

DWP PROJECTS

JAMES W. FRANKLIN

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

James W. Franklin

Born June 13, 1906 in Buffalo, New York.

Parents: James (NMI) and Helen M. (Pfeiffer) Franklin.

Married:

Children:

WWII Service: U.S. Air Force 1942-1945.

Entered DWP service January 16, 1933, Laborer, Bureau of Water Works and Supply.

Retired June 30, 1971 as Executive Staff Assistant, General Plant Division.

Department Organizations:

Board of Directors, Employees' Association.
Speaker's Club.

in Buffalo, New York on June 13, 1906. My father was a locomotive engineer. I went to high school in Buffalo, Hutchinson Central High School. My father decided to leave railroading after 25 years and come to Los Angeles where my mother had a sister and brother-in-law. I think it was a week after I graduated from high school, that we moved to Los Angeles. We stayed temporarily with my aunt and uncle in Hollywood.

I recall very well that at the breakfast table one morning my father said to his brother-in-law, "Well, of course, I want to build a home out here and where would you suggest building?" His brother-in-law thought for a minute and he said, "Well there's a new tract way out west of here." He turned to my aunt and he said, "What is the name of that place?" She said, "It's Beverly Hills, I think." After breakfast my father, my uncle and myself, got in my uncle Stutz car. On Wilshire Boulevard the pavement ended at La Brea but we got out to Beverly Hills. The streets were laid out, but there were very few houses. The Beverly Hills Hotel had just been completed. My father bought a lot up in North Alpine Drive and he paid \$750 for it and it was a corner lot. He said to the realtor, "I'd like to buy the inside lot too." And that was \$500. So we were in business.

NELSON: What year was that approximately?

FRANKLIN: 1923. Well, I had worked after school and being of Scotch descent, I'm pretty thrifty and I'd saved my money for my college education, but I worked around the house where we were

building in Beverly Hills all summer. When it was time to register for college, I thought about Stanford. I also thought about USC and I went there to register and I found that I had far too much math I didn't need, but I was lacking in Humanities. I even tried what they called at that time the Branch...which is now UCLA, and I also got turned down there.

I enrolled at Hollywood High School and took the subjects I lacked for college entrance, graduating again in 1924. I decided to work for a year to replenish my funds before starting college. So I went to work for the First National Bank of Los Angeles that was located at 7th and Spring Streets in downtown Los Angeles. I started there as a page. I think it was either \$50 or \$55 a month and I don't know why, maybe I was just lucky, but two months later I was Chief Page and I think there were about twelve of us that just answered buzzers and did gopher stuff. The next thing I know I'm working night statements and the next thing I'm a full fledged commercial bookkeeper. That was all pen and ink bookkeeping in those days.

I was offered a bank job in Beverly Hills. At that time working nights, you worked until you got balanced and there was no overtime or nothing of that kind. Also I got kind of tired of chasing the big red cars down Hill Street.

At any event, I got a chance to go to work out in Beverly Hills for an independent bank and I suspect I learned more banking out there in six months than I would have gotten in ten years downtown because I was a teller and a general bookkeeper and everything. The times that the porter called in sick, I also

swept out and polished the brass. But I stayed there and I worked there until 1932 when the bank failed. I was out of work from June of 1932 until January of 1933. It was pretty lean times. It was during the great depression which started in 1929. I was looking for work and I found it with the Department of Water and Power on a 60 day temporary job working up at Bouquet Canyon Reservoir then under construction.

NELSON: Jim, can I stop you just a minute and go back and pick up two things? When your parents came to Los Angeles, did you father work here or was he retired at that point?

FRANKLIN: No, he worked here. He learned the plumbing trade under his brother who was a big-shot contractor. Dad told the story about when he was apprentice to his brother. I guess his brother gave him a few dimes once in a while, but he said that the way he learned his trade was that every time he did something wrong, his brother beat him up and it must have made a lasting impression. My father stood 6'1 1/2", about 240 pounds of muscle and his brother was bigger than he was, so dad said that the day that he got his journeyman certificate, he beat his brother up. He came to this country from Canada where he was born and went to work for a railroad.

NELSON: Second question is, you say the bank that you worked for the First National Bank in Beverly Hills, it failed? How did the depression hit you directly in the banking business?

FRANKLIN: It didn't hit me directly until I was working in Beverly Hills for the First National Bank of Beverly Hills when it failed. That made a very big impression.

FRANKLIN: Did you just go to work one morning and the bank was closed? Did you have a premonition of this was coming?

FRANKLIN: None whatsoever. The thing about it was that the president of the bank was a former national bank examiner and he was a son-in-law of William Jennings Brian and the bank examiners came in to examine the loans and do the usual things of checking out the accounts and so forth, customers accounts and many times the conversation was, "Well Dick, that was his name too, the president of the bank, hell this loan has been extended and extended and extended and you're going to have to either write it off or do something about it. Okay, who the hell is running this bank." This type of a debonair attitude. "Come on let's go out to the Beverly Hills club and have lunch." So he got by with it and actually the various ratios that you test to determine a bank's solvency, all of those ratios were excellent except that so many loans were poor.

He started the bank actually with a couple of hundred thousand dollars worth of loans from the Hellmans another couple of hundred thousand from this one and that and he borrowed on his life insurance and his own finances was not too solvent. He bought a great big home up in Beverly Hills and the bank held the first mortgage on it and he paid himself a fabulous salary, but

all of his salary and everything else, the dividends on his stock went just to pay interest on these loans. Then when things got bad, he was making loans that he shouldn't have made and so it all blew up. I had no premonition of it at all. I was chief teller at the time.

The day the bank failed was a normal day. I remember that morning I took a deposit of a month's paycheck from Constance Bennett, \$70,000, Metro Goldwyn Mayer, and along about, oh I'd say, a quarter to two in the afternoon, all of a sudden the lobby started to fill up. The other tellers always had to come to me for cash. They were running short of cash, so I had to go to the vault downstairs to get money and on the way, I stopped by the cashier. I said, "Mr. Thompson, what in the hell is going on here?" And he said, "Oh somebody started a rumor around town that the bank is shakey. Just give your tellers the word to pay out very slowly. All we got to do is to get by until 3:00 p.m."

So I passed the word and I got what cash remained in the cash vault and they counted the money out to themselves once and then they'd count it again to the customer and all that stalling tactics, and we got by, but by that time they had to call the police department to get the doors closed. As we got the doors closed the national bank examiners came in a back door and they sealed everything. They went upstairs and met with the board of directors. After the meeting, the chief of the national bank examiners went to the center of the lobby and rapped for attention and he said, "It's my sorry duty to inform the employees of this bank that it has failed. Proceed to make up your teller sheets as

you normally would." Every damn cent I had was in that bank.

NELSON: How did you learn about the opening at the Department of Water and Power?

FRANKLIN: Through my father. Father had gone into bankruptcy in Beverly Hills. He had a plumbing business, a big one. He had gone into bankruptcy along with a lot of other people and he had gotten a job and was working for the DWP up in Bouquet Canyon. He didn't anticipate that I had much of a chance of getting a job with the Department.

The Department had to relocate the county road above the high water level and they employed a subcontractor who had three or four what they called tractor trucks. Those truck's front end had a conventional steering gear, conventional wheels, I think they were solid tires, and the rear end was a caterpillar tractor arrangement. Those things could go almost any place. We had a power shovel, I speak of we, the Department had a power shovel up there that was digging away to make this road and filling these dump trucks and they'd back to this huge slope down there so my dad said, "Why don't you come on up. I know this contractor and maybe he'll give you a job driving a truck." Well I didn't know what he was talking about. So I drove up there one day.

I had gone looking for jobs and I'd start out in the morning always being optimistic and figuring this was the day, this was the day. And you'd stand in this line and you'd stand in this line and by noon, the ego was gone, the enthusiasm was gone, I did

have good clothes left and I was presentable and I'd buy a paper and go over to the Biltmore Hotel and sit in the galleria like I was somebody. It was good for my ego anyway.

During that period of time, I might add that I had several jobs. I did accounting jobs, auditing jobs, which normally in those days would say bring \$100. I did it for \$5 or \$10 to keep eating. I also worked for the student body at USC during the football season and I also worked for UCLA. That was the first year, 1933, that they used the Rose Bowl. I also worked for the Olympic Games in 1932 for the committee in charge of ticket sales at the swimming stadium.

I did a variety of things because I owed a lot of people. I owed on furniture. I had bought a new car three weeks before the bank failed, a new Chrysler. I tried return it, but the dealer refused to take it back. I hated that car with a vengeance. Every time I'd look at the thing, I'd kick the tires for just meanness, but you know without a car, you're out of luck. So I had to make those damn car payments.

Well anyway, to go on, I went up to see this contractor and I went up with my father who took me in his pickup up to where these trucks were working and they looked like little specks up there on the horizon. One of these guys had backed too far and that thing got away from him and he jumped clear and this thing rolled end over end down this slope. This accident brought the superintendent, Hugh Mulholland, nephew of the retired chief, and two or three other people. My dad introduced me. I knew that this was not the time to ask this truck contractor for a job.

Besides that I didn't think I wanted that job anyway. At that point Mulholland said, "Why don't you go to work for us?" I said, "Gee I hadn't thought that was possible." He said, "Oh yes, I can't do anything for you here, you'll have to go into Los Angeles and apply for work down there. I'll tell you where you go. There's a garage down at 222 South Hill Street. You go in there and in the dispatcher's office there is a guy in there by the name of William J. Bowen. He's the guy that you have to talk to and if you can sell him on the idea, he'll send you up here to go to work.

So I went down there the next day and there was a line that stretched from Second Street to Third. They were a pretty sorry looking bunch of people, but I had a business card, so I just walked up to the door of the garage there and asked somebody if they'd get this card to Mr. Bowen. So I was ushered right in. He took a very dim view of my doing this. He told me to "get the hell out and stay out." So anyway I went back up to the job to tell Mr. Mulholland about this thing and he said, "Well I'll hire you up here then." So I went to work. "You report on the swing shift tonight." I was so stupid I didn't even know what a swing shift was.

NELSON: What were the conditions of employment? You say that was a temporary job or a day job?

FRANKLIN: This was a temporary 60 day job. The idea being that as the depression or the trauma of the depression continued to

some extent, the idea was to give more men at least some employment. So you went to work for 60 days and then automatically you were terminated and another group of guys came in. My first job up there was working in a relatively short tunnel. It was a bypass tunnel and I had never been underground before. There was trackage in there and a dump car.

I joined a crew composed of three other men. One guy was an ex-clothing salesman, another guy was an ex-advertising guy from Bullocks and I don't remember just what the other guy...none of us were professional in any sense of the word and we hand mucked this car up in the heading and we pushed it out to the dump and we side-dumped this thing and we pushed it back into the heading and we picked up our shovels and we loaded it up again. This thing paid \$.50 an hour.

NELSON: What sort of distance was that?

FRANKLIN: Oh I'd say 250 yards, something like that. It wasn't enlightening work, but it was honest work and I had been on that thing for about a month I guess. The tunnel foreman was a great big strapping guy by the name of Lyle Cook. He came in the tunnel about 9:00 p.m. one night and he went up to the heading to see what was going on and on the way back he pointed his finger at me and gestured to follow. He, it turned out to be, was a man of very few words. So I followed him out and I thought, "Well I don't believe I've been fired, I'm putting out as much work as anybody else." I followed him out to the tunnel portal and there

was his pickup. He said, "Get in." So I got in and we drove down to the toe of the dam and he said, "Get out." I got out and there was a ladder. This was the cut off wall at the toe of the main dam. This trench being excavated varied about, oh I'd say was about four or five feet in width and in some places it went down maybe six, seven feet. Some places it went down fourteen or fifteen feet, depending on geology. They could not use dynamite in there to excavate to shatter any of that so-called rock, so it all had to be picked out with the jack hammers. I followed him down this ladder and at that point it was about ten feet deep and nobody could muck this muck out to throw it up that far overhead so they had a wooden platform built there and there's one guy on the bottom mucked it up to this platform overhead and that guy shoveled on it on out. We didn't have hard hats. We didn't have safety shoes. We didn't have much of anything. We got down there and Cook said to me, "Have you ever run jack hammer?" I said, "No sir." He said, "Look." So he picked this thing up like it was a toy, started working with it and said, "You do now." Well there were seven guys working down there, you couldn't hear yourself think and I grabbed a hold of it and I always knew in later years the exact time to the minute when I started running a jack hammer because at that time I had a fairly decent watch and it stopped immediately.

For a long time I didn't have the money to get the thing repaired, but when I did finally take it to a jeweler, he took the back off and the works all fell out. I ran jack hammer and it was very tough work because none of these guys who were working there

were professionals in any sense, so you're working down on the bottom and most of that stuff that the guy is trying to shovel up on the top, gets down the back of your neck, hits you in the head.

I was injured there. An air hose got away. This was in the winter time and there were no bleeders in those air lines so the moisture used to form and pretty soon the jack hammer would freeze up. We always kept a fire going up on the top. You'd disconnect the gun, have the guy that worked with you, see one guy is running a gun, the other guy is shoveling and so I had a new guy and I showed him how to crimp that hose up and put his knee on it, and hold it, disconnect it, crawl up the ladder with this jackhammer, throw it in the fire until it got red hot and it would burn all the moisture out it and then you'd crawl down the ladder. Well the gaskets in there were leaking and they were kind of bad on my hands so I thought well as long as I've got the thing apart, I'll put some new gaskets in it. We all carried spare gaskets in our pockets, so I got this thing up as I'm trying to see if this gasket is seated and this character falls off the air hose and I got the thing right in my mouth. Knocked my teeth crooked and I bled pretty bad. They took me over to the first aid man.

In those days, Dick, we were unfamiliar with this work. The foremen were decidedly decent about it. They recognized it. They were professionals. They'd been around construction all their lives, most of them. You were allowed to talk on the job, things of that kind, but if you started making a fool of yourself, all they had to do was to blow the whistle and point and you were

done. Standing out at the gate there's 25 more men clamoring for a job.

Utilities like to build things during depression times. They get better work and I'm sure cheaper work than they ever would otherwise because people need work and they'd do a good job for them.

NELSON: What were the accommodations out there?

FRANKLIN: They had a camp there. The camp consisted of an engineering office, soil laboratories, office building, bunk houses, mess hall and a little commissary. I never did live in the camp because when I came to work up there, my father and I jointly rented a place down in the canyon and we "batched" down there.

NELSON: Where was that exactly?

FRANKLIN: At Bouquet Canyon?

NELSON: Yes.

FRANKLIN: Well it was about maybe a mile and a half below the dam site. It was a nice little cabin. It had Bouquet Creek, which sometimes was dry and sometimes it had water and that's one of the things the Department did provide was a steady year around supply of water in Bouquet Creek.

I've got another interesting story along that line. Well, I'll pick up from the jackhammer job. They tried to make a tractor operator out of me, but it didn't work out. I did pull sheepsfoot rollers for a couple of weeks, I ran the big stationary compressor while the regular guy was on vacation. I ran pumps on the graveyard shift. I did a number of things and I ended up with a one man job at night. I was supposed to maintain all of the pneumatic tools, the jack hammers, tampers, and so forth. Also repair miles and miles of air hose and wherever the county roads were disrupted, to fill red lanterns and take them out there, set up barricades and so forth.

It was a very interesting job. I worked in there by myself. When I came to work, I unlocked the door to my shack and I went in there and I went to work. Nobody bothered me. One night the night superintendent, chap by the name of Cecil Lewis, drove up. Oh yes, I was supposed to take care of all emergency air and water line breaks at night and there were plenty of those too. People running over water lines and air lines and stuff, but one night the night superintendent, Lewis, drove up and blew his horn and I went out and he said, "Jim, I want you to shake hands with Bill Mulholland, he's the boss' brother." So I shook hands with the guy, he's sitting there in the car and he said, "Bill's coming to work for us and he's going to be your helper." He stood about 6'2, he unlimbered from the car, got out and Lewis kind of gave me a silly grin and drove off. So we went into the shop and I had a jackhammer dissembled, had it in a vise working on it, so this guy said, "Well you seem to know about this work. I think I'll just

watch you for a while." So he got some waste and put it up on the steel top of the work bench and he crawled up there, filled his pipe and that was that. He watched me work.

That was just fine. So I told him the next night, "I've got to put out some red lanterns and I had that thing pretty well organized. At that time I think I had 40 lanterns and I'd take a stick and have all the handles up straight and I could take a whole ten at the time and bring them in, fill them with kerosene and take the globes out and clean the globes and light them up, take the broomstick and put it in the back of my pickup.

So I was doing this and he stood there and watched the whole thing and so I got them all lit and I got them all in the back of the pickup and everything and he said, "Well, I'll tell you, I'll drive and you can put them out. You just tell me where to go." This is my helper, you know. He stayed with me quite a spell and then later on, quite a lot later after the near failure of the San Fernando dam, during the 1971 earthquake, he turned out to be one of the great guys that was opposed to rebuilding the dam. He was quoted in all the papers. It was probably the magic name of "Mulholland."

Hugh Mulholland, the big superintendent, showed up in the shop one evening, I don't know whether he was restless or what it was, but he came down and you never saw the superintendent at night, so he said, "Franklin, what did you do before you came to work for the Department?" I said, "I worked at a bank in Beverly Hills until it failed." He said, "Oh you're a clerk, huh?" I said, "Yes, I'm a clerk." He said, "Do you know the chief clerk

by any chance, fellow by the name of Frew?" I said, "No I never met him." He said, "I tell you what you do, Frew keeps telling me all the time that doesn't have any clerks that know anything. You go on up to the office in the morning and stay in your car until I get there. Don't go in that office." I worked the night shift, but I was there, believe me. So I went in and he said to Frew, "Here's a guy said he's a clerk, maybe you could use him here." So he kept right on going in one door and out the other. So Frew said, "Sit down. Tell me about your background a little bit." So I told him and he said, "What are you doing down there fixing jackhammers? I got a job for you. When can you go to work?" I said, "Right now." So he said, "I'll tell you one thing, all of these people in this office, they are all Civil Service, so if a strange car drives up in front or anything like that, there's a broom behind the door, you start sweeping like hell."

So I went to work on the cost ledgers - no at first I was time keeper. That was a pretty simple job in those days, there wasn't an awful lot of deductions.

NELSON: Was this beyond your 60 days now?

FRANKLIN: Yes, I was held on. Some people were laid off at the end of 60 days, some people were retained. It was discretionary to the superintendent. I was one of the guys that they retained.

NELSON: Was that retention for a period of time or indefinitely?

FRANKLIN: Indefinitely. Still a laborer, now at \$4.40 per day. So I was told to sweep out in case anybody showed up because I wasn't supposed to be doing this sort of thing.

NELSON: What was the location? This work location?

FRANKLIN: In the office at Bouquet Canyon.

NELSON: Oh okay, you're still in the field office.

FRANKLIN: So I started in and this is interesting too, I think, I was a timekeeper then and the superintendent came by one time and he said, "Jim, where do you live?" I said, "I live down in the Canyon." He said, "Is your wife with you?" I said, "Temporarily, she's up here now. She generally stays in Los Angeles." He said, "Well I'd like to meet your wife. I think I'll come down this evening and meet her." I said, "Gee that would be nice Mr. Mulholland." He said, "I'll be down about 10:00, 10:15." Then he took off. Well when I got home and said to my wife, "You know, I don't know anything about these construction people or anything like that, but the general superintendent has singled me out somehow or other and he said he's coming to visit." She said, "Oh that's nice." But I said, "Wait a minute, you haven't heard the whole story. He's coming about 10:15." She said, "10:15?" I said, "That's right." So she said, "Should I serve something?" I said, "I think you'd better have some coffee on, certainly." So it was just about that time

when he drove down. He came down to where we were living there in the canyon. He came up and I introduced him and she offered him a cup of coffee which he had. Then he said, "Well it's nice to have met you Mrs. Franklin, I'm going to borrow your husband for a little while. I'll take good care of him. I'll bring him home. Get your hat." So I get my hat on and we used to wear hats in those days and we drove up the canyon and right below the main dam there's a grove of aspen trees, or was, and he backed his car off the road and we sat there. He started talking about this and that and I thought what is this?

So we sat there about 15 minutes or so and there was a construction road that came down the pervious side of the dam, seldom used. There was some headlights coming down there and he said, "Wonder who that is? I think I'll find out." So he picked a flashlight out of his glove compartment. He went out into the middle of the road and here comes the car and there is four guys in it. He flags them down. "Who are you guys?" "We work for the City up here on the dam." He said, "What shift do you work on?" "Swing shift." "What time does swing shift get done?" "12:00." He said, "Well it's 11:15 now. You are fired! The timekeeper is sitting over in my car. He'll pay you off." He had taken the timeroll from the office and I sat over in the back seat and turned on the dome light and I wrote these guys checks. While I'm doing that, there's two more cars showed up. I paid off 11 men that night. That was all. The whistle blew, shift was over and he took me home. There was never a bulletin put out on that,

Dick, nothing. From that point on people were dam sure they didn't leave early.

NELSON: Did he live in the camp too?

FRANKLIN: He had a City house. You see, when the Department took over that property, there had been a bunch of small ranches around there and those ranch houses were lived in by the executives, superintendents and so forth.

TAPE NUMBER: 1, SIDE TWO

JAMES W. FRANKLIN

NELSON: Okay, Jim you are timekeeping out at Bouquet Canyon. What exactly did that entail?

FRANKLIN: I kept the timeroll, what we call a field timerall for the employees on that job and at the end of each pay period, I prepared a labor distribution sheet charging the hours of labor to the pertinent construction authorizations and codes therein. I subsequently worked on the cost ledgers there. Very, very comprehensive costs was kept as to the cost of preparation of the barrow pits, loading in the pits, the hauling of the impervious material from the barrow pits to the fill and the compaction of it.

Some of it was hand compaction around the abutments. Some of it with double and triple rollers. Costs for the excavation of rock for the pervious part of the dam, so forth and so on. There was a competitive thing set up between shifts as to who could come up with the cheapest cost per cubic yard of impervious material in place and I was keeping that type of cost ledger which, of course,

involved both transportation equipment and labor cost and material cost to some extent.

I continued to do that until the job folded up and the last thing that was built there at Bouquet Canyon was the caretaker's house. At that point practically everybody was laid off except superintendents and senior foreman and everybody went to work on this caretaker's house. Probably one of the most expensive structures that the Department ever built because you had superintendent type people with hand saws and they weren't hurrying either. Everyone was waiting to see whether the Mono project was going to go or wasn't it, and if it goes, will it be contracted or will it be force account? So people didn't hurry because they knew that if we didn't go to Mono, they weren't going any place except off the payroll.

So finally the word came that Mono Basin was going to be a force account job. Everybody took off except me and I was left at Bouquet Canyon. I had, I think, seven or eight local hayhands that were involved in clearing brush out of the reservoir site as the water level came up. I was required to go down to the control tower twice a day and telephone in a reading of the water level as they filled the reservoir to the hydrologist. At the same time we were clearing out a warehouse full of odds and ends of material and equipment and stuff that had to go up North. I was making out bills of lading and that type of thing because there was maybe six or eight trucks a day that was coming in there to haul usable stuff up to the Mono job.

All in all I kept pretty busy. Then the engineer in charge of major construction, Henry L. Jacques, on his way back from Mono one day, came back down the back way into Bouquet Canyon and he said, "Jim, you'd better be prepared to go up north pretty soon. They're going to need you up there." The Department always has figured, and I think that's a hold over to the days of old William Mulholland, who gave the impression that he thought a clerk was the lowest form of life that existed. He was not greatly beloved by clerical people or accountants. Every time they laid off a laborer in the field or a miner, they laid off a clerk. So we ended up it was just Frew and one other guy and myself were the only...now this is starting on a multi-million dollar, six year job. We didn't have a warehouseman, not only not a warehouseman, we didn't have a warehouse.

So in any event, he went on his way to his Los Angeles office and the next morning he called me and he said, "Jim, I just got word that they need you urgently up there. I'll tell you what you do. You come in town. The Department car I had was a little Ford Model A. The Superintendent of Transportation, Mr. Thayer, tells me that he has a truck that has to go up North. You come in and get this truck and come back by way of Bouquet Canyon, load whatever office furniture you can or whatever you can put in the truck and proceed North expeditiously." So I said, "Hell I'm not a truck driver." He said, "Well you've driven a truck for us before." So I said, "Okay."

So I came in town and I had never been down to Ducommon Street. So I reported to this Thayer chap and he said, "Did

Jacques tell you what you're supposed to drive up there?" I said, "No." I kind of thought maybe a ton and a half flatrack or something. He said, "Well we got three off the road trucks that were bought for the Colorado River project, the surveys out there. These things take a special permit to put them on the highway. Could you drive one?" I said, "I don't know, I haven't seen them yet?" So he said, "Come with me." So I went down and these are huge damn big rock trucks. As a matter of fact there are five steps to get up into the cab. He said, "Fire it up." They had it in the shop, they just overhauled the engine. So I fired it up. He said, "Drive it around the yard." Well there's three gear shift levers here and I had never driven a thing like that. So I fumbled around and got it into something and I drove once around Ducommun Street yard and he waived me out the gate.

So I went back up to Bouquet. I loaded everything we had up there practically in that huge thing and I started out one morning. Now bear in mind I'd never been as far as Palmdale in my life. I had no occasion to go up there. I went up through the Leona Valley and that day, I left Bouquet I believe at 6:00 a.m. and that day I got to Little Lake and I was a tired guy! I went to bed and started out again in the morning. No power steering, I might add, and besides that the thing had a governor on it on the recently overhauled engine, a huge gasoline affair.

The next day I drove all day as fast as I could go and I got to Bishop. That was after quitting time and I inquired where the Bishop yard was and I drove it in there, took my little bag and went over to the Kitty Lee Hotel and went to bed. When I got up

in the morning and had breakfast, I walked down to the Department yard and there were about eight or ten guys standing around this monster. They had never seen anything like this before.

So they asked me where I was going and I said, "Well, I don't really know. There's a place called the Cain Ranch up here someplace up north. They told me it's south of Leevining." They said, "Well between here and there, you'll see you are going to go up a hell of a big grade and as you haven't driven up here and this engine has just been overhauled, take it easy." It was in August, 1934. So they put a couple hundred gallons of gas in it and a couple of gallons of oil and I got out of Bishop and I could see this stupid grade coming up and I stopped at a place there at the foot of the grade and got a cup of coffee. And I still hadn't mastered this gear shift so I fumbled around until I got onto something, I started up the grade, then I realized that I was in too low a gear, but I was reluctant to start shifting around the damn thing on the grade and I kept watching the heat on it and it wasn't heating so I thought, well I'm not in any hurry, I'm on the payroll anyway. I don't know it took me three hours and a half or something to get up to Tom's Place. Eventually I got up to the old Cain Ranch.

The big deal was to get the camps built, get the facilities in and get underground before winter hit. There's maybe ten, fifteen private trucks, Department trucks bringing materials in there every day. There's lumber, there's pipe, there's roofing materials, there's all kinds of building materials being brought

in and we don't have a warehouse and we don't have a warehouseman. Frew and I walked across the road (Highway 395) from the old Cain Ranch and we took some surveyor's lathes and staked out an area maybe 150' x 150' and he hand-lettered a shingle that said, "Warehouse." This is where they dumped material. Before the incoming material was hardly unloaded, there's Department trucks hauling it away to build something with it.

Invoices came in and we had a Shredded Wheat box for a file. We'd just throw them in there. We had nobody to check them, to see whether the quantities were correct or otherwise. We didn't have a timekeeper either, and we had a force of about 400 men working and we don't have a system of accounts to charge anything to either. That comes later. So Frew said, "The first thing, Jim, let's get a timekeeper up here." We got a guy off the Civil Service list and I spent my time with this guy getting him started, and instead of an authorization number and a code, he's got to write on the timeroll "building dormitory," or whatever the guy's got on his time card. Okay, the guy is going to pick this up and I think now I can go on to something else.

Comes now the general superintendent, Henry L. Jacques. He always had certain questions that he always asked if he called from his Los Angeles office or when he was up on the job and they went something like this, "How many men are there on the payroll? How's the weather" and he wants the temperature, low and high and all. And, "What progress has been made on the tunnel." And you'd better have these answers ready. I got the timekeeper going real well and he'd been there about ten days and Jacques showed up. He

came through the outer office where the timekeeper sat, went over to him and he said, "How many men do you have on the payroll today?" And the guy said, "So and so." He said, "Thank you." Always a gentleman. He walked back into his office. This is in the project office and I heard the conversation, I jumped out of my chair and I asked the timekeeper, "Are you sure of that figure?" And he said, "Oh I just guessed." Jacques called me and he said, "Jim have that man bring his timeroll into my office." He sat there and counted. The guy was 35 or 40 people off. He said, "Fire him." I said, "Lord, we just got him here." He said, "I said fire him. He was on the next bus going to town. Start all over again."

I know later on one time, the paychecks had got up to Bishop, but the bus couldn't get beyond East Portal Road because of snow. This is up in the Mono project. Our guys couldn't do anything with the checks if they did have them, but except be mad because they didn't have them, if you know what I mean. I volunteered to snowshoe down to meet the bus at East Portal Road, which I did and the bus was there with the checks. There was a Department phone box at that site. The trouble was that the phone boxes which were convenient to a person normally in the summertime, were always buried in snow in the winter time. So before winter set in, the Department's linemen would move those things up. Sometimes the snow was there and sometimes it had drifted away from the bottom. In this case this phone box is up about seven or eight feet in the air and I have to shinny up the pole and all I wanted to do is to call in to my office to tell the operator that I'd gotten there

and I was on my way back. He said, "Captain Jacques is on the other line in L.A. and he wants to talk to you." It's blowing a gale. So the Captain says, "Well how are things going? How many men do you have on the payroll?" and so forth. Then he said, "Do I detect an abruptness in your voice by any chance?" I said, "Captain I am up nine feet in the air, hanging up on a pole down here at East Portal. I'm about to freeze to death."

The people who set up the system of accounts for the project were not very professional. I don't think any of them had ever seen a tunnel. When we finally got the system of accounts, we ended up with 57 authorizations. There was one authorizations each for the building of camp buildings at each of the four camps. One authorization each for plant buildings so called at each of the four camps. Those authorizations we'll say for the camp buildings at West Portal, broke them down further into single family residences, a mess hall, recreation hall, forty man dormitories, a hospital and so forth and so on. As if that wasn't fine enough, it was broken down into rough and finish carpentry, painting, doors and sash, flooring, plumbing, electrical, heating, and so forth. But the emphasis was on the building of the camps and facilities. There didn't seem too much likelihood they were ever going to build other camps like these 40 miles from nowhere. Then when it came to the tunnel itself, the accounting breakdown was very meager.

NELSON: They drew on their expertise and the expertise was in things they were familiar with.

FRANKLIN: Well, here's what happened. We were six months into the job. All of the camps were built. The tunnel was underground and we were moving forward on that, we were sinking the two shafts, and we've got all the accounts for these activities and we've got what was done up to that point in time.

Now you get a hold of say, the carpenter foreman and say, "Carpenter foreman, Mr. Keith, how many hours of labor were used in building, say the mess hall here?" "Oh hell, Jim that was a long time ago. Well I guess so many hours on framing and so on and so on finish carpentry, et cetera." I said, "Well how many board feet 2 x 4's, but how many board feet T & G Flooring, and so forth. How many rolls of roofing paper?" "Well, the best I...you know it's all an estimate." I'd say, "Yeah, yeah."

Okay, we built a transmission line from Leevining, from the Southern Sierra's power station in Leevining to West Portal and up over the hill to the other camps. And I'd go with the line foreman, Mr. Wasson and by the odometer readings, we figure how many wood frames we've got this thing on and how many miles of conductor and so forth and so on. My father is the pipe fitter foreman on the job. He has a bunch of Pieute Indians that dig trenches, and puts in all pipe for the water supply system and the reservoir and so forth and there's no drawings of it, of course. I get a hold of my father then and he tells me how many feet of 8" various size pipe and valves he has buried, etcetera.

So I sit down and finally, with all this estimating and stuff and I've got to make out a bunch of bills of lading and this bunch is about a foot thick and I make out a D2epartment transfer that

goes something like this: "crediting MOH, which is the material on hand account, or whatever, with a value of materials issued in connection with the construction of camp and plant buildings and other facilities on the Mono Basin project from the date of so and so to the present as per bills of lading attached." I make this document out and it is for a million or so or some such amount. I get a cardboard carton and I send this thing into town and two or three days later, the teletype machine starts clattering and the teletype is for Captain Jacques, signed by E.B. Mayer, who was executive engineer of the Water System, and it goes like this: H. L. Jacques. You are instructed to discharge J.W. Franklin for gross incompetence. Signed E.B. Mayer, Executive Engineer. Jacques calls me into his office and he said, "Now what did you do to occasion this teletype?" I said, "I don't know. I have no idea." So he called Mayer up on the telephone and it was dereliction of duty," as shown by this delayed huge material document. We were lucky to ever get any material costs into the accounts at all.

You know, in my judgement, the Department on clerical and accounting help, has always gone for quantity rather than quality and I think a lot of that leads into the DDR thing. That the more people you supervise, the bigger your salary is, the greater the number of points. Of course, I feel too, that in retrospect, that if you got a system of accounts like that, you're going to have to use them and if you have an account that's got labor and it obviously should have material, you'll put some material value on it too, somehow. To make it look realistic, at least.

But I think that up there we had an average including warehouse personnel and commissary personnel, a fluctuating average of about 60 men throughout the six years up there. We could have got by with half that number at a considerable savings and we wouldn't have lost any needed detail at all, nothing that was pertinent, but that's after the fact.

NELSON: Let me go back and pick up three or four questions. Back to Bouquet. Two questions on Bouquet. Were there women working in the field at that time?

FRANKLIN: No.

NELSON: Not in the office? Cooks?

FRANKLIN: No. No.

NELSON: On your trip to Bishop, was the road paved?

FRANKLIN: Oh going up? Yes, it was two-way most of the way. With a fast car and really steady driving, it was about six and a half hours to the project. When I was working at Long Valley, with DeWitt, H. A. Van Norman showed up one day and he asked me to make a phone connection for him, which I did and he talked with someone in his office. There were two desks in my office. I occupied one, the other one was vacant. When he hung up, he said, "Jim do you have a stenographer here?" I said, "No I don't." He

said, "Well I've got to write a letter and it's got to be in to town tomorrow. Can you take a letter?" I said, "Gosh I'm not a stenographer." He said, "Well I'll take it easy."

I had in mind, hopefully, a two or three paragraph letter. This turned out a master's thesis. Sitting in the adjacent office, was DeWitt, the project resident engineer. Also, two or three other Department office engineers. Van dictates and I said, "Van, you're going too fast. I'm not getting it." So finally he's finished this thing and as a matter of fact, it turned out 1 3/4 pages of single space. And he walked out and said, "Well type it up. I'm staying with Andy Kessler. He was past president of the Alemite Lubricating Company. Had a beautiful place up there off of Convict Creek and so the minute that Van walked out the front door, DeWitt and the three engineers stuck their heads in my office. "How much of that did you get?" I said, "Get out of here." I grabbed the typewriter and I started banging away. I did rough draft and Van went down on the job and I guess he was gone an hour and a half and I had a draft when he came back and he said, "Let me see what you've got." So he sat down at the other desk and he started to read and he looked up and said, "Did I say that?" I said, "You couldn't prove it by me." He said, "Well I didn't mean to say that anyway." He was very nice about it. He said, "I'll make some marginal notes there. So he did in his own writing. He said, "Well let's get this thing typed up and I'll be up at Andy Kessler's and when you get it done, why bring it up."

So here's the Department, you know, pinks and blues and I had the stationary there and I think there was five carbons that went with this thing and it's addressed to the Honorable Board of Water and Power Commissioners and a carbon copy to the Water and Power Committee of the City Council and to the Mayor and, of course, office copies. I can type, or at least I could in those days. I get this thing typed up and if you make a mistake, you know to start over on that type of a correspondence. So I made about six passes at it and it was after 8:00 p.m. that night when I got it finished and I drove up to Kessler's place and he was sitting on the porch with Andy Kessler, having a highball. So I park this pile of junk that I was driving, City car, and went up on the porch. He introduced me to Kessler and I said, "I have your letter, Van." He said, "Oh let's see what you've got." So he said to Kessler, "Aren't you going to buy my assistant a drink?" Andy Kessler called a Filipino houseboy who brought me a highball. So Van looked at this thing and said, "Well that looks good." So he signed it and he said, "I want this thing delivered down to the Hill Street garage not later than 8:30 a.m. I want you to take it down." I said, "Okay, Van." He said, "You'll never get there in that Department car you're driving, take my car." He had a big Buick at that time. He had a siren on it and red lights. He said, "You take my car and you'd better take your wife along too, because when you get that thing down there, I don't want you to come back for a week. Take a vacation. Then when you're ready to come back, why go into the Hill Street garage and have them give you a car."

Well I drove back up to West Portal and picked up my wife. I drove straight through. I didn't stop for nothing and it took me about six and a half hours. I recognize in those days I was kind of immature because I hit the intersection of Los Felix and Riverside Drive about 7:15 a.m. and I turned on those red lights and let loose with that siren.

NELSON: You came into town in class.

FRANKLIN: He was a nice guy to work for. I don't know if you knew Van or not, but he stood about 6'3 1/2" and he had shoulders that you couldn't get through that door and mostly he was a very nice person.

NELSON: There was quite a contrast between him and Bill Mulholland as far as personality?

FRANKLIN: Oh yes, oh yes. Mulholland, he seemed a very bitter man. Let's put it this way. After the Saint Francis fiasco, Van came up to the job one day at Bouquet Canyon and he walked into my little cubicle and he said, "Jim, I got the old chief out there in the car. He wanted to come up. For some reason or another, he wants to see that siphon over there in San Fransquito Canyon under construction. So he said, "Will you drive him over there.?" So I said, "Sure." And he was sitting in the front of Van's car and I crawled in and said, "Good morning, Mr. Mulholland." No answer.

So I thought, well so what. So I crawled behind the wheel and I drove him over there.

I stopped the car at the top of the siphon where it goes down over San Fransquito Canyon. We got out of the car and he had a top coat and he had it hanging over his arm. The wind was blowing pretty strong and he attempted to put this coat on and he was having difficulty and just like I would do with you, Dick, I took a hold of the corner of the thing to help hold it and he pulled away from it and he said, "God damn it, if I need your help, I'll ask for it." Nasty man!

Van was a very nice guy except when he got mad which was quite seldom. When he did, it was enough you'd wanted to crawl under your desk and get out of sight because he just got mad all over.

NELSON: There's also a reference that you have made reference to a bus that was up on the Mono project. Was that a DWP bus or was that a commercial bus?

FRANKLIN: There was a Department of Water and Power bus that left from the Hill Street garage every morning and they had Department mail, small material items that were going up to the job and personnel. By noon time they got up to Homestead in the Owens Valley and there they met the project bus, also a Department bus that had similar stuff, Department mail and so forth, that had left West Portal that morning and they met there. We had a meal authority at Homestead and the men had their lunches and they

changed buses and those that were going into Los Angeles got into the other bus and the other one got into the other bus and the guys that were coming to the project got up there generally around 6:00 p.m. from Homestead.

NELSON: Now is that bus the same thing as the candy wagon?

FRANKLIN: The candy wagon was an inter-project bus that came from East Portal and Shaft 2, Shaft 1 to West Portal on a daily basis or a maybe a semi-daily basis to bring men over that needed treatment maybe in the main hospital in West Portal or exchange of mail, pick up supplies and things of that kind. This was, I think, probably twice a day.

NELSON: You mentioned Jacques as Captain Jacques. Was that a title unofficially given?

FRANKLIN: No. World War I.

NELSON: He was a captain in World War I?

FRANKLIN: Yes.

NELSON: You mentioned the four camps and I think you just indicated where they were. East and West Portal and Shaft 1 and 2? Those were the four camps?

FRANKLIN: Yes.

NELSON: The largest of which was..?

FRANKLIN: West Portal.

NELSON: Second largest?

FRANKLIN: Shaft 1.

NELSON: What was the smallest?

FRANKLIN: Well, of course, we had the camp over at Cain Ranch when we were constructing Grant Lake Reservoir. I think I would say that would be the smallest.

TAPE NUMBER: 2, SIDE ONE

JAMES W. FRANKLIN

NELSON: Jim, why don't you describe for us your recollections of the camps themselves. What did they consist of and what were the facilities? I know the DWP coined some money to be used in the commissaries up there.

FRANKLIN: Yes, that's very true. Early on, and I mean 1935, we were losing quite a number of very valuable men who had elected to bring their families up on the job and they were living in June Lake, Levining, Crestview, places around there and there was an awful lot of shacks you might say, habitable buildings...they had to be in that wintertime up there, that were built in the camps themselves by employees, using, of course, Department materials etc.

People were quitting mostly because of the fact that the local merchants really had two prices. They had one for the natives and one for Department employees. This situation was called to the big boss' attention, by that I mean by VanNorman and he said, "Oh the hell with these people, these locals. We'll start our own store." Well in the first place, we were on Forest

Service lands. We had a provisional use permit for the duration of the job. To start any business in the County of Mono, we had to get a license to operate a business and when we applied for that, there were all kinds of problems right away.

The local merchants assumed, and they were certainly correct, that our prices would be substantially cheaper than they could do business. This would put local merchants in June Lake and Levining, etc. out of business. And we countered with the idea that we would give identification cards to our employees and they would have to identify themselves at our store before they could buy anything but this did not satisfy the Mono County Board of Supervisors. They said, "They could loan these identification cards to somebody else." Finally we got backed into this idea of creating our own coinage which was an entirely different matter altogether. This coinage was in denominations of dollars, half dollars, quarters, dimes and nickels. This stuff came, tons of it which necessitated us getting a new office safe to put it in. The way this thing worked, all a man had to do in those days was to go to the timekeeper who had a book, with pages that were in triplicate, and the man would tell the timekeeper that he wanted so and so many tokens. The timekeeper wrote in his name and what he wanted in denominations of \$5, \$10, \$15 he could get up to what he had due at that time in the way of salary. Then he could take that thing over to the commissary and get tokens with them. Okay, sounds good!

The guy wants to go to Reno and they don't take tokens in Reno, so he is in a position now, because the commissary clerk has

both cash and tokens, to make a deal and I can't catch my commissary clerks at this thing because they're discounting. So how bad does a guy want to go to Reno? Here's \$20 in tokens. The going rate generally was about \$16 in cash for the \$20 in tokens and the commissary clerk puts that difference in his pocket. I'm trying to catch him at this thing, but I can't because nobody wants to kill the "goose that laid the golden egg," if you know what I mean. It turned out to be a real problem with the token thing.

Also we had something that was very helpful, we had a local house of prostitution and the madame is, well I've got to tell you about that. It's called the hog ranch and it sits along Highway 395 just about where the exit of the Grant Lake outlet tunnel. What happened, a guy figures early on that four camps, they're going to have a lot of garbage. Now what do you do with garbage? You feed it to hogs, so he's going to raise hogs. So he got some kind of a permit from the state, or the county or somebody to raise hogs at this location and he built a very, very, beautiful, substantial building. Naturally in that elevation and with the snowfall, they have to have a peaked roof and he had somebody paint on both sides of the roof where you could see it from the Conway Summit to practically to Bishop, "Hog Ranch."

He got an enclosure to put his hogs in and he gets this thing all done and he's ready to go. He hasn't gotten the hogs yet, but he just assumes that the Department will give him the garbage. No problem, and there would have been no problem probably except that Van Norman was up on the job and things on the Project were not

going well. I emphasized were not going well and Van is in a bitter, bitter, angry mood and this guy comes in to see Jacques. Van is sitting there smoking his pipe and mad at everything in sight. The hog grower was there to get permission and figure out the facilities for getting this garbage every day. Van told him to get his ass out of that office. He couldn't have the garbage and he wouldn't give it to him. So he was out of business before he ever started.

Then the madame from Tonopah moves into the hog ranch building. This was a beautiful situation. Her boyfriend is one of our tunnel foremen. Great big strapping guy and he lives there at the hog ranch with the madame and he advertises the place - on shift and elsewhere and also when he's off shift, he is the bouncer. If somebody gets out of line, he throws them out in the snow bank. She took in tokens too, that's why I get to the token thing. Well I didn't want to redeem them in cash, but she explained that her girls had to eat too and could she patronized the grocery store and I said, "Sure." So she did and she came over in her Cadillac once a week or so and she was a real good customer.

NELSON: I'm not clear. The coins were for employees. Did they have an option of buying the coins?

FRANKLIN: No you didn't buy it. Payroll deduction on it.

NELSON: But did you have the option, your monthly salary was paid to you in coin while you were there?

FRANKLIN: Oh no. We got paid by check.

NELSON: So if you wanted to frequent the commissary...

FRANKLIN: They'd take either cash or tokens.

NELSON: How long was the hog ranch there? Was that there the entire length of the project?

FRANKLIN: Yes, indeed. As a matter fact, the Madame came over to see me just before I left for good and said that her auditor, get this, her auditor in going through her books, had discovered that she still had a few tokens and would I care to redeem them? I said, "I'll redeem them with my own money and take care of it when I get to town.

She expressed her regret that she hadn't had an opportunity to bid a personal good-byes before they left to Mr. Jacques, Mr. Van Norman and others and she said, "You'd be surprised what my take was during the five years I've been here." I said, "I guess I would be." She mentioned a sum of money I couldn't believe it. Then I asked Bertha what she planned on doing next and she said, "Well I'm going to start a rooming house in Bishop." I said, "What kind of a house was that you're going to start?" She said, "Well a rooming house." I said, "Okay, and let it go at that."

She was very cooperative with us. She would, like for example, she'd call me maybe on a Monday morning and say, "Mr. Franklin, your nice Mr. Murphy, he's one of my clerks, came in

Saturday night and he was very drunk and we put him to bed and he's up now and he's had coffee and he's had his breakfast and would you care to come over and get him?" I said, "Sure, thank you." Drive over and pick up Mr. Murphy. It was very handy. But we didn't have so much turnover in personnel as before.

The worst thing about operating those stores was meat cutters. They're all a bunch of drunks I guess. There was not a civil service rating for meat cutter, butcher or anything of that kind, so you take people that were meat cutters and called them general clerks. I'd be sitting at my desk working and all of a sudden I'd hear the door slam in my office and bang, on the side of my desk, here is a big fat miner's wife, she's got a piece of round steak, she says, "Mr. Franklin, would you eat this?" This thing is three inches thick on one end and it's razor thin on the other.

The thing about operating these stores, Van Norman was absolutely hipped on the subject of no profit whatsoever. Well, all of my accounting had been based on profit and pricing so you try to set prices not to show a profit and about every time he came up, he'd want to see those records. So I made the last months tally on this thing - we're \$300 ahead. "I don't want that to happen, Jim. Don't let it happen again." Well, miners and their wives, they understand beef steak and they understand pork chops and they understand this type of thing. Unfortunately as we bought in halves, beeves, or fourequarters or hindquarters of beef, you got only so many prime cuts. You've got filets and so

forth and they were priced the same as round steak. We ate pretty

But some place along the line, I must confess that between running four commissary stores and a grocery store and a meat market, it was very easy to lose sight of what your real function was there. We were really supposed to be driving a tunnel.

NELSON: Well, let's get to that. What were you, at that time, and what time was that and what was your function and responsibilities?

FRANKLIN: Your question requires a rather involved answer. The "Mono Basin Project" consisted of five separate construction projects. Some of these projects were constructed by "force account," some solely by contractors and some were begun by Department forces and completed by contractors. The driving and lining of the Mono Craters tunnel was the largest and most expensive. Projects identified with numeral (1) refer to "force account" jobs, those with (2) contract jobs and (3) a combination of each. The five projects were:

Leevining to Grant Lake conduit (2)

Grant Lake to West Portal (1)

Mono Craters Tunnel (1)

Grant Lake Reservoir (3)

Long Valley Reservoir (3)

Now to answer your question. On some of the projects I

Now to answer your question. On some of the projects I served as assistant chief clerk, on others as chief clerk and on others as the Department's representative in fiscal and related matters with contractors. I was the only employee that served on all phases of the work.

NELSON: And what was the organization under you?

FRANKLIN: The organization varied from one of the five parts of the Mono Basin Project to another. It varied according to the amount of work to be done. For example, the clerical organization on the Mono Craters Tunnel project averaged about 60 men. At Grant Lake during the time the Department was doing the construction, about six to seven.

NELSON: During your job having supervision over the clerical operation of four camps, did that keep you on the road then?

FRANKLIN: Quite a little bit. It so happens that I do not like just looking at figures, particularly on a construction job. I liked to see what those figures mean. I liked to go out in the field and see what's actually going on and I liked to go in the tunnel and I liked to go down those shafts occasionally when I was permitted to do so. That was not true mostly with my people. You couldn't drive them out of the office. You just couldn't drive them out. They didn't have the fascination that I did for it.

As I said, it was fascinating. Every bit of it was fascinating and working with contractors particularly to see how they operated. I know one time when I was down at Long Valley, Van dropped into the office and he was very affable and he said, "Jim you've been around our construction work for years, you know our ways of doing business, what do you find different here in the operation of J. F. Shea?" I said, "That's very easy to tell. When this thing was a going concern under force account, we had a blacksmith shop and we had a carpenter shop and we had Lord knows how many men in the warehouse and all that, every one of those shops are empty now. If there is blacksmithing to be done, people bring what needs to be done and they put it outside the locked door of the shop. A guy who can do blacksmithing is currently in the field driving a tractor. When he sees a lot of blacksmithing there or the superintendent does, he comes up and he does blacksmithing and he gets paid as a blacksmith. Then he goes back to working as a catskinner or doing something else.

By the same token, the warehouseman, he keeps a "want" list of stuff that they are shy of and when he has a sizable enough list, he takes a truck and a helper and he goes to Los Angeles or San Francisco and he writes purchase orders for what he needs and he brings it back and puts it in his warehouse. They keep no records as far as equipment is concerned, how much gas and oil and so forth, they keep no warehouse records except what they had to start with, what they bought and what they have left, the balance of it is what they used on the job. This simplifies things a heck of a lot.

NELSON: On the West Portal camp, for example, how was that laid out? How close was the residential area to the camp itself?

FRANKLIN: The residential area, originally started with five City owned houses. Ultimately there was, I suppose, eight to fifteen or eighteen former bunkhouses that certain people were provided with and that were fixed up for residences. These were maybe 150 yards from the camp itself.

NELSON: I've noticed recently in tracking through both the east and west portal areas, foundations that are still there with the tracks in them?

FRANKLIN: First of all, the main track went on out to the dump. That track originally was not covered with the snow shed. It was an oversight all the way through because when the first snow storm hit us, we couldn't operate.

One of the superintendents on the job who was quite inventive in his own way, he came up with what I suppose would be the original flame thrower of all times. This thing was constructed around the clock in the machine shop and what it consisted of was a chassis of a couple of dump cars. On one of them was mounted an air receiver and a gasoline driven compressor, and on the other was mounted a tank of fuel oil. On the front of this stupid thing was a nozzle that looked like the nozzle on a vacuum cleaner which was wide enough to spray the tracks. As I say, this thing was worked on and worked on and put together in a couple of days.

The inventor of this contraption finally fired up the compressor and we all went down to watch. He fired up the compressor, got this air receiver full of air and he went to the front with a lighted newspaper and lit the atomized oil. This thing burst into a huge flame and this "flame thrower" was pushed or propelled by a battery locomotive, one of our regular locomotives. He waves the "go ahead" signal. The snow is melting away, but about halfway down the track the whole damn thing caught fire and they just pushed it over the end of the bank.

NELSON: That experiment ended.

FRANKLIN: Then they built the snow shed, but back to the original question, first of all off of the main track, there was a branch that went into the battery shop. These locomotives were battery operated, Atlas locomotives. These batteries had to be changed and recharged.

The next side track was into a subsidiary warehouse that had all electrical supplies that would be needed in the tunnel like mono cable and stuff of that kind. Also pumps. We used pumps, my Lord there's no end to the pumps because we ran into so much water in there. Then there was another branch that went into the carpenter's shop. For various things that the carpenters would be making in there, that could be loaded on and taken back into the tunnel so that was the reason for all the side tracks.

I know the last time I was up there, as I may have mentioned to you on the phone, the people that bought our June Lake place

when I got the City house, we became very close friends with them and matter of fact they lived for years down here at Camarillo. We went up to visit a couple of times and they took us over to West Portal one day and I was having a terrible time trying to get oriented. You know there was a lot of those foundations around there. Some I knew were for air receivers and I could distinguish some of the others. As a matter of fact, I was quite surprised to find that the Forest Service was as lenient as they had been in the way we left that place up there, but when you leave something that is a going concern and you are away from it for years and years and you go back and there's nothing but sage brush and stuff, it's pretty hard to find yourself.

NELSON: At the West Portal today, headed out toward what was the dump, there's a lot of timber, a timber structure out to the little side canyon. Is there a powder magazine out there?

FRANKLIN: No. The powder magazine is not in that direction. It's up on the hillside offset from the camp and there was a railroad track that went up to it. What you have referenced to, I am sure, those timber structures was the fact that that trackage out on that dump was changed a number of times. As they dumped those cars on either side, gradually that got filled up and they didn't want to keep going to Lee Vining with this thing, so they built these timber structures in a different location, in the same general location, but I mean parallel to the original and laid track on them to provide new areas to dump in.

NELSON: You said you spent some time in these shafts and in the tunnels themselves. Can you give us some insights into the tunnels, the construction and how they were driven?

FRANKLIN: I'll try. First of all, a general description. We are talking about a horseshoe-shaped gravity tunnel driven under the cones of three extinct volcanoes. Tunnel length slightly over eleven and a tenth miles. The tunnel was driven from six "Headings." Two such "headings" were from the east and west ends of the tunnel, identified as East Portal and West Portal. The other "headings" were driven in an easterly and westerly direction from the bottom of two shafts sunk from the surface to tunnel grade.

The geological formations through which the tunnel was driven was extremely variable. It varied from solid grey granite to ocean sand and sea shells - and everything in between. As part of the preliminary engineering work, a number of various routes for the tunnel to traverse, were surveyed. The one finally selected was known as the "J" line. A core drilling contractor was hired to take core along this "J" line down to tunnel grade which should have provided some general knowledge of what conditions would be encountered. This contractor had all kinds of difficulty including killing one of his employees and losing a valuable string of diamond drills down a core hole. As a result, the contractor went into bankruptcy and further efforts to secure cores were never taken.

The method of driving and supporting the tunnel, therefore, depended entirely on the geological formation encountered. Pneumatic drills were mounted on the moveable arms of a "drill carriage" mounted on the tunnel railroad track. We drilled an eight-foot drill hole 1 1/4" in diameter. These drill holes were drilled around the periphery of the tunnel, across the bottom of the arch and in a cone in the center of the heading or "face." These center drill holes were drilled in a slanting direction meeting approximately together eight feet from the tunnel face.

In loading the drill holes 1 and 1/8" 40% dynamite was used. In firing the "round" three different "delays" were used. The first to detonate were the core holes, followed by the charges around the periphery. The last to go were the bottom holes.

Support of the tunnel as it was being driven, that is before the concrete lining, was dictated by the geological formation. It ranged from so-called "square sets," 8" x 8" mortised timber to steel supports. We started to use 20 pound I-beams. This is a flange thing, in two pieces of a horseshoe type and there's two feet on it that sat on pre-cast concrete blocks and they are bolted together at the top, and you are using that in place of timber. Behind it you had lagging, generally 2 x 6's, 2 x 8's, whatever that could go behind this thing. We went along pretty good with that for a spell, then we got into heavier ground. At first those I-beams, I believe, were placed 8' center to center and before we went into heavier steel, we went down to 4' center to centers and they were still beginning to buckle.

So then we go into a 60 pound "H-beam" which is really heavy stuff and pretty soon they're taking a strain too and the engineers had gone with strain gauges that they put under the feet of those things to measure them every day and people began to get a little bit leery of this thing. In the meanwhile we're picking up more water and more water and more water.

The trouble - the dimensions of the tunnel were based on it's ultimate capacity, based on engineering surveys of the runoff of the Leevining Creek and so forth and so on, but it turned out to be too small a tunnel to accommodate all the de-watering lines and everything else and that was the cause of the few mishaps we had. People getting caught between those sidewalls and the locomotives and the muck cars coming in and out. There were so many de-water lines in this thing that they started putting them under ground underneath the railroad track. And finally the H-beams are buckling too and this is really heavy ground.

There was a section there, believe it or not, where the invert, that is to say where the trackage was, started creeping up the sidewall. That whole thing was turning and this is very scary stuff. Then you've got this situation, every geological formation, I think, known to mankind was in that tunnel someplace.

You've got this kind of situation that we'll say, the bottom half of the heading is solid granite or whatever and then the upper part half of it in the heading is running sand with water pressure behind it. If you drill the bottom part and shoot it, you're going to lose the whole thing. So the way this thing is done is what they call "spiling." The miners take a 2' x 8'

structural fir. The carpenter's shop has tapered this timber to a very, very sharp edge, and this timber is put up, mounted on the drill carriage to hold it up and they used pneumatic force to push this thing in ahead of the heading. Maybe they could get in in two or three feet and they do this, outline this whole periphery of the U-shape tunnel, then they can take that stuff out. This is very slow going, very slow and very expensive.

NELSON: Talking about in a day's time, a foot, two feet?

FRANKLIN: Depends. So much for that. The east end of it, Shaft 2, which was a rectangular shaft, three compartment shaft, went down to tunnel grade, and I think it was about 380' - no problems at all.

NELSON: What do you mean "went down?"

FRANKLIN: Was sunk down to tunnel grade. See at the bottom of that tunnel there is going to be a "station," an area excavated far larger than the tunnel itself. There is to be places to recharge batteries, for example.

Shaft 1 had to sink approximately 1,000 feet to tunnel grade. That's a deep shaft. The first two or three hundred feet of sinking, we established a world record for footage sinking that type of a shaft. Then we started picking up water and more water and more water and Captain Jacques wanted to stop at that point to put calyx holes around the periphery of the shaft and high

pressure grout the whole thing to seal that water back. The answer was no, keep on sinking. So we kept on going and we got down to about 650' and by that time we weren't going any place.

In the first place that material was pretty abrasive and you could put a \$1,000 pump down there and two hours later it was shot. The impellers cut right out of it. Besides that there was no more room for more pumps to force the water to the surface. So about half way down the shaft, they cut back into the shaft and established another pump room for booster pumps. In the meanwhile the water is cavitating behind the shaft timbers and the shaft miners are driving blocking behind the shaft timber sets. I think they were 14' x 14' structural fir, with three compartments and their mortised, just like a fine piece of furniture. Behind them there was a tremendous weight.

Every once in a while those timbers would start squeaking and groaning, rolling, moaning and you should see those guys go up the ladders. I don't know if you knew it or not, but at Shaft 2 one of our boys got the Carnegie medal for outstanding heroism, you were aware of that? Okay. Very heroic thing!

NELSON: There were no fatalities at that time, were there?

FRANKLIN: I'm not sure about "at that time." I think there were five men killed on the entire tunnel job. An outstanding record for any tunnel project, especially for tunnels such as the Mono Craters tunnel!

NELSON: Through the six years?

FRANKLIN: Yes. No fatalities or injuries through the use of explosives. Considerably more people were killed on the highways to and from the job. The safety record they figured, for just ordinary tunneling, a mile a man, we drove 11.1 miles in that one and I think there were five fatalities. I remember the first.

TAPE NUMBER: 2, SIDE TWO

JAMES W. FRANKLIN

NELSON: Jim, how long were you out at the craters?

FRANKLIN: I was up there from about August, I believe, 1934 until I believe, December 1940 at which time I was transferred in town. Initially, I worked for Max K. Socha and his people that were just about on the verge of ending up some WPA work for the Water System. Notably the relocation of a reservoir because of the construction of the Pasadena Freeway. Then I went back to work for the construction division again and shortly thereafter, I went into service in December, 1942 and I was in the Air Force until June, 1945.

When I came back, I found that in my absence and in the absence of a lot of other men in the military, that there had been a number of promotions made to people and I went back to work at the same thing I had been doing before and it bothered me a bit. Then I started playing catch up, and I started studying - well as a matter of fact, I started my studies of accountancy when I was still up at Mono Basin. Over at June Lake I couldn't study because of what with pumping water out of the lake and cutting firewood

and shoveling snow and so forth, I just couldn't and the light wasn't any good. Coleman lanterns. That was before we had power in June Lake. But as soon as I got the City house over at West Portal I subscribed for the entire accounting correspondence course offered by Northwestern University.

I brought a spare desk and some equipment, adding machine, calculator, whatever up there and I went to work at nights and I completed that course. When I came back from the Air Force, I worked for the Water System for quite a spell as chief clerk of the construction division.

Following a Civil Service exam, I was appointed to the position of Chief Timekeeper of DWP. This turned out to be essentially a "systems" job, that of installing a whole new system of timekeeping throughout the Department.

NELSON: What year would that be?

FRANKLIN: I would say about 1947, 1948. Following that, I took another civil service exam for Executive Staff Assistant and I had a chance to go to work over in the Power System for the General Plant Division.

NELSON: What location was that at?

FRANKLIN: The Hill Street building. Third floor of the Hill Street building.

NELSON: Do you recall the address?

FRANKLIN: 222 S. Hill. Over the Hill Street garage, right across the street from the Fire Department which used to be their headquarters.

When I was still working for the Water System in the fall of 1945, I got a telephone call from the assistant chief engineer of water works at 2:00 a.m. It was raining cats and dogs and he said, "Jim, we've had extensive damage up in the Mojave division. It's my understanding we've lost the Nine Mile siphon and other extensive damage. I want you to go up there and see if you can't give Cahill a hand. (Cahill was the district superintendent). I've already talked to Cahill and he's delighted that you are coming up. Do you have a City car?" Foolish question. I said, "No I don't." He said, "Well call a cab and come into Hill Street and pick up a car and go up there." I think that was about October, 1945.

The repairs were not completed until just around Christmas time and it was a most challenging situation. Getting the men from any point to where the job is, you can figure a couple of hours drive, and we had damage at that time, Dick, everything from Little Lakes out to the other side of Mojave. Patrol roads were washed out. The road in Red Rock Canyon was washed out totally. The siphon was gone, everything!

When I reported to Cahill, he hadn't been in bed for two days and nights and he was getting reports over the telephone of visual

estimates of damages from various aqueduct patrolmen and he had been making notes.

Towards late afternoon Mr. Grant called and stated that he wanted an estimate of repair costs to give to the Board of Water and Power Commissioners in the morning. I said, "Bill, why don't you go home and go to bed. I'll give them an estimate." I knew we were going to have to rent a lot of equipment on the outside and I knew we'd have to hire a lot of people.

I prepared a cost estimate mostly by guess based mostly on estimated quantities, labor and equipment rental costs. I think it was around \$650,000, a huge sum in 1945. I teletyped this estimate to Mr. Grant.

In the morning, I was sleeping in the back of the warehouse as I hadn't even gotten a motel room yet. I was awakened and told that Mr. Grant was on the phone and wanted to talk to me. He stated that he had just received my teletype and that he was "appalled." When the job was finished, it developed that by sheer luck the final cost was close to the estimate.

It developed that my main job up there was to find meals and lodging for all these people to cut down travel time. Everything I did in that connection was illegal according to Department rules. At that time of year when there wasn't much tourist travel. I rented every motel room that was available in Mojave and with the restaurants that I wanted to feed the Department's people. They needed the business, but the only thing they'd go for was menu list prices. I said, "You will get a purchase order from our purchasing division in due course of time." "Okay, fine."

Mostly they stated that the only problem was they didn't have enough money to buy the initial food to get started. Okay, how much do you need? This was in Inyokern, Ridgecrest and elsewhere, but it's close to the job that's the main thing. So I found out how much they needed to get started and I went to Los Angeles and got a couple of thousand dollars from the Controller's Trust Fund. I started passing this money around and I take the guys receipt for it. You will have to make out an invoice in triplicate for the meals you serve. The guy says, "What's a triplicate?" So I make out the invoice for them too. I traveled with a typewriter. I had 16 men living at White's Motel in Mojave. When I come in there's a note on my motel door to see Mrs. White, the owner, immediately. She said, "Mr. Franklin, this is the last night for your people. Get them out of here." I said, "What's the problem?" She said, "Well they get drunk and they go to bed with their clothes on and they get vomit all over the floors and my bed makers won't clean up the rooms." I said, "Well just leave them alone." "No, I won't do that. I don't run that kind of a place." I said, "Suppose if I can make my peace with your bed makers, can they stay?" "Well that's up to you." So I started passing out \$5 and \$10 bills to the bed makers to keep our people in there.

Before too long, I've got over \$2,000 out. Then I get a call from a friend of mine that somebody down in the office had tipped off the chief traveling auditor that something might be crooked up there and he was coming up. He said, "If you got any loose ends, you'd better tie them up quick, Mr. Bailey is on his way up." So instead of going out in the field, I stayed in Mojave that day and

he showed up with a big executive Buick and a brief case and it was right around lunch time so he said, "Jim, let's go down and have lunch and we'll talk over the luncheon table." So we got down there and he said, "According to the records, you've got \$2,000 or something like that in cash out of the revolving funds. Can you account for it?" I said, "In time." He said, "What have you done with it?" So I sat there and talked to him just like I'm telling you. He got whiter than a ghost and he said, "Jim, you realize that everything you've done is against Department rules and regulations and so forth." I said, "Yes, I know that. I knew that at the time. On the other hand, it was my impression that they wanted to get the aqueduct back in service too." He said, "Jim, can you finally account for this stuff?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Good-bye." He picked up his briefcase and went back to Los Angeles.

There was an old camp up in Sand Canyon used years and years before when they built the original aqueduct. I didn't even know there was such a place. There were four bunk houses. There was a mess hall with a walk-in ice box and various and sundry buildings. Cahill said to me one day, "You know where that old camp is?" I said, "No, I don't." He said, "Well, here are the keys. Go on up there and see if you could put that thing in shape where we could put 40 men in there for a while." I drove up there and it was really full of cobwebs and rust and dirt. I thought there was a feasibility to this thing.

I called in town to the Personnel Department and told them I needed a cook and a second cook up here and they started

recruiting. There was no civil service list. They got the brilliant idea that as the Navy was discharging at the Port of Long Beach, there might some battleship boys down there, Navy cooks, and they snared two of them. They arrived in uniform, two Navy Chiefs. They came up on the bus and I met them and I thought once they saw the condition of that old camp, they'd start running the other way. I took them up to the camp and they looked around and one of them said, "Well, it's kind of cruddy isn't it?" I said, "Yes, it is. Are you interested?" They said, "We will need a detail." I said, "How many men?" He told me, "We could use six men up here." All the pots and pans, dishes and all the bedding and the cots and everything were in storage in Mojave in the office basement.

So I got them their six man "detail" from the labor force. I told the cooks, "I've already made out a list of staples, but I didn't do anything about perishables or anything of that kind, so you might look this thing over. I didn't even know I was going to get any personnel to run this thing." So they look this thing over and said, "It looks pretty good. What about my yeast?" I said, "Yeast, what for?" He said, "How the hell am I going to bake without yeast?" I said, "Well I planned that we'd bring that up from Mojave, baked goods and that." "No, I want to do my own baking." I said, "We'll get you yeast."

I went away and left well enough alone. I came back about three days later and I walked in and there's pots bubbling on the stove, they wanted oil cloth to cover the tables and all that, and a bunch of worked out looking laborers sitting there and the chief

says, "Where are these guys that I'm supposed to feed?" I said, "Are you ready to do it?" He said, "Sure, bring them on!" It worked out fine!

But it was a challenging assignment overall because you know, you can just go out there and do a job and use initiative and so forth. In the Department of Water and Power, as you well know, you don't get that many opportunities.

NELSON: You had over 38 years of service, were there particular fellows, peers and bosses during that time that were kind of role models, people that impressed you?

FRANKLIN: Oh yes. I worked for a guy that I thought had a tremendous amount on the ball. A guy that started in from very, very low beginnings, a graduate of high school in Long Beach and he started working down there cleaning out the fish tanks down at Fish Harbor then from that he became an engine wiper in the round house up in Sparks, Nevada for Union Pacific. Then he got a job with Los Angeles Gas and Electric at their Seal Beach generating plant as a power plant operator and when we took that system over, he moved over to Harbor Steam plant. From there he was appointed the engineer in charge of Valley Steam Plant. From there became engineer of all system steam generation and ended up as my boss in the General Plant Division.

NELSON: R.C. Alexander?

FRANKLIN: Yes. He had a professional engineer's license, but he was looked down on by some of the engineers because he wasn't a college graduate. Yet, he was one of the best management people I've ever ran into in my life. He wrote a very terse business letter. He conducted a very sharp meeting. He had a mind exactly like a sponge. In the beginning he knew nothing about accounting. He new nothing about General Plant.

We sat for hours and he'd say, "Jim, what in the hell is a shop rate? What's this? What's that?" I'd go through the thing and he'd say, "Let me repeat after you and see if I've got this thing correct." And he'd pick it up like that. He put a lot of reliance on me and I thought very highly of him. Very highly! I thought very highly of Mr. Jacques, too. He was a man of great integrity. When I got in the Power System, I found that there were more people in the Power System that were impressed with him as an engineer than there was in the Water System where he worked all his life.

He represented the finest, I think. He was a graduate of the Colorado School of Mines. He worked as a mining engineer before he came with the Department. He was a man at the height of his career when he was in charge of the Mono project. He made \$600 a month at that time and he considered he was overpaid.

One observation, I have mixed emotions as far as civil service is concerned, I also am undecided about DDR's. I think that basically there needs to be some standardization of salaries, but it also seems to me that there has to be some incentive, even if you have an annual review and you get a percentage added;

something to stimulate people other than saying, "I reached the fourth step, and that's the end of the line. There's no place I can go now." Because in the old days when we had what they called the "Form 300" and that simply was a form that could be signed by your division head, approved by the general manager or the head of the system. It went both ways, it could be either an increase in salary or it could be a decrease. I've used it both ways as a supervisor.

NELSON: Well Jim, in summing up your over 38 years with the Department, how was it?

FRANKLIN: Good, overall.

NELSON: No regrets?

FRANKLIN: Oh heavens, no. Every time I get my retirement check I feel very noble about the thing, really. It's provided us with a very good livelihood. My wife is a retiree of the Southern California Edison Company.

NELSON: You have a monopoly on the utilities here in Southern California.

FRANKLIN: Well let me put it this way. Initially when we were first married, we argued the relative merits of public versus private ownership of utilities and we got no place because she is

a dyed in the wool, stalwart, Edison management personnel. She was, when she went to work for Edison, the second highest paid woman in the company. She had an executive job.

NELSON: Well thank you very much for giving us your time.

FRANKLIN: Well thank you for coming up here. I do appreciate it.