

Under the present definition, it would appear that only those affluent land-owners with sufficient means to fight their cases through the courts will be permitted to keep their minerals.

On the other hand, our clients have no money to finance costly trips to Washington, as was necessary for the Air Force General to retain his minerals. They are not the type to "march on Washington" or take other "direct action" measures. They simply look to this Committee and the Congress to treat them fairly through the enactment of H.R. 13370.

THE STATE OF TEXAS,
County of Navarro:

Know all men by these presents, that I, Andy J. Snider, am 69 years of age and have been a resident of Navarro County, Texas, since 1934.

In 1941 I bought a farm containing 199.99 acres out of the Thomas Wright Survey, Abstract 820, in Navarro County, Texas, being just northwest of the little town of Navarro Mills, Texas. This farm was bought from the Corsicana National Bank who reserved all of the minerals for a term of fifteen years because a few years before, a well had been drilled for oil on it which well was subsequently plugged and abandoned. Years afterward and still today, this old well leaks some gas out of the pipe. This mineral interest which was reserved by the bank reverted to me in 1956 and I then owned all the surface and all of the minerals.

About December of 1959, I received a letter from the United States Corps of Army Engineers informing me that a Flood Control and Water Conservation Dam and Reservoir was to be constructed in the area and that my land would be taken by the Government for the project. A man came by a couple of weeks later and said that he was a Government agent and showed me a map of the Navarro Mills Project and how it affected by land. I was told that the Government had the power to take the land under powers granted it by Congress and that they wanted me to clear off my property before the 1st of January because they wanted to start construction on the dam at that time on land which included my 199.99 acres. I told him that in the event we reached an agreement for its purchase, I wanted to reserve my minerals under the land since the Government didn't need them to build this type of project. He told me that I could not reserve the minerals, that the Government was taking all the minerals under all of the land which would be under water and under the dam and parks. He said that the land would be appraised by two appraisers, one a Government appraiser, the other, a civilian appraiser.

About two weeks later this man came by to see me and said that he was the Government appraiser and would I show him my farm. We drove out to my farm in his car, and I pointed out several things about the place that I thought should deserve some credit for such as my big grove of pecan trees from ten to twenty inches in diameter, and a gravel pit from which I periodically sold goodly amounts of gravel. Then we walked over to the old oil well and I showed him how gas was still leaking from the casing. After he finished looking at the land, he took me back to my place and said that a civilian appraiser would be by soon.

The exact dates are not clear, but it wasn't long after that that I got a letter telling me what they were willing to pay me for my farm. I felt then as I feel now that their price was not enough, and so I refused to sign the Consent Letter agreeing thereto. Almost immediately they filed a Declaration of Taking condemning my land and depositing the amount of money first offered me in the court pending Final Judgment on the Declaration of Taking.

I discussed this whole matter with Judge May, and he advised me that since the Government agent had said that the Government had to have the minerals as well as the surface, and since they were treating everyone the same in this regard, then the only thing I stood to gain by protesting through condemnation proceedings was the possible slight increase in the amount paid for the land. He also cautioned that the court might possibly award less than the Government was willing to pay. With great reluctance, I wrote the Corps of Engineers District office telling them I would accept their offer. Judgment on the Declaration was subsequently entered, and I eventually got my money.

I want to reiterate that I requested that I be allowed to reserve my minerals from the very first conversation with the Government's agent, and only gave in on this request after being assured by him that the Government had to have all minerals under the land and was taking them from everyone who had land