

Lowell Brown
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
September 28, 1989

Beth Martin: This is Beth Martin interviewing Lowell Brown. It's the 28th of September 1989, CCC Oral History Program. Lowell where were you from originally before you ever joined the CCC's?

Lowell Brown: I was from Cache County, Logan, Utah. That's where I was born and raised.

Beth Martin: Okay, and what did you do before you joined the CCC's?

Lowell Brown: Well, I went to school and I graduated from Logan High School in 1933 in May, the latter part of May, and right on the first of June we were inducted into the CCC camps.

...

Martin: Oh yes, I want to do what's exactly what you exactly did in Zion. Well what did you do for recreation after?

Brown: Oh hey. We had some of the best baseball teams, now we didn't have a softball team... Now that was one of our main situations and we did have basketball because we had a gym in a church down at LaVerkin that we were able to use. They let us use that all the time for our recreation.

Martin: But in the spike camp.

Brown: But in the spike camp up here mostly I'll tell you what it mostly was boxing. We'd done a lot of that. We didn't have any ring or anything, but we'd get out and put on boxing gloves and just do that to take the frustration away once in a while. And a lot of wrestling, a lot of horseshoe, we played that.

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Martin: Course up there did you boys take books with you to read at night?

Brown: They had little libraries at that time that they used to bring in books, but they were kind of a paperback thing mostly of fiction stories and stuff like that. It wasn't necessary church history.

Martin: Now you were talking a little bit about yourself. Did you take advantage of the education programs that the CCC offered?

Brown: Yes, the thing that I took advantage of was -- when I was a youth going to school there

in Logan I worked for a contractor in the summertime after school was over. So through that I was helping to build homes, not a lot of it but I was doing a few pounding of nails. Now we when came to the CCC camp, what little knowledge I had of that I was one of the main pushers down here at the building of this camp and the one in Logan also. And through that yes, I went into contracting later in my years. Oh yes.

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Martin: Well what type of classes did you attend?

Brown: Mostly carpenter classes.

Martin: Stayed right with the construction business?

Brown: Yes, I sure did.

Martin: What about your medical care? Did you ever have any medical problems?

Brown: Yes, only one. I had an appendectomy in 1933, in the latter part of 1933.

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Martin: Did you gather any lasting friendships?

Brown: Yes, many of them. I have in Logan at the present time, which I don't live there but I do have, I would say, and the picture that I have inside your recreation building now, I would say probably thirty of those people that I see quite often. Still the same guys, same fellows.

Martin: That's nice.

Brown: Went to school with them, went to college, part of a little bit of college but not very much. But yes, I still have lots. We still meet often, not as a CC situation I wished we did.

...

Martin: What would we have done without the basic work that the early men did?

Brown: Like we were doing?

Martin: I can't imagine what would've happened if we hadn't....

Brown: I'll tell you the main basic things, I think as far as coming and putting in a water line coming down through there, that could've been done very easily with a bulldozer today or with a clam and dug it out or whatever they had that would've been very easy and

very quickly. But show me equipment that would go up and build that beautiful trail from here on up to the top of that mountain. Couldn't make it, take the one that goes up through the tunnel and off across there, you couldn't have done it and still can't.

Brown: See we were mostly on basics. Let's get the water to the people.

Martin: Get the water down

Martin: Then you think then that it [his success] was your experience in the CCC?

Brown: Yes, absolutely. It helped to teach me responsibility for myself and not be afraid to work. Like I've told everybody in my life, I've said "If you want to make a good living. If you've got the nerve to go to California and work hard you can work all of your life and have a good job, but if you're not that kind of person, don't bother to go because they don't need you. And you can really make it." Yes, and I think of this. Getting up at five in the morning was a great thing for us. It taught us to get up. It taught us cleanliness. Go in and brush your teeth, go in and take a shower. Get in and do these things, and get all your clean clothes on. We had to wash all those clothes. One, we couldn't wear a shirt the next day that we had worn the day before.

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Martin: Okay, let's go ahead and talk and tell about some of the other experiences here. What did the programs from the colleges present to the CC boys?

Brown: Most any subject you wanted to take.

Martin: No, I'm talking about entertainment.

Brown: Oh, entertainment, singing. Mostly singing, and they would come and put plays on, a little play. Normally, you don't have too big of an area as far as the stage is concerned. So they would have this little twelve by eight, so they'd only bring a play with four or five kids in it, girls and boys. But the singing groups we'd have as high as eight to ten, fifteen people.

Martin: You didn't feel like you were being too deprived?

Brown: Oh absolutely not, not one second.

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Martin: Did you have any more comments Mr. Brown?

Brown: Well, I don't know ... You know, I made so many friends. Today, if we could have a reunion similar to this one that you people are having here, with us as guests I have to say, I would love to have one going into this other area and get a hold of those fellows.

Martin: Wouldn't that be nice if every camp couldn't have a reunion before it's too late, before we get so we can't even move.

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.

...

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.

Norman Hull and Paul Lemon
 Zion National Park Oral History Project
 28 September 1989

Norman Hull: We're at Zion's National Park and this is the 28th of September, 1989. I'm Norman Hull from Hooper, Utah, and I came here in the CCC's on the 28th of July 1934. And it's warm today, but it was hot that day. When we came, there was one camp here, and there was a lot of weeds and rattlesnakes. They did have a crew in there—maybe you was there; I don't know—that partially cleaned it up, but we had to finish cleaning it up. And there was rattlesnakes here and a lot of weeds, but it wasn't only just a day or two—there was two hundred and fifty of us, so even if we'd cleared just a stick a piece away, it didn't take long. And so we settled in, and the first job I was on—and the foreman was named Bill Miller, and he's from Washington, and I was here eight months, and he was my foreman the whole time.

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Carolyn Hinton: Were there very many tourists there?

Norman Hull: Yeah, there was quite a few people that would come there and go up to the Narrows, but it was 118. It got as high as a hundred and eighteen degrees right in that box canyon, and I didn't wear a shirt. Every once in a while, my skin would peel off like a snake, I guess. I'd shed, it was that hot. That isn't good for you, though, but [it's] a wonder I don't have more skin cancer than I got. But we finished that, and then we started—I think they tried several crews—on making these crib piers down, like he said, on the river turns because they was a road, and they'd come into the highway, even, and they picked Bill's crew, and we made cribs all the way down this river, and they was sixteen feet wide at the bottom, and I think they was about ten feet tall and three feet at the top, and we'd make it all level, and these guys or somebody'd haul them from the rock quarry and we'd nail them right up.

...

Hull: And then when it'd get better weather, we'd build a big campground right here and rock fireplaces.

Hinton: Over here at the canyon . . . visitor center.

Hull: Right here just south of . . . And we spent several months there. We'd run clear down almost, well, it was all in *here*. I might say for entertainment, I played baseball, and the reason I quit is because one of the foremans [sic] had me a job, he said, pitching baseball for baseball at Provo, and I was looking for a job. So I got out in eight months, and then they wouldn't give me a job. But I played a lot of horseshoes, and I hiked on every one of these mountains.

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Hinton: Didn't have a canteen with you?

Hull: I drank out of horse tracks along the side of the river. We'd had shots for TB, and so
[Chuckles] But I had a lot of fun and really enjoyed it. But we didn't—that's when you can have fun without any money.

Hinton: What do you think that the CCCs did for you?

Hull: It helped to build me to associate with other kids, see—to see all different kinds of kids. I think it's good to meet a lot of different—from all different areas. I think it's great. And it taught me how to enjoy life and do things without a lot of money, and so I never was too much for education. I come from a family of twelve—six brothers older than me, I'm the youngest boy—but I always liked to work. But even at that, I don't think I've been too much of a failure. I got married, I got eleven kids and forty grandkids and three great grandkids, and I've never been on welfare. I still farm in Hooper about fifty-seven acres.

...

Hull: I'll tell you, I'd had a tooth broke off when I was eight years old, and they said they couldn't fix it then. When I was here and I was eighteen, there was a dentist come in here. He said he'd had a nervous breakdown or something—not too old a guy—he put gold in that tooth, capped it, you know, fixed all my teeth, and I think it was four and a half he charged me. And I took two months for me to pay it up. You couldn't even talk to a dentist now for I don't know.

Hinton: So both of you'd say CCC camps were good experience for boys and would recommend something like that today?

Hull: I don't think that it'd hurt any kid of any walk of life, boy. I think it'd be good for anyone.

Hull: I've talked to several men up there [who] said they thought the CCCs done more than any organization they ever had for the youth. They really did. Of course, you can't measure by money, but I mean they really done something.

Hinton: Building character.

Lemon: You bet.

Hull: They built things too. They—all over the United States, there's every place where the CCCs have been 'cause I talked to a lot of men, you know, from Arkansas, all over, the things they done. I know they built that bird refuge and dikes, and they saved Willard, Utah. It used to flood all the time, and they went up in the mountains and built flood controls so the water could come down, and they built it so the water would come down one area. It used to flood. I went up to Willard when there was mud all over the highway, and they fixed it so it doesn't now.

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.

...

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.

...

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.

...

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.

...

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.

...

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."

Vernon W. Lemmon & Norman Hull
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
September 28, 1989

Carolyn Hinton: Okay, we're in Zion National Park at the CC Reunion, September 28, 1989, at Zion Nature Center. I'm Carolyn Hinton, and we're here interviewing Vernon Lemmon. Where are you from?

Vernon Lemmon: Originally or now? Where I grew up?

Carolyn Hinton: Yes. Where did you grow up?

Vernon Lemmon: Silver City, Utah; that's five miles from Eureka.

Carolyn Hinton: And what did you do before joining?

Vernon Lemmon: I was in school.

Carolyn Hinton: You were in school.

Vernon Lemmon: And I got out of school in 1934.

Carolyn Hinton: And why did you join the CCC's?

Vernon Lemmon: There wasn't anything else to do, living in a mining town, and I came from a large family. There are six boys and four girls in our family, and I was the eldest. So this was a chance to get a job and help the folks out some because twenty-five [dollars] went home, and I kept five [dollars] for myself. I was filthy rich.

...

Hinton: That's really good. That's one of the questions that they ask you. What did you feel like the CCC had done for you, and you told us what they did.

Lemmon: Learned how to mingle with people and be friendly with them, and so forth. We didn't have any problems in those days. Another thing that happened in February of 1935, they took us down to Boulder Dam. It wasn't finished. It was just finished, but the water hadn't been turned into it yet. They took us down to the bottom of the dam and we viewed the dam looking west. Looked up at that gracious thing there, and the guide showed us flags on the hill where the water would be, and we thought, "That isn't possible. That's way up on the mountain." They said, "The lake will be up to where those flags are eventually." Then we stayed at a VFW hall overnight, just slept on the floor, and then the next week, they took the other half of the camp down. They couldn't take the full camp at once. They had to leave at least half of the people here in case of a fire or anything like that, an emergency.

Hinton: About how many were in the camp?

Lemmon: About 200. Sometimes when you're serving tables, it seemed like, or washing dishes, it seemed like more than that.

Hinton: How many would you serve on a shift? Did they break the shifts up?

Lemmon: No. They all came in at once.

Hinton: Two-hundred.

Lemmon: Just like a bunch of sheep. You open the gate, and here they came all in at once, and it didn't take us too long to take care of it.

Hinton: What were the facilities like?

Lemmon: Well, they had good cooking facilities and everything. The darn cooks would dirty too many pots and pans though. It kept us busy. We thought they were pouring them from one into the other, cleaning up after them. But it was a good experience, and it's too bad they don't have something like that today. I had four of my brothers join the CC camps later on, as they became old enough.

...

Hinton: So what do you think that the CC did for you?

Lemmon: Well, it helped me grow from boyhood into manhood, I think. You had responsibility. They checked on you. You had to have a pass to leave. They had bed check each night. If you wasn't in there, you had extra duty and things like that to give you something extra to do on Saturday during your off-time. And so you had discipline. We had the calisthenics in the morning and the whole thing. That was one beautiful thing about getting in the kitchen. We got out of the calisthenics in the morning.

Hinton: What time did they start calisthenics?

Lemmon: Oh, they'd start just before breakfast. They'd get out there. We'd be in there with breakfast and be all ready, and just waiting for them to get through with that, and we'd watch them through the windows. (Carolyn laughs). And then they'd come charging in there and sit down at the tables and wait 'til somebody served them their breakfast.

Hinton: You don't remember what time?

Lemmon: It was early in the morning. We'd have to get up about an hour and a half ahead of them in order to get everything ready. We got to the point where we could peel a hundred pound

sack of potatoes in an hour, each one of us could. We'd hurry up in the kitchen, get our work done, and the first one done would dash down to the cellar and start peeling potatoes. Because every day we'd have a hundred pound sack of potatoes we'd have to peel. And the meals were good. A lot of people complained about it, but most of us weren't doing that well at home because this was right in the middle of the depression. Especially with me and coming from that large family being the oldest one. When I got out of twelfth grade, my youngest sister was going into the first grade. So they didn't remember too much of me at that particular time because I was gone most of the time. I liked the CC's. I liked it well enough that after I'd been in it six months, working on the railroad for \$2.28 a day, I got back in the CC camps again.

Hinton: What are some real special memories that you have?

Lemmon: Well, we'd go down to Springdale to the dances. In those days, a lot of my friends that I know now didn't dance, but they're good dancers now. But we went to a dance every week down there at Springdale, sometimes at Hurricane. Sometimes they'd have little shows. Trucks would go to Cedar City and different places like that. They always loaded us in the back of a big old truck, about 35 or 40 of us, and away we'd go, just sitting in the back of this truck. Being able to mingle with guys and they were all good guys. They'd get drunk once in a while, some of them and carry on a little bit, but you didn't have the dope and you didn't have the temptations that they have in this day and age. In a way, it might have been easier for us even though we'd gone through the depression. It might have been easier for us than it was. The temptations weren't quite as great there related to drugs and things like that as they are now.

Hinton: So you think it would be a good idea if they had something like this for the youth today?

Lemmon: I think so. They'd probably have to pay them a little more money.

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Hinton: You said you worked up at Sinawava?

Lemmon: Yes. Just a little bit.

Hinton: What did you do up there?

Lemmon: Well, we were mostly doing pick and shovel work preparing for these basket bands and protection that they put the rocks in with the grating over it, and so forth, to protect the land. It would be just a wave and the water would come down, rushing through the canyon. Then they'd have floods, and terrific rains, and everything like that. The farmer's land was being washed away a little bit at a time. We were preserving that. And when we went up here to the

rock quarry we were just breaking rocks and loading them in a truck. They were shipping up to those guys and building a lot of the stuff up close to the tunnel, and that rockwork there, and the entrances to the parking lot, all that kind of stuff.

Hinton: Anything else that you can remember?

Lemmon: I'll remember a lot of things after I go, I bet. It will be too late for them. It's been a long time. I think that I'm fortunate to remember as much as I did after all these years.

I married a Panguitch girl. I did a little work the second time I came back up here up at the campground up here a little ways, a little bit. I was in a group for a little while up in the campground

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Norman Hull: But do you know this CC done me a lot of good just being away from home.

Lemmon: Get away from mother's apron strings. You see we had this big family. My dad said, "I'm going to teach you boys how to work." There were six of us. He said, "If it's no more than digging post holes and covering them up again." So we had to watch fifty head of sheep. We'd let them out in the mountainside then bring them back in. So we knew how to work. But a lot of the kids just went through high school; they didn't know how to work. And it was tough for them but we knew how to work.

Norman Hull: I think it was one of the best programs

Lemmon: Bring it back.

Norman Hull: You can't give people too much, but it was really a good program. It's like, probably not WPA or PWA, like you say your dad was in. Now I lived when we first got married in 1940, on just a dirt road. So we went finally went over to the County and said, "How about fixing this road?" You know they got wagons and we got six or eight dump board wagons and guys. There's a sand hill not far from me, and they loaded them up and widened that road and fixed that road up. It took them months, but it didn't cost nothing, about two dollars an hour or a dollar an hour for those.

Lemmon: Yes. They got forty or forty-five dollars a month, and they had to work. There wasn't any food stamps and no 'give-me' at all. You had to work. If you didn't show up, you didn't get your WPA allotment. That's all there was to it. You had to do it.

Hazen Madsen
 Zion National Park Oral History Project
 CCC Reunion
 September 28, 1989

Hazen Madsen: My name is Hazen D. Madsen. I was here from, as I recall, from July 1940 to July 1941, and it don't look like they spelled my name right there. I was in the one right across the river from here, Company 962. Clayton Edwards was the first sergeant. Captain Edward Wall was the commanding officer. I worked on the rock crew that built the rangers' dormitory back of the present Visitors Center. I don't know when they moved the visitor's center down from up on the corner where it used to be.

Nancy Harms: Where was the location?

Hazen Madsen: Just as you come down from across the switchbacks and hit the road that goes up to the other road it was just here on the corner. It was here when we had to go up and shovel three cars out of the snow slide at Checkerboard Mesa. People stopped to watch the snow running down the hill and all at once it all came and buried three cars, but we got extra leave if we volunteered to go up and shovel snow off and dig out those three cars. The year that I was here they had the rock slide up the canyon. It blocked the whole canyon off. I guess it must have been a 120 foot deep rock slide to come down and block the river and everything else up there. That year I grew ten inches in height. When I came in, I was five foot two inches tall and when I went out I was six feet even.

Nancy Harms: Are you serious?

Hazen Madsen: I grew ten inches in that year. I was in for a change of clothes every two weeks it seemed like. I'd just grow out of them.

Nancy Harms: How old were you?

Hazen Madsen: Seventeen.

Nancy Harms: Seventeen.

...

Woman: What'd you do on your day off?

Madsen: Chased deer across here with a camera taking pictures of them.

Harms: What was your salary?

Madsen: Thirty dollars a month. Twenty-two of it went home and we got eight. Harms: You got eight.

Madsen: I supplemented a little while I was night-watchmen. In the winter I'd build a fire in the barracks, had the barracks warm by the time they got up, which paid me twenty-five cents per month per man.

Woman: They paid him, not the CCC.

Harms: Oh.

Madsen: The men in the barracks each gave me a quarter a month to have a fire going when they woke up.

Woman: Tell them about the fire hose.

Madsen: Well, the guys would go get drunk and they'd come home from town drunk. In the summertime they'd always took the windows out and just had screens in the barracks' windows. These guys would turn the fire hose on and run up and down the barracks you know with the fire hose going through all the screen windows. Everybody was always short sheeting the others, figuring some new way to wet their bed. I came up with the idea to put a cup up above the rafters, one of those GI cups you know with the tilting handle and fill it full of water and then a long string somewhere. But I think the most ingenious one that somebody thought up was they took a flat whiskey flask and put a hole in the cork and then they'd put it down in the bed and punch a hole in the sheet and tie it to the end of the bed. Somebody would come in and feel it with their feet and reach down and pull it out and that'd pull the cork out and a string of water up the whole way.

...

Woman: What kind of food did you eat, I'm curious, because the country wasn't very rich either?

Madsen: Well I remember we had good food. I know they ate potatoes because I had to peel two sacks of them one day.

Harms: Did you have anything to do with the channeling, channelization of the river?

Madsen: No, that was after my time. Our project was this dormitory right back of the visitors' center.

Harms: That was your main project?

Madsen: Yes. That's what I go most of my training on.

Harms: So you got to learn rock work then as well because I understood not a lot of CCCer's did rock work.

Madsen: Yeah.

Woman: He took photography from that Mr. Robertson and he did these pictures and developed them himself by learning photography.

Madsen: Some of them, not all of them.

Woman: Some of them, yeah. Here and that's why he's got a lot of little pictures. He couldn't afford a better camera.

Madsen: This is the main project that we built on and that's the ranger's dormitory. I understand now it's the girl's dormitory or something.

...

Harms: Did you think there was a lot of visitors at that time, visiting here?

Madsen: Through the park?

Harms: Through the park.

Madsen: It seemed like there was quite a few, but it isn't anything like the numbers today. Harms: Were you here during the Easter times when they had the pageants?

Madsen: Once.

Harms: Do you remember those, once?

Madsen: Once. Yeah.

Harms: Where was the pageant held when you were here?

Madsen: Oh, I don't remember. It was up on one of the side hills here.

Harms: Up in the main canyon area, up past the grotto, what's now the grotto? Do you remember that much?

Madsen: I don't remember that much, but I do remember they had the Easter pageant here. I was on the carpenter crew at one time and night watchman. I chipped rocks up here and was on the road crew doing road work on the switchbacks and I was on the crew that hiked the full length of West Rim Trail and Angel's Landing busting rocks and clearing the trails. Other than KP duty once in a while, that was my jobs.

Woman: Did they have forest rangers here then?

Madsen: Oh yeah.

Harms: Park rangers.

Madsen: Park rangers.

Woman: Park rangers, I meant, yeah.

Harms: What kind of facilities were available then? Do you remember the motels and the cabins?

Madsen: I had nothing to do with them at all, but the campground here it seems like it was fairly busy all the time. We swam in the river, just right over here, quite a bit. If we went to town, it was to Springdale. I did get around one time as far as the bend in the road before you turned into Rockville. But we had to walk everywhere we went. The only time we got out of the park other than when we went home on leave is on a recreation trip. They went over to what is now Colorado City, Short Creek.

Harms: Yes.

Madsen: The baseball team was playing a game over there and we got over there to see a baseball game. I got into Hurricane one time. There was one of the fellas lived there and we went home and spent the weekend at his place, but other than that I didn't get out of the park unless I headed up this way toward home.

...

Harms: What about CCCer's? Did the locals seem to appreciate CCCer's?

Madsen: Some of them. Some of them always had a chip on their shoulders and wanted to fight and they would fight with anybody they had a chance to fight with. A lot of time they picked them just to get in a fight. I was never that kind. I never went with any girls locally.

Harms: When they began teaching you to work, because you came here as a green kid at seventeen and you hadn't been doing rock work before.

Madsen: Oh no they just, "What can you do?" Like I say, I was on the pick and shovel and the sledgehammer busting rocks.

Harms: Yes.

Madsen: I did get on the carpenter crew remodeling some of the buildings, the visitors' center up here on the bend of the road, and I got to go to Bryce Canyon for that month on a remodeling job on the carpenter crew.

Harms: Now, did they teach you as you go or did they have a separate class?

Madsen: Well I had a little carpenter experience working with my dad who was a carpenter and cabinet maker at home. And I had a brother at the camp here. He was on the carpenter crew. Had a brother that was here at the same time and he was one of the rated thirty-six dollars a month instead of thirty. They needed a carpenter at one job and through Mr. Dooley and my brother, why I went to work on that crew instead of hammering, beating rocks to pieces. But that wasn't awful long and then I got on over here chipping rocks and running the jackhammer drilling holes.

Woman: How did they handle dynamite? Did they have it?

Madsen: Oh they had dynamite, yeah.

Woman: Who handled that, the CCC or professionals?

Madsen: I don't know. Well one other job that I got on that I liked was trapping deer. We would trap deer here and haul them way back in the park and turn them loose when they would get too many here.

Harms: Oh is that right?

Madsen: Yeah, but they had cages that they had to move around and bait them, bait the traps. That's the part I liked is they baited them with apples. We would catch deer and transport them. They would get in one trap that had screen on both ends, and once they were in there they would open on both ends. They couldn't wait to get the apples and that would trip the lever and then they would open up another cage, if you will, on the other end that was just open on one end and they'd pull the dark side up and didn't see the open up there and away it would go and drop the lever. Then we'd load them on trucks and take them in the backcountry and release them. So that's one other job I had here. I talked to one of the Pryor boys and he said that's the one he worked on a lot of the time.

...

Woman: Anyway the three children would send the 88 dollars. Madsen:

Sixty-six.

Woman: Sixty-six right, and that's what the family lived on.

Madsen: The 22 dollars that I sent home that bought the family their first refrigerator they ever had. They used to use what they call a "cooler" with screen wires and burlaps stretched over with a pan of water on the top and the burlap in there and it'd evaporate down. That's the cooling process.

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.

...

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.

...

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.

...

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.

...

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.

...

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.

...

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.

...

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.

...

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.

...

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.

...

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?

George Platt
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
September 30, 1989

George Platt: Well, I'm from Richfield, Utah, and I went into the CCCs in the spring of 1935 with my brother Roland. He had been in the summer before and then came home for graduation from high school, and I joined up with him because we had a widowed mother that needed our assistance, and we didn't have any employment.

...

Don Graff: Okay, so were you still in school when you—?

George Platt: I was still in school when I joined the CCCs...

...

Platt: I worked here in Zion with John Excel on a rock crew. We broke a few rocks and were laying a bridge up the canyon here towards—what is this canyon?

Graff: Pine Creek Canyon.

Platt: I only worked there for a short time, and then I went to work in the kitchen. Graff: Oh, yeah?

Platt: We had an opportunity—well, we took turns doing KP (kitchen police/kitchen patrol) duty, and so we were assigned, there were five of us assigned to do KP duty. And we got talking to the cooks and first sergeant and finally the commanding officer, and we decided that, if they'd let us, we would stay on and do steady KP work, but the man in the outfit would have to give us two bits a month.

Graff: So you were the group that started that.

Platt: We were the group that started that.

Graff: So what was the total bill, then?

Platt: The commanding officer took two bits out of their paycheck every month and divided that among the five of us.

Graff: Is that right?

Platt: I think there were five of us. Whatever it amounted to, we got it.

Graff: About what was that?

Platt: Well, I think the first month it come out to be around eight dollars each. But it got down to

six, and then the company's strength went down, and we were practically working for nothing, but that was in the bargain.

Graff: Right.

...

Platt: I remember trying to get somebody to do KP work for me because I didn't want to have to change KPs every day; I wanted somebody to get in and help me with my work and do the work without having to be told everything. Finally got one kid persuaded that if I'd let him go when somebody come that wanted the job, he'd come in and work for me. So he did, and that was the agreement. Well, after a time, they sent some more men over, and he found a man who wanted to do it, and so he brought him in, and I said, "Well, that's what we agreed to, so just go on and get ready, and go to work." And he left the young feller there, and I don't even remember who the kid was ... I got busy, and it come time for Marian to take his men to work, and he found out that I had changed KPs on him without consulting. Oh, he was mad! He came in there, "My good golly sakes alive! Blue blazes and purple flowers! What do you think this is, anyhow? Who's a-running this place, you or me?" And he really laid it on me. And I got a little tired of that, and so when he got through, I said, "Well, Marian, I guess there's something we better get straight. You're not running this place. I am! And if I want to keep that whole damn crew in here, I'll do it! And there ain't a thing you can do about it!"

Graff: Just so I understand this, wasn't the army over feeding the men, so they were actually running the kitchens, and it wasn't the ...

Platt: The army was running the whole thing. But if they wanted to assign the men to do something besides go out and do work on the projects, they did. They run the thing. They were in command. But that's what we were here for was to do service for our country and conservation and one thing and another.

I'd like to say this. I think that the CCC program was a great conservative effort on the part of our federal government. A lot of our natural resources were conserved through the efforts of the CCC. But more important than that, I think, was the conservation of the young manpower of America. I think that we did more for the young manpower of America in the operation of the CCC than any other thing that had ever happened because some of those boys we got out here from back east couldn't read or write. They had never been to school. And if they had, they hadn't gone very far in it. And the educational system that was set up for us in CCC was a marvelous thing. I don't want to pass this up—I graduated from high school with projects, work, studies that I took in CCC under my educational advisor while I was at Mayfield. I got credit—high school credit—for those studies, and I graduated from high school, and they allowed me to go home and graduate with my own high school class. So I graduated with my own class out of Richfield High School when I should have done, and I've always been kind of proud of the fact that I was one of the first two men in the state of Utah to get high school graduation credit, to graduate from high school from credit I got in CCC.

...

Platt: And then they put the flush toilets in and plumbed them and so forth. And then he started

fixing up the kitchen, and when he come to the kitchen, he says, “Platt,” he says, “We’ve got to have a plumber, and we can’t take the one we got out on the park service for the park service; we’ve got to furnish our own.” So he says, “You’re our plumber.” And I says, “I don’t know anything about plumbing.” He says, “Didn’t you hook up this hot water when you come down here?” I said, “Yeah,” and told him what I’d done. He said, “You’re our plumber.” He says, “You can have any man you want except men that are assigned to the park service to help you.”

...

Platt: I went home and was called on a mission. I left for a mission to the Western states. I entered the mission field on the 24th of February, 1939.

Graff: Had you been able to save enough money in the Cs to finance it?

Platt: No, I hadn’t because Mother had . . .

Graff: Had needed the money.

Platt: Mother had used all of my money that I had sent home during that time. Graff: How many other kids were there in your family?

Platt: We had five brothers and sisters home when my brother and I went into the CCC.

Graff: They were younger than you?

Platt: And only one of them was a teenager.

Graff: So she needed the money that you were sending home.

...

Graff: Sure. Let me ask you this. Did your experience in the three C’s—did it help you on your mission? Did it help you in later life and in your career? Did you feel like you gained something?

Platt: I have never had any experience in my life since I left the CCC that I can’t put a direct trace of some kind or another back to an experience I had in the CCC.

Graff: Yeah.

Platt: In the mission field, my mission president’s wife frequently said to me, “I never worry about your companion getting the right food. I know that you’ll feed him properly. I never worry.” And I had a companion that she worried about a lot.

Graff: He wouldn’t eat very good.

Platt: He was skinny as a rail, and, though he ate good, he never put on any weight. She was worried about him.

Graff: Sure.

...

[now discussing Platts time in the army]

Graff: So did you cook overseas, then?

Platt: Oh, yes. I went overseas and cooked for them over there. When the war was over, the group commander sent for me to come and cook for him; they was going to make an officer's club, and they wanted to have their own mess hall, and they wanted me to come cook for them. I didn't want to do it, so I told the Lieutenant so, and I said, "If you can find any other man in the group that'll do it, why, take him 'cause I don't want to. And if you can't find anybody, come back, and I'll go and do it." So he came back the next day and he says, "The old man wants you to go on and do that." So I had him get the baker out of the headquarter squadron and [we] cooked a few meals for the old man. ...

Graff: But wouldn't you say this, I mean, yeah, you learned your cooking here, provided, you know, you got to be a cook; that probably was better than . . .

Platt: Well, the most important part, I think, is learning to be a leader.

Graff: Yeah ... I think the most important thing that I learned out at the CCC was to be a leader, to stand up, to stand up and be heard, to say my piece, to learn the ropes and then how to take them.

Glade Reynolds
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
September 28, 1989

Don Graff: This is Don Graff and right now I'm interviewing Glade Reynolds. This is September 28, 1989. We're at the Nature Center in Zion National Park. The time is 3:15. Why don't we just start out and I'll ask you where you're from Glade?

Glade Reynolds: Richfield, Utah.

Don Graff: Is that where you've been all your life?

Glade Reynolds: No I'm originally out of Escalante, Utah.

Don Graff: Is that where you were when you joined the three Cs was in Escalante? Glade

Reynolds: Yeah, Escalante.

Don Graff: What interested you in the three Cs? What made you decide to join up? Glade

Reynolds: Money I guess.

Don Graff: The dollar a day, you bet.

Glade Reynolds: That sounded big.

Don Graff: Well, if there wasn't any work which there wasn't any work. How old were you, were you out of high school?

Glade Reynolds: No, fifteen.

Don Graff: Fifteen?

Glade Reynolds: Yeah.

Don Graff: You had to be seventeen, didn't you?

Glade Reynolds: Well, my parents signed for it.

Don Graff: Your parents signed for you to go ahead. So you hadn't graduated from high school then?

Glade Reynolds: Nope, no.

...

[discussing what he worked on at the camps]

Graff: Shod horses?

Reynolds: Yeah. They had two horses and a mule left in the barn up there and I took care of them for a while. I had to go up and shoe them for the deer hunt. They had to ride the boundary line during the deer hunt.

Graff: Yeah.

Reynolds: So I had to have the horses shod.

Graff: Horses shod. Well, now were you a ranch background? I mean is that why they had you shoeing horses?

Reynolds: No, they wanted to know if anybody could shoe a horse and nobody volunteered, so they said, "Okay, you can."

Graff: Is that right? Had you ever shod a horse before?

Reynolds: No, no.

Graff: Is that right? Well, who showed you how?

Reynolds: My dad is a horse shoer. He was a blacksmith. My background was horse shoeing, blacksmith.

...

Graff: So then what'd you do when you didn't have your horses anymore?

Reynolds: Worked on the switchbacks. They had a big slide up on the switchbacks. I think about the second, third turn. They had a slide down, mud slide come down and we'd clean that off. Had a jackhammer, I was their top jackhammer man.

Graff: So you blasted some of the rock, bigger rocks did you?

Reynolds: Yeah, we'd have to drill them and blast them.

...

Reynolds: Well I don't know whether Johnny Excel put me on that volunteer job or just told me to go do it. Anyway I was a powder monkey here for a long time up there.

Graff: Was that just on the switchbacks or other, other projects?

Reynolds: On the switchbacks and up the canyon; we went back up the canyon. Graff:

What were you doing?

Reynolds: On the flood control.

Graff: Oh, on the flood control?

Reynolds: Flood control up the canyon.

Graff: So you were making little rocks out of the big ones to put in the flood control stuff there. Oh I see.

Graff: Was a dollar a day no matter what you did then. ...

Reynolds: Regardless what it was.

Graff: Did you work an eight hour day?

Reynolds: Oh yeah we'd get up and go, just regular.

Graff: Didn't have to work any overtime or anything like that?

Reynolds: No.

Graff: Five days a week?

Reynolds: Five days.

Graff: What'd you do the other two days?

Reynolds: Chased the girls.

...

Graff: How was your camp life? Was the food good?

Reynolds: Food was good. I guess. We gained weight.

Graff: Three square meals a day.

Reynolds: Three squares. We went up and pushed snow up to Bryce Canyon in the wintertime and went up to Cedar Breaks once a year.

Graff: Now you say pushed snow in the wintertime with equipment?

Reynolds: Well we went up to clear it in the spring.

Graff: It was closed down in the winter, was it?

Reynolds: They closed down the winter. We'd go up and push snow, clear all the roads and stuff.

...

Graff: After you got out of the C's, you were in two years, you said you'd of stayed if they would've let you, so you must have enjoyed it while you were in?

Reynolds: I didn't have a thing against the C's. I enjoyed every minute of it. Graff:

Enjoyed the work and the good food and the company?

Reynolds: I enjoyed it all, the guys, I enjoyed all the guys and everything. Graff:

Course the war started up shortly after that, did you end up in the war? Reynolds: I

got out and went in the service.

...

Graff: Did you find that your training in the three C's helped with any of that, the fighting?

Reynolds: Well, it was to get along and to live with other men.

Graff: Live with other men, yeah. How bout, how bout in later life after you got back from the war as far as other jobs and things? Did you find that the experience was a good education from the three Cs?

Reynolds: Well, I kind of done that when I got out because in the service I seen a lot of stuff how they would handle things. We seen a ship out there. They opened up the doors on a ship and there was one piece of meat that had a little bit of green on it. They kicked about fifty ton of beef into the ocean. Some lieutenant stole the cheese. put it on an LST and brought it out and somebody hollered and said they was coming after him and he dumped it in the ocean. So when I got out I went to work up to Ogden, [Utah] and some lieutenant jumped onto me about doing something and I took out all my...

Graff: Frustrations onto him.

Reynolds: Frustrations on him and went back to Escalante and started driving truck and I lived on the highway out there for 45 years.

Graff: On, you mean, working for the state highway or...

Reynolds: No, for...

Graff: Driving trucks?

Reynolds: I mean I drove a truck for 45 years.

Graff: Well that's what I meant. Did you feel like the three Cs was a good education, taught you how to work good and that kind of thing?

Reynolds: Well, its, it taught me how to stay with one job, right.

Graff: Stay with it until you'd completed it.

Reynolds: I didn't go from job to job and bounce around from here and there.

Orril E. Sorensen
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
28 September 28, 1989

Jeff Frank: My name is Jeff Frank. I am interviewing Orril E. Sorensen of Tucson, Arizona. It is September 28, 1989, at 3:40 p.m.

...

Orril Sorensen: Well, as far as I am concerned there wasn't very much that I could tell you because I was doing mostly office work all the time I was down here. From the time I first arrived here until we left for the summer camp up in Bryce again that fall.

Jeff Frank: In 1934 when you enrolled, where was the town you enrolled in? Or how did you find out about CCC?

Orril Sorensen: Well it came out in the newspapers or something, I don't know. I had just graduated from high school; in fact I hadn't even graduated from high school when I put in my application. My father was more interested in getting me into the CC camps than I had anything to do. Suddenly I was in and that was it. I went over to Richfield one day and was interviewed real quickly. I was very young at the time; I was seventeen years old when I went in.

...

Orril Sorensen: My home town is Central, which is five miles south of Richfield.

...

Frank: So you knew this gentleman that we spoke about

Sorensen: Oh yes.

Frank: Did you two work together awhile?

Sorensen: Well, I spoke to him this morning; it's been a little over fifty years ago or well probably closer to 55, well, it is 55. I am sure that he doesn't remember me (laughs) but I remembered his name very well. As a matter of fact he was very instrumental in helping me get what I consider some of the fun jobs in the CCC camp pod while I was in there. He liked me and I liked him.

Frank: So you started out with time keeper here and this was still maybe about June-July some while in there?

Sorensen: This probably was in, I would guess, about late July or early August while they were building the barracks. They were building them real fast because they knew they had a

time schedule to go on. I remember it was early October, if I'm not mistaken, at least November hadn't shown up yet, and the main camp hadn't shown up down here from Bryce, and they pulled a sub-camp out from Cedar Breaks because they were snowed in. They had to plow their way out.

...

Sorensen: The wind got to us around the same time. Now this was right at the Narrows, right at the Temple of Sinawava is what I am talking about.

Frank: Did you work on that trail?

...

Sorensen: It was a path... But I remember we had a crew of about six men and I remember only one of them, little fellow by the name of Johnny Zetto and we took turns on a shovel and rubbing our hands to keep them warm.

(Both laugh)

Sorensen: It was awfully cold.

Frank: Oh you bet it gets bitterly cold up there. Was that all pavement by that time?

Sorensen: No, it was gravel at that particular time.

Frank: Oh, it was gravel.

Sorensen: But what we did, we actually made the stone outline of the arrowhead. That was what we did first. Cleaned out everything on the inside, and then built all the stones around there and then hauled in all more earth. Then there was a tree planting crew that would go out. They would go out all around the area here and got different species of trees which they put in there.

Frank: Hmm

Sorensen: But our job was over by that time. I think about that time when I came back to work in the office, and I also worked in the canteen.

Frank: So it sounds like as an administrator, your job is everybody else's job.

Sorensen: Yeah. I enjoyed it; I had a lot of fun.

Frank: So you kept all the files for the company and if there was anybody that needed something, a paper or a correspondence, you were the gentlemen they chose to handle that.

...

Sorensen: That's why I have been in administration for all my life. I firmly believe that I picked up my administrative ability from what I had learned in the CC camps. Because when I was drafted into the army in 1941, within two days I was working in the office because I knew a lot about morning reports, I knew about how to handle rosters and a lot of this I learned in the CC camps, and I was in demand!

(Laughs)

Frank: In the army?

Sorensen: Yeah

Frank: The requirement to take care of all that clerical.

Sorensen: Yeah, knowing how to do it.

...

Frank: It's phenomenal. As an administrator here then, you took care of the Bridge Mountain Camp. Did you know your counterpart across the river?

Sorensen: No I didn't take care of them, I knew about them, in other words for the typing up and all this kind of stuff. See, I was what you might call an "Indian." All I was doing was the typing.

Frank: Oh you did. It's a hard job you know.

Sorensen: Yeah I know, but the logistics part of it I didn't get into that. When I went back up to Bryce and became the assistant educational advisor then I got more into that more than I had done down here, just strictly on a job basis. Besides that I was very young, I was seventeen and eighteen years old.

....

Frank: Not too many folks are talking about, you know, handling all the paperwork. So that's another one of those unwritten kind of sides to it.

Sorensen: Oh I don't think a lot of people knew there was paperwork involved. (Laughs)

...

Sorensen: Are you speaking of what the CC taught me that I could use in later life? Frank: Sure

Sorensen: Well, actually, that is exactly where I had what you might call "basic training," because I had just got out of high school, and I had taken a business course in my last year of high school. I was interested in business, in book keeping, typewriting, short hand, and all these. I could do all of those things. My father was just absolutely upset to think that I would take shorthand and I said, "Well it's a good, it's a living." You know you have to look at it from that standpoint. So when they had found out that I could do that in the CC camp, they picked me for it and then what I picked up in the CC camp, when I got into the army. . . Incidentally, I'm an army retiree. I put in 28 years in the army after I got through the CC camp and school and a couple of odd jobs. So I feel that what I picked up in the CC camp as far as the army method of doing things helped me considerably to further my career there. For example, I never fired a shot in anger and I stayed in the army for 28 years and that is because I was an administrator. Every place I went there was administrative type work.

...

Frank: If you had to have something said about the three Cs, anything at all, what would that be? Anything in particular? You know a summation?

Sorensen: Well in summation all I can tell you is that I feel that it was one of the best things that could have happened to the young men in this nation at that particular time. If we ever get into a situation where the United States is as bad off financially and economically as it was in those particular times, they couldn't find a better method of taking care of the youth groups than to do two things or three things really; one is to get them off the streets, second is to try to teach them something, and the third is trying to give them a little money to get the economy going. These things I think are very important for them and would be now.