SHORT EARLY HISTORY OF FRY ARK PROJECT
by Frank Milenski

By 1890, in Colorado, 6000 CF water decreed out of Arkansas River. Over appropriated to say the least.

Between 1890 and 1910 storage developed east of Pueblo. 400000 to 500000 AF of storage. The water situation was chicken one day and feathers the next.

The reservoirs gathered water in times of excess to store for use in dry times.

The State of Kansas at the turn of the century brought suit against Colorado on the use of the waters of the Arkansas River. This suit united the canal companies then in existence to create the Arkansas Valley Ditch Association with about 26 ditches involved.

Along in the twenties the then Chamber of Commerce of the valley and the ditches united to bring supplemental water from the west slope to the Arkansas Valley. Western Colorado had the excess water allocated by Colorado River compact of 1922. Eastern Colorado had the people. In 1938 congress authorized the Big Tom Project. A project in Northern Colorado at a cost of 44 million dollars. This involved around 300000 AF of water. The City of Denver had been raiding Western Colorado’s excess supply.

Ben Powell, a Bureau man, had come up with the Gunnison Arkansas Project Plan. This plan involved 340000 AF of west slope water and developed new land in Eastern Colorado in the Arkansas River Basin. There was, in the Arkansas Basin (Lower), a water development association. In the development attempts to get financing Golden Frying Pans were sold, big one $500.00, small one $100. Tin pans covered to look like gold. A water development association had been formed to procure more water for the valley. They had filings on west slope water in Garfield County. This development association was pushing for the Gunnison Arkansas Project.

The Hoags, Pueblo Chieftain owners, were very strong supporters to get more water for the valley. CF&I had a great interest in more water for the valley. Many people worked to get new water to the Arkansas Valley.

Some of the water development men were: Hoags, Ducy, Williamson, Johnson, Powell, Beatys, Ernest, Ryan, Cooper, Amsley, Gorden, Boustead, Christy, Nevious. Charlie Beise, with Fairfield and Woods, was their lawyer.

Along in early fifties there was big water meeting at the Elks Club in Rocky Ford. Ellis Armstrong, Commissioner of Reclamation
History (Continued)

USBR, was there. The CF&I under Harold Christy were very strong supporters for more water for the valley. Charley Boustead worked for CF&I. They kept Boustead in Washington D.C. for months lobbying the Gunnison Arkansas Project.

Congressman Edgar Chenoweth had introduced the legislation to authorize the Gunnison Ark Project (HR594).

After much discussion by many people it was decided that a water conservancy district should be formed. Christy, Boustead and Beise visited annual meeting of canal companies to explain need and usefulness of district with taxing power, petitions were circulated to form such a district.

May 13, 1958 district was formed. Boustead and I picked the following directors: Diley, Irwin, Nichols, Young, Ciruli, Christy, Bauserman, Milenski, Shoun, Shaw & Wagner, Bennett, Schroeder, Martin, Shaw.

There was some contention between upper Arkansas River and lower river. Selby Young was of Fountain River Basin and was considered a neutral.

Judge Phillip Cabibi appointed full board. The board elected officers were:
- Selby Young, President
- Roy Cooper, Vice President
- Jim Shoun, Secretary
- Dave Ciruli, Treasurer
- Charlie Beise, Legal Counsel, $600 retainer
- Boustead, General Manager at $11,000.00 yearly salary.

District borrowed start up monies from Minnequa Bank at 3% interest, 4 tenths of a mill tax assessment.

The new district used the water development people for an advisory and guidance.

Western Colorado was not about to give up 340000 AF of Colorado River water. The lower basin states of the Colorado River Basin, California, Arizona and Nevada allocated seven million five hundred thousand AF of water measured at Lee’s Ferry. Took a dim view of the 340000 AF Gunnison Arkansas Water Project.

The filing in the water development name had to be transferred to SEWCD, July 7, 1958. District filed in Garfield County to reopen adjudication to get 1939 filing. U.S. Senate had approved project but until filing was completed political road blocks to legislation.
History (Continued)

Beise, Christy, Milenski and Boustead went to Grand Junction to negotiate terms and conditions for Fry Ark Project.

1958 - Governor McNichols requested Southeast Water Development and Colorado River District and Colorado Water Conservation Board to reconcile their differences. Before any legislation of Fry Ark Project could come the State of Colorado had to resolve their differences. The Colorado Water Congress was formed in 1958 by Governor McNichols to help straighten out big differences between Western Colorado and the demand of Eastern Colorado. July 9, 1958 Garfield District Court ruled on Fry Ark 1939 filing date. November 13, 1958 board passed motion to borrow not to exceed $50,000 from Minnequa Bank.

In February 1959 Southeast Board voted to accept Western Colorado’s operating principals (no more holed thru mountains for water and cities got preference on use of western Colorado transmountain waters). The Frying Pan project was toned down.

Ruedi Reservoir was first to be built compensatory storage west slope got Ruedi 100,000 AF storage less replacement calls. Ruedi storage was an asset to Western Colorado.

Frying Pan got 69200 AF average diversion with 120000 AF ceiling. I told Beise and Christy just a horse trade. They had never traded horses, kinda confused them. Of course, the Bureau of Reclamation was thoroughly involved. Jim Olgive was project leader. Colorado Canal owned Twin. Twin Lakes is involved and the Bureau had to over build their storage. Turquoise owned by CF&I was to be over built. The negotiations were very time consuming.

Hearing in Washington D.C. May 15, 1961. Selby Young, President of District wanted full board at the D.C. hearings, so board went. Wayne Aspinall was Chairman of Interior and Insular Affairs. Mr. Chairman, Aspinall, called all the shots. He was from Western Colorado and he covered his fanny. Other Colorado River Basin water users did not want to lose any water by the diversion, compact commitments or not. Project costs in 1961 were $169,905,000.

I think Congressman Judge Chenoweth gets much credit for fine input into the passage of Fry Ark Project. He was very well respected. Senator Gordon Allott guided project through U.S. Senate bill S284, HR2206. Bill passing Frying Pan Project was by voice vote, in house vote. Aspinall insisted on victory cocktail celebration. Senate passed S284 june 28, 1962. Senator Gordon Allott sponsor, Senator Carrol said 30 years of endeavor and Senator Ed Johnson supported the bill.
History (Continued)

In August 1962, President John F. Kennedy came to Pueblo to sign authorization. Damian Ducy, Hoag and Christy each got a pen used by the president to sign bill authorizing Frying Pan Ark Project. Getting a project authorized is only a small part of action. Funding by Congress is what pays for construction.

The cost of Fry Ark at that time was $167 million dollars (1962), 5 power plants with 770000 AF of storage, exclusive of Fountain Valley Pipeline. Fountain Valley Pipeline was built estimated 16 million, actual 60 something million. Ark Valley Pipeline estimated 17 million, will never be built. Assessed valuation of district over 400 million dollars 1961. In the 1960's Colorado State had lots of water legislation. 1965 $170,000,000 ceiling on Fry Ark costs.

1965 Young and Boustead went to D.C. to discuss repayment contract. $170,000,000 ceiling costs, expenditures for operation of project, non-reimbursable costs, recreation developments pursuit to Section 4 of the Act, August 16, 1962, Article 23 to clarify making winter water expressively subject to terms of contract.

There is about 26 miles of tunnels in the collection system. Environmentalists caused tunnels to be drilled rather than open ditches, which makes this system a great engineering project.

April 18, 1966 Southeast Board adopted a memoriam to Charles H. Boustead, a giant of the Frying Pan Project, and his sacrifices to the Arkansas Valley. I knew Charlie Boustead very well. I have always considered him as Godfather to the Fry Ark Project.

In November, 1966 Tommy Thomson was hired for General Manager for southeast, $15,000 salary. The district got heavily involved in valley water matters (pumping included). As I view the District's role in the Arkansas Valley water problems, Fry Ark is only supplemental to existing supplies. Getting a project going after one is authorized takes money. Tommy Thomson had a great knack meeting with D.C. Powers. Tommy was very active in all western U.S. water problems.

James Olgive of the Bureau was a fine project leader from the start. He had fine rapport with congress. Jim retired January 1970, went to work for Denver Water Board. Art Soderberg was his replacement.

History (Continued)

FRYING PAN FEATURES

Ruedi Dam - Replacement Feature
  Total Storage - 102,369 AF

Sugar Loaf - Total Storage - 129,432 AF
  Up from 17,000 AF Capacity

Twin Lakes Dam - Total Storage - 141,000 AF
  Up from 50,000 AF Storage

Pueblo Dam - Total Storage - 357,000 AF

Mt. Elbert Forebay - Total Storage - 11,530 AF

Initial Contract Mt. Elbert Pumped Storage Power Plant

Pump Turbine raging - 138,000 Turbine HP and 170,000 Generator Horse Power

Static head 477 ft.

Collection Systems - Carter Diversion Dam & Feeder - 2,836 ft. long

North side structure - 280 ft.

Mormon - 1,374 ft.

Cunningham - 4,052 ft.

North Cunningham - 310 ft.

Middle Cunningham - 290 ft.

South Cunningham - 2,100 Ft.

Cunningham - 15,082 ft.

Ivanhoe dam and conduct. - 270 ft.

Ivanhoe Creek crossing - 450 ft.

Nast Tunnel - 15,653 ft.

Granite Syphon - 4,000 ft.

Granit Adit - 750 ft.

Divide or Boustead - 28,511 ft.
Features (Continued)

Fountain Valley conduit - 45 miles
Max Pumping Trunk Line - 31 CFS
Lilypad Collection - 221 ft.
Frying Pan Conduit - 2,481 ft.

Southside Collection System

Hunter Tunnel - 40,123 ft.
Souger Diversion Conduit - 3,098 ft.
Chapman Feeder - 264 ft.
Chapman Tunnel - 14,597 ft.
South Fork Feeder - 395 ft.
South Fork Syphon - 711 ft.
South Fork Tunnel - 16,244 ft.

West Slope Roads - 52.4 miles
East Slope - 18.5 miles
Highway Project Roads - 19.5 miles

Boustead, Divide Tunnel first to be built on for east slope diversion.

Original Reimbursable costs 23 October 1981:

- Municipal - $54 million
- Irrigation - $59 million - no interest
- Power - $72 million
- Interest rate - 3.04%

Flood Control, Recreation, Fish & Wildlife - Nonreimbursable
Contract No. 5-07-70W0086
History (Continued)

Project Managers

Jim Olgive - 1960-1070
Bob Evans - October, 1970-September, 1974

March 1974 - Estimated Costs Project:
$462,070,000
25 percent - non-reimbursable

George Kregger - October, 1974-January 10, 1981
Acting Manager: Robert Prouty - January, 1983
Jack Garner - February, 1985 until now

No one actually knows the value of water in a desert country.