

Forty Feet Under



Kaw City and the Kaw Project on the Arkansas River, 1957–1976

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Kaw City, established in the Oklahoma Territory at the oxbow bend of the Arkansas River in 1902, lay in an area ideally suited for farming and cattle raising. The town first served as a center for oil operations and was located about nine miles east of

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Ponca City. In 1950 it had a population of 809 and housed a notable art collection in the Clubb Hotel, a plain, red brick, three-story building. The entire area was subject to periodic flooding, and in 1956 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed the construction of about 2.2 miles of levee for Kaw City's protection. Yet within two decades the town was abandoned, making way for a dam that was part of a master plan to promote flood control and improve navigation on the Arkansas River, the last major undeveloped river in the United States.¹

Arkansas River development was divided between the Army Corps of Engineers, which represented downstream interests encompassing the state of Oklahoma, and the Bureau of Reclamation (Department of the Interior), which was primarily concerned with irrigation and upstream problems. Kay County, where the major part of the Kaw Reservoir would be located, is classified as an urban county (where more than half of the population resides in towns of more than 2,500 inhabitants). The primary reason for this designation is Ponca City, with almost 60 percent of the county's population and home of the Continental Oil Company. During the years this project was underway Kay County experienced a net out-migration due to a lack of job opportunities.²

Water policy for the Arkansas River Valley had largely been formulated by both geographical and vested-interest-group politics: agriculture in the upper valley (Bureau of Reclamation), business and industry in the lower valley (Corps of Engineers). Upstream interests wanted federal funds for watershed development and irrigation; downstream groups called for large dams for flood control and navigation. Following severe flooding in 1943, Robert S. Kerr, as governor of Oklahoma, awakened to the opportunity to control the state's water resources for multiple purposes. Working with members of the Tulsa business community and a state engineer, Don McBride, Kerr began to contact federal agencies, administration officials, and key legislators to involve the federal government. He was not interested in a river valley authority comparable to the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), preferring instead to have the governor and executive agencies involved in the process. Water development, Kerr recognized, would create jobs, attract industry, assist agriculture, and possibly one day surpass oil revenues. It would be the catalyst of prosperity.

With his failure to win the presidential nomination in 1952, Kerr determined that he would spend his tenure as a United States senator furthering his state's interests, especially the federal develop-

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ment of the Arkansas River Valley, by bringing to Oklahoma a seaport for ocean-going vessels. As a member of the Public Works Committee and after 1955 chair of the Subcommittee on Rivers and



U.S. Senator Robert S. Kerr, father of the Arkansas River Navigation System (OHS photo).

Harbors and Flood Control, with an ex-officio seat on the Appropriations Committee, Kerr was situated as the most powerful member of the Senate to further water development in Oklahoma, let alone the United States. In this capacity he was instrumental in removing Kaw City in order to further the development of the Arkansas River Valley. In this decision the people in Kaw City had no voice other than bargaining with the Corps of Engineers for a meaningful price for their property. Modernization signified progress and prosperity, and in this instance the people of Kaw City would pay the price. Community leaders in Ponca City and in Newkirk, the

county seat, endorsed and actively supported Kerr's efforts, although he was a Democrat and Kay County traditionally cast its votes for the Republican ticket.³

Kerr was alerted early in 1956 that "a large number of people in Kay County, particularly in Kaw City" were alarmed by the action of the Arkansas River changing its course at several points. They sought aid in protecting bank-side property. Federal funds to curb bank caving, Kerr knew, could only be secured if transportation arteries were in danger or if the caving affected flood control. An earlier authorized project for protection of Kaw City was deferred for lack of local interest. If anything was to be accomplished in Kay County, concerned groups would have to become involved.⁴

A year later the interest had materialized. Bank protection was replaced by a proposal for a Kaw Reservoir as a means of expanding water facilities for the entire county. A grateful mayor of Ponca City was delighted with Kerr's "generous and heartening cooperation" in endorsing the proposal, formally entitled "Reconnaissance Report on the Kaw Project, Arkansas River," that was forwarded to the Corps's Chief of Engineers, General E. C. Itschner. The proposal was formally accepted at a meeting held by the Arkansas Basin De-

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velopment Association to discuss the possibility of securing a survey and report on the feasibility of the new project. In attendance were U.S. Representatives Ed Edmondson and Page Belcher, representatives of the governor of Kansas, and delegates from Kay County. If the project was deemed attractive, Kerr's endorsement asked General Itschner to provide "some indication of the economic benefit" that might accrue from it.⁵

News of the proposal and its filing with the Corps of Engineers spread quickly throughout the county and aroused the interest and enthusiasm of individuals and groups who corresponded with Kerr and Belcher. All were pleased when Brigadier General J. L. Person, responsible for civil works in the Corps of Engineers, asserted that a favorable benefit-to-cost ratio could be achieved if, in addition to flood control and power benefits, water supply and recreational purposes were factored into the proposal. However, additional detailed studies would be required before a definite determination could be made. A long process now began. Kerr thought the Corps of Engineers would be favorably impressed once "the Recreational Bill and the Omnibus Rivers and Harbors and Flood Control Bill" were enacted. He hoped that once these bills were law, the Corps would respond favorably to the Kaw proposal.⁶

The situation became acute in May 1957 when thousands of acres of Kay County's fertile farmlands, rich with the promise of a bumper wheat crop, lay beneath flood waters. Scores of farms and homes were inundated or isolated. Transportation was disrupted, and bridges were closed. The newly organized Kaw Dam and Reservoir Association (KDRA), already boasting 40,000 members, hoped that Kerr could "immediately help" secure an appropriation of \$25,000 and request a feasibility study by the Tulsa District of the Corps of Engineers. Kerr informed the president of the KDRA that the Corps of Engineers had promptly launched a survey "to determine the extent of the damage and projects which would have eliminated it." The Kaw Project could supply needed additional storage to prevent flooding. In addition, Kerr would bring the association's concern to his Public Works Subcommittee on Appropriations.⁷

Thus far, no one in Kay County or in Washington paid attention to the residents of the old Kaw Indian Nation in Washunga or to the people of Kaw City, whose homes and businesses would be submerged if and when the proposed dam and reservoir became realities. Residents adopted a "wait and see attitude," but construction and home improvements virtually ceased in these two Kay County communities that faced each other across the river.

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The project's success would mean that water up to thirty-four feet deep would cover Kaw City's main street, leaving only the top of the three-story Hotel not submerged. Residents were already concerned about the seventy-five or eighty pensioners who would find it financially difficult to move and who would not be able to replace their modest homes, valued "anywhere from \$3,000-\$4,000." However, Dale Shackelford, the mayor, believed it was "too early to be upset," because in 1957 the project's feasibility was yet to be determined. In effect, a time bomb was ticking, as the proposal's promoters were relentlessly enthusiastic.⁸

To influence public opinion throughout the region, among the officers of the Tulsa District of the Corps of Engineers, and in Washington, the newly incorporated KDRA launched a massive campaign to secure funding for a feasibility report. The association reported in a 1958 newsletter that besides the benefits emanating from flood control, unemployment in the area was "triple over 1957" and that the dam and reservoir was necessary for "the preservation of the welfare of our people, our refineries and other industries during the drought years to come." In May success seemed possible when Belcher testified before the Public Works Subcommittee on Appropriations to urge the inclusion of a \$100,000 survey of the Kaw Reservoir Project. If this effort failed, Kerr would seek its inclusion in the Senate "and then get the Conferrees of the House and Senate to agree."⁹

News that the appropriations committees might consider this request sent three association members to Washington. There they joined a host of delegates from Oklahoma, Kansas, and Arkansas, all emphasizing the need for the Arkansas River Basin Projects. The three KDRA representatives were distressed to learn that Belcher's request for \$100,000 had been reduced to \$25,000. The members returned home tired but confident that planning would soon be underway. Don Hoye of Newkirk Trust Company told Representative Tom Steed that "without water the industries that we now have will not expand and we know that no new industries will come in," and there was a chance "we could lose the industries we have." As an indication of how alarming the situation was, he noted that in the past two weeks not a single new car had been sold in Ponca City. People, Hoye concluded, simply did not have any money to spend. Another Ponca City resident observed that well water was being pumped into Lake Ponca to reduce the hardness of its water and at the same time to afford recreational facilities on a lake already congested with boats. In addition, the Research Department

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for Continental Oil Company noted that drinking water in the city “was approaching a serious health hazard for internal consumption.” All were further reasons for the project’s construction.¹⁰

However, despite the efforts of the Washington delegation the House Appropriations Committee did not include funding for the feasibility study in their bill. Kerr promised to do his best to persuade the Senate Appropriations Committee to include the item, and he was successful. Ponca City Chamber of Commerce President Don Wright exulted that “this is one of the most significant things that has ever taken place in our community.”¹¹

While they awaited the Corps’s study, the KDRA’s supporters mounted a barrage of resolutions and membership drives (annual membership cost was \$2). Members packed the Corps’s public meeting in Ponca City in late April 1959, held so that the feasibility report could reflect the attitude of local interests. The association made every effort to insure that members of the Congressional delegation, state officials, and Kansas representatives were on hand.¹²

An unintended consequence of these activities occurred on April 14, 1959, when eighty-eight affected property owners formed the Anti-Kaw Dam Association. Keith Fruits, a Kaw City-area farmer and president of the new organization, said the group would proclaim their opposition at the public meeting. One farmer said it had taken him a decade to improve his land to its present state and that it would take another decade to get another farm to the point of productivity of his present operation. Another observed that farmers did not want to improve their land if they would be forced to move. Still another said it was almost impossible to sell property or secure a loan. In addition, the men pointed out that many of Kaw City’s almost seven hundred residents had moved there upon retiring.¹³

Shortly thereafter, the Anti-Kaw Dam Association enumerated in bold print the devastation that would probably occur. Fertile land would be lost; dwellings and other improvements, including places of business, would be abandoned. Services would be impaired and huge costs incurred to pay for inundated land, to rebuild county roads, and possibly to build a bridge. The notice queried, “Who Do You Think Will Pay for This?” and “Where Will You Replace This God-Given Land?” Association directors also intended to hold a public meeting in the community building in Newkirk and another in Kaw City before presenting their views at the Corps’s public meeting in Ponca City. Members of the Anti-Kaw Dam Association found it “difficult to understand how businessmen at Ponca City, Newkirk or other cities in this area can favor the Kaw Dam project,

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since it is clearly a socialist project which will undeniably and definitely destroy a large part of the best tributary farmland in the respective trade territories.”¹⁴

Continental Oil Company of Ponca City expressed its concerns in a communication to Corps District Engineer Colonel John Bristor, who would preside at the upcoming meeting. The company cited its expanding needs for good quality water beyond the “2.1 billion gallons” already available and thus its “vital interest” in the completion of the Kaw Dam and Reservoir Project. An adequate water supply constituted “a basic condition for the development of a substantial petrochemical industry.” Furthermore, the construction of the Kaw Dam and Reservoir would obviate “the devastating effects of flood and drought” upon the region’s economy and improve Continental’s role as “one of the principal suppliers of petroleum products in this primarily agricultural region.” Moreover, through water-flooding practices a number of oil fields in the area could be made to produce great quantities of additional crude, ventures that could not otherwise be undertaken. Construction of the project, in brief, “would both permit and encourage industrial growth,” attract “tourist travel,” and stimulate “recreational activities” that “would create substantial new sources of income to the suppliers of petroleum products.”¹⁵

Couched in terms relevant to the concerns of the Continental Oil Company, the letter reflected the views of the KDRA and all who supported the proposal. It would benefit the region’s economy and provide recreational facilities beyond those offered at the already overcrowded Lake Ponca. In fulfilling Kerr’s broad vision of developing the Arkansas River Valley, the project would be good for business. It also meant that the anti-Kaw Dam group would pay the price of progress, because the Corps of Engineers, in the general information it received and in the testimony presented, said, in greater detail and with different specifications, what Continental Oil Company had related to the district engineer. Namely, the project would promote the area’s industrial development, bring additional job opportunities, provide flood control, greatly enhance the water supply, and possibly develop the fish and wildlife potential. In his statement at the public hearing, Senator Kerr commented on “the vigor, the enthusiasm, and the precise planning” demonstrated by the project’s backers. He further announced that the entire Oklahoma congressional delegation “pledged their whole hearted support.” He related this project to his work in promoting water development throughout Oklahoma and called upon the Corps of Engineers “to again demon-

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strate here their usual and thorough manner of expediting vital surveys.”¹⁶

A survey would take time in working its way through the bureaucracy. With the Eisenhower Administration unenthusiastic about endorsing public works proposals, Kerr realized, as did most area residents, that a decision would be arrived at later than sooner. He, however, took some satisfaction when, for the first time during Eisenhower’s tenure, Congress in 1959 overrode his veto of a water resources bill and appropriated funds for fifteen new reclamation project starts. As chair of the newly created Senate Select Committee on National Water Resources, Kerr was ideally situated to secure authorization for the Kaw Project, once the survey report reached Congress.¹⁷

Chambers of Commerce in nearby Kansas communities also expressed an interest in the project, and several sent delegates to the public hearing held in June 1959 in Ponca City. Meanwhile, residents of the area began addressing letters of inquiry directly to the Tulsa District Office of the U.S. Corps of Engineers. The Chamber of Commerce of Newkirk, Kay County seat, was particularly concerned with “whether or not a bridge across the proposed reservoir at a point where a bridge is now located, due east of Newkirk” was part of the feasibility study. The chamber considered the bridge vital to the community. Ponca City’s mayor wrote to the director of the Bureau of the Budget to explain how his community depended upon industry for its economy and how industry in turn depended upon water. Mayor Dale Shackelford of Kaw City had more immediate concerns. District Engineer Colonel Howard Penney informed him that the report “under study” would set the flood control pool for the Kaw Reservoir “at about elevation 1,044, which is much higher than the lands in and around the City of Kaw,” thereby inundating the community. If deemed feasible, the project could take from “three to five years or more to obtain authorization.” If authorized, the mayor was informed, the government could provide assistance in removing publicly owned facilities to a new site. Private property, however, would not be relocated but would be purchased. Condition at the time of removal would determine the purchase price of land and improvements. If a favorable feasibility report was presented, Kaw City was doomed.¹⁸

With Kerr handily reelected in 1960 (he lost Kay County despite the enthusiastic support his efforts always received in Ponca City), he now could devote more attention to the proposal and a request from Carl Cramton, vice president of Kaw City’s First National

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Bank. The bank was “doing very nicely,” he noted, but everybody in Kaw City was “very concerned as to their position in regard to the proposed dam.” A number of retired people were worried that if forced to sell their homes, they would not be able to replace them if the selling price was based on the market value. Actually, the banker noted, there was no market of any kind, due to the possibility of a dam being constructed. No one wanted to buy, and there was “not a single lender” willing to loan on Kaw City property. While farms and ranch land would be appraised and something approaching an equitable value could be determined, he worried about residents who owned and lived in homes that now had no sale value. A new house in Ponca City would cost them four or five times what they could get for their Kaw City home. The banker needed advice as to how “the home owner might be treated and the choices he might have.” Kerr, of course, was of little help. He could only relate the information to District Engineer Penney, and that information was not reassuring to Kaw City homeowners.¹⁹

Anxiously awaiting word on the project’s feasibility from the Corps of Engineers, Kay County residents received a tremendous boost from the Special Message to the Congress on Natural Resources by newly elected President John F. Kennedy. In his message Kennedy announced that “we reject a ‘no new starts’ policy” and that he had requested the director of the Bureau of the Budget to schedule new projects to meet accumulated demands. The reluctance evident during the Eisenhower presidency would end with the new administration. During the campaign Kennedy had wired people in Ponca City that he endorsed the Kaw Dam and Reservoir proposal, a pledge that supporters recalled in an exuberant telegram proclaiming that the people of northern Oklahoma were “happy” with his message on natural resources. The telegram further expressed the hope that “with your helping Senator Kerr the report from the Army engineers should be forthcoming immediately.” The telegram contained the names of fourteen prominent members of the Ponca City business community, including the presidents of both oil companies.²⁰

Proponents of the projects received a boost of another sort in May 1961 when violent thunderstorms, accompanied by heavy rains, hail, strong winds, and rising streams, wrought havoc throughout the county and forced the evacuation of homes in parts of Ponca City. At Kaw City, where three inches of rain fell, the Arkansas River rose slightly, but no serious flooding was reported. While flooding from the Arkansas River was not a major factor, other wa-

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ter-gorged streams emptied into the river, arousing concern and helping maintain interest in the project.²¹

The disastrous rains possibly prompted a story in the *Daily Oklahoman* that focused on Kaw City, claiming that it “refuses to give up, either to water and silt on the angry Arkansas River. . . .” The story noted that once there were more than 2,500 people living there. The 1960 census listed 457 persons. There were attractive homes in the community, but many had been moved away. The three-story Clubb Hotel, with its famed art collection, was now a rest home. Most of the art resided in Tulsa’s Philbrook Museum. While there was talk of moving the First National Bank, founded in 1902, away from Kaw City, it continued to function as proof of business stability and as a vital part of town life. Its deposits and loans were up, and a savings department had been added and the lobby modernized. There were even some new jobs in the area. All was evidence of a slowing rate of decline, but all was threatened if the forthcoming feasibility report favored the project. Nevertheless, individuals who wanted to keep Kaw City alive still could have possibly a decade “before anything more definitive than discussion” about the reservoir was concluded. They resolved to keep active during that time.²²

So too did supporters of the project. In late May KDRA’s directors announced their intention to flood the Oklahoma Congressional delegation’s Appropriations Committee members, as well as the Corps of Engineers office in Tulsa and Dallas, with letters calling for authorization of the proposed dam and reservoir. The recent downpour and flooding made it a propitious time to launch such a campaign, with the impulse emanating, as in the past, from the Ponca City business elite. This time, however, the association’s leaders would seek greater support throughout the county and in Kansas. While it was known that the engineer’s preliminary report had reached Washington, no one in Ponca City knew how it had been received. The coming letter-writing campaign could speed the process and help secure a favorable report.²³

To no avail. It soon became known that the preliminary evaluation indicated the need for “more detailed studies” before “firming up [the project’s] economic feasibility.” The Corps’s Director of Civil Works Major General William F. Cassidy explained that further study would necessitate “a careful review of major cost items” and a further assessment of project benefits to determine how they juxtaposed “with the goal of national economic growth recently set by the President.” The statement nevertheless revealed that the proposal

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was being seriously considered and that the Tulsa District Engineers would be fine-tuning it, a task that could take several months.²⁴

Anticipating a favorable response and to manifest massive support, the KDRA scheduled a rally for the evening of October 9 in Ponca City. To lure a large audience the association would provide "piping hot barbeque." Senators Kerr and Mike Monroney and Representative Belcher would speak, kicking off an intensive effort to secure the project's authorization. At the rally, Kerr assured the crowd of approximately eight thousand people that the project would be approved in January [1962], but he added that this "would be only the beginning." Appropriations would have to be made before the Corps of Engineers could launch the project. Kerr's remarks indicated his optimism, bordering on certainty, that with a Democratic president and Congress and with his dominant position on the Public Works and Appropriations committees, the slogan "the Kaw Dam for You in '62" would become reality.²⁵

By this time, opposition to the project was rarely noted in the press and was confined largely to letters to officials. These were directed primarily to Republican Page Belcher, who represented the First District, extending across northern Oklahoma roughly from Woodward to Tulsa. Correspondents included farmers whose lands would be taken, ultraconservative Republicans resentful of any intrusion by the federal government, and Kaw City residents. Their voices were lost in the general enthusiasm evident at the Ponca City meeting and even more so following another startling announcement. In November they received notice of a public hearing to discuss a proposal offered by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a national wildlife refuge in conjunction with the Kaw Reservoir. This new proposal would generate considerable controversy, but it also implied that a favorable feasibility report was forthcoming. Indeed, in scheduling the meeting for late November in Ponca City, the district engineer said that the survey studies were nearing completion.²⁶

On December 12, 1961, the results of the report were formally announced by Major General Robert J. Fleming, Jr., heading the Corps's Southwestern Division, which included the Tulsa Division of the Corps of Engineers. Calling for the construction of the Kaw Dam, the reporting officers approved a multipurpose reservoir that would provide storage for flood control, municipal and industrial water supply, water quality control, and conservation uses. The officers further recommended that careful consideration be given to the Fish and Wildlife Service's request for acreage to establish a na-

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tional wildlife refuge. In accordance with law, the report would be referred for review to the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors in Washington. Hearings would be held on January 3, 1962.²⁷

Before the meeting in Washington the parameters of a major battle among friends of Kaw Reservoir were already outlined. For example, Mayor William Kasl of Blackwell in Kay County expressed opposition to the proposed refuge because it would include the entire area of the lake from Kaw City to the Kansas line. This, he insisted, would destroy recreational opportunities and “cost the City of Blackwell and surrounding area many dollars in retail business, derived from recreation and the development of cabins and boat docks.” The opposing side was evident in a resolution from the Tonkawa and Ponca City chapters of the Izaak Walton League of America. They endorsed the proposal and called for specific access points to be made available for fishing, hunting, and boating.²⁸

With the December announcement, the first phase, that of securing approval for the Kaw Reservoir Project, concluded. Opposition became negligible. Arguments for the project’s economic and recreational potential had produced a substantial result in a favorable feasibility report. Construction of the Kaw Dam and Reservoir now was assured. Supporters would contend among themselves about the virtues of a game preserve, a contest that soon extended beyond Kay County. Kerr and other members of the Oklahoma delegation considered this a distraction, as did the KDRA. In a formal resolution the directors unanimously opposed “the inclusion of a wildlife refuge as an adjunct of the Kaw Reservoir,” a view endorsed by the chambers of commerce of most towns within Kay County.²⁹

Throughout 1962, before action occurred in Washington to start funding the project, the Kaw Reservoir game preserve controversy raged. Members of the Oklahoma delegation received hundreds of postcards and letters on the subject as well as petitions illustrating a lively debate in Kay County and increasing interest elsewhere. Kerr indicated that his mail “from the cities and towns and individuals in the area” indicated “almost 100% opposed” to the refuge. Belcher was informed that interested groups were circulating petitions among county residents in opposition, in all suggesting that it was general and not limited to an isolated few.³⁰

In late February the project moved a step further when the Army Engineers Board of Rivers and Harbors approved the project. Once approval was announced, Senators Kerr and Monroney said they would attempt to get the project in the Omnibus Rivers and Harbors Bill in time to obtain preconstruction funds in 1962. Before

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that could occur, the chief of engineers and the Budget Bureau would have to approve the proposal. The chief of engineers did so in March, submitting a report for transmission to Congress. In September the Budget Bureau advised the Senate and the House Public Works committees that it had approved the multimillion dollar Kaw Reservoir Project. But it was too late for the Eighty-Seventh Congress to act.³¹

Between February and September debate raged over the merits of the refuge, and pressure to launch the project intensified. Spokespersons for the Branch of Wildlife Refuges again met with groups throughout the county. When asked at a meeting of the Tonkawa Chapter of the Izaak Walton League if reaction against the Refuges Branch coming into the Kaw debate was typical, the spokesperson replied, "We only get this type of reaction where people are trying to make a lot of money." Senator Kerr, who had no need to make a lot of money, quickly concluded, "since there has been so much opposition to the wildlife refuge," that he would "favor the project without the refuge." The KDRA endorsed his view, as did most chambers of commerce and business people in the county, with one notable exception. The Tonkawa Chamber of Commerce reflected the opposition of the local chapter of the Izaak Walton League. Although Representative Belcher and Senator Monroney were in accord with Kerr's views, it was also evident that the refuge fight would only intensify in the coming months.³²

The strides toward realization of the project prompted the Kaw Indian tribe to consult with the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the problems it sought to have resolved. Sixteen Kaw Indian families resided on lands to be submerged, and the tribe requested that the bureau seek an appraisal enabling them to secure comparable property nearby. The tribe also sought aid in selecting a new burial ground for the cemetery that would be inundated. However, concerns of soon-to-be displaced people attracted little attention. It would be several years before their problems would be addressed. The immediate concern was the wildlife refuge itself, which drew the attention of a growing constituency outside of Kay County.³³

Within the county a class cleavage could be discerned. While more affluent individuals would bear no financial hardship in finding a place to hunt and fish, and could afford to travel some distance to find it, the "poorer people" were denied many such opportunities. In addition, organizations such as the Oklahoma State Division of the Izaak Walton League, the Oklahoma Academy of Science (Conservation Section), the Oklahoma Division of the Outdoor Council of

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America, and numerous Sportsman Clubs had acquired an elitist image, due to their numerous well-to-do members. Owing to their lower economic status, Kay County residents recognized that their recreational opportunities, unlike those of members of the supporting organizations, were largely limited to those offered in the vicinity.³⁴

Meanwhile, despite the fact that the Budget Bureau had not officially accepted the project, Kerr continued discussing it. His assistant provided an outline of points that the KDRA leadership should make in its presentation before the Public Works Committee. Besides a general statement relating to the need for the project, the Corps's report should be characterized as "ultra conservative" in its assessment of potential benefits such as flood control and recreation. Benefits included in the report should be evaluated. Strong statements "reinforced by appropriate resolutions" relative to water supply requirements and "the willingness of local communities to participate on a contract basis" for such supplies should be stressed. Other points in the presentation could mention how the Kaw Reservoir, through silt control, would extend the life of the downstream Keystone Reservoir. Above all, anticipated industrial development should be stressed as a primary benefit. In short, an elaborate presentation embellished with supporting data would be of great assistance to the committee. No mention was made of a wildlife refuge.³⁵

A further hurdle was cleared in June 1962 when Oklahoma Governor J. Howard Edmondson informed Acting Chief of Engineers Major General Keith Barney that all agencies having responsibility regarding construction of the project had now concurred in the report. Edmondson urged the acting chief to forward the report to Congress at the earliest possible date. Shortly thereafter, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall informed the Chief of Engineers Lieutenant General Walker Wilson that "the proposed national wildlife refuge would be of substantial value in the national program for the management of the waterfowl resource." The secretary challenged the district engineer's report on the estimates of fish and wildlife utilization, claiming it was not in agreement with those of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. Moreover, he was specific in requesting that the district engineer consult with the Bureau of Indian Affairs regarding effects that the policy might have on "restricted Indian lands in Kay County."³⁶

At the end of August the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers asked Congress for funds to launch new water projects in Oklahoma. The Kaw Reservoir would furnish municipal water to Ponca City and Newkirk as well as to Arkansas City, Kansas. It would also control

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floods, improve water quality, and provide fish and wildlife habitats. The order for construction of the several projects, however, would be left to the discretion of the Corps, leaving the contentious issue of the wildlife refuge unresolved. All that Kerr could offer at this point was that authorization was necessary to continue the program of developing natural resources in Oklahoma. In September, as previously noted, the Kaw Dam and Reservoir had been approved by the Bureau of the Budget. But the Budget Bureau's approval made no mention of a wildlife refuge, while that of the Corps called for the provision of fish and wildlife benefits, leaving this matter up to a new Congress, scheduled to convene in January 1963. However, thanks to the strenuous efforts of Senator Kerr, just before it adjourned, the Eighty-seventh Congress appropriated an additional \$75,000 for the project. Delighted, KDRA's directors said that in five years it had reached a level of accomplishment generally not seen in such a program until twelve or fifteen years of work had been done.³⁷

Project supporters' exuberance dimmed somewhat with the death of Senator Kerr, whose arduous efforts were responsible for the progress thus far achieved. Despite the number of individuals and organizations continuously calling for his assistance, Kerr did not carry Kay County in his 1960 reelection campaign. Fortunately, every member of the Oklahoma delegation would continue to back the project. Belcher in the House and Monroney in the Senate took the lead. Thanks to Kerr's efforts, the project now entered a decisive stage, namely that construction money had been handed to the Corps of Engineers.³⁸

A more immediate matter needed clarification, namely the status of the wildlife refuge. While the Corps of Engineers recommended the proposal, the Bureau of the Budget hesitated to utilize funds for acquisition of lands for wildlife purposes. As the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of the Budget sought to resolve their differences in the summer of 1963, Congress had already appropriated \$75,000 for advance planning and engineering, and the president had requested \$200,000 for similar use in the next fiscal year. Only after this work was completed would construction funds be allocated; at least another year of engineering would be required before a contract could be let. Once this occurred, funds usually followed with some degree of regularity. The envisioned target date to get underway, KDRA officials claimed, would be July 1, 1965, with the major construction contracts awarded a year later. Tulsa District Engineer Colonel John W. Morris in March 1964 amended the

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starting date to July 1967. He further indicated that residents of the areas to be inundated would not know when they must move until about six months after the construction of the dam.

Kaw City residents now knew that a wait-and-see attitude had become precarious. On the other hand, Ponca City residents envisioned the project “as a bonanza which will mean untold millions in recreational and industrial profits for future generations.” Don McBride, now assisting Senator Monroney on water issues, insisted that maintaining the project would sustain jobs and a continuous annual payroll. Tourism would increase, as would private investments, and per capita income would rise. But high hopes alone would not translate McBride’s views into reality. Congress still had to vote the construction funds, an amount estimated at \$83 million by the Corps. As soon as money was available, land would be purchased, and access roads, project buildings, and construction areas would be developed. If anything, the KDRA would have to work even harder than it had when Kerr, with his powerful committee assignments, had been there to assist.³⁹

A waiting game now ensued: waiting until preconstruction planning was completed, waiting before being forced to move, waiting for contracts and the employment opportunities that would follow. Kaw City’s leaders understood that the whole town would be lost if it were abandoned but that relocation would secure government aid to move utilities, roads, schools, and churches and that individuals would be reimbursed after appraisal. To assist in the process the Kaw City Council hired a Tulsa engineering firm to plan and supervise the town’s relocation. In Ponca City, Newkirk, and elsewhere the debate between “wildlifers” and opponents renewed with some intensity, but most people seemingly were willing to let Congress, the Corps of Engineers, and the Bureau of the Budget resolve the issue. In addition, lobbying was renewed to secure supplemental appropriations so that the project could proceed on schedule. Fred Harris, who secured a seat on the Public Works Committee that Kerr had used so effectively, might help accelerate the appropriations process.⁴⁰

In May 1965 Belcher appeared before the House Appropriations Committee to request additional funds to complete the planning and initiate the construction for the Kaw Project. Harris made the same appeal before both the House and Senate appropriations subcommittees on Public Works. He, like Kerr, ardently supported the project and, like Kerr in 1960, he failed to carry Ponca City and Kay County in 1964 when he succeeded in winning Kerr’s Senate seat.

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Nevertheless, like Kerr, he endorsed the KDRA's views, because both senators deemed the project vital to the enhanced prosperity of the state. Harris's efforts convinced the Senate to include a provision for the Kaw Dam in its Public Works Appropriations Bill. The conference committee accepted the provision, which meant that construction could get underway by 1967.⁴¹

While the approval of the appropriation aroused enthusiasm in Ponca City and throughout the county, such was not the case in Kaw City. There, more than 75 percent of residents owned their own homes, and two-thirds of the inhabitants were more than sixty-five years old. At the time (1965), there were only 323 Kaw City residents of voting age. All were eligible to vote on the site proposed by the city council for relocation. It was located three miles west of the original town, on a bluff overlooking the Arkansas River Valley, and would be surrounded on three sides by the waters of the Kaw Reservoir. By a vote of 155 to 10 voters approved the new site.⁴²

Meanwhile, the other loser in the controversy, the Fish and Wildlife Service, launched a last-ditch effort to secure the creation of a refuge. Regional Director John G. Gatlin claimed that at the 1961 public hearing strong support had been evident. Since that time, the service had restudied the proposal and developed a revised plan that "we feel will remove almost all of the opposition to the refuge." Excluded from the refuge boundary was "a tract desired by local interests as a summer home area." In all, the service reduced the area for the refuge to approximately 12,000 acres. An important part of the new plan called for developing recreational facilities on land that would not be subject to periodic flooding. With the next public hearing scheduled by the Corps of Engineers for the following spring, the service intended to work closely with all concerned groups in an "attempt to resolve as many difficulties as possible."⁴³

Monronev tried to quash this effort by reminding the director that Kerr had found it necessary "to exclude the proposed wildlife refuge in order to secure local support for the project." Congress authorized it without the refuge, and funds available to the Corps of Engineers "for advance engineering and design" made no mention of one. While Monronev did not commit himself, he recognized that a replay of the earlier debate would ensue, probably with greater intensity. But this was of little concern to the KDRA members, who planned a "Victory Dinner" to celebrate the start of construction early in 1966. The meeting would also provide an opportunity for "the local folks" to meet new District Engineer Colonel George A. Rebh.⁴⁴

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The debate, however, was a matter of grave concern to numerous farmers, ranchers, and businessmen. Many of them voiced deep concern that a new proposal was being made to establish a wildlife refuge. They feared crop depreciation by “the fowls using the Refuge.” In addition, the people of Newkirk worried that the area would be fenced and placed under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, thereby precluding “any reasonable opportunity” for them to take advantage of commercial development. For opponents of the refuge it was “same song, second verse.”⁴⁵

At the end of 1965 the issue was far from resolved. District Engineer Rebh let it be known that his division planned “to give full consideration to the establishment of the national wildlife refuge in developing the best uses for project lands.” What was decided was that groundbreaking ceremonies for the start of construction would occur with ample pomp and ceremony in the spring of the new year. Construction time for the project was estimated at least five years, after which the reservoir would be ready for filling.⁴⁶

Once a starting date, May 21, was announced, a Kay County Steering Committee was organized to coordinate opposition to the proposed refuge. Eliminating public use of approximately forty miles of shoreline would remove a huge acreage available for private and commercial use. One critic noted that “the general attitude in this country is that we are against passing out any federal funds unless you pass it out here and give us the authority to use it as we please and to hell with anybody else,” adding that “you would think, by the attitude here, that Kay County was paying the entire cost of the reservoir.”⁴⁷

Meanwhile, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, claiming the support of 22,000 sportsmen in the state, announced its intention to be heard at the public hearing. However, at gatherings held throughout the county and in Arkansas City, Kansas, with “Wildlife representatives” present, the pros and cons were presented, and in every instance by a margin of five to one the vote went against a federal wildlife r. Most local residents remained opposed to it.⁴⁸

At the same time, enthusiastic support for the project permeated the KDRA-sponsored Victory Dinner to celebrate the receipt of \$500,000 in construction funds. The dinner honored the men who had led the eight-year-long drive, and special tribute was paid to Fred G. Fellows, consulting engineer, who first had called attention to the possibility of a large dam and reservoir. The guest speaker was Tulsa District Engineer Rebh, who predicted that in time the Kaw

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Reservoir would attract "two million" visitors each year. To cement the cordial relations, Rebh and his wife were made honorary chief and princess of the Poncas.⁴⁹

Despite strong opposition to the refuge, the Corps of Engineers announced that it was still considering "all elements" in its planning to secure "maximum benefits from the project lands." So heavy was the mail pouring into Monroney's office that he insisted a public hearing be held before a decision was announced. As Monroney understood the matter, funds were not available for the creation of a wildlife refuge, thereby necessitating a Congressional appropriation. His sympathies, in accord with other members of the Oklahoma delegation, were hostile to the refuge. Therefore, he was surprised to learn that, after hearing a full explanation, audiences were withdrawing their opposition. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation promised to furnish him with the names of ninety thousand individuals who favored the refuge. In Kay County the only people who consistently endorsed it were in Tonkawa, the community furthest from the project, and where the Kiwanis Club and the Izaak Walton League played a leading role.⁵⁰

Spokespersons from the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, part of the Fish and Wildlife Service, worked hard to get their message across to audiences throughout the county early in 1966. They met with some success among groups previously opposed. After discussing both sides of the issue, the Ponca City Chamber of Commerce went into executive session to consider a motion by a prominent business leader who had spoken extensively against the refuge. Nevertheless, the Chamber of Commerce declined to oppose it. So too did farmers and other landowners who learned that they could grow crops under agricultural allotment with bureau management. Land owners were surprised to learn that they would have preference in grazing and sharecropping leases under bureau direction. Now, prominent members of the KDRA spoke in favor of the proposal. However, the naysayers still insisted that the area would be fenced and restricted, precluding cabins, boat ramps, docks, and other structures connected with recreation.⁵¹

Ignored during the refuge controversy was the plight of Kaw City. Its continued existence, the mayor reflected, could depend on the interest of outside investors. Most residents wanted to move the town and had already approved a site on the ridge of hills three miles northwest of the present boundaries. While people from many communities had inquired about lots, the mayor said the people of Kaw City would have to decide on a specific course of action.

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A major blow to the community occurred several months previously when Kaw City's First National Bank had moved to Ponca City and opened for business with a new name. Departure of the city's main financial institution was the most recent example of the way in which the impending dam and reservoir curbed progress in a once prosperous and lively community. Early in 1966 there were only ten functioning business establishments. Brick buildings along Main Street were vacant and deteriorating. The Santa Fe depot was already dilapidated, servicing one freight train daily, and the rail-



Kaw City's main thoroughfare, circa 1950 (Courtesy Jim Argo/Oklahoma Museum of History).

road indicated that it might not relocate. Spot appraisals of property were under way, but the appraisal of residential properties would occur early in 1967, at which time the mayor expected the city to have a contract with engineers for municipally-owned property.

The former Clubb Hotel, once the area's showplace, functioned as a rest home. It would have to be razed before the Kaw Dam backed up forty feet of water over the surface of Main Street. While most Kay County residents excitedly anticipated the project's launching, with or without the refuge, Kaw City residents awaited the outcome with feelings of despair. Many, including Mayor J. H. Humphrey, believed that outside money was the only hope.⁵²

Another potential loser was the farmer who did not want to be forced to sell land for the refuge, even though he would be allowed to plant in designated areas under careful supervision. With farm-

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land making a good return and with mounting opposition to federal purchase of farm lands, farmers in the vicinity generally opposed the refuge. The Oklahoma Farmers' Union entered the fray in their support. The controversy headed toward resolution at a public meeting scheduled by District Engineer Rebh for March 31 in Kaw City. At this meeting, land requirements, acquisition procedures, and other matters, including the refuge, would be discussed. Rebh made it clear that the Corps would not purchase more land than absolutely necessary.⁵³

Days before the meeting Regional Director Gatlin of the Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife announced that his agency was postponing immediate establishment of the Kaw National Wildlife Refuge. Convinced of the ultimate local benefits from the proposed refuge, the director recognized that "questions have arisen regarding the effect that the refuge might have on possible commercial development and other private opportunities." Thus ended a controversy that disappointed supporters of the refuge but pleased most of the land owners and local villagers, especially those who might profit "from the various beer and bait joints" envisioned in or near the proposed preserve (and provide the clutter that spoiled many lakes in Oklahoma).⁵⁴

With the matter of the refuge now resolved, an overflow crowd of 900 who filed into the Kaw City High School gymnasium on March 31 learned that residents would have to start evacuating their town by late 1967. Colonel Rebh informed the audience that land purchases were already being made in the dam and reservoir area and that funds already received meant that groundbreaking for roads and project buildings soon would be scheduled. June 1972 was cited as the target date for completion of the reservoir. Several days after this meeting Kaw City residents learned that a federal grant had been prepared for a comprehensive plan to move their city to higher ground. However, each citizen would have to decide whether to follow the city or relocate elsewhere. The decision would be entirely individual.⁵⁵

May 21, 1966, would be a great day: ground would be broken for the Kaw Dam and Reservoir. The day was deemed so important that its sponsors, the KDRA, invited President Lyndon B. Johnson to attend the ceremony. They had to settle for Chief Francis Pipestem of the Otoe-Missouria tribe, who delivered the invocation. An estimated fifteen hundred persons witnessed the ceremonies and heard Brigadier General Richard Free, Southwest Division Engineer, proclaim that "the Kaw project has come about, not just as a result of

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technical studies by engineers, but through the strong, persistent effort of local people who visualized the project as catalyst to the economic growth of this area." As master of ceremonies, Representative Ed Edmondson praised the project as a tribute to Senator Robert S. Kerr. Also on hand were members of the Congressional delegation, Governor Henry Bellmon, and leading citizens of Ponca City who had been involved since 1957 in planning for the project. Most business establishments in Ponca City closed their doors so that merchants and employees could attend the ceremonies.⁵⁶

Those present learned about the dimensions of the project that was about to get underway. The Kaw Dam site would be located 654 river miles above the mouth of the Arkansas River and about seven miles east of Ponca City on the Kay County–Osage County line. At the top of the flood control pool, at elevation 1,004.5 feet, the reservoir would extend upstream to the vicinity of Arkansas City, Kansas. The project would be utilized for flood control and would stand ready to supply the area's anticipated population and industrial growth with its water needs and recreational opportunities. The size of the lake at the flood control pool would encompass 38,000 acres.⁵⁷

Residents of Kaw City, recognizing that their community would be inundated before 1967 was out, became increasingly apprehensive. City officials complained that the Corps of Engineers, while cooperative, did not provide adequate information about relocation planning, and residents worried that their homes would not bring enough to replace them. Information received by city officials and residents in response to their concerns was not entirely satisfactory. While the government would buy all land within the existing city limits, it would not purchase the land for the new town site, claiming that so doing would constitute double payment. The purchase price of private properties would be negotiated with each owner, while municipally-owned real estate would be included in the relocation contract between the government and Kaw City. In addition, the government would pay for the grading necessary in relocating these facilities, including sidewalks, streets, and gas, sewer, and water lines. But such services would not be offered to properties to be developed as business or residential areas. The government, of course, was embodied in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Among other things, it could not pay more than fair market value to homeowners, a sum that would not enable them to relocate without going into debt. However, residents learned that the Farmers Home Administration possibly could provide them with loans that might help ease their plight.⁵⁸

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Most of the public's attention focused on dam construction and securing continuous appropriations for the project, despite the rising demands of the war in Vietnam and the heavy commitment to domestic programs. The Oklahoma Congressional delegation worked assiduously to avoid budget slashes. Despite this concern, army engineers considered including a hydroelectric power plant in the Kaw Dam. Adding power would push the cost of the project from an estimated \$86.6 million to almost \$100 million.

Local interest was manifest in the placement of roads and bridges in and around the area adjacent to Kaw City. The location of one or more bridges across the reservoir concerned residents, who might have to travel round-about routes to reach a recreational site, and also farmers, who would need to haul grain out of the area to grain elevators. In 1967 three bridges across the Arkansas River served the needs of northern Oklahoma. The Corps of Engineers planned to build only two bridges across the Kaw Reservoir, insisting that "three multi-million dollar bridges so close together, each of them serving east-west traffic is not justified." Bridges quickly became a topic of debate. But satisfaction was evident throughout the county in June when a brief ceremony celebrated the completion of the first major contract on the Kaw Dam Project.⁵⁹

By midsummer 1967 Kaw City residents had to resolve another problem. The site of the new town, selected several years earlier, involved excessive costs in securing the tract. A new site must be chosen, so that it could be "entered, surveyed, appraised and clear title ascertained" before the Corps of Engineers could in any way provide funds to develop the property. Kaw City officials claimed they could not find a suitable site because they could not convince an owner to sign "any form of agreement" until he received the money. Moreover, to get a site they would need a "condemnation proceeding," the cost of which would likely be prohibitive. The Federal Housing Administration, which wanted to help, was barred from providing a loan unless title to the site could be obtained at the same time the loan was made, so that the land could be mortgaged to FHA. Kaw City thus could not obtain title to a site through the use of a loan, and it had no source of revenue.

Officials of Kaw City quickly agreed on a new site, and the Corps of Engineers began preparing a "Design Memorandum" for it. Until the plan was completed, the site could not be approved. A sense of urgency permeated these proceedings because Kaw City was in the first stage of land acquisitions now scheduled for 1968. To make their case as effectively as possible, residents created Kaw City Cor-

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poration to apply for a guaranteed loan from the Federal Housing Administration. All the people involved in relocating the town were of the opinion that the federal government had “some degree of obligation” other than the Corps’s responsibility to provide utilities and streets at the new location.⁶⁰

At year’s end Kaw City, as a headline in the *Tulsa Tribune* announced, was a “Town Awaiting Date with Death.” Appraisers roamed the town seeking to purchase homes and property. One resident ran the appraiser out of his home, complaining that “you can’t even move out of this place for the price they are offering.” While property was being appraised and purchased, the town still did not have the land for relocation. Mayor Humphrey acknowledged that “we have an option, but we’re working against a January 15 [1968] deadline to raise the balance of the money—\$62,000.” The town already had paid \$12,000 down on the 160-acre tract that people hoped to occupy. Previously, in July 1964 residents had signed a petition stating that they wished “to stay with our friends and family and not be forced to make new homes among strangers.” Containing 242 signatures, it was forwarded to the Corps of Engineers. The Corps now requested a new petition to ascertain how many individuals still wished to relocate. As of December 21, 1967, 250 had signed.

But Kaw City, the mayor, and the residents had not received much help. If the government, Mayor Humphrey complained, could take their homes and their lands “that same Government should be able to give us a loan to take care of our people.” Now the mayor sought private financing. An investor would purchase the site for the new town. The citizens would then authorize the city to assume the mortgage. The land, which would be bought for \$500 an acre, could then be divided into three lots per acre, about three hundred lots in all. The lots would then be sold to Kaw City residents for the price it cost the city to develop them. Those not purchased would be available to outsiders. All of this had to be accomplished before April 1968, when the Corps of Engineers was scheduled to sign a contract purchasing all municipal property in Kaw City. Grading on the new site would then get underway. The new town, Humphrey proclaimed, would be better than the old one. Already, outside people were “coming in looking for lots, especially lakefront lots.” Not all the people in Kaw City were as optimistic as their mayor about the promised resurrection of their community. They were uncertain about their futures and sad about the fate of the place in which they had lived a good portion of their lives.⁶¹

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By mid-February more than 50 percent of the townspeople had been bought out by the Corps of Engineers and were anxious to get settled in the new location. The town had indebted itself in excess of \$80,000 for the new town site. Once the plat was filed, residents would have their choice of lots in the new Kaw City. The community's application for public housing there, however, had been delayed. The mayor hoped "to get the public housing project coordinated on a time schedule with the Corps of Engineers relocation design memorandum" and asked Representative Belcher to look into the matter.⁶²

For its part, the Corps of Engineers planned on beginning "firm contract negotiations" with Kaw City officials in April. Within sixty days after an agreement was reached, "preparation of plans and specifications could be completed by early Fall 1968," with construction started the following January. In a last hurrah for the old town, former and remaining residents planned to join for a reunion early in June at the high school from which many of them had graduated. About two thousand were expected to attend. If further reunions were to occur, participants would have to wait until 1970 for the completion of the new site on higher ground about one mile west of their soon-to-be inundated hometown.⁶³

At this juncture Dave Morgan, a Ponca City philanthropist, came to Kaw City's rescue after the federal agencies found themselves unable to be of assistance. He paid \$500 an acre for the 160-acre site and then deeded it to the town. Reimbursement would come from the proceeds of the sale of lots in the new Kaw City. An additional piece of good news came when the Corps in Tulsa announced that Kaw Citians would be allowed to remain in the old town until the new townsite was ready and that they would get two weeks' exclusive choice before the lots went on sale to the public. Lots would cost between \$450 and \$700. By the end of May a hopeful spirit pervaded Kaw City that the community would bounce back.⁶⁴

If hope was on the rise in Kaw City, exuberance prevailed among the four-thousand-member-strong KDRA on Saturday, June 22, 1968, at the groundbreaking. U.S. Senator Mike Monroney boarded a huge earth-moving machine to launch "Operation Bulldozer" and to begin the mammoth construction project. Dignitaries on hand harangued the crowd, most of whom had driven to the site in a 112-car caravan from Ponca City. A similar ceremony at the same site two years earlier had marked the actual groundbreaking. On this occasion, 1968 being an election year, Monroney in his remarks took note of a telegram from President Johnson. Of greater interest

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to the large crowd was the information conveyed by one of the speakers that the initial project could be completed in fewer than two and a half years.⁶⁵

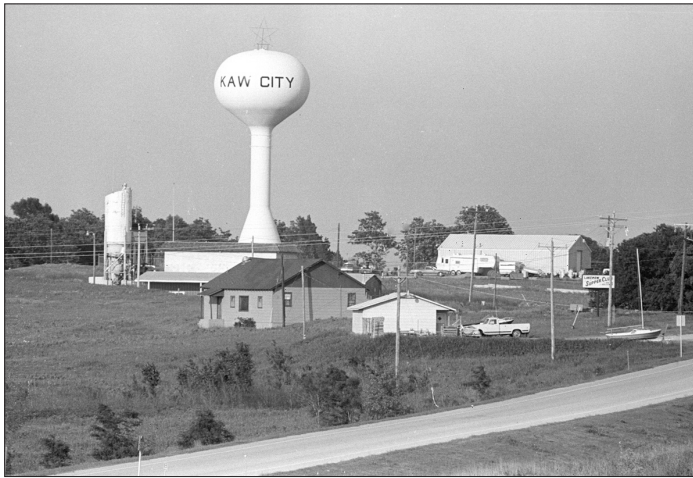
Equally promising was the progress being made to provide for the addition of power-generating facilities. Secretary of the Army Stanley Resor approved, and Fred Harris introduced a bill to so modify the project. It was referred to the Public Works Committee, where Kerr had once been the most influential member and where Harris now served. But this was as far as the proposal went. Also stalled was the effort of Kaw City Mayor Martin Branch to secure public housing funds to assist families being displaced “because of a mammoth Government project.” It would seem, the mayor asserted, “that the citizens of our community should be given the same attention as the city people.”⁶⁶

Delayed too was the start of construction work. It could not get underway until municipal facilities were relocated at new Kaw City. A federal contract with Kaw City was awarded at the end of January 1969. But before moving could occur, the water, gas, and sewer systems, as well as streets, had to be laid out. Plans and specifications were developed, and prospective bidders would compete. Construction of the systems was expected to start later in the year. A of property were almost complete. Some owners were still holding out, but their claims for replacement costs, as previous residents learned, could not be met by the Corps of Engineers.⁶⁷

By August 1969 most of these pressing issues were resolved. The last of the residential lots in the new town site had been sold, utility installation was completed, and street construction was being readied. A temporary water system would be provided by the Corps of Engineers, with a more permanent one to be established later. The removal process merited a headline in the *Sunday Oklahoman*: “Rebirth of Dying Kaw City Underway on New Site.” The new town site, it was expected, would be ready for occupancy in six to eight months. When completed, it would be on a peninsula extending into the Kaw Reservoir.⁶⁸

If the people of Kaw City were pleased, though far from satisfied, that the ordeal of relocation was being concluded, the five thousand members of the Kaw Dam and Reservoir Development Association, as well as most people in Kay County, parts of Osage County, and southern Kansas, were exuberant. In October the House Appropriations Committee allocated \$6,850,000 for constructing the project. Several months later President Richard M. Nixon recommended that Congress allocate it \$11.1 million. Funding would enable the

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*“New” Kaw City’s public services included a modern water system
(Courtesy Jim Argo/Oklahoma Museum of History).*

Corps to start the spillway, purchase necessary lands along the river, realign highways, and complete the relocation of Kaw City. In addition, all the storage water in the Kaw Reservoir, still under construction, had been apportioned based on population and use over a one-hundred-year period. The target date for starting the impoundment of Arkansas River water, originally programmed for 1972, was moved forward to 1975. Inflation had boosted the initial cost estimate of the project from \$83 million up to a 1970 estimate of \$103 million.⁶⁹

In October 1970 President Nixon signed the Public Works Appropriation Bill that included the \$11.1 million that he had requested for the Kaw Reservoir. Advertising for bids on the remaining construction, the concrete spillway, and the earthen dam, could get underway once design plans were resolved. Completion of the reservoir with final closure and start of impoundment was forecast for June 1975. Whether or not this forecast proved valid would depend upon the Corps’s acquisition “of the approximately 1,800 tracts needed for Kaw Lake.” By late 1970, 607 tracts had been secured, 528 by purchase, and 79 by condemnation proceedings; the Corps also acquired easements, over 15 by purchase and 5 by condemnation.⁷⁰

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On June 5, 1971, the president dedicated the Arkansas River Navigation System before a jubilant crowd gathered at the Port of Catoosa, at the head of the 448-mile-long waterway. The Kaw Project, about 21 percent completed at this time, would take its place as a unit helping coordinate flood control within the Arkansas River Basin, as well as serving as vital storage for water needed periodically for successful operation of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System. The opening of the waterway, plus the onset of drought, prompted the leadership of the Kaw Lake Association, formerly the KDRA, to intensify their efforts in urging appropriations to secure maximum funding for the project.⁷¹

With construction well underway, steps were taken to save the old stone tribal council house of the Kaw Indian Agency from inundation. Residents of Arkansas City, Kansas, wanted to remove it stone by stone and transfer it to the Cherokee Strip Living Museum grounds in their community. A state historical marker was also being planned in commemoration of the former Kaw Capital, located in the Washunga community that would be flooded. The plight of the Indians received almost no public attention, most of which was focused on its southerly neighbor Kaw City, which would soon join the list of Oklahoma ghost towns.⁷²

In new Kaw City at the end of 1971, thirty-two of the fifty-three homes were already connected to utilities. Some municipal buildings were in place, and several commercial enterprises were open for business. Most residents were among the estimated four thousand people crowded among the downtown ruins of old Kaw City for a last homecoming and reunion, including a parade. Before the celebration, at its final meeting in the former town the city council officially turned the town over to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The day-long observance was climaxed with a street dance in new Kaw City. To reverse the words of the poet T. S. Eliot, old Kaw City ended with a bang and not a whimper. Meanwhile, not too far away, concrete was being poured for a portion of the dam.⁷³

Another task the Corps had to consider was road relocations for Kaw Lake, a process worked out with Kay County officials. A county road extending across the Arkansas River was on a school bus route. Since officials considered use of the bridge hazardous, the Corps awarded a construction contract for repair. The bridge was expected to be operational at the onset of the new school year. The Corps also arranged for the dead to be disinterred at the Kaw Indian tribal cemetery and moved to a new burying ground near Newkirk.⁷⁴

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As already noted, residents of Kaw City were far from satisfied with the sums they had to accept when the Corps of Engineers acquired their property. Under the terms of the Uniform Relocations Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, many residents applied for and hoped to receive financial aid. The Corps interpreted the law “as meaning that the applicant whose property was acquired before January 2, 1971, but who did not vacate the property until after that date, was eligible for benefits under the Act.” While the law and the official interpretation assisted many residents, others complained that because they had sold their properties and relocated prior to January 2, 1971, they had not received any payment. The law was not retroactive. Residents whose property was acquired after January 2, 1971, were receiving sums considerably in excess of the funding provided people who relocated before the designated date. To remedy this situation, Representative John N. “Happy” Camp introduced a measure that would provide payment to all persons relocated from Kaw City, a process that had begun in 1966. While legislation was enacted, the Corps requested a ruling from the comptroller general that suggested a broader interpretation of the 1970 law. It provided benefits to homeowners whose property was acquired before the effective date of the act although “substantially less than those persons whose property was acquired subsequent to that time” in most instances.⁷⁵

While these matters were being concluded, construction of the Kaw Project approached completion. The Corps announced that while it always responded to the nation’s changing needs for the various benefits of water resources development, it was also sensitive to the American public’s growing concern with environmental quality. Manifesting that interest, the Ponca City Chamber of Commerce wanted to know if the Corps of Engineers planned to locate a marina on Kaw Lake near Ponca City, and who would own and operate it? In addition, chamber members inquired whether federal funding was available for building a lodge comparable to state lodges on other Oklahoma lakes.⁷⁶

At this time, in the spring of 1973, the Kaw Dam was half finished. Workmen were installing structural steel for a power plant in the project, now estimated to cost \$116 million. The first water was expected to start backing up in 1975 and to raise a fifty-five-foot-deep pool. Meanwhile, the matter of county roads providing access to the public areas of the soon-to-be completed Kaw Reservoir was a matter of increasing urgency as county commissioners anticipated being unable to maintain these roads with increased traffic going to

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the lake. The county hoped the Corps of Engineers would assist. Some needed to be widened and culverts and bridges provided. Traffic connected with the project already accentuated the problem, which would become acute when the public gained access.⁷⁷

The public, particularly the Kaw Lake Association, was disturbed to learn that appropriations for some of the public-use areas had been cut back. If the Kaw Lake Association members and others were disturbed, those who grazed cattle in unauthorized areas of the project were equally distressed to learn that unless the cattle were removed within two weeks, the owners would be issued citations. Cattle, the district engineer asserted, damaged work areas, including road grading projects, resulting in liability to the government.⁷⁸

When the cattle were removed and concern for public-use areas was expressed, the Kaw Project was 82 percent complete. Although a powerhouse was being constructed as part of the dam, a Congressional appropriation would be needed to install production facilities. More significant was the fact that Kaw Lake would provide about 920,000 acre-feet of flood control storage to the Arkansas River system and serve as the major water supply for communities throughout north-central Oklahoma, along with Arkansas City, Kansas. As the new year 1976, the nation's bicentennial, got under way, work on the Kaw Dam was winding down. Engineers said they needed to plug two temporary sluices in the concrete spillway and thereafter impoundment would begin. Clearing the lake area was virtually complete, while the public-use areas were expected to be open before the onset of spring. Almost all the road relocations were completed, and construction of municipal water supply facilities for the new Kaw City were nearly finished. Yet to be constructed was the road across the dam.⁷⁹

The project, authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1962, had been proposed almost a decade earlier. Construction started in June 1966, and the project was placed in useful operation in May 1976. The earth-fill dam is 9,466 feet long, including the spillway, with a crest height of 121 feet above the original stream bed. Kaw Lake, covering an area of 38,000 acres, controlled the runoff from a drainage area of about 7,250 square miles and would provide flood protection for roughly 39,000 acres of agricultural and urban land. The lake and the government-owned lands around it were developed and managed for public use. Six public-use areas were available when the project became operative; five more were being completed. All would include boat ramps, picnic tables, campsites, motorcycle trails, water supply, and sanitary facilities. Concerned about the en-

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vironment, the Corps assured visitors that the clearing within the public-use areas would be held to a necessary minimum to provide pleasant, useable space. All desirable vegetation would remain in the natural state, and a program of reforestation and turfing would be maintained throughout the life of the project. Its estimated cost at this time was \$111.1 million.⁸⁰

Yet to be resolved was the matter of generating electricity, and a power station was constructed as part of the Kaw Dam. Before a final decision would be reached, though, the Corps wanted to institute a "marketability study" in the summer after the ceremonies marking completion of the project.⁸¹

On May 21, 1976, a huge "get-acquainted" party honored people who, in one way or another, had participated in the development of the dam. Dedication ceremonies the following day began with a morning parade featuring Senator Henry Bellmon, the parade marshal. On the speakers platform, among the numerous dignitaries only one, Commissioner of Charities and Corrections Jim Cook, was a Democrat. As Kay County voted overwhelmingly Republican, and as Kerr had been instrumental in launching the project, and as both Monroney and Harris were unflinching in their support in the Senate, as was Speaker of the House of Representatives Carl Albert, Cook requested that Albert send greetings and regrets that he could not be present. Cook intended to read the Speaker's message before the distinguished guests began their orations.⁸²

To complete the project, in July 1976 President Gerald R. Ford signed the bill appropriating funds. The legislation included items for rural road relocation and recreation development. With no resolution on the generation of hydroelectric power, the issue quickly disappeared from public view. Also disappearing was the request of the Kaw Indians in 1977 for approximately a thousand acres of public land for a marina and recreational park, a proposal considered excess to project requirements.⁸³

With Kaw Lake now in operation, the long battle of the KDRA, the current Kaw Lake Association, to secure federal funds, \$111.1 million in total, to promote the welfare of their business interests came to a successful conclusion. To be sure, residents of Kay and neighboring counties also benefitted. The project welcomed 1,657,000 visitors in 1979, and the dam assuredly fulfilled part of Senator Kerr's broader vision of utilizing water resources for developing, maintaining, and promoting prosperity in Oklahoma.

On July 4, 1977, even some of the losers found reason to celebrate. About three thousand crowded into the new Kaw City to cele-

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brate Independence Day as well as the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the original town. In addition, several thousand more spent the holiday on the nearby shores of Kaw Lake. There was a parade through the downtown area, followed by the presentation of a golden shovel

that had been used eleven years earlier by Chief Francis Pipestem in the official groundbreaking for the Kaw Dam. The shovel was presented to the Kaw City Museum, housed in the old Santa Fe depot, which had been moved from the old town site, already under forty feet of water.⁸⁴

ENDNOTES

* Richard Lowitt is a retired Professor of History at the University of Oklahoma, Norman. The author wishes to thank Dr. Martin Reuss, Senior Historian, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who read the manuscript and made numerous helpful suggestions.

¹ *Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), 355; *Report of Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1957* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1957), 2: 871. In a 1957 revision of *Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State*, edited by Kent Ruth, Kaw City's population is listed at 561 and the art collection of more than 200 paintings had already been moved to the Philbrook Museum in Tulsa (pp. 418–19). Photos on page 388 courtesy Jim Argo and Oklahoma Museum of History.

² Untitled booklet on the Kaw Reservoir, prepared for the Kaw Tribe by McCaleb, Nussbaum Thomas, QME Inc., July 1976, 3, Dewey Bartlett Collection, Box 34, Folder 10, Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center Congressional Archive at the University of Oklahoma. Hereafter, unless otherwise noted, all cited manuscript collections are housed in the Carl Albert Center.

³ For my discussion of the role of Robert S. Kerr, I have relied on Anne Hodges Morgan, *Robert S. Kerr: The Senate Years* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), a penetrating study of Kerr's senate career, and John Robert Ferrell, "Water Resource Development in the Arkansas Valley: A History of Public Policy to 1950" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1968), which offers incisive insights into Kerr's role. See also an article by Walker in the *Lawton Constitution*, November 2, 1958. The article originally appeared in the *Dallas News*.

⁴ Robert S. Kerr to David Ross, January 27, 1956, Robert S. Kerr Collection, Departmental Series, Box 5, Folder 36.

⁵ L. A. Needham to Kerr, March 12, 1957, and Kerr to General E. C. Itschner, March 12, 1957, both in Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 11.

⁶ Mrs. R. E. Brook to Page Belcher, March 21, 1957, Page H. Belcher Collection, Box 28, Folder 15d; General J. L. Person to Kerr, April 19, 1957, Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 11; Kerr to Fred G. Fellows, April 23, 1957, Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 4.

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⁷ *Ponca City (Oklahoma) News*, May 19, 1957; Lawrence Cannon to Kerr, June 5, 1957 (telegram), and Kerr to Cannon, June 12, 1957, both in Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 11. Cannon was president of the Kaw Reservoir Development Association.

⁸ Oklahoma's ORBIT [magazine], *Sunday Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City), August 25, 1957, 5; *Ponca City News*, September 17, 1957. In the latter article, Representative Belcher advised boosters that a long battle was expected "if we are going to get more water storage, the place to get it is here."

⁹ For examples of the promotional work see Cannon to Col. John Bristor, District Engineer, September 20, 1957, Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 11; Cannon to Belcher, February 28, 1958, Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 2; Statement on Proposed Dam and Reservoir to the Public Works Subcommittees on Appropriations, n.d. [1958], Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 11; Belcher to Gerald Nield, May 9, 1958, Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 3.

¹⁰ Newkirk (Oklahoma) *Herald Journal*, May 16, 1958; Dean Hoye to Tom Steed, May 16, 1958, Tom Steed Collection, General Series, Box 11, Folder 7. Hoye was vice president of Newkirk Trust Company. Perry Whiting to Kerr, May 17, 1958, Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 11. Whiting owned a furniture company in Ponca City.

¹¹ Kerr to Cannon, June 17, 1958, and Don Wright to Kerr, August 26, 1958, both in Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 11.

¹² See for example Resolution No. 1834 [April 20, 1959] by the Ponca City Board of Commissioners [copy], Toby Morris Collection, Topical Series, Box 2, Folder 10; Continental Oil Company letter to their employees March 25, 1959 [copy], Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 4; Col. Bristor to Carl Albert, March 26, 1959, Carl Albert Collection, Departmental Files, Box 32, Folder 33; Cannon to Belcher, April 7, 1959, Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 4. In addition, the *Ponca City News* every Sunday in March ran full-page campaign spreads to solicit support for the project.

¹³ *Ponca City News*, April 15, 1959.

¹⁴ See *Ponca City News*, April 20, 1959, for both the broadside and a story on the Anti-Kaw Dam Group.

¹⁵ Vice president, Continental Oil Company to Col. John Bristor, April 23, 1959 [copy], Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 6. The copy in Belcher's files was not signed. For a similar letter from the manager of the Cities Service Refinery in Ponca City to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, see H. W. Targeson to Charles Warner, September 24, 1960 [copy], Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 6.

¹⁶ For the April 24 public meeting see "General Information"[copy], Albert Collection, General Files, Box 14, Folder 54; Statement of Senator Robert S. Kerr, April 24, 1959, Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 12.

¹⁷ Kerr to Mr. and Mrs. Charles, May 4, 1959, Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 12. See *Reclamation News*, September 1959, for stories about overriding a presidential veto and Kerr's becoming chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Water Resources. See *Tulsa (Oklahoma) Tribune*, October 17, 1959, for a story about Kerr's promoting numerous state water and military projects. For additional stories about Kerr's promotion of Oklahoma water projects, see Kerr Collection, Clipping Series, Box 1, Folder 46.

¹⁸ Floyd Amsden to Toby Morris, May 13, 1960, Morris Collection, Topical Series, Box 2, Folder 10; Don Andrews to U.S. Corps of Engineers, May 19, 1960, Albert Collection, General Files, Box 17, Folder 5; Col. Howard Penney to Dale Shackelford, July 14, 1960, and F. Q. Jennings to Charles Warner, September 28, 1960, both in Belcher

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Collection, Box 184, Folder 6. Amsden was president of the Wichita Chamber of Commerce. Andrews was the president of the Newkirk Chamber of Commerce. Jennings was the mayor of Ponca City, and Warner was the director of the Bureau of the Budget.

¹⁹ Carl Cramton to Kerr, November 18, 1960, and Col. Penney to Kerr, December 2, 1960, both in Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 12. For the vote in Kay County see Richard Scammon, et al., *America Votes*, Vol. 4 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1960), 333.

²⁰ Telegram to Hon. J. F. Kennedy [n.d., March 6, 1961?, copy], Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 7. See also *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1961–1963*, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1962–63), 1:114–21, for the special message on Natural Resources.

²¹ *Ponca City News*, May 8, 1961.

²² *Daily Oklahoman*, May 14, 1961.

²³ *Ponca City News*, May 25, 1961.

²⁴ Major General William F. Cassidy to Belcher, July 26, 1961, and Colonel Penney to Belcher, September 1, 1961, both in Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 7.

²⁵ *Newkirk Herald-Journal*, October 5, 1961; *Shidler (Oklahoma) Review*, October 12, 1961; *Fairfax (Oklahoma) Chief*, [n.d.], *Osage (Oklahoma) Journal*, October 13, 1961. All are available in Kerr Collection, Clipping Series, Box 1, Folder 36.

²⁶ Dale Orr to Belcher, October 24, 1961, Belcher Collection, Box 55, Folder 16C; Belcher to Jerome Peterson, September 12, 1961, Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 7; "Notice of Joint Public Hearing," November 1, 1961 [copy], Belcher Collection, Box 55, Folder 16C; Col. Penney to Albert, November 6, 1961, Albert Collection, Projects Files, Box 10, Folder 10.

²⁷ "Notice of Survey Report on Kaw Reservoir. . .," December 12, 1961, Albert Collection, Departmental Series, Box 37, Folder 54.

²⁸ William M. Kasl to Belcher, December 30, 1961, Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 33; Resolution by Tonkawa and Ponca City chapters, Izaak Walton League, Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 31.

²⁹ Resolution, January 16, 1962, Kaw Dam and Reservoir Development Association, Inc. [copy], Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 13; *Ponca City News*, January 12, 1962; Belcher to John Gardner, January 16, 1962, Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 33. In this letter to the mayor of Newkirk Belcher said he had discussed the matter with Kerr "and, upon investigation, we find that the justification for the project does not require the Fish and Wildlife Refuge."

³⁰ Kerr to Wendy Watts, February 16, 1962, Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 13; John Warren to Belcher, Box 183, Folder 32. See also Mrs. C. E. Doyle to Albert, February 20, 1962, Albert Collection, Projects File, Box 10, Folder 10. Mrs. Doyle was president of Oklahoma Gardens and Clubs, Inc. More of Albert's correspondents favored the refuge than opposed it.

³¹ *Ponca City News*, February 28, 1962; *Daily Oklahoman*, February 28, 1962; General W. K. Wilson, Jr., Chief of Engineers, to the Secretary of the Army [March 1962, copy], Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 8; *Shawnee News-Star*, September 14, 1962.

³² *Tonkawa News*, [n.d. (March 1962)], Kerr Collection, Clipping Series, Box 1, Folder 36; Kerr to Brown, March 5, 1962, Perry Whiting to Kerr, March 10, 1962, and Dennis Impson to Kerr, March 10, 1962, all in Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 14; *Daily Oklahoman*, March 6, 1962.

³³ Frank Kunc to Albert, March 9, 1962, Albert Collection, Projects Files, Box 10, Folder 10; John Sushnik to Kerr, March 9, 1962, Kerr Collection, Conservation Series,

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Box 3, Folder 14. Kunc was vice president of the Mid-Continental News Company in Oklahoma City; Sushnik was a retired accountant living in Bartlesville. See *Daily Oklahoman*, March 16, 1962, for a story titled "Refuge Battle Line Drawn" (p. 10).

³⁴ Ray Hamilton to Belcher, March 20, 1962, Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 32. Hamilton, a teacher at the junior college in Tonkawa, was also an officer in the Oklahoma Division of the Izaak Walton League.

³⁵ McBride to Dean Hoye, May 23, 1962, and Fred G. Fellows to Chairman of Public Works Committee (with copy of report), June 11, 1962, both in Kerr Collection, Conservation Collection, Box 3, Folder 14. In addition, Fellows informed McBride that statements from many people would be submitted to the chairs of the Public Works Committees in both Houses of Congress.

³⁶ J. Howard Edmondson to Major General Keith Barney, June 18, 1962, and Kenneth Holm to Lt. General Walker Wilson, Jr., June 26, 1962, both in Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 14.

³⁷ *Bartlesville Examiner Enterprise*, August 30, 1962; Wilson to Orville Freeman, September 13, 1962, 87 Cong., 2d Sess., S. Doc. 143, xix; John Gardner to Kerr, September 14, 1962, Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Box 3, Folder 14; *Daily Oklahoman*, October 22, 1962. Incidentally, Lt. General Wilson had to satisfy the Secretary of Agriculture that a minimum of agricultural land would be permanently flooded.

³⁸ *Daily Oklahoman*, March 6, 1963; *Ponca City News*, May 26, 1963.

³⁹ Clarence Pantzke to Belcher, August 1, 1963, Belcher Collection, Box 77, Folder 21; Belcher to Thomas Lamb, November 12, 1964, Belcher Collection, Box 77, Folder 21; *Sunday Oklahoman*, November 17, 1963; *Daily Oklahoman*, March 4, 1964. Pantzke was a commissioner in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

⁴⁰ *Oklahoma's ORBIT* [magazine], *Sunday Oklahoman*, January 10, 1965, 12; Herman J. Smith to McBride and Monroney, January 28, 1965, A. S. Mike Monroney Collection, Box 76, Folder 27; Belcher to LaVera Sheeks, March 12, 1965, Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 10; Harper Baughman to Albert, March 15, 1965, and John Gardner to Albert, March 15, 1965, both in Albert Collection, Projects File, Box 10, Folder 10; L. Enloe Baumert to Fred Harris, March 22, 1965, Harris Collection, Box 25, Folder 21. Baughman was president of the Kaw Dam and Reservoir Development Association.

⁴¹ Statement of Page Belcher, May 17, 1965, and Belcher to Harper Baughman, October 18, 1965, both in Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 11; Statement of Fred Harris, May 17 and 18, 1965, Charles Duffy to Harris, July 6, 1965, and Baumert to Harris, August 27, 1965, all in Harris Collection, Box 15, Folder 25.

⁴² *Daily Oklahoman*, September 9, 1965, p.12; *Sunday Oklahoman*, September 12, 1965.

⁴³ John G. Gatlin to Monroney, November 1, 1965, Monroney Collection, Box 60, Folder 9; H. O. Crowley to District Engineer, December 9, 1965, [copy], Monroney Collection, Box 76, Folder 27; Information, For Release, November 4, 1965, and "Proposed National Wildlife Refuge: November 18, 1965" [copy], both in Harris Collection, Box 26, Folder 6. Gatlin headed the Albuquerque Office of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Crowley was acting Regional Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

⁴⁴ Monroney to Gatlin, November 8, 1965, Monroney Collection, Box 60, Folder 9; Cannon to McBride, November 9, 1965, Monroney Collection, Box 58, Folder 17.

⁴⁵ John W. Warren to Monroney, November 9, 1965, Monroney Collection, Box 6, Folder 9; David Ross to Harris, November 12, 1965, Harris Collection, Box 26, Folder 6.

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⁴⁶ Col. George A. Rebh to Belcher, December 23, 1965, Belcher Collection, Box 133, Folder 34; *Daily Oklahoman*, December 16, 1965.

⁴⁷ *Ponca City News*, January 2, 1966; Mills Garrison to Harris, January 4, 1966 [copy], Monroney Collection, Box 76, Folder 27.

⁴⁸ John Warren to Monroney, January 10, 1966, Beaver to Monroney, January 6, 1966, and William Johnson to Monroney, January 10, 1966, all in Monroney Collection, Box 66, Folder 27; Johnson to Belcher, January 12, 1966, and H. Drew Owen to Belcher, January 20, 1966, both in Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 36. Beaver was with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Owen was president of the state wildlife federation.

⁴⁹ *Ponca City News*, January 10, 1966.

⁵⁰ Rebh to Belcher, January 19, 1966, Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 36; Monroney to John Gardner, January 19, 1966, Jay Wilson to Monroney, January 20, 1966, and Monroney to William Johnson, January 26, 1966, all in Monroney Collection, Box 76, Folder 27. Col. Rebh was the District Engineer. Wilson was Secretary of the Kiwanis Club.

⁵¹ Gatlin to Belcher, January 31, 1966, Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 36; Gatlin to Monroney, February 1, 1966, Monroney Collection, Box 76, Folder 27; *Ponca City News*, February 6, 1966; Duane Palovik to Belcher, February 11, 1966, Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 36; Stanley Spencer to Monroney, February 18, 1966, Monroney Collection, Box 76, Folder 27. Gatlin was Regional Director of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. Spencer was with the Arkansas City, Kansas, Chamber of Commerce.

⁵² *Sunday Oklahoman*, February 13, 1966.

⁵³ George Stone to Monroney, March 4, 1966, Monroney Collection, Box 76, Folder 28; Col. Rebh to Monroney, February 11, 1966, Monroney Collection, Box 76, Folder 27.

⁵⁴ Gatlin to Editor, *Ponca City News*, March 25, 1966 [copy], Harris Collection, Box 85, Folder 6; Harold Jones to Monroney, March 29, 1966, Monroney Collection, Box 76, Folder 28.

⁵⁵ William H. Robertson, Jr., to Monroney, April 1, 1966, Monroney Collection, Box 76, Folder 28; *Daily Oklahoman*, April 1 and 6, 1966.

⁵⁶ Ray Eisele to Lyndon Johnson (telegram, 1966, copy), Steed Collection, General Series, Box 100, Folder 17; *Sunday Oklahoman*, May 22, 1966. For Chief Pipestem see clipping in John N. "Happy" Camp Collection, Box 74, Folder 14a.

⁵⁷ "Kaw Dam and Reservoir," May 1960, U.S. Army Engineer Corps of Engineers Tulsa District [copy], Camp Collection, Box 74, Folder 14a; "On This Site," U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Tulsa District [copy], Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 11.

⁵⁸ Joe P. Walcott to Belcher, January 26, 1967, Colonel Rebh to Belcher, February 6, 1967, and Belcher to Walcott, February 13, 1967, all in Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 29.

⁵⁹ "Army Engineers Studying Power Plant at Kaw Dam," Newspaper clipping, ca. 1967, Belcher Collection, Box 135, Folder 13; Belcher to A. B. Alcott, April 10, 1967, Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 11; Fred G. Fellows to F. L. Vogler, May 15, 1967, and Vogler to Harris, May 15, 1967, both in Harris Collection, Box 65, Folder 2; Rebh to Belcher, May 31, 1967, Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 11. See *Ponca City News*, May 11, 1967, and *Daily Oklahoman*, June 15, 1967, for stories about dam construction.

⁶⁰ Conference with officials of the Corps of Engineers, H.U.D., et al., July 25 and July 27, 1967, and J. D. Check to Federal Housing Administration, August 16, 1967,

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both in Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 29. For a further indication of the inability of the government to be of assistance to Kaw City see F. N. Brownstein to Belcher, January 24, 1968, J. H. Humphrey (Mayor of Kaw City) to Belcher, January 4, 1968, and W. B. Breisch to Belcher, January 26, 1968, all in Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 29, and Belcher to Breisch, May 3, 1968, Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 30.

⁶¹ "Kaw City—Town Awaiting Date with Death," *Tulsa Tribune*, December 29, 1967.

⁶² J. H. Humphrey to Belcher, February 15, 1968, Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 30.

⁶³ Col. Harley Ladd to Belcher, March 6, 1968, Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 30; Guy McCune to Harris, March 9, 1968, Harris Collection, Box 105, Folder 10. For the final reunion in Kaw City see *Daily Oklahoman*, May 9, 1968, p. 28, May 10, 1968, p. 11, and June 3, 1968, p.16.

⁶⁴ "Kaw City Will Live; May Even Have Boom," *Tulsa (Oklahoma) World*, May 26, 1968.

⁶⁵ *Daily Oklahoman*, June 23, 1968.

⁶⁶ *Congressional Record*, 90th Cong., 2d sess., September 12, 1968, p. 26665; Harris to Col. Vernon Pinkey, September 16, 1968, Harris Collection, Box 116, Folder 23; R. A. Lindquist to Martin Branch, February 28, 1968, and Branch to Belcher, March 7, 1969, both in Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 30.

⁶⁷ Lt. Col. Edward Fike to Belcher, May 1, 1969, and Col. Pinkey to Belcher, May 13, 1969, both in Belcher Collection, Box 183, Folder 30; Roy Grantham to Camp, July 18, 1969, Camp Collection, Box 74, Folder 14a.

⁶⁸ *Sunday Oklahoman*, August 3, 1969; *Daily Oklahoman*, January 11, 1970.

⁶⁹ Herman J. Smith to Albert, October 5, 1969, Albert Collection, Legislative Series, Box 114, Folder 35; Herman J. Smith to Chairman of the Public Works Sub-Committee, April 15, 1970, Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 12; *Ponca City News*, October 3, 1969, and February 2, 1970; *Daily Oklahoman*, January 11, 1970.

⁷⁰ *Ponca City News*, October 12, 1970; Woodrow Berge to Belcher, October 28, 1970, Belcher Collection, Box 135, Folder 13.

⁷¹ *Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1971* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1971), 2: 19–29; Ellsworth Rains to Chairman of the Public Works Sub-Committee, Appropriations Committee, House of Representatives, May 6, 1971 [copy], Belcher Collection, Box 184, Folder 12.

⁷² *Daily Oklahoman*, March 28, 1971, and August 9, 1971. See *Annual Report: Chief of Engineers on Civil Works Activities, 1975* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1975), 1:59 for a photo of the Kaw Indians' historic council house, soon to be removed and restored so that it could again be used for tribal functions.

⁷³ *Ponca City News*, December 29, 1971, and May 5, 1972; *Sunday Oklahoman*, May 14, 1972. A few die-hard residents still remained in old Kaw City. They were notified that all utility services would be cut off at the end of June and the lines removed shortly thereafter. See *Daily Oklahoman*, June 16, 1972, p.11.

⁷⁴ Col. William E. Read to Camp, March 10, 1972, Camp Collection, Box 74, Folder 14b; *Daily Oklahoman*, July 17, 1972, p.13. Kay County later complained that the road to the bridge was hazardous. See Gerald LeValley to Camp, September 18, 1972, Camp Collection, Box 74, Folder 14b.

⁷⁵ Camp to Earnest Wolfenbarger, August 10, 1972, J. F. Kaskiewicz to Camp, August 15, 1972, Otto and Ethel Burtcher to Camp, August 16 and September 2, 1972, Jean Southard to Laverna McCune, October 20, 1972, and Nikki McNiece to Paul Smith, September 20, 1972, all in Camp Collection, Box 84, Folder 19; Col. John Driskill to Camp, March 6, 1973, Camp Collection, Box 74, Folder 14b.

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⁷⁶ Water Resources Development . . . in Oklahoma, "Environmental Statement," January 1973 [copy], Albert Collection, Departmental Series, Box 106, Folder 44; Raymond Shaffer to Dewey Bartlett, February 16, 1973, Bartlett Collection, Box 63, Folder 8.

⁷⁷ *Daily Oklahoman*, May 6, 1973; Dorothy Conaghan to Bartlett, September 27, 1974, Bartlett Collection, Box 63, Folder 8; LeValley to Camp, October 4, 1974, and Col. Driskill to Camp, October 16, 1974, both in Camp Collection, Box 33, Folder 4.

⁷⁸ David Beard to Bartlett, March 24, 1975, Bartlett Collection, Box 63, Folder 8; *Tulsa World*, May 1, 1975.

⁷⁹ *Tulsa World*, September 7, 1975; *Daily Oklahoman*, January 29, 1976.

⁸⁰ *Water Resources Development by U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers in Oklahoma* (Tulsa: U.S. Army Corps Engineers, Southwestern Division, Dallas, Texas, January 1977), 11–12; *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers on Civil Works Activities, 1976* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1976), 2:19–13, 14.

⁸¹ Ed King to Bartlett, February 25, 1976, Bartlett Collection, Box 43, Folder 42; Col. Anthony Smith to Bartlett, April 23, 1976, Bartlett Collection, Box 61, Folder 9.

⁸² *Tulsa Tribune*, March 5, 1976; Helen [Newman] to Charlie [Ward], May 20, 1976, Albert Collection, Departmental Files, Box 137, Folder 3.

⁸³ *Tulsa Tribune*, July 15, 1976; M. M. Chouteau to Col. Smith, May 3, 1977, and Col. Smith to Bartlett, May 6, 1977, both in Bartlett Collection, Box 34, Folder 10. The installation of a generating unit at the dam began commercial operation in August 1989.

⁸⁴ *Daily Oklahoman*, July 5, 1977; *Water Resources Development in Oklahoma* (Tulsa: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Southwestern Division, 1981), 30–31.