

Tillman Jorgenson
Zion National Park Oral History
CCC Reunion

Tillman Jorgenson: I didn't do anything important. I was a pick-and-shovel man on various projects, and I was a first-aid man for, oh, about six months.

Wayne Hinton: Was that towards the end of your CCC?

Tillman Jorgenson: About the central part, and then—

Wayne Hinton: Did they give you special training for that?

Tillman Jorgenson: Just how to administer CC pills. Do you know what a CC pill is?

Wayne Hinton: No. What's a CCC pill?

Tillman Jorgenson: It's about the size of a quarter, and about this thick, and it cures everything.

Wayne Hinton: Everything.

Tillman Jorgenson: Anything from boils—

Wayne Hinton: Take two aspirins a day, huh? (Both laugh)

Tillman Jorgenson: Anything from, like I say, boils to pneumonia.

Hinton: That was a universal cure, then.

Jorgenson: Yeah. No, we used to divvy out cough syrups, and so forth, you know, when they'd get a cold, and—

Hinton: And you'd do that under the doctor's direction?

Jorgenson: Yes. Dr. Clark.

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Hinton: Now, you came into the CCC—according to your registration—in 1937?

Jorgenson: Yeah. July of '37.

Hinton: July. Were you just out of high school?

Jorgenson: No. I quit school in the second year. My family was going under some—it was during the depression.

Hinton: Sure.

Jorgenson: They'd lost their home. I had four brothers, and they all went in the Cs with me. We

give them twenty-two dollars out of our thirty dollars a month to buy a new home.

Hinton: Yes

Jorgenson: So that's why.

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Hinton: You also indicate that you worked up on the switchbacks. I guess that's a lot of rolling rocks.

Jorgenson: I was rolling the rocks down the hill and using what they call a crowbar—it's that big, long bar and picks and shovels.

Hinton: Put the bar under the rocks to roll them?

Jorgenson: Yeah. You'd loosen them up and roll them down the hill, and then they shoveled them into a truck, and off they went.

Hinton: Yes.

Jorgenson: Then my last three months, I was the custodian at the park office up here. It used to be up where the bridge goes across.

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Jorgenson: Yes. Also, there was a big forest fire out here by Cedar City some place, and we went up and fought that.

Hinton: You had some firefighting training . . .

Jorgenson: Yes, yeah.

Hinton: . . . as part of your CCC experience?

Jorgenson: Well, they trained us up there.

Hinton: On the job?

Jorgenson: On the job—you bet—shoveling dirt into the bushes, and things like that. Backfiring, you know what they call—build a fire on purpose.

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Hinton: Were there many tourists that came to Zion in those days?

Jorgenson: No, there wasn't. Maybe about every ten minutes, a car would come through.

Hinton: Yes.

Jorgenson: Of course, I was here in the off-season, it was the winter. It wasn't summer, you know.

Hinton: But when you worked on places like the switchbacks, would they have flagmen out?

Jorgenson: Yes.

Hinton: Flag the cars?

Jorgenson: Yeah, they flagged the cars. But, like I say, a car would come by every five to ten minutes. That's about all the cars they had in those days.

Hinton: So—

Jorgenson: It's not that way now.

Hinton: No. Heavens, no. It's busy today. We drove up to the lodge area today. It was really busy. I was surprised there were so many people here this late in the season.

Jorgenson: Yes. Yeah, my wife had never been here, so I took her on a little trip up to the Great White Throne and up through the tunnel and the other side.

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Hinton: And after your CCC experience, you said you went in the army when World War II came along.

Jorgenson: Yeah.

Hinton: Did the CCC experience prepare you in any way for that?

Jorgenson: Well, only for discipline probably. We had in the CCs, you know, we had to respect our officers and so forth.

Hinton: Have to say, "Yes, sir," and "No, sir."