

Earl Francis
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
September 1989

Earl Francis: I'm Earl Francis and I was down here in 1939 and '40 in the CCs and I'm from Brigham City.

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Carolyn Hinton: What were some of the assignments that you had?

Earl Francis: Well, I worked for the park service but I was in the CCC camp.

Carolyn Hinton: The one that was right here across the river?

Earl Francis: But, but I worked for the park service. I was on what they called park maintenance. We had to do all the little jobs, get the rocks off the road, dead deer, the porcupines and what have ya, [and] bury 'em. About anything that went wrong, they called us and we worked on it and fixed it or whatever.

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Hinton: You just kind of cleaned up, is that right?

Francis: Yes, well if there was chuck holes in the road, we fixed them, and if there was a broken water line or something like that, we would fix that. We would have dirt slide down in a storm or something we'd clean all that off, generally maintain. We seen that the water was on the trees here; we had to do that every Sunday morning.

Hinton: They planted all the trees in here?

Francis: Yes, they planted a lot, but they irrigated them and I had to put the water on every Sunday morning. That was my job.

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Hinton: Did you make any lasting friendships of fellows that you met here?

Francis: Well there was some from just right around there. This Paul , he was in with me, he is from Perry too_ We've been mailing back and forth ever since. Most of 'em were from down here, in Washington and around there like that. Well we've come back here ever since we've been married every year on our vacation. This is where all the kids wanted to go; this is where we wanted to go, and we always come back. We really enjoy it.

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Francis: Then the other crew would go up through the tunnel, clean all of them off up there and go through the tunnel to the east entrance. They'd come back and you would be about back to the bridge when they'd get there. Then we would go and do whatever else they had for us to do during the day. That was every morning, and you know in the winter time its quiet, no traffic, it's really a peaceful thing. Then at Sinawava up there, when we worked up there on that, they was fixing them little rock things and the bathrooms and the fountains and that. We cut a lot of rock, you know, and got a lot of rocks for them. In fact the one up there used to have a sign on the front of it. We put the sign on. We splintered two cuts off of it and then the third cut we started. We had all the gads in there and it started cracking and Rosell come up there and he'd come right to pieces. They didn't want to touch that rock, so we pulled all the gads out and you could still see the holes in it.

Francis: ... They had pipeline for a lot of the WPA jobs. They wrapped it here and they took it to them. I took three loads up to Short_Creek. That was an experience I tell you. Nobody would talk to you up there, even the ones who was laying the pipe. I just dumped it in the same place every time and left.

Then in that winter, we was in here and they was trapping the deer. They trapped about fifteen-hundred head of deer.

Hinton: How did you trap them?

Francis: Got traps and they would put hay and apples in there and they'd have a door open. Then somebody would sit up in a tree then when they got in there, pull up, they'd drop down and they was in this corral. We'd put them in these individual boxes, then load them in a truck and we hauled them up to that Mineral Wash where the park kind of ends. We did that all winter and we got hauling deer off. We had a lot of experience in that.

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You know, you just learned things like that and I guess it will live with you forever because that's the first time I had ever been away from home and as far as, I don't know what you could ever have done any better. You know it had taught you something. It taught you to work and it taught you discipline and I think it taught you to appreciate, really that there was somebody else besides you. Like in the morning early, you know, eight 'o' clock I'd be walking up to that canyon and me and Wood Hardy and we'd just walk through there ... I guess I made a couple dollars that I didn't have before; we just got out of the depression.

Hinton: Were they still sending part of your money home to your family then?

Francis: Yes, they sent \$22 dollars and you kept eight. You got that once a month. By the time you got your laundry and your hair cut paid for, you'd have about three bucks.

Hinton: Some of the boys would go down to Hurricane to the dances.

Francis: Oh yes.

Hinton: How did you feel like you were received by the people at the dance?

Francis: Well I had a ball down there.

Hinton: (Laughter)

Francis: I was just happy and I thought we was received good and I had a lot of fun down there. We'd go down to St. George; we just had a lot of fun. Just like this one girl down there in Hurricane told me, she said, "You know you don't ever need to worry about getting hit with a rock down here," and I said, "How come?" She said, "Nobody dares throw it; they might hit their own cousin."

Earl and Hinton: (Laughter)

Hinton: That's cute

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Hinton: So, where did you go after you left the CCs?

Francis: Well let's see, I went home and that was in the fall of 1940. They was getting all panicky, you know in this war effort. So then I went to school, over to college, over in Logan. I went that winter and then the next spring I was on the draft list and that. So then I went to work and they was crying for men down at the arsenal. So, I went down there, well I went down there and I worked what is [Unintelligible] for three months 'til they got the hanger down, then I went to work for the arsenal and I hauled TNT for the arsenal. Then I enlisted and went in the army. I did my four years in the army and then come home.

Hinton: And three of those years were down in Mexico?

Francis: Yes, on the Mexican border.

Hinton: When you got home what did you do?

Francis: I worked construction; I was a heavy equipment operator for WW Clyde Company for eleven years. Then I worked for the government for nine years. I was heavy equipment operator for them. They had that big shop up to Utah General Depot in Ogden, the engineer shop and I was the test inspector. I operated all their equipment, cranes, dozers, everything. I did that for nine years and then I hurt my back. They operated on it twice then they medicaled me out of there.

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Hinton: Were there many tourists during that time?

Francis: There was a lot.

Hinton: A lot. This would be about 1940, by then there were quite a few coming through?

Francis: Well there was a lot even in 1939. I was amazed how many there was, you know. See we was supposed to get out there and get our rocks of the road before they started in. But there would be a lot of tourists. There was nothing you know like it is now, but there was a lot of tourists. But you know then there wasn't no money.

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Hinton: You were here just that one year.

Francis: Yes. I really enjoyed it. I met some of the nicest people I guess you'd ever meet in your life and, you know, people that wasn't in the CCC's, just regular people that I met. I had a good time with 'em. I liked it all the time down here. This one friend of mine, he was from Hurricane. He wasn't in the CCC camp, but me and him worked on, I dunno, two or three jobs for WW Clyde Company. His name was Martin Sanders, and it was his kid who cooked last night. Did you know him?

Hinton: I'm from Hurricane. (Laughter). Yes I know him. He married my aunt.

Francis: His wife now?

Hinton: Yes, Martin's wife now is my aunt.