider, both of these aspects. The thing is that there are clean water tanks available and that generally there's a National Guard water company somewhere in the ~~xxx~~ area that you can bring in within a couple of days.

EH Did we have any other significant equipment or problems as far as the city was concerned during the early hours of Saturday and Sunday after the flood?

LS Well, of course the , the whole problem as I see it now was that we decided we had a big cleanup to do, and what we had to get at it right awya, which there's no question in my mind about that, and we had to 9, a big problem of finding the equipment av ailable to do the job in ~~xxx~~ a short a time as possible. Actually, as I look at it in retrospect, probably, it worked out fine the way we did it, in other words, we started getting our contractors together and hired them to go ahead and do it. Actually, the , the government repsondedmuch faster than I had expected, and the Corps of Engineers was in here letting contracts, and it would now appear to me that we should hot have acted so hastily and allowed the Corps to take over all of the cleanup project, because now the city has a million dollars that we're gonna have to pay out to the contractors, and sure we'll get it back from the government, but it does hurt our treasury in this interim period until we can get money from the government and really we can't expect the contractor to carry the burden either. So we're going to have to extend our general fund monies to pay for this and then be reimbursed by the federal government. Whereas if the corps was handling it all we wouldn't have to do that and it wouldn't deplete our resources, financial resources, nor would we be losing interest on that money. And they responded so fast that we gained a day on them and that's about all. So, if anything happened that, along that line that I would change is that I would say that we acted too hastily and were, I would say we should be commended for it , but by the same token I wouldn't do it again, wouldn't be my advise to do it ~~again~~ that way again.

EH Well, of course, looking back, I think that's easy to see; in the situation we were in, however, at the time..

LS That's right.

EH I think the action we took is the proper action to take, I think government (has) to respond as quickly as it can to such .

LS I do too, it's, especially, see, at that time that we made that decision, we didn't know when, well, like I said before, we didn't think the federal government could respond that fast, and they did.

EH There's another aspect of the problem which I don't think I've discussed with anyone,

EH and (that's) the problem for debris disposal. This tremendous amount of debris under contract to removal through the city and beyond, and what, what were you looking at in that regard?

LS Actually, earlier you asked me what I saw when I went out the first morning and looked at it. I saw a tremendous problem from a standpoint of cleanup. I also saw a problem as far as where to put it. It looked like such an enormous thing to me that I just couldn't possibly see that we could get it in our solid waste site that we had without completely dissipating our resources at that site that we expected to last until 1980. But by the same token, I felt that there was, that it had to be disposed of, and so we should give it a try and then if we needed some other area we'd just have to find it. And especially for carrying on thereafter. We did think that it would probably be inadvisable to bring all of the material from the west part of town through the gap clear out to the sanitary land fill which is on the east part of town. So we decided to look for something in the west part of town, and looked at several sites, and for quite a while completely overlooked a quarry site that the city owned that we'd just abandoned within the last thirty days. That is abandoned from the standpoint of doing any more quarrying. And so I don't know who first suggested the idea, but someone happened to think of the quarry, and actually it, it turns out ~~xx~~ as, in my mind any rate as a very expedient way of handling two problems. One was dispose of the material that we had to dispose of, and the other is to make a quarry which was ~~was~~ unsightly, but more than that, on one side quite dangerous, so we were taking care of that problem at the same time, and I, I realize with all the materials in there and stuff this ground ~~xxx~~ will settle for years, but the point is that we'll make it a no building area and so what does it harm if it does, we'll have an area that ~~xx~~ at least is filled, if not completely, partially, and a great part of the sheer wall that was on the south side will be safe. For someone that might accidentally fall over. The other thing that we've done is we've actually determined that that quarry is not going to be ~~xx~~ used again, which is probably a good idea. Oh, and the other thing that I didn't, I failed to mention was as vast as that mound of material looked, when you get it out and spread it over a piece of ground like our waste area out there and put on an 8 foot to a 10 foot lift, it's surprising how little ground it actually is taking.

EH Let's see, that's regular..

LS That's, that's the regular disposal site. I, so, in reality it's going to take very few years of usable time from our estimated life of that sanitary land fill. We're just raising one area up a little higher than we probably would have originally.

EH I'm sure that you've had numerous occasions in the past to check the records on past floods; to your knowledge, has there ever been a time when there was this much or more water that came in any flood through Rapid City?

LS In my estimation and I only have the records that I was able to collect a few years ago to establish on a map in the engineering department the flood of 1907. Actually, we, we plotted several floods, but the one in 1907 is the one that's outstanding. And actually, that inundated the same area that the 1972 flood did, and maybe a little bit more area, according to what data we could gather. Which indicates to me that the 1907 flood was a worse flood than 1972 flood in the amount of water that came down, in other words, there was a greater amount of water that came down in 1907 than in 1972. The reason I say that is because I doubt very much if there were any trees, at least there were probably very few trees in the flooded area at that time. There were almost no bridges in 1907, and there were no houses probably west of West Boulevard in 1907. So the water really had a free flow compared to 1972 when it was retarded at every bridge, retarded by every house and every tree, and therefore if that happens the water will build up and spread out farther with the lesser amount of water. So I think 1907 there was more water. Now, they tell me, and I haven't talked to them personally, but I've been told the Corps of Engineers estimated the water that came down this time as somewhere upwards towards 30,000 cubic feet a second at , at one instantaneous time or at its peak, whereas in 1907 it was only somewhere around 20,000. Which doesn't agree with what I say, so I can't explain that part . The reason that I have the data of the 1907 flood and the other flood is because in 1962, well first of all in 1952, we had a flood that was, didn't come anywhere near what we had in 1972; 1962 we had a ~~xx~~ flood that did damage to some homes in South Danyon, and also Rapid Creek was very high; so we reconstructed, then, what had happened in the past, and , and it was quite obvious to us that what we were doing ' was wrong as far as building was concerned, number one, ~~xxx~~ number two, as far as doing

LS nothing to control the floods (is concerned). And so the engineering department started right after the flood in 1962 to put together a, a request to have another study made, and I say another study because previous studies had been made in Rapid City by the Corps of Engineers for Pactola Dam and other reasons, to put together a study to see if it would be feasible at all to number one, place another dam on Rapid Creek, and number two, a series of metering dams on all the tributaries, main tributaries that contributed to Rapid Creek between Pactola and Rapid City. And actually we had both the soil conservation service and the ~~Army~~ Corps of Engineers very interested in this project, and I believe they were willing to proceed with it. We had our application to all the agencies that we needed to have it through to get it to Washington, and did get it as far as Washington. There it was viewed, when we had a vote here in this Hills area for a soil conservation district, sub-district, and we passed it. And a man by the name of Phil Schroeder was mayor at that time, and he had to go to Washington on some matter and I asked him if he would try and find out what was happening to our application. And they dug it out of some files in Washington, I don't know which one, and told him that he'd have to take it back now that we had a soil conservation sub-district and get a priority set on it. And of course from that time to now, of course, it's become a part of the whole sub-district problem, and of course the sub-district then you have to make a feasibility study, and within the last year we received that study ~~of~~ the sub-district did, and I don't think that my, or that the engineering department suggestion for metering dams was a part of that, but they did have other dams that they talked about and all of them they said were not feasible under the law, under the existing laws that they had to abide by to find whether it was economical or not.

EH How well do you feel that the city was prepared to, to deal with this kind of emergency?

LS Well, first of all, I feel that the Civil Defense structure ^{that} had been ongoing since 1952. did have some meetings and practice sessions that I thought actually spoke well for the organization, and actually it showed itself in what happened now. As far as being prepared for this type of thing, I'd say we were totally unprepared with that exception, I think that those practice sessions did show that the city responded quite well and

LS reacted to what had to be done, although it took us a little while to realize, I think, what had to be done. Moreover, I think that in saying, in answering that question, I'd have to rely, I think it's a relative thing, and I think I'd have to rely on all of the response that I received from people, from, that interviewed me from various news media across the United States. And they ~~didn't~~, they were asking me questions, I wasn't asking them, but all of them, or not all of them, but several of them commented that they had never seen a response by a city to such a type of disaster with any greater speed. So whatever it was, we showed some expertise. More than that, I talked to a representative just yesterday morning from Governor Reagan's office in California, and they didn't come out here especially, I guess what they're doing, because California has more than it's share of disasters, they're going to all disasters and talking to people. But, he said to me that, at the end of the interview, that he had picked up several points here in Rapid City that he was taking back, and he was going to be critical of the state and... of California because they hadn't some things that we had done. So I think that part of it was by design, the other was by the, probably by the people that just live here and responded, that our reaction was probably greater than we could really expect.

EH You were able, thought, to get response from all of your department heads who were within the city.

LS They, I, the department heads and the people in ~~the~~ each department responded magnificently, and it's hard to say that there was any one of them that was outstanding, they all did a tremendous job. However, I think that Mr. Wessel directed his end in getting the water supply back at something that, well, you wouldn't imagine it could be ~~done~~ done. And whenever I talked to them he knew where all of his people were and exactly what his position was, he did a tremendous job. But they all did.

EH He had a rather severe personal problem as a result of the flood ?

LS That's right. He went down to save the plant and lost his house and his car, he lost everything he had. Course, ^{we} you didn't know that for a day and a half, cause he didn't get home to find out.

EH Are there any other significant things that you feel should be added here?

(END OF INTERVIEW)

LS I don't believe that I can think of any right at the moment, Earl, that fit the situation

