

**Ezra Lusk**  
**Interview, 18 April 1972**  
**Buffalo Creek Hearings, pp. 1270-1271**

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WADE: YOU WERE AT SAUNDERS WHEN IT BROKE?

LUSK: Yea, I was right up there when it broke.

WADE: DID YOU LIVE AT SAUNDERS?

LUSK: Yeah, I lived there. You see, the dam came out below my house, well, there was another house sitting right over in front of the dam, it was higher off the ground, it was higher than my truck off the ground, you can go over there and check on that, and it wasn't in there, just backwater.

WADE: DID YOUR HOUSE GET HIT BY BACKWATER?

LUSK: No, it didn't get touched by backwater, it ' came pretty close to it, but it never did hit it. But that backwater just came up, and went down. Just long enough to pick a man's pick-up up in the yard, floated it around and around, and set it back down.

WADE: WAS THERE JUST ONE SURGE OF WATER?

LUSK: Just one surge of water. There was a boy come running off the hill and said, "everything is gone." I said "what do you mean everything gone," and he said, "there ain't nothing down there, church house or nothing~ But, it was hard for me to believe that, so I just went on down to see, and there wasn't.

WADE: THEN YOU COULDN'T SEE IT FROM WHERE YOUR HOUSE WAS?

LUSK: No, not from where the house was. All I had to do was walk across the road, just walk across a bridge I had, and look down there.

WADE: BUT YOU DID *SEE THE WATER COME UP?*

LUSK: Oh gosh yes, I stood on my porch and watched the water, it was high in the air, the water was. When that blowout come that was when the water came down to the lower end, there was a fire on the lower side, and the water seeped down in that fire, and that's where the explosion was, from the fire. Otherwise, there wasn't no fire at all back where the dam was. Wasn't no fire up in there at all. And that's the reason I couldn't see putting in two dams behind the big one. Of course, you know a holler runs up, it don't go down, it goes up, cause this big dam, when they went above this, they built one way higher than it was then they went on above

it and built another one higher than it was, But it just wasn't strong enough to hold that much water. It never did come to the top, it never did go over the top. It just picked it up and carried it. That let this sludge come out of there then.