

WORKING IN THE DWP ELECTRIC PLANT

KENNETH EVERETT YOUNG

Interviewed by Dick Nelson

One of a series of oral histories covering the growth and development of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power as seen by the participants - its employees.

Produced by

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Biographical Notes

Kenneth Everett Young

Born in Saint Cloud, Minnesota, May 4, 1914. The third of ten children.

Parents: Warren Clarke and Mable (Gehrenbeck) Young.

Married: Lulu Mae Beardslee, June 7, 1935, in Los Angeles, CA.

Children: Hazel Ann (Young) Arey and Gail Lou (Young) Mackie.

DWP History: January 15, 1942 - Assistant Electric Plant Operator
June 1, 1974 - Retired as Chief Electric Plant Operator

This is to certify that I have reviewed this transcript and attest that it is true and accurate. Also, by my witnessed signature below, I grant the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, or its designee(s), sole right to use this material in any way, and for any purpose, it deems appropriate.

Kenneth Everett Young 2/2/92
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TAPE NUMBER: 1, SIDE ONE

KENNETH EVERETT YOUNG

GIVEN TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1991

AT

HIS HOME IN NEWHALL, CALIFORNIA

INTERVIEWED BY DICK NELSON

NELSON: Okay Ken, would you fill us in on your early years - where you were born, growing up, going to school, etc.?

YOUNG: I was born in Saint Cloud, Minnesota on May 4, 1914. I am the third child of ten kids that was in the family. We moved to

California in 1922 living in the Boyle Heights area. Went to Soto Street School, which by the way is still there. Then we moved to Santa Monica. I went to John Adams Junior High. We moved back to Los Angeles in 1929 and went one semester at George Washington High School then transferred to Fremont High School where I majored in auto electrics and graduated in 1932.

In the depression years I did a lot of odd jobs and finally ended up making transformers primarily for radios at that time. I worked for INCA Manufacturing Company until 1942 when I went to the Department of Water and Power. My first job was at Receiving Station B (RSB) and I was there for a little over a year and then went into the distribution stations in 1943 to 1947.

NELSON: Let me back you up, we're covering too much ground. I have a couple of questions. How come the family moved out here from Minnesota?

YOUNG: 1922 was kind of a depression year and my dad was a stone cutter and he found work out here so he moved out, got a job and then we moved out.

NELSON: What do you mean stone cutting?

YOUNG: He did primarily grave stones. When I was in it, I was more in building stone. I was in it for a while. My crowning achievement is, if you have ever been at the L.A. Times building, the front building where it says, "L.A. Times?" Well my dad did

the one across that says, "L.A. Times" with two eagles on the side, another fellow and I did those. He did the carving and I ground the chisels for him.

NELSON: What year was that?

YOUNG: 1930 I think.

NELSON: That's when that building was constructed. Who were you working for? Was he working for himself?

YOUNG: Bly Stone Company.

NELSON: Your father stayed in that business his entire life?

YOUNG: Yes. He died in 1938.

NELSON: How did you learn about the job availability at DWP?

YOUNG: I don't remember if I read it in the paper or something, but there was a fellow at church that was an operator. I can't remember his name. I talked to him and he took me down to Distribution Station 12, (DS 12), showed me around, showed me what the Distribution Station was all about and a few things and, of course, with my auto electrics, I had some understanding of electricity, more DC than AC, but I could relate to it. I wasn't real happy with my job in the factory any more and I won't go into

detail on that, but I was just looking for something else. I had tried the postal exam, but the year that I took the postal exam there were 25,000 who took it. I was looking for something that would be stable, so I started with the Department.

NELSON: Were you living at home at that time?

YOUNG: No, I was married.

NELSON: Well, let's talk about how did you meet your wife?

YOUNG: I met her at the Westland Methodist Church.

NELSON: Where was that church?

YOUNG: 89th and Main Street in Los Angeles. We lived right across the street from it. I was janitor of that church. That's my first church work -I was a janitor at that church for a couple of years.

NELSON: You literally started at the bottom?

YOUNG: Started at the bottom. Then I became an operator which is, as many of them call them, "moperators" and stayed at mopping the floors.

NELSON: Did you get a little subsistence for that?

YOUNG: Yes, I think \$10 a month I got for being a janitor.

NELSON: That was strictly a second job?

YOUNG: I was still at home at that time. That was in 1930 and, of course, I didn't leave home until 1935 when I got married.

NELSON: How long had you known your wife before you were married?

YOUNG: Well, when we moved here in 1929, she was going to the church and I lived right across the street so I knew her. We started going more or less steady in about 1932, I guess. In 1933. She had a girl's group and she'd say, "Will you take my girls here or there or someplace." I had a car and so I took them and she got more and more involved with me, so she finally got me.

NELSON: What kind of a car did you have?

YOUNG: My first car was a 1922 Chevrolet. Then I had a 1923 Ford. The first car I really bought was the Model T. I bought a Willys Night on the day of the 1933 Long Beach earthquake.

NELSON: That earthquake was remembered by everyone who was here. Where were you when it occurred?

YOUNG: We were eating supper when it hit.

NELSON: And you weren't too far from it.

YOUNG: About thirty miles, I guess. We lived in the south end of Los Angeles.

NELSON: Was there any effect in your immediate neighborhood or your home?

YOUNG: They lost lights east of Main Street -- Edison, of course, served parts of L.A. at that time, and east of Main Street was a lot of Edison and so a lot of friends came over and stayed at our house and I got tired and went to bed, but I slept on the front porch and every time it would shake, they'd all run outside across the porch, so I didn't get too much sleep that night.

NELSON: Living in Minnesota, had you heard about these California earthquakes at that time?

YOUNG: Not too much, no. They didn't really concern me too much.

NELSON: Didn't dismay you from staying?

YOUNG: No. They still don't. I can't get too hepped up on earthquakes.

NELSON: You came of age pretty much in the time, at least out here, when we went through the depression. How did that affect you or the family?

YOUNG: My dad was sickly and, of course, people weren't buying gravestones, they'd rather buy stuff to eat so the business was very poor. All us kids worked. I was pumping gas when I was 15. 16 I worked in the stone shed essentially all summer. They had jobs then so I worked. I worked my first job when I was nine years old peddling papers on the corner of 7th and Boyle. When I went to Santa Monica, I delivered papers until we moved back to L.A. and then I worked in service stations, mowed lawns, anything that I could. All of my sisters worked - baby-sitting, house cleaning. I have a sister that is a better lawn mower than I. We made do. We got some groceries, but they didn't give us food stamps in those days. You took a gunny sack and went down and they'd throw vegetables and everything in your sack and you took it home and prepared it.

NELSON: This was a give away type program in which they'd pull a truck up or something full of something?

YOUNG: You went to a center to get our goods which helped out, but primarily we made it pretty much on our own.

NELSON: Were you hired in a permanent position, or was it a temporary, or do you recall?

YOUNG: At the Department?

NELSON: Yes.

YOUNG: It was a permanent.

NELSON: And that position was...

YOUNG: Assistant Electric Plant Operator.

NELSON: Your first assignment was at..?

YOUNG: Receiving Station B. (RSB).

NELSON: Where is that located?

YOUNG: 96th and Central. I went downtown, reported to Ed Russell, and he sent me out to RSB at about 11:00 a.m. I think. Benham was chief. He said, "Go home and be back here at 11:00 p.m. tonight." That was the last daylight I saw for over a year.

NELSON: Who was Ed Russell?

YOUNG: He was the Engineer of Distribution, I think they called him, his title.

NELSON: And then the other gentleman?

YOUNG: Benhasm was the chief operator at Receiving Station B.

NELSON: Do you recall his first name?

YOUNG: No, I don't.

NELSON: What were your duties there?

YOUNG: Primarily cleaning, inspections. Of course, on the graveyard you couldn't do much outside especially at that time, because this is just a month after Pearl Harbor and everybody was crazy. They were hiring all the old World War I veterans to guard the yard and we had soldiers patrolling outside the yard. RSB was the main source of power coming into the city from Boulder and they really expected something to happen.

They put big barriers around the Boulder banks. Built thick barriers so that if they were bombed, they couldn't do any harm.

NELSON: Like berms around it?

YOUNG: No, it was a big wall clear above the top of the transformer. They had soldiers around there for a long time.

NELSON: Were they camped there?

YOUNG: No, they camped elsewhere. My first duty when I came on was to make coffee and take it around to all the soldiers on the

outside and my last duty in the morning was to take them to breakfast. There wasn't a camp on the grounds, I can't remember now where they did go, but it was someplace around there.

NELSON: Were these soldiers who were walking guard, patrolling the perimeter of RSB?

YOUNG: Yes, RSB is four blocks long. It goes from 96th to Century and a block deep and so the soldiers patrolled outside the fence and our fellows patrolled inside the fence. Inside around the mechanism, switches, transformers and all the equipment.

NELSON: How many soldiers would you think were on duty at any one time?

YOUNG: About six or seven, because they had a little van and the van was full when I took them to breakfast.

NELSON: Where did you take them to breakfast?

YOUNG: Some little restaurant down on Central Avenue. I don't remember now.

NELSON: Uncle Sam gave them a store bought breakfast?

YOUNG: Evidently where they were staying didn't have the facilities to feed them.

NELSON: You say DWP people were patrolling inside the fence. Were these special security people?

YOUNG: They were hiring then and I don't know if they gave them any training or not. When I was going through the hiring process downtown, I was pushed aside by these guards because they were hiring guards like mad. Of course, people don't realize the panic there was at that time. They talked about what they did to the Japanese, but the panic that people felt was terrific. Here our country had been bombed - never heard of such a thing. I think 1812 was the last time when they bombed Washington, D.C. or something and they didn't know where they were going to strike next so they were hiring. A lot of them were World War I veterans and knew which end of a gun to aim.

NELSON: Were these DWP people armed?

YOUNG: They were armed. Mostly shotguns. Some rifles.

NELSON: Were there any incidences there as far as you know?

YOUNG: Yes, they said that some poor guy went down 96th Street and they yelled, "Halt, halt, halt," and he didn't halt so they put a couple bullets through his car, but that's about all. One incident some guy noticed on 98th Street east of Central there was a house there with checkered shingles, you know how you put them dark and light and it will make a pattern, they found one west of

the plant there about a block with one like it and they said, "Hey those are bulls eyes." Everybody panicked. This is the kind of thing that went on. But nothing came of it.

NELSON: As far as you know there were no incidences of attempted sabotage.

YOUNG: No. I don't know of any.

NELSON: Going back to Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, where were you and how did you hear of the bombing?

YOUNG: We had just bought our first home a few weeks before that and we just moved in and we went to church in the morning and afterwards went home. We had a group that after church on Sunday nights, we always met at somebody's home and we knew that they would be coming to our house that night because it was a new structure not in age. But it was new to us and we spent all afternoon, cleaning the house, straightening it up, never even had the radio on until we got to church that night and everybody was saying that Pearl Harbor had been bombed and here we were all afternoon blissfully ignorant of what had happened.

NELSON: So you were oblivious to it until that evening a number of hours later?

YOUNG: Yes, when we went to church, we found out about it.

NELSON: But you didn't notice any unusual activity in the neighborhood?

YOUNG: Nothing exciting going on.

NELSON: Getting your house clean. Where was that house located?

YOUNG: 59th and Olive. We went to church at 57th and Figureoa so it was very convenient to us.

NELSON: You were still a Methodist at that time?

YOUNG: No, it was a Christian church.

NELSON: You were a Methodist earlier?

YOUNG: Earlier, yes. We left the Methodist church actually in 1933, I guess, when we were going together. We visited a lot of churches and we finally hit this Figureoa Christian Church and there we stayed. Stayed there 15 years and then came up here.

NELSON: Where was that church located on Figureoa?

YOUNG: 57th Street. It's still there.

NELSON: It's still the Christian church?

YOUNG: It's the Church of Christ now which is a non-musical church. They moved out to Crenshaw. They became the Crenshaw Christian Church which later became the Fred Price Church. He bought the old Crenshaw Church before he built his new tabernacle on the old Pepperdine College campus.

NELSON: So you are at RSB and I guess you're the "low man on the totem pole," pretty much, working graveyard shift. How many of you worked and basically were you just dial watchers or what?

YOUNG: There were three men, A, B, and C at that time. The C operator is the top man. He's tied to the board. The B man had charge of the yard and the A man assisted him. On the first inspection, they went together, looked the whole plant over. It took you about an hour.

NELSON: Was this at the beginning of your shift or watch?

YOUNG: Yes, beginning of your shift, 11:00 p.m. We'd inspect the whole shebang then after that, you would alternate about every hour. One of us would go out and in an hour the other one would go out. Primarily we had the control room to take care of, keep the floors mopped, dust and things like this. Other shifts did things outside when it was light, but primarily our cleaning process was inside.

NELSON: Who was your boss there? That was the C operator. Do you remember him?

YOUNG: There were four of them and we'd get different ones because their shifts didn't always correspond with ours. Bill Redman, I remember him, Bill Knight, there were two others, I can't give their names right off.

NELSON: That's okay.

YOUNG: That's been fifty years! It will be fifty years next month.

NELSON: How long did you stay at RSB?

YOUNG: About 13, 14 months.

NELSON: And you were primarily on the graveyard the entire time?

YOUNG: I probably could have gotten off, but it was convenient for me because I was working with boy's clubs and church and I couldn't get a day shift. If I took an evening shift, I'd lose a lot of my activities with them.

NELSON: What were your hours of your graveyard shift?

YOUNG: 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

NELSON: Did you ever see any of the brass? They probably never came around. You didn't see much of them on your graveyard shift?

YOUNG: I was there about five months and I finally went in one day and introduced myself to Benham and I said that my probation period was almost up and I was just wondering what the score was. He said, "Has anybody said anything to you?" I said, "No." He said, "Well it's okay, then, I guess." So I passed my probation, but that was the first time I'd seen him since the day I started. We were always gone by 7:00 a.m. because they would usually relieve us about 6:45 a.m. and they didn't come in until 7:30 a.m. or 8:00 a.m. so we never saw the chiefs.

NELSON: What caused you to leave B?

YOUNG: I got a B appointment and there were no jobs there so I had to go into a DS station.

NELSON: At B when a test came up, you took it?

YOUNG: A new exam, yes.

NELSON: Were there a lot of people taking it?

YOUNG: Yes, there were quite a few of them because they did quite a bit of hiring during that period and I don't remember, I think I was about fourth on the list for B.

NELSON: Was working at the new job at the DS station different from the RS?

YOUNG: Yes, because you had nobody but yourself.

NELSON: There weren't three of you?

YOUNG: Just one man on shift.

NELSON: So you got to work the board and mop the floor?

YOUNG: Both of them, right. And when there's switching to be done, you were responsible to do it, but primarily you kept the place clean and took your readings.

NELSON: What DS was this again?

YOUNG: 45.

NELSON: Where was that located?

YOUNG: On Western.

NELSON: Down in south central.

YOUNG: Around Slauson in there someplace. Then I went to 18 which is over in the Crenshaw area.

NELSON: Were you still working nights or were you on days at that point?

YOUNG: When I went there I went on a relief shift which was all three shifts. You worked two afternoons, one day, and two graveyards. Which was real nice, but somebody screwed it up. For two or three years in 1947 I went in Thursday afternoon, Friday afternoon, and Saturday I swung back for day shift, Sunday and Monday I had graveyard. I got off the shift at 7:00 a.m. Monday morning, didn't have to be back until 3:00 p.m. Thursday afternoon.

NELSON: Pretty nice.

YOUNG: Of course, you'd have two short changes in there and somebody got the idea that that was hard on the person and it shouldn't be done. So they screwed it up and made longer changes, but then your weekends were shorter. Yes, I worked there and then I went to 47.

I was working 47 and I decided that I was getting into a rut, so I bid a job at RSC, but I didn't get it, but I was the first outsider in a couple of years that had even bid on a job at RSC - they just shifted around amongst themselves and they really didn't get a new guy so they said, "If you want to come down, we'll hold your job at DS47 as long as you want to stay at RSC. So I went down and spent I think, about six months at RSC and then I bid RSD on a relief job.

NELSON: Were you still a B operator at that time?

YOUNG: Yes, but at that time I decided I'd like to get out of L.A. In 1947, I bid a job at Division Creek. This is when they opened up system-wide bidding. Before that, hydro was separate and so I said, "Well I'll take a chance on hydro and get out of L.A." So I bid Division Creek.

NELSON: As a B operator?

YOUNG: B operator, still the same classification. I got up there in November and by January, my wife had cabin fever and February her sister got sick, so I sent her home. In May I bid out. She just couldn't stand the loneliness. There were only four houses and there was a little Methodist Church in Independence, but all they had was Sunday morning services and we came out of a church that was running 800 or better and lots of activities and she just couldn't quite take it, so then I bid Powerhouse 2. Came down here in May of 1948.

NELSON: Going back to the Owens Valley, you were a member then, of the "McCullough Electric System" for several months?

YOUNG: I was told it was called that. I was there actually only about six months. From November to May when I bid out. I really only had one run in with the famous McCullough. Had trouble on the penstock and so they shut the plant down and the tail bay had

a mound of leaves and dirt and stuff in it about four feet high and great big and I called and I called and I called Bill Lowe to see if we could do something about it and I couldn't get nobody, so I called one of the other operators in and he and I worked like dogs all day cleaning the tail bay out and, of course, he was on overtime. So I heard about it. McCullough said through Bill Lowe, "That it was not authorized." I said, "Well how often is this tail bay down that we can get in there and do this kind of work?" Then Bill came out and said, "I'm sorry, but McCullough was sitting there telling me what to say."

NELSON: Lowe was his assistant?

YOUNG: Yes and he said that I had to say it, but it was the right thing and we needed it done. McCullough was that way. Nobody did anything without his okay.

NELSON: Why was it called the McCullough Electric System?

YOUNG: That's why, because he was it.

NELSON: He operated pretty independently of downtown?

YOUNG: Yes, downtown. Never came up there.

NELSON: As long as he provided kilowatts?

YOUNG: Kept things going. He was a little dictator and had his own little thing going.

NELSON: Did he do it right though? Did he operate it right other than personality?

YOUNG: Well, no. I take it back. I got in trouble with him one other time. I was the youngest man there, we had four operators and I was the youngest one of the bunch.

NELSON: "Flatlander" to boot.

YOUNG: "Flatlander" too. Well we had one other flatlander there, but two of them were getting all of the overtime and I said, "This isn't right. I'm here. I can stand a little bit of this extra money." So I was in town for some reason, so I went into the office and talked to, I don't think it was Walker then. I can't remember now who the engineer was. I talked to him. I said, "I think it should be divided up somewhat." So I guess he put out a memo that overtime should be divided amongst all personnel at that place. Of course, it wasn't too long then that I left. I guess he was glad that I left. He didn't come up. The other fellow went up the same time I did and his wife never would come up. So he only stayed one bid, which was three months and he bid out and he was almost three months getting transferred back to town so when I got my bid to PP2, I told Bill Lowe, "I'm in no sweat to go. I've got a job there and it's where I want to go, but I'm not

in a hurry." Boy about two weeks, they had the truck up there loading my stuff to take me down to town. So I guess they wanted me to get out.

NELSON: Those Owens Valley jobs, at one time were pretty coveted. Was it difficult getting up there?

YOUNG: No. I got in on my first bid.

NELSON: Well, am I wrong?

YOUNG: For the ones that liked it, it was fine. If they didn't like it... well the canyon was the same way. I came up to the canyon, I think, in 1946 and looked around.

NELSON: Now which canyon is this?

YOUNG: That's San Francisquito. That's the canyon. But they said there wasn't any intersectional bidding at that time and they said, "If you get in here and you don't like it, you either have to threaten to quit or get on your knees and beg to get transferred." Because that's the only way you could move was by transfer. So I didn't bid at that time. Then later when intersectional bidding came in, then you could go in and try it and if you couldn't take the outlands, why you could bid back. So then we came to Powerhouse 2 in May of 1948.

NELSON: Were you still a B operator?

YOUNG: Yes.

NELSON: Going back to McCullough one last time. Can you describe him?

YOUNG: I really don't have a picture in my mind.

NELSON: I've always been fascinated by the McCullough Electric System. But that was done in the water system too. District supers were pretty much autonomous. They had their own operation and apparently as long as the job was done everyone was satisfied.

YOUNG: Well this was when I still had my fellows in the canyon. I said if we've got a beef, let's iron it out. I said, "As long as there are no rumbles, upper brass never came out and bothered us. We could do things much the same and we could have liberties, whereas, if they put it down in writing, you wouldn't have. Later on we got some guys in there, a couple of them that wanted to run to town and every time they did, they lost because they clamped down on them. Out there the big wheels didn't come out, you could kind of make your own conditions.

NELSON: Field conditions, whoever worked for that particular location.

YOUNG: Yes. My fellows, they'd go to Franklin Power Plant. In a truck it's almost an hour down there. Do a job down there. Well, if it came up time to quit, and they had maybe 30, 40 minutes work to do, they'd go ahead and do it without putting in for overtime, because you couldn't justify it. But then there was times I'd let them take off and this is give and take, otherwise the next morning, they'd have to take an hour to drive down there, do an hours job and an hours drive back again. The day was pretty well shot.

NELSON: How did you move from Division Creek? Did the Department provide the moving or did you move yourself?

YOUNG: The Department moves you. The section that's getting you is responsible for moving you.

NELSON: They always did a pretty good job?

YOUNG: Yes, although I got miffed. The chair right here, I just had it covered in a light fabric, this rounded chair here, and this guy, he grabbed the two sides like this and he held it up like this, took it into the house, and his gloves were dirty. Hand print on each side.

NELSON: You were in Department housing at Division Creek as well as, I suspect, other locations, how was that house? Can you describe it a little bit?

YOUNG: You couldn't quite throw a cat out through some of the cracks, but they whistled around. It had two bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen, a back porch and a bathroom. The only problem is we had the front bedroom, we had to go through the kids bedroom into the living room, through the kitchen on the back porch to get to the bathroom when it's ten degrees below 0.

NELSON: Was the bathroom added? It was not the original structure I'd suspect.

YOUNG: No, it had been added on the back of it.

NELSON: How did your kids get to school? They went to Independence?

YOUNG: No, Big Pine by school bus.

NELSON: You had to get them down to the highway.

YOUNG: Yes, had to take them down to the highway, which was a mile or so and when we went in and enrolled them. We had the one daughter in school at that time, and went over to the guy by the service station that was a bus driver and he said, "Oh nuts", because he'd only been coming to Aberdeen and Division Creek was another three, four, miles up there and now he had to make this extra run. I don't know whether it pays more money or it's all part of the run.

NELSON: That was three or four miles north of Aberdeen?

YOUNG: South of Aberdeen. Big Pine was north of Division Creek.

NELSON: Was that a pretty big school at that time?

YOUNG: No, it wasn't. I forget what they said they had. They could just barely field a football team, I think, in high school. It was about that size.

TAPE NUMBER: 1, SIDE TWO

KENNETH EVERETT YOUNG

NELSON: You brought the family down to Power Plant 2 (PP2) in 1947.

YOUNG: 1948, well - yes, they did get in here in 1948. I came in May, but there was not housing and they came later on in the summer.

NELSON: Where did they stay then?

YOUNG: In L.A. She was staying with her mother, well she stayed with her sister who had cancer and took care of her kids while she was in the hospital for a few months, but then in August we came up and lived at Munz Lake in a tent for about a month. That's over in Lake Hughes area.

NELSON: Was that a campground?

YOUNG: Yes, but it brought us together again. I was living in the dorm at Power House 2 and then we finally found a little one room shack in behind Big Oaks Lodge up in Bouquet Canyon and then

I think in October or November we found a house in the lower end of Bouquet in what they used to call Peter's Ranch. We stayed there until April, 1951, when we finally got a house in the canyon. At that time we had more operators than we had housing.

NELSON: As "low man on the totem pole," you took up the "last pickens."

YOUNG: Right, then I finally got one up on the hill at PPl.

NELSON: Where is that?

YOUNG: Well if you drive up the main road and not turn down into the plant, you go around about a mile or so, you go up on the flats. You call them "flats." We had five, six houses, seven houses up there on the flat at that time.

NELSON: They were not recently built? They had been there for some time. There was just a vacancy and opening came up that you got up there?

YOUNG: Yes, an opening came up.

NELSON: I guess that was not the preferred location.

YOUNG: The house we got was very small. One bedroom and we had wall to wall furniture because we had the two girls, but while we

were there, they built a bedroom on. Then we bid an apartment at Power House 2. At that time they closed up the club house and made apartments out of the club house and we got one of them.

NELSON: That was at PP1?

YOUNG: PP2. We stayed there until 1958 when I got a chief's job. In the meantime I had gone up to a C operator at Power House 2 and that's done on bidding. So I finally got enough whiskers that I could get me a C job there.

NELSON: Was that pretty much your first supervision at that point in the C position?

YOUNG: Well with the Department. I was a leader, I had a group in the factory and I had charge of assembling all the specialty transformers before I left Inca. So I had been a supervisor there. But this C operator you're still not a supervisor in a sense, you're more or less in charge of the shift.

NELSON: Be responsible.

YOUNG: Be responsible, yes. You're tied to the board and you give all the orders for switching and anything like that. In 1956 I went up as a chief for the summer. I was up a little better than three months as a chief, summer of 1956 on a temporary appointment. Wiggins and Chris Miller, I think, were there then.

Took kind of extended vacations. So they could hire relief. Then in 1958 I took the exam and passed it.

NELSON: Were these crews at the power plants? At Power Plant 1 and Power Plant 2? Were they intermingled or were they separate crews?

YOUNG: They were separate. The only ones that went were relief operators and most of my time, at PP2, I was a relief operator, which I liked because I got to do things. And it was good because I learned the plant and learned the camps and reservoirs because we'd go out and do maintenance at different places. It helped me when I became a chief, as we would sometimes go to the other plant to help in some job, but not to operate. The operation was separate.

NELSON: I imagine there was quite a contrast between Division Creek and Power Plant 1 or Power Plant 2, was it not?

YOUNG: My break-in at Division Creek was by McGee. He said, "Have you ever worked in hydro?" I said, "No I haven't." He said, "Have you ever synchronized the machine?" I said, "No I haven't." He said, "Well come over and we'll show you. See this switch? See this thing going around? When it comes up there you go ... like that." So he did it and he said, "Okay, now you do it." I went over and banged it in and it stayed in and he said, "Try it once more." I did. "Okay, you're broke in."

NELSON: That's real on-the-job-training, isn't it and brief too?

YOUNG: Yes. Very brief.

NELSON: Chief operator ... how many were there at the plant or the plants?

YOUNG: We had two, they called them, junior chiefs. One at Power House 1 and one at Power House 2. At Power House 2 they had a chief operator and at Power House 1 they had a superintendent and he was in charge of the whole area.

NELSON: He had control of 1 and 2?

YOUNG: 1 and 2 and San Fernando and Franklin. Then if he was off why then the chief operator took over. George Doty was superintendent when I started. Charlie Collins was the chief operator at 2. Later on the relief operators had to go to all the plants.

NELSON: When you got up there, was there still quite a bit of evidence of St. Frances Dam in the canyon?

YOUNG: Yes, you could see the scarf marking on the side of the hill and, of course, the boulders and stuff were still around. The transformers at 2 still had the marks on them because they went down the canyon. They brought them back and welded up the cases and put them back in service.

NELSON: Tell me about the Burma Road.

YOUNG: It's about two miles along, I guess. It starts out at the head of San Francisquito Canyon and runs up into Green Valley. A narrow road. You watched very carefully to see if anyone was coming and tried to find a wide spot so that they could go around.

A couple instances, one day they were taking all the telephone operators on a tour in a big Greyhound-type bus. They came down Burma Road and they didn't quite make one turn. The rear wheel dropped off the side and we had a bus load of women in the plant for about three hours. We had a telephone board there and they took it over until they finally could get a tow truck down from Lancaster and lift the bus back on. So we finally got rid of them. There was a hectic mess there for a few hours.

One other time, I was just going off work and I lived between the plant and San Francisquito Road and I saw a big truck going up there and so I took off after him. He was stopped at the bottom of Burma Road and I pulled up and I said, "You ain't going to make it with this truck." He said, "I've got to be in Palmdale at 5:00 p.m." I said, "You won't do it going up this road." He said, "I've got to try it." He went up about three turns and he couldn't make it so he started backing down and he had just one sweep and then he had a straight sweep down into the bottom of the canyon instead of going around and trying it, he backed up into a canyon and was going to turn around, he had his semi this way and his tractor this way and between 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. that night I finally got him out of there. I went down and got planks

and things to jack up his rig. He finally got around and said, "I think next time I'll listen."

You just don't make it, things are too sharp. Of course, I don't know. I haven't been up it for years because they've got the other road now and whether it's even passible with a car. I think there's a gate.

NELSON: I assume it's rarely used.

YOUNG: Yes. I think there's a gate at the bottom now that won't allow you to get onto it.

NELSON: Was that used sometimes when road conditions down below were bad?

YOUNG: Well, yes. We all used it regularly if we wanted to go north. Because you had 15 miles down to Bouquet Canyon and then go out the Palmdale or come on down into Saugus and go out through MINT Canyon. So we'd just go out that way. No problem. It was a good road except it was narrow and dirt, but most of the time, unless there was a big storm. No, we all used it regularly.

NELSON: You mentioned Ken, that you were in the dorm for a while. Can you kind of describe that and how it was set up and also food service, housekeeping and things like that?

YOUNG: They had housekeepers and they had cooks. They fed you three meals a day and you could get fat very quickly because they had enough food on those tables to feed anybody that wanted to eat.

NELSON: Did you pay for those meals?

YOUNG: Yes.

NELSON: Could anyone come in? How did it work?

YOUNG: Department employees. All the crews. Of course it was for all the single men or men that couldn't get housing, but also the crews stayed up there. From north Main Street to Power House 1 was probably an hour and a half, two hours in a truck. So when they came, they'd come up and stay the whole week.

NELSON: Shot half a day just to and fro at least.

YOUNG: Yes. They all stayed right there. Many of them griped about the food. It was good food, and lots of it.

NELSON: They had an actual cook who was a cook by classification and not somebody who was drug into the kitchen.

YOUNG: No. They were cooks. We had four cooks at each club house. PP1 had a clubhouse and PP2 had a club house. There were

four cooks at each place. When I went in 1948, I think we had close to 70 employees in the aqueduct division, which is 1, 2, San Fernando and Franklin employees. Now I think they have 25. But eight of them were cooks and they lived in the club house. They had rooms there and across the road there was a dorm at 1 and across the creek where the offices are now was the dorm. Also an annex in back, if they had too big a crew, there was just one big room that they could bunk in there.

NELSON: When you were up there in the dorm, were you in a bull pen or did you have a room to yourself?

YOUNG: I had a room to myself.

NELSON: It was pretty much like a motel room? Did you have a bath?

YOUNG: There was a communal bath.

NELSON: Walk down the hall.

YOUNG: Of course we weren't integrated sexually at that time. Everything was men except the cooks and they had their own room. The dorm was all male so if you went down the hall in your shorts, nobody thought too much of it.

NELSON: Were there any women working out? When did the first women come out as workers at Power Plant 1 or 2 or have they ever?

YOUNG: We never had operators that I know of unless there's been since I've left. We never did have women operators. Outside of the cooks, we never had any women.

NELSON: No clerical?

YOUNG: No, they have now at PPl women clerks there, but I had a male clerk all the time I was there.

NELSON: When you were there, how many permanent residents of the dorm were there?

YOUNG: I think there were three of us at 2 at that time. I don't remember now what - there was 3 or 4 at PPl.

NELSON: What did you do for leisure time? You say this was a club house. Does that kind of indicate that there were pool tables or you could sit and listen to the radio, play cards?

YOUNG: You could sit and listen to the radio and they had books, but you couldn't listen to television, there wasn't any. It had big rooms, you could play cards, but they had big chairs in there which you didn't have in your room - real easy chairs. We'd sit

around in the evening and chat, play cards, or read or anything like that.

NELSON: Your family moved up. How did your daughters go to school and where did they go to school?

YOUNG: They went to Saugus Elementary. While we were in Bouquet Canyon, my youngest daughter started kindergarten, so they both went through Saugus schools and both graduated from Hart High. A school bus picked them up.

NELSON: Where is Hart High?

YOUNG: It's in Newhall. William S. Hart school. Junior and senior high was altogether at that time at Hart.

NELSON: Where were they picked up?

YOUNG: Right in front of the house. Well at PP2 they walked down to the bridge. Of course, when we lived on the flats, that's where they turned around and went back, so it was practically in front of the house. When they came past the house to go up and turn around, they'd run out of the house and be right there to get on.

NELSON: I've heard reference to a B school.

YOUNG: Yes, that was gone before I came there. It was a dwelling. They had converted it into a dwelling. I don't know if you are familiar with 2 ... you go across the bridge and the club house is here, the dorm is here, you go up here, you go over to the right about 1/4 mile. It's gone now. That was the old B School.

NELSON: Why was it called "B?" What was the significance?

YOUNG: I don't know except maybe there were a couple of B canyons around there. Maybe they named it after one of the canyons.

NELSON: And these were primarily department kids? There were enough kids there for a one room school, I guess?

YOUNG: Yes. I don't know just when they did consolidate with Saugus and start bussing them in there.

NELSON: Did you get a pretty good deal on rent in the Department houses?

YOUNG: Yes. No rent. We didn't have to pay rent. It was our compensation for living out in the boonies and it was a plus for the Department because we were available at any time. If we lived in town a lot of times and until, well in the 1950's when they built that prison there were no telephones up there. You couldn't call out except call L.A. and have them tie it to a Bell line.

So it was a plus, of course, in those days, it was considered way out in the country and was inconvenient, a long time to get there, and when I went there, the only ones that got housing was operators. The outside men had to live someplace else. Later on they got houses for them when they started cutting down on operators and the houses became available.

When I went there we had three men on every shift at both Power House 1 and 2.

NELSON: So you became a chief operator in 1958. And they were working with the same fellows that you had worked with for many instances.

YOUNG: My first job was chief at Power House 1, which I had never operated. I helped out like I say, but I operated PP2 all the time. It was a hydro plant, but a little different. Pelton wheels rather than frances turbines, but basically operation was much the same and you depend on the guys. As always they tried to pull a few things because some of the guys had been there longer than I and maybe should have had it, but didn't quite make the grade.

NELSON: Well you always get tested a little too, don't you?

YOUNG: Oh yes. They tried to see what they could do to get to me and I'd just let it go and say, "Okay we'll do this," or if they said something here is haywire, you'd go and check it out. So they finally eased off.

NELSON: Those plants you were, I guess was basically 3. You were at Division and then at 2 and 1. Do they each have a personality?

YOUNG: Oh yes. They are all different. An operator goes a lot by ear and when you're walking around, if you hear noises you really don't think about it, but it's like driving your car and something just doesn't sound right. You're not thinking about it, but it registers to you. This is an operator when he walks around, a switch is making a noise or the machine doesn't sound just right and he'll start looking at it. So it's not just looking at meters and stuff, you've got everything - all your faculties working to see or hear anything.

I always likened an operator to a fireman. You see these firemen out there polishing the brass, cleaning this and cleaning that, but when the fire hits, they're on the run. An operator, he's sitting there taking readings, polishing brass, sweeping up, and greasing the machine, but when something hits, pitch changes or something happens, he earns his salary for a long time. And this is what they are, therefore, of course, the thing is that if you can catch noises before they develop into something major, why then you've saved a lot and earned your money.

NELSON: By the time you were chief, now I assume you have changed homes.

YOUNG: Yes, well like I say, we went up on the flats, then we went to the apartment at PP2 and we stayed there until I got the

one at Power House 1. Then about 1960 I guess, somewhere in there, maybe 1963, they cut down and so what had been the superintendent's house became vacant so they put me in it, it's the one closest to the plant. It had a double garage where I could keep the company car in the garage because they were getting cars by then. Before they had to kind of share them.

By now all the chiefs had a car so they could get around because we were becoming more flexible, more universal. It used to be that nobody went down to San Fernando or Franklin except the superintendent or super chief. I think they call them plant chiefs now. So I moved in and I stayed there until I retired.

NELSON: You probably went through a bit of weather down there in that canyon. You see the extremes sometimes don't you?

YOUNG: Yes, I lost a car right there at Power House 1. That bridge right in front of the club house. Didn't know whether I was going to get out of it or not. I came around the corner and water was going over the top of the bridge about up to the first railing and my car stalled and I couldn't get it going to get it back out.

NELSON: Was it because of the high water?

YOUNG: High water and I wasn't on the bridge yet, but I was approaching it and when I came around the corner, I hit it and the car stalled. A couple of fellows were coming back after going

home for lunch in a truck and they threw a rope to me. It looked like a cord, but it was actually a small rope and I was afraid to have them pull me to them because it would sweep me down into the creek so I tied it to the door handle of the car and started going hand over hand on it and I got about half way to the truck and my feet went out, that is one foot and the water was so strong I couldn't bring it down then I'd bring it up and try to get it on the ground and it'd take it out again.

So I finally said, "I coming," and I just started hand over hand and got over into the lee side of the truck and they grabbed me and pulled me around and the car ended up in the creek. The water washed it down into the creek.

NELSON: That was your own car?

YOUNG: No, it was a company car. Down there we used to call "Tony's Quarry," just above Power House 2. It used to go out periodically, there is a sharp turn in the water and it'd take the road out and the mailman used to have to deliver mail to Power House 2. He'd come from Green Valley down, then I had to take it. We'd have to go get groceries for them because a lot of the times the roads would be out for three, four days before they could get them back in. We'd go out the back way.

NELSON: Out the back way would be Palmdale?

YOUNG: Palmdale, over Little Burma. One time that road went out. Bill Niccum and I took the truck as far as we could and then we walked around the breaks up there and walked up into Green Valley where George Harvey had a home and borrowed his car and went in to Lancaster and shopped for everybody, then came back. We had about a half a mile from where we could drive his car to our truck and we had to carry all this stuff down to the truck and unload it then take it down and deliver it.

One time what got me was I said, "This is going to be for three, four days probably just get essentials that you have to have. We get over to Lancaster and going down the list of groceries was 25 pounds of dog food. We brought it all for them until they would get the road back in shape so we could get cars in and out.

NELSON: These problems never affected the power production though?

YOUNG: No. It was all just in roads. One time I was by myself, I went up over Green Valley, came down into Saugus, and was in the Safeway store and all these lists, I'd take a guy's list and go around and get it and put it in the cart, then I'd get another one and put it in the cart and I had a half a dozen of these carts lined up. Their groceries and their list with it, the lights went out and they were out four or five minutes or so, I don't know just how long. When the lights came on, I couldn't find my carts. I started screaming, "Where are my carts?" Well somebody with a

flashlight saw it and thought they were abandoned and took them in the back. It had the lists and everything in them. But they were still all in the carts.

So I got it loaded up and this is one of the things that they had to live with. The road's getting pretty good now. Of course, they've got the road over to Green Valley up high and it won't be affected. See where the old dam was you swing around on the road. You used to go straight on right up close to the creek. Then down below at PP2 where it is real crooked, we'd lose them periodically.

NELSON: Didn't I hear that you had lost or had some problem with a Studebaker Lark there too?

YOUNG: Yes, that was the Studebaker that went into the creek.

NELSON: Oh that was the company car?

YOUNG: Company car.

NELSON: Oh, only once then. You had only really one problem.

YOUNG: Yes. I banged up a few of them, but that was the only one no.... I lost another one on I-5 when I'd taken some of my fellows over there to look Castaic Power Plant over, and we were coming back down I-5, coming around the bend and there's an inch and a half of hail right across I-5 coming down the grade. There were

two cars already tangled up down there in it and I started to ease off, tried to slow down and ease over and was going a little bit too far and I cut back and when I did, I hit that hail and went sideways into these two cars that were already tangled up. They junked that car too.

TAPE NUMBER: 2, SIDE ONE

KENNETH EVERETT YOUNG

NELSON: Ken, one question, you talked about being very active in church activities, did that affect you being out here kind of isolated?

YOUNG: We got involved in a church in Newhall. Well I came in May and at the first of the year they had me appointed an elder of the church.

NELSON: Faster promotion than the DWP.

YOUNG: I was an elder in the church in L.A. and they needed it and we were involved in there from 1948 to 1964 when we left there and started a church in Canyon Country. We were with Canyon Country then until, I guess we finally took our membership out of there in 1980 when I took a church in Arizona.

We've been involved and my girls were involved in 4-H. I put 13 years on the Saugus Elementary School Board, so we were involved with the community as well as church and the plant.

NELSON: Except for those few times a year when you couldn't get out. You always had communications, telephone service, etc. When did you get television?

YOUNG: We started working on that, I think, in 1952. Archie Kerns and I did a lot. He was the C maintenance man, I was the B maintenance man at 2 and we did a lot of work. Boy, we went up and down those hills, time after time, trying to find spots where we could get a picture and finally, went way up on top of the hill, put an antenna up there and ran a line down into camp.

NELSON: So you had your cable TV?

YOUNG: Interesting, we had this Red Thompson, anyway he was good with electronics. He took care of all the radios and stuff and he was learning TV and so he kind of laid out the best way, because we didn't have cable. We had open wire. So somebody got the idea to get department communication guys, they're smart to come up and check it out. So they came up and checked it all out and said, "Well, it's just impossible to get a signal around here." So Archie said, "Well, I know. You want to come into my garage and see some of it?" We had it going. We worked on it for years trying to improve it different ways. They had television.

Then up on the hill, up on the flats, I tried to get TV when I moved up there and so Red designed me a antenna that would just be for low channels because I think we only had a couple of channels so I hooked it up and started walking up the ladder to

put it on the roof to see what I could get and my wife screamed, "Hey, there's a picture, there's a picture!" So I went up and put it on top of the ladder and put four nails in it and that's the way we had TV for a month or so until I designed a staff to mount it on the house. We were pioneers in a lot of ways in getting TV in a spot that was impossible to get it.

NELSON: What about radio reception? Was that pretty good?

YOUNG: Radio was alright. You could do pretty good on radio.

NELSON: What about social activities there in the canyon? Tried to find people that you associated with or you all went your own way?

YOUNG: We had different functions. A picnic in the summer time, Christmas party, and a few things like this. Of course we had a quonset hut up on the flats that we could use for functions of this type. We had get togethers occasionally, but not like in the old days. In the old days they had mostly drunken brawls I understood, but these were quiet.

Of course, after I became chief, I don't drink so I never planned any parties that would be conducive to that. Although summer times at Power House 2 we'd have bar-b-ques and stuff. It was always "BYOB" and some of them got pretty looped at some of those, but I never encouraged it. We didn't have too much of a problem. I understand that in the old days there was a lot of

problems, well they would get drunk and you know sometimes you do things that the other guy would get mad, for instance a guy would get looped and he'd go over and lean on another guy's wife or something, that isn't conducive to good relations. But we never did have much problems that way. We had some good bar-b-ques and stuff that way.

NELSON: Did Fred Mehr follow you?

YOUNG: No, he was ahead of me.

NELSON: He was around for a number of years and I guess his son is still with the Department.

YOUNG: Yes, he's still with the department. He's at District 5, out in West Valley someplace.

NELSON: And the Harries family, they finally got up there, didn't they? They were from Hoover weren't they, or Boulder?

YOUNG: The kids, Louie, Jr. Louie was always in the canyon. Well he had to leave to get his B appointment one time, then he came back. Bob was pretty much in Owens Valley. I think he was at Hoover and then went to Owens Valley. He's retired up there in Owens Valley now. Just got a card from him. A Christmas card. Louie came back and was chief before he died. Yes, I had both of

them when they were snotty-nosed kids. The old man, I was good friends with him, still hear from his wife.

NELSON: Who was he?

YOUNG: His name was Louis too.

NELSON: Was he at Hoover?

YOUNG: No. He was in the canyon. I can't remember now where he went to get his B appointment, but as soon as he could, he came back to the canyon. He liked it there. He was good. Then he finally retired in Big Pine. He's dead. I just got a Christmas Card from his wife. She's still alive. I'm going to go up and see her one of these days. I was real friendly with them.

NELSON: I guess you knew Gene Barrows, didn't you?

YOUNG: Yes.

NELSON: He just passed away.

YOUNG: Did he?

NELSON: Yes, about eight months ago.

YOUNG: Oh, I didn't see it in the Intake. I must have missed that one. Of course sometimes I miss them because we are gone on the road speaking.

NELSON: Well you mentioned a couple of the guys. I guess there are several people here in the canyon as you say who are one or two or three generations of Department people.

YOUNG: Yes, Raggio's is at least three. Vince, his dad, Tony, who was an operator with me. Vince came along when he was just a kid out of school. Then I think his granddad worked in construction on the aqueduct. His uncle, Louie, was a gardener when I came. I liked Louie. Louie and I got along real good.

NELSON: Niccums went back at least two generations.

YOUNG: Niccums' dad was a chief there. Of course, Bill was raised in the canyon because his dad was the chief here at that time. Have you talked to Bill yet?

NELSON: No I have not, but I am trying to. Was he before you?

YOUNG: Yes, well he lived there before me, but he came after me to the Department. He's younger than me. So he came in as a M & CH, that's a Maintenance and Construction Helper, and then he went up to building repairman. He was my right arm as far as outside

of the plant. He and I got along real good. He's a scavenger at heart.

NELSON: You have to be out in the boonies, don't you?

YOUNG: We scavenged like mad. That whole area where the office is, but there was a dorm down that way. That creek is full of old cars and cable that he scavenged every place he could. He'd bring those cars and put them in there. He got a hold of a big old steel cable and wound it through and anchored it down for rip rap so when the water would come in there, it wouldn't take any building out.

I was sitting down in camp one day when one of these storms hit and all of a sudden I saw bundles of insulation come floating by. I said, "They are in the garage up there." We were getting ready to insulate the houses and we had a bunch of insulation stored in there and it took the side of the garage off and floated off all of the insulation.

NELSON: Your kind of talking about how many feet of water sometimes coming through there?

YOUNG: Oh I don't know what it was. Well you can see where the water is now. It came up over that bridge.

NELSON: Were any of the homes ever endangered?

YOUNG: Yes the two on your left as you go into Power House 1 area. It had water in the basement.

NELSON: Down at the bottom kind of?

YOUNG: Yes, they were right along the creek. The first house, we lost the garage on it one time, but we never did lose the houses. They got messed up with water.

One time I was inspecting Fairmont and I was going to come down little Burma and it was mud. Couldn't get through, so I started up over Spunky Canyon to go down Bouquet and water was coming down there about yea deep with mud and stuff so I had to go back through Leona Valley down to Bouquet and come up San Francisquito because there was a cloud burst in Green Valley, but when I got down to San Francisquito, coming up Seco Canyon, the guys were out watering their lawns without a drop of rain. After it drained that whole area it just poured down there. You never could tell.

NELSON: Were there any particular guys, kind of characters, that come to mind that you happen to remember names and any incidents that they were responsible for? There was probably a little clowning around from time to time.

YOUNG: Yes, there was always a lot of clowning around. I must try to think of one guy's name. He was kind of a hypochondriac and he'd come into work and the guys would say, "Boy you don't

look good today." And you know, he'd get so sick, he had to go home. I don't remember who now was chief there. He finally had to put out a memo to stop. But they could get to him. You know, stuff like that.

When you sit there, especially on the board, where you are pretty well tied to the board, you've got to amuse yourself somehow, think up things. Not a lot of horse play that would be detrimental to operation though. A lot of kidding and some guys you could kid and some guys you couldn't.

All in all it was a good crew. They worked together and played together a lot. Of course, now I understand that a lot of them are moving out of the canyon, living elsewhere, so they are not the cohesive group that we were. They're going to have a Christmas party Friday up there, but there's really no place to have a party like we used to have. Like we had in the quonset hut.

NELSON: Do you attend many of those?

YOUNG: I went last year. This year I am going to miss because we are going to be in Arizona, but I've been up to two or three of them.

NELSON: So some of the retirees show up too.

YOUNG: They invite the retirees.

NELSON: That's nice. You had 32 years or so with the Department. Were there any fellows who turned out to be people that you admired and said that, "I'd kind of like to follow this guy's example?" Any of these people stand out in your mind as I guess your bosses or co workers, who impressed you in particularly.

YOUNG: Not really impressed me that much, but most of them were good fellows to work with. Archie Kerns and I didn't always see eye to eye, but on one occasion where I really admired him, I was a B operator and Archie was a C maintenance. Charlie gave me a job of building barriers for all the disconnects there so that you couldn't get to them. You had to open a little door to get to them. We went to install them so we had to take clearance. Well I couldn't take clearance being a B, so Archie took all the clearances, but he never bothered me. It was my job, he let me do it, whereas a lot of guys, because they got the clearance, are going to get in and boss, but I really admired him for that. He's dead now. Not too long ago I saw him before he died. He had diabetes bad, for years. When we would go to one of the chief's parties, he'd say I took an extra shot of insulin this morning so I could have an extra shot tonight.

But on the other hand, I got very disgusted with George Doty. This was when the Gorge was getting going.

NELSON: In the early 50's.

YOUNG: Yes and they were sending him up to kind of oversee a lot of things. In the meantime we were having an outage in the canyon and Charlie Collins had it all laid out. Guys going and doing this job, and that job. Well Doty came in late in the afternoon and he started bossing the job and by evening nobody knew what was going on. He just screwed everything up where Charlie had it all planned out and knew where the guys were going to be because technically you had to space them out. That bothered me. It didn't set good.

NELSON: Did you, over the years, come in much contact with the brass from downtown? You would see the hydro engineer, I guess once in a while.

YOUNG: Frank Walker used to come up often on Friday afternoon. He lived in San Fernando and he'd come up there and spend Friday afternoon because I guess traffic was getting bad so he could shoot down the canyon and get home nicely on Friday afternoon. Of course, he'd maybe stop at Fernando, then the word would go up, "Walker's on his way up! Walker's on his way up!" He was getting close to retirement and I don't think he had an engineering degree. I think he had maybe a license, I think they call it a license engineer or something, so he didn't get beyond the hydro engineer and he'd come into the office there and sit down and talk to me for an hour or so on Friday afternoon and never bothered really anything. So I never had any problems with him. I got to plan his retirement party.

NELSON: Well, do you mean that some of the other hydro engineers or the engineers were a little more distant?

YOUNG: Yes, they'd only come up if there was something doing or something was wrong and sometimes they'd come up to our bar-b-ques when we'd have them. We usually had them on Saturday and they'd come up and some of the guys would Tody around them and they'd figure that they could talk him into something, but Monday morning when they were sober and things would go back to normal., they'd forget about it.

NELSON: Everybody had their agenda. The wish list.

YOUNG: It didn't amount to much.

NELSON: What about system heads or general managers? Did you ever get to see any of them?

YOUNG: I can't remember anything above senior engineer that were coming up.

NELSON: Well apparently everything was running pretty smoothly overall.

YOUNG: That's right. That's why I kept telling the guys, "Don't rock the boat. They don't know we're here."

NELSON: As long as the paymaster knows.

YOUNG: I think it was J. Farren Stevens. I just wrote him a Christmas card, anyway he classified us as "golden kilowatts." He said, "These are golden kilowatts that you're putting out here."

NELSON: Meaning that the plant had long been paid for?

YOUNG: Long been paid for, the water was going through and one time I figured it up and we were putting kilowatts into L.A. cheaper than they were buying oil for the steam plants, not the operation, just the oil. They were nice kilowatts.

NELSON: Sure are. Every one of these hydroplants. So you retired in 1974. What have you been doing since?

YOUNG: Well I retired on Friday, the 31st of May. On Sunday, the second of June, I was ordained into the ministry and the 8th of June I left for Arizona to start a mission work and I was there 1974, 1975, 1976. 1977 I came back. I was senior citizen minister of a church in Canyon Country, then went back to mission in the later part of 1978, 1979. 1980 we left and February of 1980 they asked me to come out and fill in the ministry at the church. They had lost their minister and wanted to know if I'd come out and hold them together until they could find a preacher. It took them five and a half years, but they finally found one.

NELSON: That temporary job only took you five and a half years.

YOUNG: There is nothing so permanent as a temporary installation. In January of 1985, I had five bi-passes and in April my wife had a stroke. So they decided that we weren't going to be there forever, so they went out, they found a preacher. Of course, I had told them after we were there a while, we were in a little rented building when we went there and we started looking for a place to build. So I finally told them I'd stay until we got a building built. It took us five years to do it. The first service in the new building was my last sermon. We still associate with them. When we go out there, I've preached there a couple of times since, but the mission that we work with is right in the same town.

NELSON: Where is that?

YOUNG: Show Low, Arizona. It's a school for Indian kids.

NELSON: And you have been associated since 1974?

YOUNG: Well I actually went on the board in 1973, but we've been actively associated with them since 1974. We've had little "hiatus" here and there like when I preached there in Show Low, I still did a lot of work for them. Did a lot of PR for them, too when I could get away. Then after we left there in the latter part of 1985, I took a couple years to rebuild a house for my

granddaughter and then took a year as resident manager of a Christian senior home up in Atascadero, California, but it was too confining. It was 24 hours a day, seven days a week so I said I worked 40 years so I could go and come as I pleased. So we stuck it out for a year.

Then we left there, that was in 1989 and we were off for a couple of months when Andy, the administrator of the mission said, "Hey you aren't doing anything, you can be our field representative on the west coast." So since then we've been running up and down the coast speaking. Our churches are different.

NELSON: What's the west coast consist of?

YOUNG: Oregon, Washington, California.

NELSON: All the way, border to border? You have your private jet, I take it.

YOUNG: Border to border. I got as far as Seattle with my "black Mafia car," as my kids call it. We got as far as Sedro Woolly which I think is about 50 miles this side of Canada in October.

NELSON: How long have you lived in this home? Or had this home? I guess this is kind of your base.

YOUNG: Mr father-in-law bought it in 1958 and he died in 1968 and we bought it from the estate. Finally got our papers on it in

February of 1971. Our daughter had just moved in. She came from New Mexico and moved in a day before the earthquake of 1971. So technically we've owned it since 1971. I call it a half way house.

NELSON: Or half the time house, anyway.

YOUNG: The twenty years we've had it, we've probably lived in it five years or so. Our daughter in 1971, see I still was in the canyon and they moved out in 1974 and we moved our furniture in and then went to Arizona. So they lived in it about three years then and then our granddaughter lived in it and our grandson lived in it. We had a couple from Oregon that was down here. He was going to school up there, he's in construction, but he could make more money down here so he could continue his schooling up there. So he lived in it all one summer. Other ones that needed it for a few weeks or so, have lived in it.

That was the only time while they lived in here when we came down and we'd stay with our daughter. But most of the time when our grandkids lived in it, we reserved a bedroom when we wanted to come over. So it's worked out real good.

NELSON: One other thing I had forgotten and I made a note of it and you mentioned it again, tell me about the February 9, 1971 big earthquake up there in the canyon.

YOUNG: I didn't quite get to the job. I was heading for it when it started shaking and I ran for the phone. Louie Harries was on and I said, "How are you doing?" and he said, "I'm in trouble." So I pulled my pants on, jumped in my house slippers and ran for the plant and about 2:00 p.m. that afternoon, I got home and got my clothes on and headed for San Fernando.

Of course, we had to bypass water. The water was coming and we had no place to put it because the lines were down so we had to open gates and run it down the creek until they could get it shut off at the head gates. I had to go out and check tunnels where I could see and see that there was no water coming out the side of the mountain. I went down to Power House 2 and checked it out.

So then finally in the afternoon I had to fight my way down to Fernando because they didn't want cars going down. I finally said, "I've got to get down and see what I've got down there." I got down and the basement was full of mud and I had to hunch down to get over the mud to get in the back to see where the Penstalk came in. Finally got it all inspected, but that's the only damage. As far as our houses and plants up in the canyon they weren't affected, only San Fernando and it didn't bother Franklin although shortly after that they got to inspecting the dams at Franklin and finally ended taking them out.

A lot of those people down in Beverly Hills never knew that they had a couple of reservoirs above them.

NELSON: When Louie Harries said he had trouble...?

YOUNG: He was trying to get rid of his water and get his machines down.

NELSON: The plants themselves were not damaged?

YOUNG: There was no damage in the plant, but there is a ten mile tunnel that's ten foot square from Fairmont to Power House 1.

NELSON: Getting a little bit of water back there in the hose.

YOUNG: You've got to get rid of some way.

NELSON: You said earlier, Power Plant 2 is Francis turbines and Pelton wheels are at PP1. I guess until recently your real tough wheels are almost all gone now.

YOUNG: I don't know what they call these new ones. All the old ones were Pelton wheels.

NELSON: Impulse.

YOUNG: Impulse yes. That was a reaction turbine at PP2.

NELSON: Well, let's see Ken, 32 years, how would you sum up your career with the department?

YOUNG: It was a good 32 years. I enjoyed my work.

NELSON: You didn't have trouble getting up every day going to work? Except when you are on the graveyard shift.

YOUNG: No. But I used to say two square heads butting. Fred Mehr's a square head and so am I in the background and we used to butt heads sometimes. I actually tried to bid out because I just thought it might be easier some place else, but I outlasted him.

NELSON: Well, Fred had a positive attitude. His personality was...

YOUNG: I don't know, I'd come to work at 7 and work until 4. He'd come at 7:30 and work until 4:30 and he'd always spend the last hour in the control room. He'd tell these guys stuff that he never told me. The only one time he got in trouble, he was having a tunnel outage and he never mentioned a thing to me and he went on vacation and our engineer called me up and asked me about it and I said, "About what?" He said, "You're going to have a tunnel outage." I said, "I don't know anything about it. I have no memos or anything that says anything about any tunnel outage." He said, "Didn't Fred talk to you about it?" I said, "He hasn't mentioned a thing to me about it." He said, "Well, we've got to get going because we're going to have it." I said, "Okay, I'll set it up." Which we did, but when Fred got back, I think he got a little chewing that there needs to be a little communication between you and your assistant.

But that was his way. He wanted to keep everything pretty much to himself or talk to his favorite people. And, of course, then when he went to Castaic, I pretty well had the canyon. He came over one day a week and signed the payroll and came over one day the next week and brought the checks. That's about all we'd see of him.

NELSON: You never got to Castaic did you?

YOUNG: I didn't want Castaic. I didn't want the DC station. I was asked if I wanted to go the DC station. "No way" I said. I'm too close to hanging it up to start. And like I say, after the last few years he was at Castaic most of the time and we had the canyon.

NELSON: Well it sounds like you've had a very interesting and enjoyable life.

YOUNG: It's been interesting, enjoyable but it was getting a little irksome. I had one guy particularly that was a union man and he got himself in as a steward and he thought he ought to run the place by being the steward and he and I had a few words off and on that I still happened to be the chief there, and if he wanted something changed just come up and we'd discuss it. He went to town a couple of times and like I say, every time they lost. One very noticeable one, I had to send a guy to Franklin when the guys down there were on vacation or something and so it

was on automatic, but we had an operator there from 7 to 3 that's daytime. So I'd send them down there so they'd get there at 7 o'clock, they'd run their eight hours and then they'd come home which meant an hour or so in overtime and somebody got to grumble, well I counted it as travel time, not as strictly overtime and I didn't put it in the category we were dividing it up.

Some guy griped that they were getting a little more overtime out of this than me. I said, "Well it's the way we've been doing it." So he went to town on it and an engineer called me up and he said, "What about this?" Well this is the way we've been working it." He said, "Is there any reason that man has to be there at 7 o'clock in the morning?" What could I say? The thing runs 16 hours by itself, it could run 18 hours by itself. I said, "Well no." He said, "Well, he leaves the plant at 7:00 a.m., goes down there, he gets back to the plant at 3:00 p.m. He lost all of his...little overtime. The gravy that they were getting out of it. And then they cried about losing overtime.

So it kicks back. Like I say, I'd seen guys go up as chief and they became heels. Got a little authority and stuff and when I started, I just wondered, "can I be a chief and not be a heel?" and this is what I tried. If there was a ruling or a regulation, I would lean it towards my fellows rather than towards the department if I could. I can say I had good relations with nearly all of them. It made for good relations as far as I was concerned.

My maintenance men, they were the extra operators. If you didn't use them on the shift, you'd do maintenance with them.

Everyone of them had a notebook with jobs in it. Not eminent jobs, but things that needed to be done when they had time and I could be gone for a week and my guys would go on. If there was an emergency, they took care of it, if not, they'd look in the book and this is the type of the way I ran things.

One week I took a vacation Mehr was covering what I was doing and he comes out, "Oh, everything's gone haywire, this, this and this." So I got the log book out and was reading it and I couldn't see nothing but a normal week. Of course his job was when they wanted to paint the power house or want to prepare a unit where they had to come in it with general plant or station maintenance and some big thing like this where you'd sit down for a month and study these things out, where I had five power houses, thirty-something dwellings, three reservoirs and maybe one hundred times a day you do different things. The guy says this has to be, okay you do this or that and you make these decisions. Well you couldn't sit back there and study them out.

Some woman calls up and says my toilet's running over, what are you going to do? Sit there and discuss it? Call Bill and say, "Get there and get that thing unplugged." The only way you could do and so it was a different type of job.

TAPE NUMBER: 2, SIDE TWO

KENNETH EVERETT YOUNG

NELSON: We ran out of tape here on the other side, Ken, but you were concluding talking about schedules and relations and how accomplished those and how people have different approaches to scheduling and performing tasks.

As you said earlier, you had a pretty good career in 32 years. You don't regret it.

YOUNG: Had a good career and besides that, they've sent me a check for 17 years.

NELSON: Well that in itself is nice. Okay, Ken I want to thank you very much for taking your time.

YOUNG: It was a pleasure and anything else I can help you with on it, why let me know.