

Willard Pectol
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
September 28, 1989

Wayne Hinton: This is Wayne Hinton, September 28, 1989, interviewing Willard Pectol in conjunction with the Zion CCC Reunion. Willard, it's good to see you.

Willard Pectol: Glad to be here.

Wayne Hinton: When did you join the CCC?

Willard Pectol: 1st of October, 1938.

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Wayne Hinton: How long were you with the CCC?

Willard Pectol: I left about November of '40; had a little over two years. I got married and they kicked me out.

Hinton: Yes, you had to be single. That's right; that was one of the provisions, unless you were one of the local supervisors or employees. I guess you had some of those, didn't you?

Willard Pectol: Yes, I worked with... Can't remember what the guy's name was. Owen (?) Johnson, I think. He was the head of the carpentry crew and that was where I started my first carpentry was with him. We would work on this water tank up here: 200,000 gallon water tank, and then we'd go to school at night. He taught us.

Hinton: So you signed up for some of the educational opportunities?

Pectol: Well, yes.

Hinton: You were taught carpentry. You came out of the CCC with a skill then.

Willard Pectol: Well yes, but we went into the service [military] not too long after that, and then when we got out I furthered it by going into Dixie College...

Hinton: How old were you when you joined the CCC?

Willard Pectol: Eighteen.

Hinton: You indicate on your registration form that you worked on the water tank; we just talked about that. Is that the water tank that's up Oak Creek Canyon?

Willard Pectol: Right up on the hill right here, clear up on top. If I remember right, we had right around 200 steps to climb to go up there.

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Hinton: I noticed that you put on here that you were at a spike camp at Bryce, cutting timber, building lodges... what?

Pectol: Well we went out there and we cut the bug timber out of the forest.

Hinton: Got the black pine beetle in there and it was killing the timber, huh?

Pectol: Yes. We took and cut them up and bucked them up and took them down to Ruby's Inn to the sawmill.

Hinton: Ruby Syrett was using those to build his lodge then?

Pectol: Well, the lodge was built when we got there, so I don't know how he did it.

Hinton: Just put them in storage for him then?

Pectol: Well they sold it. The forester, I think, sold the lumber to people.

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Pectol: Yes, while we were out at Bryce too, I helped build that lookout tower from Rainbow Point. That was one of our carpenter duties. When we were shingling that thing, they put a rope around us so we wouldn't fall off about a 5 or 6,000 feet down in the canyon.

Hinton: Yes, I bet they would. I guess they had a pretty good safety record though, didn't they?

Pectol: Yes, I don't remember of anyone getting hurt.

Hinton: In two years, you didn't need the medical attention?

Pectol: No. ... I was the \$36 man.

Hinton: Instead of thirty, a six dollar raise.

Pectol: Yes, a six dollar raise, and that was big money.

Hinton: Does that mean you got eleven dollars and twenty-five went to your parents?

Pectol: No.

Hinton: You still got five dollar huh?

Pectol: No, I got eight.

Hinton: So you got half of the raise?

Pectol: Yes, I got eight dollars and the folks got the rest.

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Hinton: What was the food like?

Pectol: I enjoyed that food. That's why we went in there, to get three square meals a day and clothes to wear and a place to sleep, you know.

Hinton: Yes, in 1938 that was a big consideration with a lot of people.

Pectol: You bet it was.

Hinton: Where you were working that hard doing physical labor, as most of the men were, they probably fed you pretty well.

Pectol: Oh, they fed us good. I had no complaints about that. A lot of the guys complained about it but not me. I enjoyed every bit of it especially on Sunday afternoons. The cook was _____ Holly (?) He wouldn't do any cooking on Sunday; he'd just give you all cold cuts and cheese and crackers and stuff like that. I just loved that to no end.

Hinton: You just snacked all day long?

Pectol: You bet.

Hinton: Did they provide you recreational opportunities?

Pectol: Oh yes. We played baseball. Man that was my favorite. We played baseball in a league. In Rockville, I guess was a church building or a school building off to the side by a naked field down and off to the south there. We had a diamond there and we played there, and then up here in Springdale, they opened up a place up west up (wind) there somewhere. We use to play up there.

Hinton: Who did you play?

Pectol: Oh we played townspeople and other camps; we had a lot of fun doing that. We went up to Duck Creek or Cedar Breaks or somewhere up there and played the CCC camp up there too.

Hinton: Could you beat them? (Laughs)

Pectol: Oh yes, we had our fair share of the wins. I always had to knock a home run in order to

get to second base.

Hinton: Were those games usually on a weekend?

Pectol: Yes.

Hinton: You didn't miss work then?

Pectol: No, we didn't miss work. It was usually in the evening or else on the weekend. They saw that we did our work; that's what we came here for, was to work, so we did.

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Hinton: Maybe that was why you had such a good safety record in the camp, nobody wanted to go see the doctor.

Pectol: That was probably it. Lieutenant Wall was our commanding officer and Clayton Edwards, we called him Scipio, he was our top kick, _____ Pollock was our cook, (wind interruption) and Denzil Pollock was (wind). . . John Exell, he was the rock quarry man.

Hinton: One of the local?

Pectol: Yes, a local. Owen Johnson...

Hinton: Lambs they called him, didn't they?

Pectol: Yes, he was on the carpentry.

Hinton: Was Owen Johnson one of the LEMS [Local Experienced Men] too or was he a supervisor?

Pectol: He was a supervisor.

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Hinton: Once that water tank was filled, did they have CCC guys run the lines out to park service residences?

Pectol: The lines were being run right at the time we built the water tank.

Hinton: That was to provide culinary water here in the park. It didn't provide water for Springdale?

Pectol: No, just here in the park as far as I know. Where it is now, you can't tell.

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Hinton: Were you able to find employment after you left the CCC?

Pectol: Oh yes, we went to work for E. J. Graff down at Hurricane.

Pectol: We went to E.J. Graff, (wind) and then went from Pioche to Las Vegas to build that magnesium plant out there, and then we went from there into the service.

Hinton: So you went right into the same kind of work you were doing here more or less, construction?

Pectol: Yes, we followed it right on through.

Mrs. Pectol: You drove truck for a long time.

Hinton: You picked up some truck driving skills here driving the pie wagon.

Pectol: Yes, I drove truck down at Pioche and down at Las Vegas most of the time. We went right on through with the building trade. I built a lot of homes. We moved to Salt Lake. I have one of the oldest contractor licenses in the state of Utah.

Hinton: Going back to when?

Pectol: In the early 50s.

Hinton: What were the typical kinds of things you do in camp maintenance, put doors back on?

Pectol: Yes, and repair doors. The boys would get drinking a little bit and they'd kick a hole in them and I'd patch them up, or they'd tear the railings off the steps and I'd put them back.

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Hinton: Were your outfits labeled CCC so that when you went to Cedar you were identifiable?

Pectol: Right.

Hinton: How did people react to that?

Pectol: I don't think people minded that at all.

Hinton: Most of them were happy to have someone that would be buying their supplies.

Pectol: Yes, I don't think they were unhappy about the CCC.

Mrs. Pectol: (Wife says something)

Hinton: Yes, they made a lot of improvements here in the park.

Pectol: Oh you bet they did. We were just talking about that in there this morning. If we had 100,000 people come through back at that time that was a big year. Now you get a million and a half come through, and that's just an ordinary year. A lot of people now to where then there weren't as many and they could keep the trails up in top shape and really look nice.

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Hinton: You didn't have any fires here during the two years you were here?

Pectol: Not that I remember.

Hinton: Had some recently, on some of the rims and so forth, but certainly you would have been called out if they had had some.

Pectol: Oh you bet we would have because we took fire training out at Bryce. We would take fire training out there with Forest Service. They'd go out and simulate a fire. As a matter of fact, they'd go out and start a fire and then they'd call us out to put it out. It kind of backfired on them one time. They started a fire and we went out and we thought we had it all out, but there was a root that was burning. And it burnt along and came up in another place and started a fire. And then they had to call us out to douse it out. It wasn't too big of a fire.

Hinton: Well, can you remember any other interesting experiences you had during your two years with CCC Willard?

Pectol: No, not really.

Mrs. Pectol: You had appendicitis.

Hinton: You had appendicitis when you were here?

Pectol: Well, yes I had appendicitis not too long after I came in, and the doctor – I can't remember his name, I didn't think I ever would forget that guy's name – he took me in the infirmary and put me in bed and said, "I want you to stay there for 48 hours; nothing to eat or drink." So I laid there for 48 hours and he started eating a little soup every two or three hours, and he started that appendicitis out of me and I've never had an attack since.

Hinton: Well, it sounds like it worked!

Pectol: Yes, it worked.

Hinton: So how long were you in the infirmary?

Pectol: I was only in there two or three days when he let me out, about four days, got out on the fifth just eating a little bit more. But he helped me out.

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Hinton: Do you feel the CCC program was of permanent value then?

Pectol: I sure do, you bet. I think it helped out a lot of people, a lot of kids just like myself. It gave them an opportunity to learn a trade and I think a lot of the guys here today carried right on through with the trade that they had.

Hinton: How about development and resources and conservation and that sort of thing, is it valuable from that stand point?

Pectol: I think so, yes.

Hinton: You didn't get in on any of these rif-raff projects along the river, conservation and replanting of trees?

Pectol: No, I didn't.

Hinton: Were they doing that during the two years you were here?

Pectol: Yes, I can remember crews going out and doing that and cleaning the trails and the switchbacks, things of that kind. My time was spent on carpentry.

Hinton: Well that sounds like that would be a pretty good job to me.

Pectol: Oh it was.

Mrs. Pectol: He's always loved it; still does.

Hinton: Well, is there anything else you can think of Willard?