

A GENERAL MANAGER REMEMBERS

PAUL HENRY LANE

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.

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## Biographical Notes

Paul Henry Lane

Born in Los Angeles, California, November 3, 1921.

Parents: Paul Vaux and Ruth Eldred (Haskell) Lane.

A brother, David, and a sister Marian Call.

Paul married Kathryn Elaine Anderson, June 17, 1944, at San Francisco, California.

There were three children: Garth, Karen Boyd and Susan Shields.

There are seven grandchildren, six boys and a girl.

Paul attended UCLA, Oregon State University, and graduated from UC Berkeley in civil engineering.

DWP history:

Joined DWP January 18, 1949.

Appointed Northern District Engineer, Aqueduct Division, November 6, 1961.

Appointed Aqueduct Engineer, Aqueduct Division, September 19, 1966.

Appointed Chief Engineer of Waterworks, May 1, 1972.

Appointed Assistant General Manager, February 22, 1982.

Appointed General Manager and Chief Engineer, April 1, 1983.

Retired February 1989.

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Paul H Lane April 18, 1991  
Paul Henry Lane date

Kathryn E. Lewis  
witness date

9331 Alder Ave.  
witness address  
Northridge Ca 91325

TAPE NUMBER: 1, SIDE ONE

PAUL HENRY LANE

GIVEN MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1990

AT

HIS HOME IN NORTHRIDGE, CALIFORNIA

THE INTERVIEWER IS DICK NELSON

NELSON: Paul, why don't you fill us in on your early years, growing up, education, parents, etc.

LANE: Since this is not rehearsed, I may have to go back and check out on things, but I was born 69 years ago in Highland

Park (California) and started to school there. I went to Aldama Grammar School while we lived on Mount Washington. I was the first boy in the family which was very disturbing to my 23 month old sister. We were raised in Highland Park with my little brother who came five years later.

In 1931, when I was ten, right in the middle of the depression my father's engineering business collapsed. He got a job in a soda plant on the east side of Owens Dry Lake, about a mile south of a little town called Keeler. Moving up there was an exciting adventure for us kids, but a strain on our parents. The roads were small and bumpy for city folks like us. Most of the area was beautiful, wild, and undeveloped.

A long dirt road around Owens Lake and a little town, maybe 80 houses (without indoor plumbing) and a big soda plant. It all seemed very exciting to us kids. We had to travel a mile to a two-room school in Keeler. It held the first four grades in one room and the second four grades in the other room. I was in the fourth grade. I think the most memorable event involved the school bus, which was an old Essex driven by a lady from Oklahoma. One morning, she put it in reverse instead of forward and we backed into the cesspool which was an exciting way for a city boy to start his day.

There were burros, tame and wild and the kids rode them and that was fun. We were there about a year and a half. My father then got a job with the "California Taxpayers Association" in Los Angeles. We moved to Manhattan Beach and

lived there for six months and then moved back to Mt. Washington into our former home. By that time I was attending Luther Burbank Junior High School, in the eighth grade. I went on to Franklin High and graduated in 1938 and was very proud of the fact that I was so young -- only sixteen years old. I soon realized what a trauma it was to be thrust into UCLA living in a fraternity house at sixteen years of age. I attended UCLA for three years. My last summer, which was 1939, I worked up at Military school summer camp at Big Bear Lake which was my first big job. My other jobs were mowing relative's and neighbor's lawns and that sort of fun stuff.

After three years at UCLA, I went up the Yosemite for the summer to work at Wawona Hotel. A beautiful spot and a delightful job. I liked it so much and was tired of school and the army was breathing down my neck, so I decided to stay at Yosemite for the winter, which sounded good...learning to ski and so forth, worked at the Yosemite Lodge all winter and the Wawona Hotel again for the following summer. After summer I would go and enlist in the Navy before I got drafted into the Army. So I said good-bye to all my good buddies, came down to Los Angeles and talked to the Naval Recruiters at the Armory in Elysian Park.

I went through a whole day's physical, doing pretty well. In the late afternoon, they examined my eyes and the guy laughed at me saying, "We can't take you into the Navy if you, can see well only out of one eye. It was a terrible blow to my morale. I

returned to Yosemite then, after all the farewell parties, very humbled and was soon drafted. I went into the Army.

**NELSON:** You were not physically good enough to enlist, but you were okay for the draft?

**LANE:** Yes, they have a "limited service", which they stamped over everything. What a great...I could laugh about I've lived all of these problems, but went to La Jolla, Camp Callan, for basic training which was enjoyable. I was in basic training along with everybody else at my building who were all college people, all headed for OCS and unbeknown to them, I was "limited service" and just going through the basic training. But I had this feeling that well that things would change, and surely after basic training I'd go on to OCS with them, which I didn't.

So I took another test and I did well so they sent me to regular engineering college for a year - a special program and sent me to Oregon State College. I spent a delightful year there where I met Kathryn. I then went to UC Davis, where we got married, and then went zooming back into the war and over to Okinawa.

I came back and about 1946, I guess, I came back to work at Yosemite for a year along with Kathryn. Then went back to school at UC Berkeley, graduated and was interviewed by the State Highway Department and went to work for them in about

1948. I came back to Los Angeles to the home where I was raised.

While I was at State Highway, which was down at First and Spring, somebody said, "Hey, the City's giving an exam, you ought to take it for Civil Engineering Assistant, Department of Water and Power only. That's the best place to work." Well, I'll do that. So I did that and did well on the exam and came to work for the Department on January 17, 1949.

NELSON: Was that, at State Highway Department? What is now CalTrans?

LANE: Yes.

NELSON: Your father, pick up some details here, what type of an engineer was he?

LANE: He did not have an engineering degree which was one of the reasons my folks pretty much insisted they wanted me to be a degreed engineer. And I'm not sure that's what I would have chosen, but it worked out marvelously. My father did civil engineering work, subdivision type work and that sort of thing.

NELSON: Then your three years at UCLA, they were all engineering majors?

LANE: The first two were, but I didn't do so well grade-wise and I stayed a third year just to get my grades back up because I had the feeling that I was going to leave and come back. Then when I was in Oregon and Berkeley, I did very well actually, good grades. I was inspired.

NELSON: Would you feel, maybe, that those years at UCLA, you said you were very young, was that a problem?

LANE: Sixteen years old, living in a fraternity, everybody drank, everybody played pool, ping pong, I'd sit and look at a book for two hours and then I'd go play ping pong. I didn't absorb the book.

NELSON: When you were living at Keeler, do you remember if they was water on Owens Lake at that time?

LANE: There were pools of water, just like there are some years now, but Owens Lake had dried up in the mid 20's. My father did a lot of surveying work out on the lake. It was an exciting time, we'd go up into the mountains on weekends, I loved riding the burros. I'll show you, I have a couple of pictures.

NELSON: What about dust at Owens Lake? Did you encounter any?

LANE: Yes. Terrible. Some days you couldn't see the house next to you because of the dust.

NELSON: What about this in your high school graduation or your junior high graduation, when you became a speaker?

LANE: It was high school and I did very well in high school. I liked it even though I was quite a bit younger than other kids. I took dramatics and speech and I wrote a story actually about Keeler in my early days that they liked so well they had me give it at the graduation. Interesting.

NELSON: You then came to work for the Department in 1949. What was your civil service title and what did you do?

LANE: I was really excited to be a Civil Engineering Assistant in Planning. I liked the boss, Dan Bundy, who was the engineer for a long time, he was the Senior Engineer, and I was in planning, he was in charge of planning and my first job was in a group that did the weekly flow data sheet is what they called it and there were three sheets that came out that had little places to fill in every major flow in the system and pressure in many places in the districts. I would have to go down to Ducommun and go through all of the charts and get these flows and pressures. It's amazing how these things work. It was not the most exciting job in the world by far, but the beauty of it was

I learned the whole system, where everything was and how it worked. It was kind of an accidental type thing and I did well in it so I was moved into a good job working on pump system design and in planning. I went from assistant, (of course I took exams), and became an associate, and took exams and became Water Works Engineer all in about a ten year period.

I did a lot of pump system design for the Santa Monica Mountains which was interesting, and design of the Westgate Trunk Line which goes from Stone Canyon by UCLA and out to Pacific Palisades. Those were very interesting early days. A lot of good experience.

Then I did well on the Senior exam and found out that there might be an opening up in the Owens Valley, a senior position held by Bob Phillips. Having lived there and the local papers occasionally would mention that I had lived there all my life which at that time I had only been there for two years at the most, but I was just really ready to move and that quickly worked out just beautifully. I got the job. I think one of the most exciting days in my life, I was just 40... I would be 40 on a Monday and the prior Saturday I was driving my Department Buick automobile up to my new job in the Owens Valley to be within the first group that had gone through the Mono Craters Tunnel to check out a big problem. This was the beginning of a completely different life for me, driving up. I can remember just singing and rarely even being in a Buick let alone one assigned to me. It wasn't new. It was an old Buick that Mr.

Phillips had driven for two years, but I loved that Buick. I spent the night in Lone Pine and after dinner I just drove up towards Mount Whitney. I just couldn't believe my luck on getting that job.

**NELSON:** When you took the exam for DWP and left the State Highway Department, did you have a career in mind at that time?

**LANE:** No. In fact when I went to the Department, I felt that I'd just do civil service until I get enough good experience to go out and do something important in the private area. The Department pay was a lot better than what I was making at the State Highway Department.

**NELSON:** I think I read where you said that you were making \$310 a month at the State Highway and you went to \$365 with the Department. With a family, that's quite an advantage too because your three kids were born at that time.

**LANE:** Yes, all three were born in that first ten years before we went up to the Owens Valley.

**NELSON:** When did career come to mind or the thought of staying with the Department?

LANE: It depended upon what was going on. I remember the struggle of raising the kids. I made a good salary, but it never seemed enough, and you'd see people in the real world out there seemingly doing better. I think it was really when I went to the Owens Valley that I could see the whole career, in fact, I would have been happy to spend the rest of my career in the Owens Valley at that level. Then the thought come to mind that I was happy because I was working for Bob Phillips who was a great boss and he'd been up there and I was 400 miles away from the boss and it was a nice feeling.

I realized that when an opportunity came, if I didn't take it, someone else would. If I didn't take the aqueduct job which was offered to me, six months later I'd have to work for somebody else, so I followed Bob up the line. I learned the position up in the Owens Valley was just super. Nowadays its hard because of housing and other things to get people to go up there.

It was that training and that exposure that eventually got me into the General Manager's office ... you're over all of the construction and the design and the operation.

NELSON: You're basically a general manager up there?

LANE: You are, and I guess in one area I see my opportunities and things in the whole people area and communications area and our relationship with the politicians and the other outfits and

the people and all that is one of the reasons is that the upper level I ruled out because we needed that in the Department. You learn it up there. If you can get along in the Owens Valley you can handle anything in the Department.

**NELSON:** You could do anything, go anywhere?

**LANE:** Yes, I remember...I don't mind if this gets taped, this one old guy, that's when I lived in Big Pine, lived in a Department house, which was a lovely house out in the middle of nowhere looking up at the mountains with the kids and we were about a mile from town, we loved it on Stuart Lane and old Mr. Stuart who was an old codger that hated the City of Los Angeles, but he liked us and liked me, they talked me into running for the school board and it was an actual election in Big Pine after a couple of years, Stuart called me over one time and I think he was about 80 years old and said, "Boy I'm glad that you're running for the school board, because that other son-of-a-bitch has only been up here two years. (I had only been there about a year and a half). I learned so much up there. I was glad to come back here. I liked the people in the Department, coming back as the head of the Aqueduct Division was an important, exciting job.

NELSON: Did you have any mentors or people that you looked up to in your early years and wanted to emulate? Do any of those people come to mind?

LANE: Very much. This Dan Bundy that I mentioned who was head of planning was very much a mentor of mine because he was a people person and he didn't just sit behind closed doors and send down orders and things. He'd go out and talk to people. A tremendous guy. Then I think next would be Bob Phillips. I didn't even know him when I took over his job in the Owens Valley, but I had to work very closely with him because it's a ticklish position up there. He was very familiar with it. He was my boss from the time I went to the Owens Valley until he became General Manager.

NELSON: About twenty years.

LANE: 15-20 years, a long time. Sam Nelson, too, when I was in the water planning Sam was head of the water system and then general manager and I got involved in things he was interested in and I was doing projects for him and I'd go to Sacramento with him. I learned a lot out about..did you know Sam?..a lot about dealing with and enjoying myself. He enjoyed his job and I did too. Matter of fact I enjoyed, not every day of it, I think I didn't enjoy the several years when we had gone out to get a general manager from Florida. Those were difficult years.

NELSON: You went up to the Owens Valley in 1959, roughly, 1960?

LANE: 1960 about. I don't have the dates. I was up there until 1967.

NELSON: Bob Phillips was your boss at that point. What kind of instructions were you given? Were you given some kind of instructions going up there?

LANE: Not really. We worked very closely together as I learned the job. When you are aqueduct engineer you spend time up there. You go back and forth and you are on the phone a lot and he was up there probably some months before he came back down here. He'd come down here part of the time and part of his own life and moving and things like that. He was up there and we worked together very closely so I knew how he worked. He was a good model and there were many other capable people up there that I learned from.

NELSON: During that period of time, what were the issues in the Owens Valley?

LANE: The big issue was the second aqueduct which the locals feared would take all of the water and drain all of the groundwater.

**NELSON:** So that was an issue even at that point? That early they realized there was going to be additional pumping.

**LANE:** Yes. They didn't know too much about it, but they had heard about it because I remember I did, before I went up there, I had worked on part of a report on the second aqueduct, it'd be in the papers.

One of the things that I was instrumental in setting up was the Owens Valley Inner Agency Committee on Land and Wildlife. We worked very closely with Fish and Game, Forestry, and the Bureau of Land Management. It was a big help because the Department really was working on protecting the environment. A lot of the land was dry, but if the City hadn't owned the land, it would be filled with a bunch of motels and auto parts and junk yards. I loved it. It is a beautiful unspoiled area that should stay that way.

One other thing that I did that I'm really proud of, I got to thinking why in the world do we have all those big ugly advertising signs all over our property? You'd drive along and see Mt. Whitney over a big beer billboard or something like that so we eliminated the advertising signs on City property. Phased them out except right next to the town where motels, etc. needed to advertise. The only other signs you now see out in the Owens Valley are either on private land or Indian lands.

**NELSON:** Basically we have a designated scenic highway up there now. That was because of your efforts?

**LANE:** That pleased me to be able to do that and with support. I got support all the way up through top management and the Board.

**NELSON:** How was your interaction with the "locals?" I've heard that a lot of them for one reason or another, or maybe for no reason disliked the department, but as an employee, there really were no problems? You got along very well?

**LANE:** Very well. In fact they accepted most of the employees as being "locals" rather than the "SOB's" down in Los Angeles that are causing the problems. We all tried to work very closely with the local people and politicians. We loved the country and didn't want to ruin it and worked out many ways to use water for enhancement of the area.

**NELSON:** Have you seen during that period of time and on, a change in the relationship? Let's say on the Inyo supervisors, for example? Are they more or less antagonistic?

**LANE:** They change just like our board or city council, but a lot more dramatic because they are five people who have huge responsibilities and they never will be completely happy with

our presence there. I believe that most of them trust that we're not going to ruin the area. It's popular for them to make all these harsh statements and I thought it was an interesting thing to me that Big Pine which has not been affected as much as Independence and Lone Pine because they still have a lot of irrigated Department land where the southern towns don't have as much. Big Pine, I think, along with Bishop was at least as anti-City as all of them. I thought electing me for a job on the school board was a very interesting thing. Did I answer your question? Because I was pretty outspoken with the people. I told them what we were going to do and why we had to do it. We didn't give them any "snow job."

**NELSON:** Did you feel working on the school board was beneficial to yourself and the Department?

**LANE:** Yes it was very beneficial to me, I thought, and I think to Big Pine it was beneficial and to the Department because I wasn't there as the City's representative. I was really looking out for Big Pine. We were able to do some things which might not have been done if I hadn't been on it.

We would, as a family, spend most weekends on non-Department matters. We had lots of fun going somewhere maybe just for the day to get pine nuts, horseback riding, hunting arrowheads seeing the lakes, and all these fun things. The kids loved that.

**NELSON:** One more on this relationship. I've heard from others that the most vociferous opponents of Los Angeles are not particularly the old timers or the old families, but are more often the newcomers who have found their paradise and want to draw the bridge up or wanted to develop it as Mammoth has been developed.

**LANE:** Absolutely. 100 percent. In Bishop a lot of them wanted to expand. They wanted to triple, quadruple the size of Bishop by releasing our lands, but the people that didn't want that are a little more quiet, but there is a strong, strong feeling against more growth in the Valley. They would like more water and to have all the land irrigated. It was never all irrigated and you'd hear people say the newcomers say, "Well it used to be green from mountain to mountain," and it never was that. There was a lot more irrigation on lands that were never very productive. Apple orchards? - they'd have one crop out of five years at beautiful Manzanar.

**NELSON:** Just because of elevation, it certainly could never be a Central Valley as far as agriculture goes.

**LANE:** No, the growing season is so short.

**NELSON:** One additional question on when you lived up there as a child. Did you have electricity?

LANE: Yes, we had electricity. We had water in the house, but you couldn't drink it because the reservoir had dead coyotes and things and when the wind blew, the linoleum would come off the floor several inches and you'd hear that awful noise at night and the burros were rubbing their backs at the corner of the house. It was a wild place to live.

NELSON: How big of a house was that?

LANE: It was very small. It had a living room, a bedroom that my folks were in and then just kind of a lean-to kind of a bedroom where we...now when we lived in Big Pine we had a lovely old ranch house which this Mr. Stewart that I was telling you about, had lived there on Stuart Lane, Lane meaning street. (It had nothing to do with my name). It was a beautiful house. It just had one bathroom. We had the upstairs finished. It was an upstairs and had two bedrooms that had never been finished that we did. The kids grew up and loved it up there.

TAPE NUMBER: 1, SIDE TWO

PAUL HENRY LANE

NELSON: Paul you moved up to Big Pine as Northern District Engineer and you were relating where you lived at that time. Your kids, then, went to school locally and did you live in the same home the entire time you were in the valley?

LANE: Yes. We were up there six years and there was a school bus that picked up the kids. We lived down below a canal and we could walk down to the Owens River. The river flowed down into Tinemaha Reservoir. Bicycle, we had two Hondas. On the bikes I'd go dirt roads only. Wouldn't go out on the highway. Quite a life.

NELSON: Was it a Department house?

LANE: Yes. When I went up there, they were charging \$40 a month rent for it. Before the family moved up, we needed the upstairs finished, and so I raised my rent to \$55 which was considered exorbitant at that time. Of course, that was back when rents here were not that high. Driving is about 25 miles to work. Driving looking at the Sierras.

NELSON: Why did you pick Big Pine rather than Independence?

LANE: As an afterthought, sheer marvelous intelligence, but as a forethought this was the only adequate house available. Normally there would have been a house available in Independence, but Independence is a company town and I think it made a lot of sense, I liked being near, but not living in Bishop. It was just very nice - - a beautiful rural relaxing place.

NELSON: A little more privacy?

LANE: A lot of privacy. It worked beautifully. We had our own well - gorgeous place.

NELSON: Did, I assume you probably might have had animals for your children?

LANE: Yes, we had a great dane that we took up with us. She became friendly with a wild indian dog and one of the results, was Igor, a good name for him. I think Igor took his mother up the highway where she got run over and then he came back and ran the place. We had him for years, even here in Northridge.

LANE: Living and working in the Owens Valley was a good wonderful experience work-wise. How to deal with people, how to

delegate, what's important to people. You don't stratify people because they are all important. And you know everyone of them there - a couple hundred employees.

NELSON: Was it a larger work force then than now?

LANE: Probably I'd say it's smaller now. They are spread out a little more - well like the Cain Ranch used to have a bigger force than Bishop used to have.

NELSON: Your children went to Big Pine schools?

LANE: Which is school, singular. It went from kindergarten through twelve. Nice school. Not a school that equipped them well for college, it had nice teachers, they had a lot of things they didn't teach, but I think it affected a couple of our children. Our oldest went on to college from there and he was not as prepared as he should have been. But they loved the school. Everybody was involved with everything. Sixteen in a class.

NELSON: I think going or coming from each of those circumstances could be very traumatic, I'm sure. Was Kathryn a housewife during that time? Did she get involved in activities up there?

LANE: She got involved with one of the women's organizations in Big Pine. She doesn't like that sort of thing. We both went to many functions together.

NELSON: You didn't have anything exhibited at the Tri-County Fair?

LANE: No.

NELSON: The only resident who didn't exhibit, huh?.

LANE: I had my own garden. I could have picked them a squash or a watermelon.

NELSON: Who worked with you there? Who were your lieutenants?

LANE: Chuck McCauley was the head of engineers. I did the liaison for all of the work with the County and public. Chuck did the engineering work, Bill Gardner was the Construction and Operations superintendent and worked there for years. A very nice, capable guy. That's where all the construction and operation was handled. We had a surveyor's party and we had big shops for our equipment.

NELSON: On the power side up there, was that after ...?

LANE: Lloyd Wiggins was over the Power when I was there.

NELSON: Were the Owens Valley picnics still functioning at that time?

LANE: Sounds familiar. One fun thing that I started was a Christmas party where we cooked the food and everything in the garage in Independence. That was enjoyable. It was wintry and blustery outside. I'd play the piano and they'd sing. Employees were like a family. Now what picnic are you talking about?

NELSON: Well I understood that after the war, and this may have been discontinued by the time you got up there, there was a large annual picnic.

LANE: They have a picnic and they also now have a big Christmas thing which is at the fairgrounds which is probably this weekend. I know Ray Burt is heading up for that and that was enjoyable. A number of retired people live up there.

NELSON: I know during a time that you were up there too probably, the Department was looked upon to provide a lot of services above and beyond the call of duty. Some of our unpublicized community projects.

LANE: Yes, a lot of things we could do, and I felt very good about them, and a number of times I had to just say, "No, we can't do that." We'd help the hospitals and the County Government and schools. I think, well it's important because we're a part of that whole community up there. I would say a lot of people appreciate our being up there. If you interviewed them they would turn off your machine before they would say that.

NELSON: The Inyo associates, were they functioning while you were there?

LANE: Yes, I was very active in that.

NELSON: Can you describe a little bit what they, they were kind of a super-chamber or coordinating group formed by Father Crowley?

LANE: Yes, the Inyo associates kind of remind me of some of those big service clubs we have down here sort of like a chamber. We were very potent because these people couldn't do much without involving some of our people or our facilities and I wanted to make that as pleasant as possible and yet acts are that we had the control, the use of the land.

NELSON: How was your liaison with "downtown?" You had Bob Phillips who was the Aqueduct Division head, did you come to the City on a pretty-regular basis or he come up or..?

LANE: Both ways and that probably was a personal thing. He liked to come up there, I liked to come down here. I'd come down for a couple of days and that was fun for me to see the activities such as when they built our new GOB.

NELSON : And you'd be on the phone, I assume fairly regularly?

LANE: Yes, we had our regular line back and forth.

NELSON: Did you feel that there were adequate communications both ways?

LANE: Yes. Very much support because Jack Cowan was Assistant General Manager, Nelson was involved, all of those were aqueduct oriented people and they all knew the problems that I was facing so I got tremendous support. There would be board, in fact, when I was up there I would be on the board either two board members or whole board. We had Henry Bodkin and Nate Freedman, remember them? I'd take them up in a big limousine, driver up in front, me and the two guys in the back. They loved it. They were both in their 80's. They wanted to know what everything

was on the way up and then we all knew coming back we'd have to explain the same facilities.

NELSON: Different view ... the backside.

LANE: And every time Nate would get to Bishop, he would say, "Which one of those is Mount Whitney." Neat people. The board was very interested in what was going on up there and were very supportive of the changes. Like the eliminations of the signs. That meant giving up not a lot of rental money and I didn't know how some of the board members would react. But they approved it and I loved seeing them tear down those signs.

NELSON: I guess bringing board members and city councilmen, that became a part of the briefing process for every new board member. Very quickly got up to see our resources in the valley, both water and power?

LANE: Absolutely. Water matters were most vital, but power was important too. Another interesting thing, I remember when some new board members came up and they just didn't know what was going on up there. They'd come to meetings and things, but I think that's one of the things, once I was down and head of the water system and general manager and wanted to be sure the board understood the whole operation up there. The whole board could then vote on matters they were familiar with.

NELSON: We don't rely upon them to read something?

LANE: No. but you take them up two or three days to talk to them and they are fascinated with all that.

NELSON: Well you stayed up there for six years?

LANE: About six to seven and then like Phillips for a year or so, I'd be back and forth quite a lot.

NELSON: Then when you came back in 1966 or 1967, you came back downtown as Aqueduct Engineer?

LANE: As Aqueduct Engineer.

NELSON: And then Duane Georgeson?

LANE: Duane took my place.

NELSON: Had there been quite a few changes in the Water System when you went back to Los Angeles? You saw it from a different perspective?

LANE: Yes. It was fun being back. I don't think I would have been too, I'll put it another way, I'd much rather be the Aqueduct Engineer than Head of Design because I liked the travel

and getting away from the desk and the design problems and work on where the water was coming from.

NELSON: Well you got to do everything?

LANE: Yes. The Boards, Principle Engineer, you get to know the Board very well because they go up there a lot.

NELSON: When you came back in the mid 60's you came back about when construction was starting on the second aqueduct?

LANE: Yes. I spent time traveling so that I could watch and check how the work was going, that was exciting.

NELSON: Who was the head of the water system at that time? Nelson had just left about that time, had he not? Was General Manager?

LANE: Phillips was when I went down to Aqueduct, Phillips was head of the water system.

NELSON: How were they to get along with? You said you got along very well with Bob.

LANE: He's the main one I worked with. Gerry Wyss was new in the area so I didn't work very much with him.

NELSON: Wyss had not been in the Owens Valley on a continued basis?

LANE: No. Phillips and I had a very close contact all the time. He would understand since he knew the people. I could call up and say, "Hey so and so said this," well he would say, "Well you did the right thing," or "Well next time do this.."

NELSON: When you went back to Los Angeles, you went from your 200 or 300 people to eight or nine hundred or 1,000?

LANE: Not that much...see the aqueduct is not all that...I forget how many are in that...I just picked up the southern district which would make a total of maybe 500.

NELSON: So you were still working with generally people you had worked with the previous six years.

LANE: Close. Even though I was up north I worked closely with Mojave and the aqueduct division so it was not a big switch at all.

NELSON: Who were your assistants at that time?

LANE: Byron Winestein was one of them. I'll think of the other guys.

NELSON: Well I know Wells (Bud) Abbott.

LANE: I was trying to think of Bud Abbott. Bud Abbott was there, he and Byron. Bud was the Southern District Engineer for all those years. He is now retired and living in Bishop.

NELSON: His father was in the Department, is that right?

LANE: Yes, a tremendous guy.

NELSON: There is a question I must ask because I remember that you had jokingly said from time to time that you carried water for Mulholland. I know that's not true if we go back and look at ages and chronology, but do you remember any of the old timers who were still with the Department on the water side when you came? Did you ever have any contact with any of them?

LANE: Well, Nelson I suppose is the one in the longest time. Horace DeWitt too was a great buddy of mine. Horace was Southern District Engineer for quite a while. And there are a number of others whose names don't come to me at this time.

NELSON: Horace was involved, if I recall, going back to the old Colorado River aqueduct surveys, that was the early 20's.

**LANE:** Jerry Jones is another one I worked with. He hadn't been up in the aqueduct. He was Distribution Design Engineer and I worked for him about five months before I went up to the Owens Valley.

**NELSON:** You came back in the mid 60's. Unions started rearing their heads I guess near that time, maybe a few years later, what are your thoughts on union matters and did they..we had two or three work stoppages primarily in the power side as I recall.

**LANE:** That's where the primary activity was. The water system was involved, but not to the extent that power system ... I don't recall any problem. Oh, I'd have individual problems where we might discipline somebody and they didn't want that done, but I didn't have any big problems with the union. We worked things out together. I think they filled a need and again it was in the electrical arena where it was usually more vocal and more strident.

**NELSON:** What about in labor negotiations? Were you involved?

**LANE:** I would be involved when necessary, but I didn't get involved in day to day negotiations other than through somebody and I had a good relationship always with whoever the top union people were. They would come in to talk to me and there was no animosity even though we wouldn't agree on some things.

NELSON: Well, you've always had a reputation as being someone who could be talked to.

LANE: Yes, and I think that's awfully important.

NELSON: That's probably a good reputation to have.

LANE: I think so and also I think they know that I often agree with them and often not. It was an open door.

NELSON: Well you came back and headed the Aqueduct Division until when, about 1972?

LANE: Yes, May! I was head of aqueduct for six years, and Phillips moved up and I became head of the Water System.

NELSON: So you basically followed Bob in the last three or four spots?

LANE: And Duane was following me again and part of that was really the experience in the northern district job. In the water system, if you have that job, it really equips you to move up.

NELSON: It's pretty much a prerequisite in the Water System.

LANE: It's worked that way when you look at Jim Wickser and a lot of your top people came up...you'd have to really have the design experience too so you can see how operation things worked and most of these people and Phillips didn't. Wickser, Duane and I all worked in design.

NELSON: Did you realize that when you went up? It had been done before I guess. Nelson had not been in the Owens Valley.

LANE: Yes he was many years ago, I don't know what he did, but he was involved with the Mono Basin project.

NELSON: So you made a pretty good decision opting to go to the Owens Valley?

LANE: Yes. Well and I would have been happy staying at the aqueduct job, or I would have been happy staying as head of the water system, but it just all worked. When I didn't get General Manager job, I was so glad to have them put Mulloy in as he and I got along very well and he didn't try to mess around with the water. And he wanted me basically, and I didn't know this at the time, he wanted me to go take his place when he left and he wanted to leave so he moved me up as Assistant General Manager for about a year, but I didn't know that's what he had in mind. When he retired as the assistant, I was selected by the Board and moved right up.

Jim was fun. He and I were opposite temperaments. I mean he was a "sit in his office, grinning guy." We were open and really made a good team and I really enjoyed working with him.

NELSON: There seems to be that difference, as I noted in the two systems. The power side seems to be much more reserved.

LANE: Many are the scientist type. Whereas civils (civil engineers) are usually different -- more used to working with people.

NELSON: Okay, so you came into heading the water system in the early 70's and that was about the time when all the stuff hit the fan as far as the environmental movement ...

LANE: Air Quality.

NELSON: Second aqueduct was operating and pumps were pumping and the people were getting nervous.

LANE: Very nervous. Yes all of those things that you mentioned were all kind of tied into one big pot and we had problems in the Owens Valley. Some of our engineers, Wickser did a great job up there and so did Duane.

NELSON: And before Jim was Ron McCoy. I guess he followed Georgeson. So at that time you had been head of the Northern District and the water system and then you were moved on to become General Manager, getting a little bit ahead of myself, I assume these varied in your management style. You had to vary a little bit. What were the variances there?

LANE: Well I would say depending on the personalities and the requirements and things, I would say that about when I was about 50 soon after that I became General Manager, but I had been going into a lot of interests. I was taking some psychology courses going to Fuller Seminary, theological classes and learning a lot about myself and I would say up until 50 I did well, but often would do what I thought people expected of me. I wasn't always "me" running things the way I really wanted to. It all kind of happened about mid-way in my years as head of the water system (1975). I started giving talks to engineer's clubs on subjects like personnel and stress management, Communicating and interpersonal relationships. I began to really know and understand myself on how to do things the way I felt they should be done -- not looking for the popular thing to do.

NELSON: It was much more inward growth?

LANE: Yes. I could more easily cope with the public and the lawyers, politicians, etc. working with all of these people, but

doing it from my own judgements, which I think what we want leaders for. It was quite a difference in the way I was very comfortable even if I'd be in a room where many might disagree with me. I would listen to them and procede with my plans.

**NELSON:** You could accept that and still do what you thought was right.

TAPE NUMBER: 2, SIDE ONE

PAUL HENRY LANE

LANE: When I was fifty and going to the head of the water system and also in the general managership I found the need to personally go over and talk to the other department heads and establish a closer relationship with council people and really talk to them. I think a perfect example of what I'm trying to convey is when I was new as a general manager, I got an awful letter to sign and send to the fire chief. The fire department had operated some electrical switches in a building which they should have checked with us first because they have the right to do it, but they should tell us because we may have linemen working on projects who could be injured. This letter was unthinkable to me I didn't even know this Don Manning, the new fire chief. My first thought was to send this letter. After cogitating, I took the letter, put it in my pocket, called him up, went over and we sat there and we read the letter and discussed the problem. We were both angry, discussed the problem thoroughly and resolved it and have been good friends ever since discussing many mutual interests and activities of the two agencies.

It is vital to get along with the council and other city departments. That is why I like to see people like Eldon Cotton in top jobs.

**NELSON:** He has a good reputation with the council.

**LANE:** Super guy. And Wickser also does well in that area along with Dan Waters.

**NELSON:** You had once said, going back to your age 50, I think you once said you'd been a loner for much of your life.

**LANE:** Inwardly, yes.

**NELSON:** And didn't establish any real relationships until about this time when you started looking within yourself?

**LANE:** I would have surface type relations. Well, I had friends and things but I wouldn't share any deep thoughts with anybody or let them know who I really was or how I felt because I was afraid that if they knew me they probably wouldn't like me so I'd be hesitant to share my personal thoughts.

**NELSON:** Tried to mirror what you thought they wanted.

LANE: And I was so surprised, well particularly after my first (interpersonal) speech I gave to the engineers. Cotton introduced me and I had two speeches in mind and I really wanted to give the one that talked about me so I did it. A few people were shocked and never came back, "that was just unheard of." But now people knew who I was and would come and share with me and I'd share with them and nobody ever, or at least I don't recall anybody in a meeting or something telling me I'm full of you know what.

NELSON: As a general manager, a lot of people would be interested in how a board (Los Angeles Board of Water and Power Commissioners) and a general manager functions on a day to day basis in your experience?

LANE: Depends on the board and depends on the general manager, of course. I've dealt with a lot of boards and I think, fortunately, we've always had at least three members that, regardless of what else was in their minds, they really had the department's interest at heart and when it came down to "brass tacks" those three would support the Department in a business-like fashion.

Each general manager works differently with the board. I liked meeting with them individually, talking to them, telling them where I was, telling them what I thought was most important and where I thought they might be wrong. I think it surprised

me a bit when they made me general manager. They had had an earlier opportunity when they hired Louis Winnard from the outside. When Winnard left, they could have put me in as I expected, but I was not disappointed because Jim Mulloy got the job. If they'd gone outside the Department again, I would have quit, but I enjoyed working for Jim Mulloy.

Jim was very different with the board. He was very open and very pointed with them and he was not a mouse at all. It was not as much on a personal level as when I talked to them and I think it is awfully important for the general manager to maintain a close liaison with the board. Our new present board is interesting. I think Dan Waters is going to work out fine.

**NELSON:** Well the board meets twice a month. During your tenure as general manager would you be talking to those board members on a weekly basis, or several times a week or your staff or....?

**LANE:** It would depend. I probably would talk to the board president quite often, even daily maybe, but I've known weeks when things would come up where I needed to speak to all of the them, so it just depends. I think the general manager and the Board should have close meaningful communication, sharing goals and ideas and work closely together.

**NELSON:** They must perform. If they don't, it reflects upon the Department too.

LANE: Absolutely. There's all sorts of board members.

NELSON: How much license did you give your system heads in talking to the board? Did you want to be appraised whenever they spoke to a board member?

LANE: I would want to know if it was about some issue that was important, but not every time they would deal with board members. In one way, the general manager is two people - he's part of the board and he's part of the management.

One helpful thing was I have a close relationship with the board secretary. (Currently Judy Davison). I could alert her and she's in constant communication with the board. I would tell her when something's coming up and see if any of the board members wanted to attend or have any special information. They would alert her to do things with me. I think that's an important tie. Because she is kind of in the middle, part of the group.

NELSON: Did you ever have problems with an over-zealous board member, maybe going beyond system heads?

LANE: Oh yes, occasionally.

NELSON: How do you handle a situation like that?

LANE: It never got out of hand. If it did I guess I would have gone to a board president if there were a problem. I never had that. Fortunately, most of them didn't have the time to..I'd go up there and there'd be a board member there and somebody would be in talking to them from low levels or from whatever reason. It's a matter I felt personally secure. I think in earlier years it might have made me nervous.

NELSON: Well from a standpoint of continuity of the message too you've got to be a little careful.

LANE: I'd want to, as a G.M. you have to know what's going on.

NELSON: The reason I'm on this subject is it's never been covered before and for the record I'd kind of like to know how one person dealt with the board.

LANE: That's what I would have advised. That's what is fun for me with people like Wickser or Cotton or Duane. To know these people and be able to tell them as they are coming up what I do and what I think is important and critical - working and sharing together as a team.

NELSON: I guess that speaks for itself. Going back to board members, you indicated that you had dealt with a number over the years, who are those who impressed you from a standpoint of

motivation and of taking their job very seriously and doing a good job? It's a hard job.

LANE: Many of them were very dedicated and helpful. I could get along with any of them. There are very few that did just nothing, but there have been some. Sarah Stivelman was a hard worker, nice lady. Katherine Dunlap and John Malony were great board members. Carol Wheeler was a very nice, dedicated lady and had very strong interests in a lot of areas, but all of these people you could deal with and talk to. Walter Zelman added a great deal. There were none of them that I just couldn't deal with. There are some that I really had a problem, there are some that I mentioned. I would say there's, I can't think of any that were total loss, that we'd be ashamed of.

NELSON: I would suspect the job to most of them, they do not know what they are getting into and this is an overwhelming job if they take it seriously as most of them then take it seriously, but it's an overwhelming job.

Going on from board then, what about that relationship with the mayor and the council between the general manager and the council? There were liaisons and all this, but how often did you get involved or at what point did you get involved in this? Did you regularly meet with the mayor or was that...?

LANE: Not regularly. It would come about so that it happened sort of regularly. I had good telephone communications with him. I'd keep him posted on the few things that he might be really interested in. He would call and request some special service for a customer which we could easily do. Usually I had no problem, but occasionally I would have to say we just cannot do it for this reason ...

We could do those things for him or any councilperson who would call if it just meant adjusting a schedule and letting the crew know. I didn't have a problem with that. They, all of them, the councilmen, all wanted some things that we couldn't do, but I had enough of a relationship with them to work it out.

NELSON: And then the buck stopped with you on the things that couldn't be resolved at any other point, I assume?

LANE: Yes, practically always.

NELSON: Well the council generally, the individual councilmen, generally didn't have much "clout", if you will, with DWP board members. Board members are appointed by the mayor so I would not imagine that there was much relationship between council and the board itself or individual board members.

LANE: Not that I know of. But the mayor and our board president - there's usually a lot of relationship there.

NELSON: Were you kept pretty well informed by board presidents that you worked with as to conversations they would have with the mayor on subjects if it were appropriate?

LANE: Yes, things that really affected the Department, they would tell me. I would say most of the time, the things I could do with a clear feeling and if I couldn't, I would let them know that I didn't feel it was right, but I'd go ahead and do it. There were very few of those that didn't. It was not a problem.

NELSON: When you came in as general manager we've gone through Jim Mulloy and prior to that Lou Winnard so that was a period of maybe seven or eight years, I guess, of power general managers and one, Lou Winnard, being an outsider so to speak, did you find that you had the strength in internal communications between top management? With your communications skills, did you have to make any adjustments?

LANE: I was so different from well clear back to Phillips. I think a lot of them made adjustments, but I think they were adjustments they wanted to make. I was open. I was discussing things in groups that they would have been more inclined to not discuss. I don't recall having to do anything more than operate the way I wanted to operate. Like I'd go down to their office and talk to them. That's such a little thing that you don't think about and I think a lot of our predecessors rarely did

that. When somebody comes to see you in your office, there's a much different feeling than being talked to in their office.

**NELSON:** What about your relationship with the power system? During the time, not only general manager, but say the head of the water system, your opposite at that point was Mulloy.

**LANE:** We were close and we would be in each other's offices, probably closer than we ever had between the water and power side. I had a good relationship with Jim Anthony, close friend. I think it's important particularly as head of the water system to have a good relationship with the power people. There were so many interrelated problems faced mutually by the two systems.

**NELSON:** And with the other systems too, you made it a point to maintain those relations? You see that even the guy that signs your paycheck is important.

**LANE:** Absolutely. And it pays off too, because they know you, they let you know things that you should know.

**NELSON:** Did you establish these contacts when you become general manager? Did you establish more meetings among the top brass or did you just more or less continue what you had done in your own way?

LANE: Yes.

NELSON: Both systems have operated to a certain extent independently of each other. Did you have any problems as general manager with the other systems, and not particularly the power system?

LANE: No, I didn't.

NELSON: Okay we'll get away from there and talk more about changes you foresee in the composition of the City's water sources in the future?

LANE: We've got to obtain what was originally planned from the State. They've got to straighten that out. We have to see that state water is distributed like the original Governor Pat Brown visioned when he talked about the State aqueduct. And that means bringing water through or around the delta, various problems have to be worked out. We can push sea water conversation, cleaning up that ground water and we can talk about ocean water which might be down the road, if we have atomic plants that we can use and convert water at the same time producing power. There's just not another practical place we can go to get water so I would say it is important to realize we are one State. Not a Northern California and a Southern California state.

NELSON: The Legislature has to address the State water project and get it completed with something done in the Sacramento Delta area.

LANE: I would say so. And I think we will be doing a lot more wastewater conversion planning, but I don't see that as becoming drinking water. Other than some of it will get into the ground water I don't see it as a terribly big help other than on golf courses. A lot of things like that.

NELSON: The tertiary treatment of wastewater, you believe will not be used as drinking water not because of quality, but more psychological?

LANE: Yes and eventually that may change, but you can imagine people would buy a lot more sparkletts because of their fear of this water.

NELSON: What are they going to do? I have heard recently talk about water transfers and how MWD or other water agencies are going to buy the share that is owned by the interest and transfer it around the state. Does that seem to be viable? Is that going to handle our problem though?

LANE: It will help. I think it's one of many things that will help. I think there's a lot of overuse in agriculture and I

think that should be worked on more stringently. People are important and we've got to take care of them.

NELSON: Well it sounds like you are saying though, that if we utilize these water transfers, we pay farmers, then we pay for the transportation of water to the point of use, then sounds to me like water prices are going to continue to rapidly move upward.

LANE: I think it's a crime to have as much fresh water pouring into the Pacific Ocean that is up in the Columbia and the Sacramento rivers, you name it. We may even get to transporting glaciers off the coastline from somewhere up there.

NELSON: I remember many, many years ago you may have worked on it, when Sam Nelson came up with this proposal for the Snake/Colorado project. Do you think those type of transfers are viable?

LANE: I think they are viable. They are viable physically, engineeringly. If we can get them politically understood, that's where the future is.

NELSON: Going back to Mulholland, you mentioned good old Bill here a while back, DWP was instrumental in establishing the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. In retrospect, was this in the interest of DWP?

LANE: Very much so. I think there are several viewpoints you can take. Without MWD Los Angeles city would be much bigger and I don't think that's smart. People wanted water, that's why they moved in next to the City, but I think MWD has operated properly and represents the entire Southern California effectively when dealing with the State.

NELSON: Just recently we've had our audit completed and as I recall one of the recommendations by the audit team in the water system or overall department strategy was that the Department ought to go out and develop new water resources.

LANE: I wouldn't be adverse to that. I don't know just what they would recommend.

NELSON: They did not give us a clue?

LANE: I think if we were allowed to, and it's not all environmental things, build a big atomic plant down at the ocean. You can see that there'd be some way we could get a lot of sea water desalted. It would cost a lot of money, but that would make sense to me. That's going to be, God knows how long before anybody can build a big nuclear plant near large populated areas.

NELSON: That would be the sea water, desalinization. Similar to what the Department and MWD had proposed way back in the 60's. I think MWD is still ... has it on one of the burners of their resource stove.

I think we covered this before, but there appeared to be a period of calm between the Owens Valley and the City in 1940's till the late 60's and the change, I guess, would have been the completion of the second aqueduct which then brought the specter of increased ground pumping and a lot of things were then attributed to the Department. A lot of environmental damage in the valley was contributed which was not so.

LANE: Not accurately done. There are changes. There would be major changes whether we were here or not when you think of the water that used to come down through there and down through all the dry lakes and over into all over the world practically. I don't know if we have a few more years of drought, you're not going to see these green lawns.

TAPE NUMBER: 2, SIDE TWO

PAUL HENRY LANE

NELSON: I guess I need to ask you what do you think the outcome of the Mono Lake situation is going to be?

LANE: I am afraid that it will be more reduction of water export. I know that we will not be able to get what we really should. We take what we have right to 100,000 acre feet. I think it would be logical for a lot of reasons. To maybe cutback 90 or 80, but they are talking about raising the lake and all that. I think it's political depends on the governor, and the senate, and assembly.

NELSON: Do you think Los Angeles has a chance of being reimbursed if that should come about?

LANE: That's what they talk about. I don't know where the water's coming from. 70,000 acre feet, 100,000 acre feet. With this drought, we are cutting way back from the Owens Valley. We are lucky that MWD has enough water in its sources to take care of it.

NELSON: Were you general manager during the 1977 drought or head of the water system?

LANE: Head of the water system.

NELSON: And that had quite an impact upon the City of Los Angeles at that time.

LANE: Yes. People would conserve and cut back when it's necessary. Look at all the swimming pools, even now you see water running down the gutters from time to time. I think in the future unless there is a weather change, no matter what we do, I think we will not have the ample supply that we've got up until now. We are still having loads of people coming in.

NELSON: One of the complaints raised by people in Northern California and even some people in the Owens Valley is why supply our resource to all these swimming pools? Is that a valid argument?

LANE: Swimming pools...and I don't know how much they use, they evaporate four or five feet I suppose, I have never figured that out, in one way it's part of the environment ... a swimming pool, nice lawns, and all that. They were having a big battle on covering reservoirs. There's going to be a few that we can

cover. People are having a bloody fit because they like to look at the water.

NELSON: "You are destroying my lake." They paid good money to have sight of it.

LANE: Yes, right. I don't know. I would say eventually we may not have as many pools. I think we are in for a lot of hard times as far as water supply. Power is there and power you can cut back more than we have. Water we can cut back. We're not used to that.

NELSON: When you retired, you'd been with the Department 40, 41 years?

LANE: It's 40 years and a few months. I never dreamed now I thought five or six years and then I'll do something important.

NELSON: I think that's what a lot of us came into it saying this is just until I do something else and before you know it you have a career.

LANE: Well I really enjoyed the people and the projects and accomplishments of the Department.

**NELSON:** And the other question, I had forgotten to ask and throw it in now, as you went through these various positions of responsibility, you were further and further removed, I assume, from day to day the nuts and bolts and you became a manager and a policy maker. I think one time you had said you hadn't looked at your slide rule for years, of course now we are in calculators and computers, but that's probably true and many people still want to look at their slide rules.

**LANE:** When I was general manager of the last two years I had them put a computer next to my desk because I wanted to learn....everybody else was using them. I did not have time in that whole two years to even learn the basics ... at least I had it there. I wanted to learn how to work it. It would have taken time away. It was a lot more important for me to spend time with the people.

**NELSON:** That was the close to the last question, Paul. What are you doing in retirement now?

**LANE:** I'm enjoying myself. I've had...this year has been... right after I retired is when I fell and loused up both my arms. This year I've had three major operations. Both shoulders and one hernia so I've not been able to buy the bicycle want and go out and ride which I'm going to be doing before you know it. We were like a big family.

NELSON: Do you get down to the Department pretty regularly?

LANE: Not regularly. I see a number of people and I can get down, go down I'm through with this stuff now, so I'll get down probably. Make excuses to go either to the credit union or go down for various meetings.

NELSON: Are you continuing to speak to the water engineers?

LANE: I have not. I think eventually I probably will. Did you see they gave me two leather bound volumes including all of my speeches labeled, "Epistles of Paul." That was really touching.

NELSON: Good company, I guess. Well I want to thank you very much, Paul, for....

LANE: It's a pleasure reminiscing and I hope I wasn't too reminiscent for you.

NELSON: No. You did a good job.