

James K. Carr Oral History Interview—JFK#1, 11/18/1970
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Carr, Under Secretary of the Interior (1961-1964), discusses his appointment and duties as Under Secretary of the Interior, other Kennedy Administration appointees to the Department of the Interior, and power and water projects, among other issues.

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JAMES K. CARR


ARCHIVIST OF THE UNITED STATES

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April 8, 1976

MONTH, DAY, YEAR

James K. Carr—JFK #1

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First of Two Oral History Interviews

with

James K. Carr

November 18, 1970
San Francisco, California

William W. Moss

For The John F. Kennedy Library

MOSS: I didn't realize that your middle initial "K" stood for Kennedy.

CARR: Yes, I can tell you some interesting things about that when I was appointed.

MOSS: Well, let me ask you about your appointment as the opener. How did you come to be the Under Secretary of Department of Interior?

CARR: Well, of course, one never knows the whole process, but I first met the President [John F. Kennedy] back in around '51 or '52, when I was an engineering staff member on water and power for the House Committee on Interior and Insular affairs. I also had some special interest in education, and the President served then on the Education Committee [House Education and Labor Committee], as I recall, in the House. When he became a senator, I had become assistant general manager of the Sacramento municipal utility district, an electric power district. In that capacity I was responsible for all governmental affairs. It required my visiting Washington fairly often, and we had quite a bit of business before the Congress. I saw the President from time to time. I was not ever very well acquainted with him. When he was nominated, I was asked to serve on a committee—I believe Frank Smith [Frank E. Smith], the former congressman of Mississippi, was the chairman.

MOSS: Right.

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CARR: It was the committee on natural resources for the Kennedy-Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] campaign, I prepared a number of position papers on resources. At the time I was also serving as chairman of the California Water Commission. I had a background in water and power and forestry and other subjects that were of interest to the West. I prepared position papers; I prepared along with them drafts of speeches or parts of speeches that could be inserted in a speech on resources. I also prepared drafts of press releases based on the fact that these quotes might be in the speeches. I took them in to Mike Feldman [Myer Feldman] who was coordinating some of this, and Mike was very impressed that this material was put in that kind of shape.

Later on in the campaign, if I remember the names correctly, John Bartlow Martin was drafting speeches. When the President made his final swing through the western states, they asked me if I would meet them in Seattle and go over some of the speeches, as they might affect California resources particularly. Unfortunately, it was just impossible for me to meet the train except very early in the morning at Dunsmuir, which is up above Redding, my hometown. I had a little political situation with my directors where they were all Republicans and not necessarily for the President, so I didn't make any unnecessary public display of my help. I rode down on the train from Dunsmuir to Redding, talked to the President very briefly, and went over some things with John Bartlow Martin. And I got off at Redding, picked up a plane and flew back to Sacramento. I was in Sacramento by the time the President arrived on the train, with no one knowing that I was on the train.

I had naturally been identified with the campaign anyway because my family has been in Democratic politics in the state since 1874. And my father was active in the Democratic State Central Committee for about forty years. So there'd been no question about my background in the Democratic party. One of my close friends—in fact, my father was his manager when he first ran for Congress—was Clair Engle, who later became senator. I worked over the years with Pat Brown [Edmund G. Brown] and in my 1951 to 1953 experience I became acquainted with a number of people who later became senators or powerful House committee members. For instance, Scoop Jackson [Henry M. Jackson] was a fellow that I knew in the House; Albert Gore [Albert Gore, Sr.]—there are any number of those fellows who started on the House side along in there that I knew—Gene McCarthy [Eugene J. McCarthy] and others. Then Wayne Aspinall [Wayne N. Aspinall], who was at the time chairman of the House Interior Committee, is a close friend of mine and was one of the members that I served on the House committee. There were certain groups like the American Public Power Association, some of their top people including Alex Radin and others were quite interested that they have somebody that understood the power problem. There were people in California that felt that I was highly qualified in the water field inasmuch as I'd spent fifteen years with the Reclamation Bureau on the Central Valley project earlier in my career. So someplace along the line, somebody suggested to the President-elect that I might be a

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a good Under Secretary of Interior. There were lots of names being bandied around at that time, including Clair Engle and Stewart Udall [Stewart L. Udall]. There are some who claim that when Stewart Udall was appointed, the situation was so delicate out here that they had to try to find a Californian.

MOSS: This was the Arizona water business.

CARR: That's right. On the Colorado River. It's interesting that when I first talked to Stu Udall he had been appointed that very day. It was December as I remember.

MOSS: Eighth, I think. Go ahead.

CARR: Well, possibly it was the eighth because I think I went in the sixth, the night of the sixth from Los Angeles where I was making a speech at a water convention. I had received a call from Clair Engle asking me to come to Washington immediately. I told him I couldn't come because I had to give a speech. Typical of Clair, he said, "Let somebody else give the speech." He said, "Bob Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] wants to talk to you, and right away." And I said, "Well, Clair, I have to give this speech. I'm all booked, and I'm giving it at noon. I'll take the 'red eye special' and fly in, and I can talk to Bob Kennedy in the morning." So I made an appointment, or Clair made an appointment with Bob Kennedy for me to see him the next morning.

I can remember arriving there somewhat lacking in sleep. It had snowed and there was ice on the ground and I had left Los Angeles the night before. I had some question about what I was doing there because I had lived in Washington before and was not particularly fond of the weather at times. But I went in to see Bob Kennedy and he told me that the President-elect had received recommendations from several people that I should be Under Secretary of Interior. And I told him at the time, I said, "There may be three reasons you don't want me. Number one, I'm not asking for the job. I have a very good job in California. Number two, I'm a Roman Catholic, and it seems that you have several around already. And number three, my middle name is Kennedy." Well, he was quite amused at this. The upshot of our conversation was, I told him that I had had rumors to this effect—there'd been some press comment. Some said it showed a great deal of parental foresight. I had asked myself what I would do if the President offered the position to me. I had come to the conclusion that a man had to have a very good reason to say "no" to the president of the United States.

MOSS: Now I have heard this many, many times before and I wonder just why a person thinks that way.

CARR: Well, the reason I feel that way is that the President has such an awesome responsibility and almost impossible job and that if you

have any basic feeling for the welfare of the country, then you have to serve. And it is difficult to have any higher service as an American than to serve the President in a position where the President needs help. And so I came to the conclusion that my arguments against it all fell in the category of either my own security or comfort, and in effect, refusal to pick up the challenge. So I told Bob Kennedy in our meeting that I had already decided that if the President-elect were to offer me the position, that I was going to accept it. And I said, "Now the monkey's on your back as to whether you want to ask me because if you ask me, I'm going to say yes." Well, we had a very vigorous, I should say, conversation and with a good deal of humor.

MOSS: What sort of things did you talk about, other than the Under Secretary?

CARR: Oh, he naturally asked me a bit about my background. I'm a professional engineer, graduated from Santa Clara [Santa Clara University] and had worked as an engineer in a number of different ways in planning, development, construction, administrative, and I had a good deal of experience in the Department. I'd actually had my first job with the Interior Department in 1933 as a rodman on a survey crew with the U.S. Geological Survey. So I was regarded as a career man in the Department of Interior even though I had come back and gone to work for the utility district of Sacramento, and I had lots of friends in the department. We discussed that background.

MOSS: How did Robert Kennedy impress you at that point? What was your reaction to him?

CARR: My reaction to him at that point was that he was supercharged, and he was not wasting any time. He was very clipped in his speech and questions and no time to be wasted. He had a room full of people and it was obvious was under terrific pressure to get some of these things answered. And I discerned for the first time something I think that a lot of people thought he didn't have and that was a good sense of humor. After you got to know Bob Kennedy, he had a wonderful sense of humor, but it didn't show as often as with the President. I think as he got a little older he mellowed and it developed a little more.

But finally he told me, he said, "We've announced that Stewart Udall is going to be the Secretary, and would you be so kind as to go over and see Congressman Udall?" So I got an appointment for five o'clock with the Congressman. I had met him once before, just shook hands with him. He wouldn't know me from anyone else. I told him why I was there and we had rather an interesting conversation. One of the things Stewart Udall said to me right away, he said, "Now, if you were in my position, what would you do about some of these people that had been

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in Democratic administration and they want to come back into Washington, a lot of experienced people?" And I said, "I'll be quite frank with you about it. I think that President

Kennedy is not going to have the kind of administration where we can take the Truman [Harry S. Truman] retreads unless they're exceptional people."

MOSS: Who was he speaking of in particular?

CARR: I don't know.

MOSS: Oh, all right.

CARR: I suspect that he had had.... His desk was covered with papers and applications from various people who had been in government before, and I think were thinking—particularly in the Interior Department—wanting to come back. Now, just who he was talking about, I don't know. Later on I suspected that one might have been the late Mike Straus [Michael W. Straus] who had some very strong ideas about how to run the department. Another fellow who had a lot of Washington experience was Bill Warne [William W. Warne], and there were different people like that. So it might have been some of those people wanting to come back.

Well, he said, "I can't agree with you more." He said, "We have to have a new team." And I said, "Well, now just so we don't misunderstand each other"—and this kind of jolted Stewart a little bit—"if you are going to recommend me to the President-elect simply because I'm chairman of the California Water Commission, and you're from Arizona, and you understand our problems," I said, "I want you to know that you're doing two things: you're doing an injustice to the President of the United States and you're doing a great disservice to my family." This kind of shook him a little bit, and then he said, "Okay, I understand." He said, "No, I'm looking for somebody that has the qualifications of helping me run that department." He said, "You've been recommended as an administrator and very knowledgeable in the Department, particularly with your service to the House Interior Committee before." So he allowed as to how that was not a bad thing, but he didn't want to pick me on that basis alone.

MOSS: Well, how did he get the Department organized and how did he divide up the responsibilities, particularly between himself and you? What were your understandings with each other on how the department was to be run?

CARR: Well, I put it very much to the point, I think, which he understood. I told him that I would accept the position only on the basis that my number-one job was to make him the best Secretary of Interior we ever had, and that at any time where I was not

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rendering that service to him, he was to tell me and I would leave. And at any time we got at such cross purposes personally over issues that we were not working together, I would leave. I also told the press later when they tried to pit one of us against the other that if Udall leaves, I leave. And we worked on that basis to the point where even after I left the Department there

were times when he called upon me for statements, which he issued as his statements because of his confidence in what I would give him. We had that relationship all the time I was there.

MOSS: The job of Under Secretary, particularly in the Interior Department where you have a number of assistant secretaryship fiefdoms, must be a very awkward one, a difficult one.

CARR: It is, in some ways. It depends on the personalities. Now, for instance, the law reads that the Under Secretary of Interior has all the powers of the Secretary, except, in certain instances, with the Senate, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House and the President. But the authority is so broad that you could actually take action in one room on a subject and have the Secretary take the opposite action, and you'd both be legal.

MOSS: This is potentially...

CARR: That's potentially possible because of the broad authority given to the Under Secretary. This is not the case in certain other departments. So realizing that I had to be the alter ego of the Secretary, I set up my office right down the hall. We had a private passageway. And when we were both there we saw each other several times a day. We were only a few feet away and if there was any question at all about his views or what should be done, we checked this out. He also, very often when the pressure was on, would come down the back entrance to my office and come in and take his shoes off and put his feet up on the desk and see what we should be doing. I must say I had a perfect working relationship with the Secretary all the time. There were a few times that I spoke up on issues, but I pointed out that once I had given him the benefit of my views, the decision was his, and if he made a decision, then I would carry it out as vigorously as I could, even though I might disagree with it. So he always was very appreciative of that, and he considered me, I think, a little on the stormy side at times. I was sufficiently aware that on some of the tough ones an Under Secretary's job is to take the heat. And in fact, there were times when he was going to make certain statements or do certain things, I told him, "You let the Under Secretary do that."

MOSS: Could you give an example of that, do you recall?

CARR: Oh, it had to do more with saying no to people and some powerful groups where they were not going to be happy about it. And

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I told him that as a fundamental rule, if he was going to be successful, that I should take the hot ones, and if it's something that somebody's going to get credit for, that he should take that or pass it on to the President as might be the case, but that I considered that part of my job. I also was to some extent—and this is a very hazy thing and it was fluid—to some extent, you see, I was the executive officer of the department. There were many things

that were not permitted to reach the Secretary's desk unless I had reviewed them. And there was the usual case of where assistants would take things to the Secretary directly, want them signed immediately. And he would decide to look them over, and hundreds of times they came down to my desk for my comment before he went ahead. This was particularly true in some very difficult oil and gas problems.

MOSS: I was going to say, you've got two pretty strong characters in the assistant secretaryship position. You've got John Carver [John A Carver, Jr.] and John Kelly [John M. Kelly], both of whom are very strong types. You've also got Ken Holum [Kenneth Holum] who has an expertise in your area as well, at least in the REA [Rural Electrification Administration] end. How does this work out?

CARR: Well, this naturally worked differently with each one. John Kelly and I both were very close as Irish Catholics. John Kelly was more jealous of his position than others and found it somewhat more difficult to come and ask the Under Secretary what to do because he felt he reported directly to the Secretary. This did not disturb our personal relationship, and we enjoyed each other's company, and we talked rather frankly to each other at times. John Carver and I, for some reason, although John could be very positive about things, John Carver seemed to have considerable respect for my judgment and my knowledge in certain fields and very often came to my office for advice before he went in to the Secretary. I had a good working relationship with John Carver. Ken Holum, although he had experience in the electrical field, was not an engineer. I had been fairly active in the American Public Power Association when he was in the REA, so when it came to water and power and reclamation and the things under Holum's jurisdiction, almost everything came to office first, or he would ask me if I would review it with him.

MOSS: Was this an arrangement between you and Holum, or was the Secretary asking that this be done?

CARR: No, this developed I would say fairly soon just between Holum and myself and then was quite satisfactory to the Secretary. Later on when the desalting of sea water program began to lag, the Secretary asked me to personally devote time in running that program. As a result of that I was sent to Vienna for the first meeting of scientists and engineers to discuss the possibility of desalting sea water with nuclear power as a heat agent.

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MOSS: The International Atomic Energy Association.

CARR: That's right. That was in March of 1963. And then I went again in September of '63 for a second meeting.

MOSS: What caused the program to lag? I've heard it said that the technical problems really became more than you had expected initially.

CARR: That's right. The real example we had hoped to develop was the Bolsa Island project off the coast of California, and when they got into the problems of protecting the plant against wave action and certain other things, the cost went up. And then they got into an arrangement which was really without a head. They had some private power companies, the city of Los Angeles, Interior Department, and Atomic Energy in it without anybody being project director. And no one in the Interior Department had the—that was after I left, you know—no one really had the time to devote to that.

MOSS: Did anybody have the foresight to see that this would develop into a...

CARR: Apparently not. The thing was coming along fairly well. In fact, some of the early meetings I had were with the metropolitan water district. They sent me a resolution, a framed resolution, thanking me for my part in moving this thing along. That was because I had personal friendships with California water and power people both public and private and we knew each other and we were able to work out a program. Jim Ramey [James T. Ramey], Atomic Energy Commissioner, later told me that he felt we might have been able to move a little farther down the road had I stayed and personally battled this thing out because of my interest in it. But the economics were against us at the time. The size of the plant had to be a large one and it took a great deal of money.

MOSS: Let me come back round to the department staffing again and ask you where Orren Beaty and Bill Pozen [Walter I. Pozen], Graham Hollister, Bob McConnell [Robert C. McConnell], and people like that fitted into the picture?

CARR: Well, I'll take them in the opposite order. Bob McConnell was a fellow that I knew from back in the congressional days. He was the secretary, later called the administrative assistant, to Congressman Fernandez [Antonio M. Fernandez], as I recall, of New Mexico, and so he was an old friend from the Hill. Graham Hollister I did not know very well. I knew of his family in California. He really did not play the part that either Bill Pozen or Orren Beaty did in the operation of the department. Because my office was just beyond Bill Pozen's and Orren's, the way we worked it out, I was in very, very close contact with them. They seemed to always understand my position. In fact, in the three and

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a half years I was Under Secretary, only once do I recall telling Orren Beaty when the Secretary was out of town that he did not have the authority to tell the State Department what he did, that I was the acting Secretary and he had overstepped his authority. And Orren quickly acknowledged this and said, "I'm sorry. I was trying to get the job done." And I said, "Well, I just want to be frank with you about it because we have to watch that because when the Secretary's out of town, I'm the acting Secretary." I think that was a great record—only once that I can remember in three and a half years.

MOSS: Is there a great temptation for the primary assistant to the Secretary to sort of play the role of acting Secretary?

CARR: I should think so, but Orren was not that type of person. Orren had been on the Hill with Stewart Udall when he was a congressman and naturally was his right-hand man. He understood who was important and who wasn't, and he did an excellent job. In fact, his work was such that it relieved me of a number of problems that could've come to me on the days the Secretary was out of the office. For instance, if some senator wanted an answer, if it hadn't been for the work by Orren Beaty, then it would've come to me with all the telephone calls that I had anyway. So we had an excellent working relationship.

MOSS: How about Bill Pozen? What kind of things was he into and responsible for?

CARR: Well, he at times did a little more work with the White House because he had certain contacts over there, and if something would come up, the Secretary would send him over.

MOSS: I've heard that he had certain contacts. The nearest I can find out is that his daughter was attending Caroline's [Caroline Bouvier Kennedy] little school.

CARR: Well, that was part of it. But there were some other people that he apparently knew. I know the Secretary would send him over there on those. For the most part he served a sort of a backup for Orren Beaty. One of the girls that carried a terrific load there was Jane Life [Anna K. Life], the personal secretary to the Secretary. And I think she had worked earlier, if I recall, for the Secretary in the previous administration or when Oscar Chapman [Oscar L. Chapman] was Secretary, who incidentally was another of those who I think talked to the President-elect about my selection. Oscar considered me a little bit of being one of his protégés back in his days.

Then my other relationship in the Department was excellent, with Otis Beasley [D. Otis Beasley], because Otis and I had worked very closely when I was in the Department, particularly when I worked for the Congress. And then during that period when I worked for Sacramento, I frequently saw Otis

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on matters pertaining to appropriations and other things. So we had a long personal friendship before I was appointed, and he was very devoted to my best interests the whole time I was there. He was a fellow who probably knew more how to get something done than anyone else because of his long experience in the department.

MOSS: Can I pin you down to an example on something that he did in this way and how he did it?

CARR: Oh, for instance, if I had any personnel problems or wanted to change grades or move certain people around, all I had to do was to tell Otis what I wanted to do and it was usually done quickly and he would know how to do it. If it was a budget problem or something with the Appropriations Committee, he would see that it was taken care of. If it was even a small thing with respect to the office as far as rearrangements of furniture, space, or anything else, I didn't have to do any more than make a call to Otis and then I could forget it. He just knew how to get all those housekeeping things done in the department, and he had a very close working relationship with Congressman Kirwan [Michael J. Kirwan].

MOSS: How much power did he have in the way of budget determinations and that kind of thing?

CARR: He had quite a bit.

MOSS: How did he exercise it?

CARR: I thought he exercised it very well. The reason he had this was, if you go back and check the record, you will see that the Secretary was more interested in new programs than he was in getting money for on-going programs. There were places where I worked with Otis, but Otis watched closely what a particular program would need and would get the money in the budget, working with the people on the Appropriations Committee. The Secretary more or less left that up to Otis, principally because he had such a tremendous interest in national parks and the environment and other new programs, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. And we developed the program for the extra high voltage transmission of electricity. That, incidentally, was a suggestion I made to the Secretary in the first few days of the new administration. The Secretary had a meeting with some of us and wanted us to suggest things that the Kennedy administration should advocate that were new. The first one that I recommended to him was that we should take the leadership in building extra high voltage DC transmission systems in the United States because it was being done in Sweden, England, and the Soviet Union, and the United States didn't have any and they'd fallen behind and there was no leadership in this field. He accepted this. We appointed Chuck Luce [Charles F. Luce] of Bonneville as

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the chairman, and we got together a committee. That project is now an operating system in the West because of that effort. We worked very, very hard the first couple of months. We found ourselves in the position of any administration, that certain actions were taken that would go into effect if they were not changed within thirty days. There were a number of decisions like this, so we had to review actions taken at the last minute by the former administration and see whether we agreed or not. Some we had to reverse. I would say in the power field, which I was involved in, there were some things that they did which would, I thought, be disadvantageous to public power programs.

MOSS: What sort of things, because I've asked the question of a number of people whether any booby traps were left that really bothered you.

CARR: Oh, I would have to go back—this is where I'd have to probably even go through the files to determine what I can...

MOSS: What was the nature that sort of thing? Benefits to private power and that sort of thing?

CARR: That's right. They had to do with the way that power would be marketed on certain projects. And they had to do with water where large landowners were involved and other things which I felt were not consistent with the President's program.

MOSS: What about the whole business of public versus private power? There was the Colorado transmission thing, the seven-ten split on the wheeling arrangements and that sort of thing, Clyde Ellis [Clyde T. Ellis] screaming that it was a sellout and so on.

CARR: Yes. Well, I think we were able to get away from the real clash between the private and public power interests to some extent. We used the Northwest power pool as an example that private companies and public agencies could get together. In bringing about this compromise, the more liberal-minded people were very critical of some of the decisions. The California inter-tie group that they put together, that was done after I left the Department, and there are still some people that feel very strongly about the final agreement that was made.

MOSS: This is with the Northwest preference and bringing power down to the Northwest?

CARR: This was where they felt that the eleven California cities that own their public distribution systems were being discriminated against in favor of PG&E [Pacific Gas and Electric] and the Edison company.

MOSS: Oh, I see.

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CARR: And Congressman Moss [John E. Moss] and Congressman Bizz Johnson [Harold T. Johnson] were very outspoken about that, and they're still quite irritated over the final agreement.

MOSS: How does an agreement like that get rived out? Who pulls the strings on that and where are the puppets?

CARR: Well, in this case there were certain representatives from the Edison company and PG&E that were working with the secretary and people in his office.

There were people working through Alex Radin and others in the public power groups, and there were state involvements. I recall—it was after the President was killed—I came to California with President Johnson, and there were people trying to get him involved in a number of these things. I wrote out statements for both his power position and water position which I thought were broad enough for him not to be involved with one side or the other because we were trying to get a compromise. In making these decisions as far as I was concerned, I worked closely with the Congressman Chet Holifield [Chester E. Holifield], with whom I've been acquainted for I don't know how many years, ever since he was in the state legislature. And two of my very good friends are Congressman Moss and Congressman Bizz Johnson, also Congressman McFall [John J. McFall], Congressman Sisk [Bernice Frederic Sisk], and others. I tried to keep one eye on the political situation as far as the congressmen and the party was concerned so that some zealot didn't let the President ride over a cliff. I felt that was my job. I recall—this is a little bit different, but on the same subject—the Secretary leaned a little more toward the Central Arizona project, naturally. And this Colorado River thing was up and I've forgotten the wording, but President Johnson said to me, "I'd like to have your view on this." And I said, "Well, Mr. President, you already received Secretary Udall's letter, didn't you, on that?" I laughed and, all right, so I told him that mine was a little different shade of how he should approach the problem if he was going to be the President for both California and Arizona, and he seemed to appreciate that very much.

MOSS: I've heard it said that there's really not lobbying in a case like this, but technical advice. How do you make the distinction between technical advice and crass lobbying on these things, or is there a line at all?

CARR: The technical advice that you get as pure technical advice is fairly limited. The people who are in there advocating one thing or another are using their technical knowledge to prove their case. So I would say that people being people, there's more lobbying than there is just straight technical advice. There are many of us at times have represented groups in Washington and it's always better to have a technical background.

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MOSS: Selective evidence?

CARR: Yes. As an engineer, I've testified before committees and I might be advocating a certain thing, but it gives it a little more validity if I can speak in engineering terms about the situation. It's purely political. And so there was a good deal of that all the time from anything. We had so many conflicting groups, you see. We had the hydroelectric advocates versus the thermal. We had the coal and gas and oil and all these other areas, and the environmentalists. If you look at the record, you'll find out the Kennedy administration really began this great concern over the environment and ecology. In

fact, some of my earlier speeches under Udall were devoted to this question of quality rather than quantity and preservation of our natural resources, particularly those that are not renewable resources. And then a more understanding position where resources are renewable, particularly with water development.

MOSS: I'd like to come back to the conservation business in a moment, but let me ask you this first. During the campaign, a great deal was made of reversing the no new starts policy under the Eisenhower administration [Dwight D. Eisenhower].

CARR: That's right.

MOSS: It's my impression that when you got there, there weren't that many opportunities for new starts available really. What lay behind all this? What was the reality of the situation?

CARR: I don't remember it quite that way. I know that, for example, we had the Sacramento Valley canals which the Eisenhower administration wouldn't give us any assistance on, and this was one of the first things we were able to get action upon. We had very little assistance on the Auburn Dam, which is now being built. There were other Central Valley developments that the Eisenhower administration had stopped at this no new starts and no money. We were able to reverse that. Same applied to other states. Congressman Aspinall had a number of small projects that we were able to get under way like the Paonia project and others. So I think it was a very real thing that they'd stopped this and in some instances those projects had been stopped because they were threats to private power development, no question about it.

MOSS: All right. And in the early days of the administration, I think along about April of 1961, Clint Anderson [Clinton P. Anderson] and some other western Democratic senators got together and wrote to Udall asking him to look into revising the criteria to be applied to water and power projects. Did you get involved in this?

CARR: Oh, a little bit, yes. This had to do with the whole question of cost allocation.

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MOSS: Right.

CARR: And I've forgotten some of the documents. I remember the number 46 at least.

MOSS: A-47, the old budget circular A-47.

CARR: Yes, this is the kind of thing that... [Interruption]... Anderson and the others who wanted a review of the projects.

MOSS: Right. I just checked my notes on that and it was the old budget circular A-47 which had come through in the, been drafted, I think, in the Truman administration, and then the Eisenhower administration accepted and enforced it, and then the Senate document 97 eventually replaced it.

CARR: Well, here's what happened. A very simple example is that if you took the Central Valley project and said that you would sell power based on the cost of power at Shasta Dam, that would be one thing. If you then built a new project like the Auburn Dam and made these separate entities, then the price of power would be higher. The private power companies and their friends in the Eisenhower administration advocated something like that. But following the more liberal members of the Congress, we were considering projects like the Central Valley project a single entity. And therefore, if you brought a project in later that might be higher cost, those higher costs were offset by the earlier lower costs, some of it going back to Depression days. And as a result, if you put this all together in your cost accounting and had this payout period that kept increasing—you see, as you added new projects you didn't have to pay out immediately—then you would end up with lower rates for power and this was what the battle was all about.

MOSS: There was a question of whether or not it should be a payment within fifty years or within ninety years.

CARR: That's right. They were saying in effect that you should consider each one and each addition and it should not exceed fifty years. That included forty year repayment and tenure development period. So they didn't like the way we lumped everything together. And the reason for the whole fight was that they were trying to get the government power rates up, closer to those of the private power companies.

MOSS: And I remember phrases like costs remaining benefits method and residual method of...

CARR: Oh, there were various methods used in cost accounting. I've forgotten which one they finally adopted.

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MOSS: One of the difficult things I recall was trying to put a value on the recreational and preservational benefits of these things.

CARR: Yes. Senator Anderson had a friend a Doctor Wollman [Nathaniel Wollman], I think it was, down at the University of New Mexico, that made some studies on that. I have his book in my library. It turned out that the value per acre foot for recreational purposes, even back in those days, could be proven to be nearly a hundred dollars an acre foot as against the ability to pay, say, of a farmer in the Sacramento Valley of maybe \$2.75 an acre foot and maybe \$3.50 an acre foot in the San Joaquin [San Joaquin Valley]. So there's no question that economically the water-oriented recreation has a

tremendous value which was not being cranked into the total economic picture as far as the project was concerned. See, there's a great difference between financial feasibility and economic feasibility, which a lot of people were unwilling to recognize, and yet the government, federal government is the agency that should be interested in the long term economic feasibility.

MOSS: There's the question in all this, getting over into the parks, of a difference between—again we have terms, labels we put on these things—multiple use, preservation, conservation, recreational use, this kind of thing, where these things sometimes conflict. Did you have a feel that these were really being fought out during the Udall years?

CARR: Well, there was a little battle that went on in a friendly way, and I thought it was a great accomplishment for the administration. For the first time the Forest Service [National Forest Service], with its multiple use policy through Orville Freeman [Orville L. Freeman], got much closer together with Interior as a result of that friendship between Freeman and Udall.

MOSS: The famous treaty of the Potomac?

CARR: Oh, there were any number of projects. The Flaming Gorge [Flaming Gorge Dam] I think, was another one. And we modified some of our views in the department. For instance, the Whiskeytown national recreation area, the act approved by the Department of Interior is much closer to what the Forest Service calls multiple use. Multiple use began to be a great phrase that was taken up frankly by the lumber interests. And then in the National Park Service we had purists who might be called the preservationists. There was a split in the National Park Service which didn't really develop into anything too bad. But many of the National Park Service people, the younger ones, were of the opinion that no longer could these be areas for the more wealthy people to enjoy as private parks, but that we had to have more intensive recreation in certain areas, and that the Park Service should be in that business. Whiskeytown was a good example how that was resolved, and

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it's been a wonderful showplace for the National Park Service.

People fail to define their terms in many cases. Even now the emphasis on the environment as such is really not the right way to say it in my opinion. What people are talking about is ecology, and then you have to define whether you're talking about ecology from a biological standpoint or sociology. The ecology of man is one thing, the ecology of bugs is another. And it's this total ecology that we're really concerned about. For instance, the problem of air traffic noise is an objectionable thing and we are trying to reduce it at its source. Airports, unfortunately, are the visible targets for this, but I'm sure there's no one that lived in our age that would want to cut out air travel because of the noise. We have to find a way to correct the noise, but think of the almost limitless improvements in

communication and education and livability and man's ecology that have resulted from air travel. So there's a failure to think some of these things through on the parts of certain advocates. President Kennedy's conservation speech that he presented to the Congress I thought defined it very well when he ended up by saying to the effect that in the final analysis conservation is the wisest possible use of our natural resources and it is the highest form of national thrift. And I should probably be able to quote directly from that, but I thought he put it in perspective. He allowed for both preservation in certain areas and development in others. In other words, man has to live off the products of the earth as well as on it. We started all of this discussion and I think Secretary Udall was sort of a prophet in the field. But now a number of people have taken up their pet causes and failed to take a broad look at it, which I think would've been inconsistent with President Kennedy's views.

MOSS: Well, I was going to ask, how well do you think that President Kennedy himself and people around him like Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] and Feldman and White [Lee C. White] understood what was going on at Interior and in the country on these things?

CARR: Lee White was probably as well versed on it as any because of his role in knocking heads together in the resources field. He did a lot of that, and he did it in a very capable manner. There was a lesser amount that we did with Mike Feldman. I would say Sorensen was in it mostly when we were down to final position papers or speeches or that type of thing. The President himself took a special interest in certain things. One thing that—look at the White House conference on conservation, I think it was.

MOSS: Yes, in May of '62?

CARR: About that time.

MOSS: Or '63? I've got the date here somewhere.

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CARR: He was terribly interested in the development of the resources of the sea. And one of the reasons for this, you know, was that the development of the fish protein concentrate.

MOSS: Yes, yes, I remember that.

CARR: ...which has a tremendous potential for the world was developed in the Kennedy administration. This was one of the things that the Secretary more or less turned over to me although I worked closely with Assistant Secretary Frank Briggs [Frank P. Briggs]. Frank was a fellow who was a delightful man and hardly ever got into any of these policy areas without asking my advice. I helped him a lot because he was a neighbor of mine and we worked very closely together. But President Kennedy mentioned the development of a fish protein and one of the reasons, I think, was that I

understand that the Kennedy Foundation [Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation] had sponsored some studies and it had been shown that mental retardation apparently has some connection with protein deficiency during pregnancy and the lactation period. And so I'm sure that was an influence. Eunice Shriver [Eunice Kennedy Shriver] was interested in this very, very much and talked to me about it—had lunch with us one time and the Secretary and we discussed it. And since then we've made great strides. I've naturally found it impossible to throw away my interest in desalting sea water and fish protein concentrate and these other things that we worked on, so I've kept up with these things. And I'm presently serving as a consultant for the Atomic Energy Commission. I have been called recently both on desalting of sea water and the question of who should own the uranium enrichment plants, which has become an issue in the Nixon administration [Richard M. Nixon].

MOSS: Do you know the story on the Passamaquoddy tidal basin thing? I have heard that this was sort of presented as a *fait accompli* to the President without really cluing the White House staff in on where you all were going with this. Is that so?

CARR: Oh, I don't remember it that way. As I, remember, it was pushed as something that we should try to develop because France had been able to develop a new type of low head generator that had not been available before. And I think what really killed off the Passamaquoddy project was not the lack of technical ability, but the fact that it would cost a considerable amount of money and was being vigorously fought by the New England private power companies, and for good reason. They had been charging some of the highest rates in the country. For instance, where you were getting energy at Bonneville for, say, two mills per kilowatt hour, if I remember at Calais, Maine, the rural electric group there had to pay wholesale something like sixteen or seventeen mills. And for instance, take the frozen food business, like peas. That's a big business in Maine and could be bigger,

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but some of those people couldn't operate because they had to pay too much for power in their freezing process and they couldn't compete with other sections of the country. And so Senator Muskie [Edmund S. Muskie] was certainly right in his efforts to develop that and the Dickey-Lincoln School project on the Saint John River. And it was my assignment to work with the Senator on that. We just ran into so much political opposition for the expenditures that were necessary to get the show on the road that we fell behind.

MOSS: Okay, who was voicing this opposition in political circles?

CARR: Oh, it was coming generally, I'd say, through the Edison Electric Institute. And you know when the chips are down, well, the companies stick together pretty well, and so it was rather hard to put your finger on any particular...

MOSS: All right. On whom in government or in Congress were they putting the

muscle to scare them off?

CARR: Oh, I don't remember exactly who all the persons were, but naturally they were the people they could talk to in appropriations committees and point out how we just couldn't afford these kind of expenditures at this time, and that this was an FDR [Franklin D. Roosevelt] boondoggle in the first place. Then it had its ramifications with Canada which made it even more difficult to put together.

MOSS: There was to be a power sharing thing with New Brunswick as I understand?

CARR: That's right. And so when you took all of the complications, they just had a great advantage in stopping this great source of low cost power, and at the same time prices were going up, which had its effect. And the record of the Dickey-Lincoln School fight is an indication of how tough it is to change things in New England.

MOSS: I've heard it said that over the course of Udall's administration, there was an easternization of Stewart Udall, that he shifted his focus...

CARR: There was. He began to find that the environment of the East was more greatly threatened than the West in many places because of the great population along the eastern corridor and the necessity of saving what little we could. And he helped, rather took the lead in developing the policy of the National Park Service and the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation of acquiring land now, while we can, for parks and recreation and open space, and he saw that the real

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critical area was the East; also in the preservation of historic monuments, although that's a little unbalanced. I'd say the New England, or the northern part of the East Coast had not received the attention historically that they had in the southern states. And then that sort of bounced back and all of a sudden they realized that out West and in California there were a number of historic things that no one paid any attention to because we were too new out here.

MOSS: Let me—I know you are pressed for time—let me close this by asking you to review very briefly what you told me earlier before we started the tape about your activities on the day that the President was assassinated. I know we have somewhere a recording you did with Bob Lodge [Robert W. Lodge] from USIA, [United States Information Agency] but will you give it very briefly?

CARR: Well, what it amounted to—I was with Under Secretary of Labor John Henning [John F. Henning]. It was his birthday and we were at the LaSalle du Bois Restaurant—I think that's on 19th—having a little birthday lunch for John Henning. He got a telephone call from his wife; came back to the table with a shocked

expression and he said, “The President has been shot and not expected to live.” And so we left almost immediately. I had my driver take me back, as I was the acting Secretary of Interior, to the Department. I went upstairs and Bill Pozen was there, and if I remember Orren Beaty and several others, glued to the television. And I told Bill Pozen that Orren better stay in the Secretary’s office and I would go with him to the White House immediately to see what instructions we had from the Secretary of the Cabinet. When I arrived there, Lee White was acting as the press officer and did an admirable job for almost an hour before we finally, officially received the news. Naturally we had the TV reports coming in, all sorts of rumors were circulating: that President Johnson had had a heart attack, that Speaker McCormack [John William McCormack] and Senator Hayden [Carl T. Hayden] had been attacked. And we didn’t exactly know where we were, and we had to remember that six Cabinet officers were on a plane that we had to turn around out there around Hawaii.

So it was a very tense time and I went up finally and received the word and Ted Reardon [Timothy J. Reardon, Jr.] said that we were to meet the body at Andrews Air Force Base field, but he was so apart. He told me, he said, “Jim, I just can’t go through with it.” He said, “Would you call the Cabinet officers and tell them to come to the White House? I’ve already asked for the helicopters.”

So it was my assignment to.... I got a White House operator and a special room and I started in tracking down the Cabinet officers that were to be called. I didn’t have to call Bob Kennedy, who’d already been called, nor did I talk to McNamara [Robert S. McNamara], but I called the under secretaries too and then there were certain others, Justice

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Goldberg [Arthur J. Goldberg] and FDR, Jr. [Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr.] and others that had been over at the White House. There was a brief moment there when—well, it wasn’t too brief either—we wondered whether or not Mrs. Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] wanted us to meet the plane, and that was resolved by a conference call with Bob Kennedy on the plane, I believe. So we only had a few minutes left and it was my job to stand at the door with the White House Secret Service and call off the names and permit the people to go on the helicopter, and then I was the last to run for a helicopter. And we arrived at Andrews Field just, oh, I would say less than ten minutes before the plane arrived bearing the President’s body. Then we went back with President Johnson. Very sad thing to see the staff tearfully removing things from the President’s office when we went by. And then there was an emergency meeting early that next morning. There wasn’t much sleep for any of us. I think I got to bed at three o’clock that morning, got a little sleep and came back down to the White House about nine or ten o’clock the next morning.

MOSS: Okay, thank you very much indeed, Mr. Carr. I don’t want to take up any more of your time.

[END OF INTERVIEW #1]

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