

START SIDE A, TAPE ONE

Ken Steeber: It is October 28, 1997. I'm Ken Steeber, a volunteer at Shenandoah National Park Archives, and I'm conducting an oral interview with Cecil Haney. Cecil was a former enrollee in the Civilian Conservation Corps, and he was stationed at NP-1, which is Skyland. We are at the Shenandoah National Park Archives in Luray, Virginia. Cecil, I want to thank you for granting us this interview and at this time, I would like to note that you have agreed to sign the gift and release agreement which you will receive a copy of and a tape copy of this interview.

Cecil Haney: Uh huh, certainly.

KS: Okay, now, let's get down to some business. Cecil, what's your full name?

CH: Cecil Glenwood Haney.

KS: And what's your present address?

CH: 450 Hazelwood Drive, Oysterside Village, Surfside Beach, South Carolina, 29575.

KS: And your phone number?

CH: (803) 650-6066.

KS: Okay. When were you born?

CH: November the 7th, 1913.

KS: Now, where were you living when you signed up for the CCC?

CH: In a place called Ruckersville, Virginia.

KS: What county is that in?

CH: Greene County.

KS: Greene County. And who were you living with at that time?

CH: Parents.

KS: Okay, did you have any brothers or sisters?

CH: Yup. Five brothers and two sisters.

KS: And where did you fit in in the mix here?

CH: I was the second oldest.

KS: Second oldest.

CH: My sister's two years younger, uh, older than I am.

KS: Now, did any of your brothers serve in the CCC in addition to you?

CH: No.

KS: You're the only one?

CH: Only one.

KS: Okay. How did you find out about the Corps?

CH: Well, I'd seen some boys that went in in the first enlistment, and there just wasn't nothing to do and I went up to the county office building which the fellow handling the enrollment of CC camp - I went to high school with him. And really, I wasn't qualified, his parents being on welfare, to go, but I was an alternate.

KS: Now, explain that now, you weren't qualified because your parents weren't on welfare?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Okay.

CH: See my daddy was with the state highway department and he had a farm.

KS: Okay, and he was employed, then.

CH: Yeah.

KS: Okay.

CH: So I went down as an alternate and about two thirds of them went down that day didn't pass.

KS: Now, why didn't they pass? Is it, physical?

CH: The physical.

KS: The physical, okay.

CH: So three of us went down to alternate and we all three went in the CC camp.

KS: I see.

CH: And just by ear, you know, word of mouth, is the way I found out about it.

KS: Okay, now what year did you join?

CH: 1933.

KS: Was that in the summer, or . . . ?

CH: That was in October.

KS: October. How long did you serve?

CH: I served fifteen months. That was the longest you could stay at that time.

KS: Okay.

CH: Now . . . (laughter)

KS: Okay, now, you know we're going to get into--well, let's talk about that, that part of what you've done and we'll get that on record here.

CH: What do you mean? What I done after I was discharged?

KS: Yeah.

CH: Well, I was working on the water supplies in the Park. That's for the parking overlooks, hotels, and what-not ().

KS: Here in Shenandoah?

CH: In Shenandoah.

KS: Now, okay, alright.

CH: I was working from Rattlesnake Point to Swift Run Gap, Route 33.

KS: Okay.

CH: And I had the mountains all pretty well dug up. And this boss man from Charlottesville had taken my barracks bag and foot locker home, and he come on New Year's Day and asked me where they were, and I told him they's where he put them off the day before. He'd brought them back to the mountain and I'd come back to the mountain and back to work as a local experienced member [L.E.M.]. So I was on that about sixteen months.

KS: Okay, so then, you really had the, the maximum tour, and then you came back again.

CH: Yeah.

KS: And in what capacity, were you a civilian, or . . .

CH: I was a CC boy, a two striper, same as a corporal.

KS: Right. In the second sixteen months?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Oh, really?

CH: Yeah. I was in the Pinnacles barracks, I was the barracks leader when I got the discharge and I come back, I was still the barracks leader.

KS: I see. Okay, well, we'll go into more of your work a little later in the interview, but

that's interesting, that you were able to do that, or . . .? Okay, you smile. Was it illegal? Or did you just, uh, . . .

CH: It was illegal.

KS: It was.

CH: But I mean, I was a party of it after the fact. I didn't know what was going on, until the fifteenth. And they called me in, wanted my name. I told the Captain, I said, "Captain Murphy, you're nuts! I been here fifteen months!" He said, "I never saw you before in my life."

KS: Oh, I see. But he did.

CH: Yeah. So I gave him my girlfriend's grandfather's name. So I worked about fifteen month under that.

KS: Oh, you came in under another name?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Oh, okay, I see how you did that, okay, fine. That's great.

CH: I hope the statute of limitation's run out!

KS: I don't think anybody's going to bother you (laughter). Well, let's talk a little bit about camp life. Was this your first time away from home?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Okay. And, oh, by the way, how old were you when you came to camp?

CH: Nineteen.

KS: Nineteen. Okay. And, you know, how did you adjust to camp life? Were you homesick, or . . .

CH: No.

KS: You went right into it?

CH: Right into it. See, they'd taken us from Richmond, army recruitment station, to Fort Humphries, which is Fort Belvoir, now.

KS: Okay, yeah.

CH: For basic training. You know, getting accustomed, you know, to the life. Which I worked KP down there.

KS: Now you said basic training at the army fort; what was that about?

CH: That was to issue us clothes and get us used to army life.

KS: What that, like, any marching, drilling . . . ?

CH: Yeah, you had some, well basically that, yeah.

KS: And then KP?

CH: Yeah, then, KP. Well, I worked KP all the time I was down there, in the officer's mess.

KS: Okay, and how long were you there?

CH: About approximately two weeks.

KS: Was that about par for the course for most enrollees?

CH: Yeah.

KS: To be there about two weeks?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Okay. Did all enrollees do that, go to army base first?

CH: I don't know, I think they did, though. See, about all we got here come through, on the Drive, came out of Fort, it's Fort Belvoir, now.

KS: Oh, I see, yeah.

CH: It was Fort Humphries then.

KS: Okay.

CH: Come out on the train, and come down to Luray, then had a cattle truck, with the high sides on it, slats, it'd take you to the mountain.

KS: Right. Now, what camp were you assigned to?

CH: Camp Number 1, it's Skyland.

KS: Skyland.

CH: I think that was 334th Company, I believe. 334th Company of CCC Camp Number 1, Skyland, Virginia.

KS: Yeah, I think you're right. Now were you there for your entire first hitch, the first fifteen months?

CH: Yeah, umm hmm.

KS: Okay, and how about the second--

CH: I was still there--

KS: --hitch. You were still in the same place?

CH: Umm hmm.

KS: Okay, and you were there. Okay, what was it like to be in camp? Now, you know, you're, you're just coming, you know, away from home for the first time, and, just--

CH: The first part of it, the first of it was rough, because we stayed in tents the first winter. From October 'til March.

KS: Tell us a little bit about that.

CH: A lot of nights you wish you was home! (laughter) Yeah. What had happened, you'd go in your tents, and if you didn't have somebody in there understood what the boss would do for them, you'd go to bed and you'd forget to loosen up your tent ropes. Then you get a little shower, and get some wind, see, that'd blow the stakes out. So you'd have to get up then, in your drawers, or whatever you had on, and slip on some clothes, and set your tent back up. It happened quite frequently, at night time, because the tents was right close to the mountain at Skyland.

KS: I see.

CH: So, it wasn't too bad, but I mean . . . they had a bathhouse at the time that you could go to.

KS: How many people were, slept in a tent?

CH: Two--uh, twenty in a tent.

KS: Okay, it was a, those great big, uh, like squad tent, they call them?

CH: Yeah, yeah.

KS: Yeah.

CH: And it wasn't bad, I mean, it, you had plenty of covering, you had a couple of little wood stoves in there, but, when you got up in the morning, you didn't, you didn't set around on the edge of the bed and stretch and carry on, you got in your pants as quick as you could to get out of there (laughing), but I, I enjoyed it, myself.

KS: You know, was it severely cold, or was it fairly comfortable?

CH: No, it was cold in the morning, 'til you got lit fire in the stove. You go over to the bathhouse to get dressed and warm up your shoes.

KS: Okay, the bathhouse, I take it, was heated?

CH: Yeah. See, they had a wood furnace in there, a () oil drum that heated the water, you know, and it kept the bathhouse warm.

KS: When you were in tents, did they, did they have mess halls, or were you eating in tents, too?

CH: They had the mess hall when I was there.

KS: Oh, they built the mess hall.

CH: Yeah, that was the mess hall. The mess hall, and the infirmary, and the bathhouse was about all we had, and the captain's, the officer's quarters, was all that was built up. The rest of it was tents.

KS: Here's a question that I'm not aware of. Where exactly was the camp located? Now, you know where Skyland is now, and they have two entrances.

CH: Yeah.

KS: And you know where they have White Oak Falls parking lot. Was it down further from that, down, more towards the south end of that?

CH: If you go out of the old entrance to Skyline Drive, make a right, you know, going--

KS: Now, okay, define for me the old, old one.

CH: I mean, the entrance into Skyland.

KS: Okay, the one we have today.

CH: In other words, the original--

KS: The first one you go to when you go there?

CH: The original.

KS: That's the original, okay.

CH: It's about three quarters of a mile south of there, just as you start up the mountain, you go up through there. That used to be a pow-wow grounds on your right.

KS: A what?

CH: Pow-wow ground.

KS: What, for indians?

CH: That's where the fellow named "Park" [unsure how to pronounce name]--

KS: Oh! Pollock!

CH: Pollock.

KS: Okay.

CH: He'd have the big blow-ups there.

KS: Now, is that right along the Park, now--right along the Drive, now?

CH: That, that's maybe three or four, five hundred feet off of the Drive, right off. And you go through a swale, like, little low spot, and just as you start up the mountain, you know, going towards Crescent Rock--

KS: Alright.

CH: --it's on your left.

KS: Okay. It's grown over now, isn't it?

CH: Yeah, umm hmm. Last time I was through it was grown over.

KS: And the camp was located near that?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Okay.

CH: When you, when you leave Skyland just as you start up the mountain, I forgot the

amount where you go up to Crescent Rock, you know, where the big overlook's on the Skyland side. You go, come out of Skyland, the entrance, and come down through a low spot, you know. About a half a mile or so, () distance and just start up the incline and that's where the camp set.

KS: Okay, fine, great. Okay, one of the questions I'm interested in, was there any guard duty and who, who performed guard duty?

CH: Only guard--you had one guy who worked at nights.

KS: Was he like a fire guard, or, or just . . .

CH: He just more or less kept the fires up in the stoves, you know, for, things ready for the cooks in the morning, and kept the fires of hot water going in the bathhouse.

KS: I see.

CH: Then, cold weather, we'd all give him 25 or 50 cents a month and he would keep the barracks heated up, I forgot, in the barracks.

KS: Oh, okay.

CH: Yeah. That was his side money.

KS: Lot of fellows had little side jobs, didn't they?

CH: Well, outside of him, and maybe some would do some laundry, and we had a fellow, Shorty Kesner, and Lon Recklif, who cut hair, barbers. They was two of the main barbers, Shorty Kesner and Lon Recklif. There was more of us. The rest of them didn't have anything on the side.

KS: Okay. And, did you have a nickname?

CH: Just Haney.

KS: Just Haney.

CH: That sometimes depended on what the boys thought of you. I heard some pretty bad

names, sometime--

KS: () (laughter) In some of the interviews I've done I've picked that up, and I was just curious. How about discipline, did you have any discipline problems? In camp?

CH: Very few, very few. Once in a while you'd have a little fist fight or scrimmage, but . . .

KS: No, no stealing or . . .

CH: I never heard of any, if it did, it didn't get out.

KS: Well, you were there a long time, so . . .

CH: Yep. Well, see, I was in about eighteen months after I come out of the local experienced members. So I spent, about a good, about, in fact close to five years there.

KS: I, I, I, I guess, now, that discipline was handled by the . . .

CH: Captain.

KS: The captain, and he handled that. You know, when you'd have a fist fight. Was there any AWOL and things like that?

CH: You'd have some AWOL, not too much--

KS: That's about, that's about it. Okay.

CH: Now what we'd have, when they'd get a new group of boys in, and you could tell the ones that going to go over the hill, that got homesick.

KS: Okay.

CH: They'd, sort of, they'd start going to bed with their clothes on.

KS: (laughs) Did they chase after these guys?

CH: No.

KS: No. I had an interview not too long ago where I asked that same question, and the fellow replied that, "Only if he took government property." And then they went after him.

CH: Yeah, yeah. Well, one thing they had the clothes on their back, is about what they'd take out, I think. You could, you know, most of them would arrive, knew that they were going over the hill. Was it families, I don't know, down my part of the state, that needed the money worse than the other (). The ones that families really needed that \$27 [\$25] a month, they're the ones that go out.

KS: Really?

CH: And then, I know a guy in Greene County that talked about how bad they's treated, the food wasn't no good, and he was just, homesick.

KS: Oh, and he just used that as excuses.

CH: Yeah, I think one of them had been in about two months, he'd gained about eleven pounds. And looked better than I'd ever saw him in my life and he says it's too rough for him, but . . . I didn't, I didn't see it that way, myself. And now, we first went up there, we had a Lieutenant Cook, George Cook was over the mess. Now he really fed you. He'd go over to Sullivan Meat Packer in Harrisonburg and pick out the cattles he wanted slaughtered for his use, and the hogs. And he marked them all.

KS: They, they got their food supplies local, then, huh?

CH: From Sullivan.

KS: The meat?

CH: In Harrisonburg.

KS: How about produce and things like that? Was it all local?

CH: That was mostly local, yeah.

KS: Did you get any, did you have any military food? I don't know, I mean, this is a time that I'm not familiar with, in the military.

CH: No, no, no. It was all cooked right there. They'd use, like, dried products, beans, and stuff like that out of, of Fort Meade or up in that area, but, the cook and them, they, they fed good. I mean, we had roast beef, pork chops, and everything. But, then he got transferred out and brought a guy in there by the name of Tenelle. Now, when we was in the mountains, they sent the chow truck out with hot food. Well, Tenelle got in, he started feeding soup. And you'd have to, you'd eat a gallon of soup and get a teacup full of vegetables, and meat. So, I was out of the CC's, well I was a L.E.M. then.

KS: What's an L.E.M.?

CH: Local Experienced Member.

KS: Okay, I understand.

CH: And, the boys went on a strike. Just refused to work. And a couple times in the mess hall they just hollered and whooped, and raised the devil because he wasn't getting food like Lieutenant Cook, you know, had fed them in the past.

KS: I see. Was the food really going, you know . . .

CH: It looked bad, I know, because a sandwich or something, you had to () cut logs, lifting rocks, and build trails, and they bring you out a cold sandwich and some watery soup . . .

KS: I see.

CH: I don't mean () on the thing, but see, I was, so I could, the way I worked that is I had a state car to use, I could go off and get me something to eat, go down to Panorama or somewhere.

KS: Well, did it improve later?

CH: Yeah, it did improve fast.

KS: As soon as you got rid of . . .

CH: Yeah.

KS: Now, was there a mutiny up there?

CH: The nearest thing I know to a mutiny was, just, when they had that strike over that--

KS: That food?

CH: The food, yeah. That wasn't bad, I mean, just, that was settled very quick.

KS: Okay, a day or so, or . . .?

CH: Yeah, because a captain called them all in and told them if they didn't get back to work, he was going to discharge the whole company.

KS: Now, was this a mixed group, between Virginia boys and, and Pennsylvania boys?

CH: Yeah, some of both, yeah, more was, more was Virginia boys at that time. There was a guy from Woodstock, Rudolph was the last name. He was in World War I; sergeant. And the captain said he was going to discharge the whole bunch if they didn't get back to work. Rudolph got up and said, "Captain (), you just discharge the () ones?" He said, "You go with them." He said, "You read the Articles of War. Whenever a commanding officer has to () the whole company, he goes with them."

KS: Oh, I see.

CH: So, see we was under the Articles of War, anyway. You know that.

KS: You were?

CH: Under the, you know, military.

KS: Military, yeah, I guess you're right, yeah.

CH: And, so that cracked that down. I mean, that commanding officer, it was a good experience.

KS: Was there much problem, you know, many problems between Pennsylvania boys and Virginia boys?

CH: Very little.

KS: Very little.

CH: Yeah, because by the time they start coming in, it was more of those that was Virginia boys.

KS: Yeah.

CH See, before we start getting the big city boys, in the, you know, slum areas, the down-beaten areas, you might have a fist fight every now and then, but . . .

KS: That's about it?

CH: Yeah. But, it wasn't, but they pretty well went together. You always have, you know, one lemon in the bunch, but we made the lemonade of those pretty well.

KS: Were there, were there many rivalries between camps?

CH: It was, yeah, because at one time they had run a () on the best camp on the Drive.

KS: Okay.

CH: And boy, we, that's, our camp was all cleaned up: white-washed, you couldn't find a cigarette butt, nothing, all over there. In fact, Camp Number 1 got the award.

KS: Uh huh.

CH: But all the camps was into it. I mean, it was, very loyal spirit was this, members and

their camps, I mean, the boys and the (). And then your barracks, if somebody getting themselves making a mess, the boys'd take care of that.

KS: Yeah, took care of it themselves.

CH: And we had had boys that come in there, didn't want to take their bath. We'd just get in some shorts or something, and catch him, and get a cake of that army soap, take him out in the bathhouse in the cold water and we'd give him a good showering . . . see, a lot of them was bashful, they had to wait until lights out to leave the barracks, before they'd take a bath. But we got them taking a bath, and wash their clothes. I mean, you wouldn't smell them, but, didn't take but once or twice to do it, but.

KS: The corps held educational classes . . .

CH: Yeah.

KS: Did you take advantage of any of them?

CH: I'd taken some, yeah.

KS: Which, which ones did you take, do you recall?

CH: I was working on accounting.

KS: Accounting?

CH: Yeah, and bookkeeping. Then, what I done, I wasn't cut out for that. I, uh, engineers, I was working for in the water end of it, I'd work with them and they'd teach me stuff on hydraulics. And that's where I got into civil engineering and sanitary engineering was from them, see?

KS: In other words, you got your start right, right from the Corps?

CH: Yeah, if it hadn't been for the CC camp, I'd probably be bootlegging right now. Or

in jail.

KS: Well, how would you rate the educational programs that they provided?

CH: They was alright, if you wanted to learn it. It was like, just like public schools. I mean, you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink.

KS: Right.

CH: So if you want to learn it, they had an instructor there, his name was Blanchard. And another, a CC boy, Pete Roach, that worked with him. And they done a good job on teaching it to the ones that was interested, but, you see, thirteen months is not much of a () in there, you know, for really getting involved in something.

KS: Did a lot of the fellow re-enlist?

CH: They couldn't.

KS: I mean, after, now, I think it was like a six month tour, wasn't it?

CH: Six, well, six months tour, then they re-up, yeah.

KS: Did a lot of the fellows re-up?

CH: Yeah, mmm hmm.

KS: They did.

CH: Yeah.

KS: Okay.

CH: I tell you, lots of, lots of them, I know, the ones that worked in the crew I had up there, I, see, I had a crew out of Camp 3, 2, and 1, and one out of Camp 12 for a while, working on the water. See, I had five camps, or four camps of CC, I bet they all had tears in their eyes when the last come and they had to get out of there.

KS: What part of camp life did you enjoy the most?

CH: I really enjoyed getting out, working to try and find these water supplies, the work, probably more than anything else.

KS: Well, okay, let's get into the work part of it, now. Now, what was your first job assignment when you, when you got to the Park?

CH: Well, the first thing, I got screwed up the first day. I went and got in the wrong gang load, and the rock, the road gang.

KS: Now, how does that, how did that happen? You just got on the wrong truck?

CH: Well, just new, and they called out names, you know, and, confusion, and I just got on the wrong truck, I got with the wrong, you know, bunch of men. So, now, () I'se supposed to be in the gang, a fellow named Adams was the boss, from, he was from Connecticut, cutting out the dead chestnuts.

KS: Now, was he a civilian supervisor?

CH: Yeah. He was a forestry, you know, a school man, more or less.

KS: When you were pulling rocks, what was that for? Is that for trails, or . . .

CH: For the rock wall, the walls along the Drive.

KS: Okay. Where would, what was the source of rock?

CH: It was right on this, that parking lot on the north end of Stony Man.

KS: Okay, well, did they have a quarry there?

CH: No, just, where they's building the road, there's a big rock bluff in there, they, they wanted to get it out of there. Just, they was removing rock for building that parking overlook.

KS: The overlook?

CH: Yeah.

KS: And then they were using that, oh, that's what they were doing, just removing that stone.

CH: Yeah.

KS: I see. Now, what other, other jobs did you, were you involved in? Over your whole career?

CH: Well, I stayed there about two months, I mean, one day on that, then I got in on cutting the dead timbers out. So then, I was on that for probably two months, at the most.

KS: You cut out the dead timbers of--

CH: Dead chestnuts.

KS: -what did they use that for?

CH: Just, was cut up in about four foot lengths and brought to Luray for people to burn, firewood for the needy people. It was hauled down to Sperryville and all over the country.

KS: Oh, really?

CH: Yeah. It was four foot lengths, you know. Hauled a lot of it right down to Luray.

KS: And then, what, did they distribute it in Luray?

CH: I think they, no, I think they'd just pile it somewhere they come and got it. I don't, I didn't--

KS: Oh, I see. And that was all the dead chestnut?

CH: Yeah. Which is not much good for firewood, anyway. Burns too fast.

KS: Oh, I see.

CH: See, you want an oak, a heavy wood for heating, but when you haven't got nothing

but cracker boxes, () be mighty good, but . . . Then these fellows that's was in the water end of it, the Geological Survey, they're from Charlottesville, so I'd ride home with them on weekends and come back. And so then they got me over in their gang, that's how I got started in the water works, you know.

KS: Okay, tell us a little bit about the water works. I mean, you know, how were you trained, and, what did you--exactly what did you do?

CH: Well, really, it, the only training in there was to use a pick and shovel, because that kind of work had never been done before. In fact, what we done here was used in the West years later. You know, to find water. But what we'd do was go out, to these parking overlooks, in the winter time particularly, and look down over the mountains and find where's there are evergreens. Well, see, when you find evergreens, you got water.

KS: Okay, especially the hemlocks, right?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Okay.

CH: So, then we'd go in down there and find out how big a spring there was, or how the stream was coming out of the mountain, in the summer time. You'd have it on a map, we'd go back and dig them out. Sometimes we'd go down four or five feet, you got the hardpan, and bring it out, in these, like, drain tiles, through a weir, 90° v-notch, to measure it. We'd temporary measure it, before we started, then we'd go back--

KS: Now, when you say measure, measure the flow?

CH: Measure the flow and--

KS: Okay.

CH: And then we'd go back after getting it all finished and got it all opened up and measure it and see how much we'd increased the flow.

KS: Okay, now, how would you try to increase the flow?

CH: Well, by opening it up. See, a lot of it goes down through the ground.

KS: Okay.

CH: And you'd dig down through the loose ground until you got to hard pan, where the water wouldn't penetrate.

KS: I see.

CH: Then you'd build a small dam around it, then bring the water out, right, as low as you could. We would build a pool behind the dam, we'd bring it out of the dam into a box, you know, below. And that way you could get all the water, most of it coming out of it. Sometime it increased, know it increased () sometime as much as 50%, sometime it would double the flow. Then you'd, I know at Sexton Shelter [Pinnacles Picnic Area], you know, where the Camp 10 was, that one there was a boiling spring, coming () out of the ground.

KS: A boiling spring?

CH: Yeah.

KS: In other words, the water was just flowing right out?

CH: Right straight up.

KS: Okay.

CH: And we went down in that, probably six or seven feet, it was still coming up. So we just had to take it off there, because we couldn't get it from there down to the reservoir.

KS: Now, what did you do, pipe it down to somewhere?

CH: Yeah, yeah.

KS: To a reservoir?

CH: Yeah.

KS: What was the reservoirs like, just a tub, or . . .

CH: No, concrete tanks, we poured concrete tanks.

KS: Okay.

CH: That picnic ground, what is it? Sexton Shelter? Up on the mountain, it's a picnic, but, well, that water supply comes out of that spring.

KS: Oh, I see. Now, was it all gravity fed, or did you have pumps?

CH: Oh, we had to pump that.

KS: You had to pump it? Once it got in the reservoir?

CH: Yeah. Well, sometimes you're gravity fed, a lot of times you had to pump it to where you wanted to use it.

KS: Okay. Where did, where were some of the sources that you, uh, or end places that the water went to?

CH: Well, uh--

KS: I would imagine drinking fountains, and . . .

CH: Well, drinking fountains, and, I don't know, like at Skyland, Big Meadows . . .

KS: You had reservoirs for all these places?

CH: Well, we worked on the water supply, see that's, they, they was built after I left here. I don't know what, how they was--

KS: Oh, I see.

CH: --to transport the water to the locations, but, we worked on those springs. Now, Dean Mountain picnic ground [South River Picnic Area], up near where that plane crashed after the--

KS: Yeah.

CH: But () where Camp 3 was, and Swift Run Gap, the water supply, I think we built a 10,000 gallon concrete reservoir in there, to bring the springs down. That was the water line for the Dean Mountain picnic ground.

KS: I see.

CH: Then we had a couple small ones in between there and Camp 2. Then this side of, the other side of, Big Meadows, I don't know how much water, what they ever had on it, finished on that. And Skyland, and that one on Stony Man where they said the storm cleaned it up pretty much up in there. That was the first one I ever put in. Then, while I was there on towards the last, they brought an engineer in, he wasn't, he didn't finish school, to help out on our work and he was General Lee's grandson. (laughter) Danny [?] Lee.

KS: Really?

CH: Yeah. He was the contrariest sucker I ever saw. You'd have thought he was a sign post (laughter). So I got transferred out of the Park, then, the biggest part of the time and one job I done was putting in the water supply in Paris, Virginia.

KS: This while you were CCC?

CH: It was after, just after (). So then I went on state-wide work, on river flow measurement. So I spent my whole life in water.

KS: Okay, just a second, I want to turn this tape over, and we'll continue. This concludes

Side A, please fast forward and turn tape over.

[END SIDE A, TAPE 1]

[BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 1]

KS: We're back now, and we were just talking about tapping the springs, the natural springs that were in the Park, and connecting the flow with the reservoirs and then distributing from the reservoirs to drinking fountains, and picnic grounds and so forth.

CH: Yes, and so forth. That was either gravity or by pump, there wasn't no ()--

KS: Okay, depending on what you needed, I see.

CH: Yeah, ().

KS: Now, is there any other projects that are worthwhile discussing now, that you, you can remember?

CH: Yeah, I had one that didn't last long, but, that was in the winter months. They needed some chestnut rails, see, to make rail fences out of, in Gettysburg Battlefield. So, it's me, and Milton Moray from Luray, and they called, I think, about four or five of us. Went down in Whiteoak Canyon, about, after you, below Crescent Rock, you know, where that gap in there now, at Hawksbill now?

KS: Yes, yes.

CH: That road that goes down to what used to be a pool, like, down on Whiteoak Canyon. I mean, they've torn that out, it had a rock wall that the water backed. If I'm not mistaken, those dead chestnuts, that's what we were making the rails out of, we made several thousand of them. I was

working on Saturdays and Sundays to get some time off. So, a lot of the rails at Gettysburg--

KS: So, oh, excuse me, just a second, back up, if you worked Saturday and Sunday, you would get time off during the week?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Okay.

CH: Well, only, that was, you know, special on account, they wanted those rails for Gettysburg, so they wanted volunteers, so I'd like to see us fill in, too, so I could have some time off when (). There was about four of--I think we made several thousand rails, twelve feet long, that went to Gettysburg Battlefield.

KS: And how did you do it, did you just cut them down, or saw them up, or . . .

CH: We'd cut them down in twelve, about twelve foot lengths and split them out with an ax like a rail fence.

KS: In other words, you split the trunk of that, of the tree?

CH: Yeah. Yeah, we split them up into rail size.

KS: Okay.

CH: Of course, that chestnut is very easy to split.

KS: Okay.

CH: You can take a pole ax and usually split the whole log, if it was about twelve or fourteen inches, from end to end. Then just take a slice off and hit it with an ax and another of us would hit it with a maul, and--

KS: Did you need wedges or anything to split them?

CH: No, we didn't, but a few of them. Woods, we made woods, didn't use steel wedges,

but this wood () wedges, but . . . we was in there three or four weekends doing that. And it was cold weather, I remember, I went up one Saturday morning, started snowing, at lunch time, snow was up to the top of your boots. So, we didn't bother about the weather, then.

KS: I see.

CH: Then I had another job for one day. You know, I'll remember it for as long as I live. The day before President Roosevelt dedicated the Shenandoah National Park, a fellow by the name of Watson, with the phone company out of Charlottesville, him and I started at Big Meadows, and walked that phone line to Criglersville. And we had a bag over the back of us, these glass insulators, cross arm pins, climbers, and tools. Had a couple of sandwiches with us. And after we got below Hoover's camp, we () walk across some springs, or something. We walked 'til 3:00 that afternoon or later, and didn't have no water to drink after 11:00 that morning. You know, with that load on us, but. See, had to do that because to get his radio speech on the air, it had to go by wire to Charlottesville, phone line, and back to Washington and then it was broadcast from Washington.

KS: Oh, I see. Now, did you put the insulators on poles, or in trees?

CH: Oh, there was poles--

KS: The poles were set up?

CH: --for the phone line, so, if we'd find an insulator gone, or a pin gone, we'd have to climb the pole and replace it.

KS: Oh, is that what you were--just replacing the insulators?

CH: Yeah, and every so often, see, your phone line runs parallel. You had to take the one on the north side and switch it over to the south side. Transposition, 'cause if it run continuous, north and south, build up too much static electricity, be too noisy on the radio.

KS: Oh, I see.

CH: Then you get up there in the afternoons, daytime, you get sweaty and you get between two, happen to touch two of those lines at the same time and static electricity, started to feel like a darn bee done stung you. But, when I got to Criglersville, and they left the car I was using then at the foot of the mountain, I went on to Charlottesville. I says if I had to walk that mountain to hear Roosevelt . . . I didn't care nothing about it! (laughs) So I didn't come back the next day!

KS: Oh, so you weren't at the dedication?

CH: No.

KS: Oh, okay.

CH: 'Cause that was the worst job I had the whole time I was up there.

KS: Now, outside of the courses that you took, did you have any special training for the jobs that you did?

CH: No.

KS: You, you, for the most part, you picked it up on the job, right?

CH: Yeah.

KS: The supervisors you had, were they very helpful in, in training people and laying out the jobs?

CH: There was two mighty good friends of mine, and they were 'til they died, but they wasn't much as far as being engineers on the job.

KS: But were they civilian supervisors?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Were they local fellows?

CH: No, they was out of Charlottesville.

KS: Oh, out of Charlottesville, okay. Okay, now, did you have, did you work with any special tools? I know, pick and shovels are, is the backbone of the CCC--

CH: No, no, the only thing that we would use is little current meters, to measure water, little old thing-a-ma-jigs that you'd just put down to get the water velocity going through a weir. You see, you had this 90° weir in the water, see, it's two inches through it. And you, you knew how much water was going through it, supposedly, you, you's used a pan to measure it, see, exactly, with a stop watch. Then we used a little current meter, velocity meter, and see if that would compared with the current we're drawing on the 90° weir.

KS: Okay.

CH: And just going for information, to check information, more than anything else.

KS: One of the questions you might be able to answer for me, big, heavy equipment: tractors, road graders, steam shovels -- were they operated by the CCC fellows?

CH: No.

KS: They weren't?

CH: The biggest thing operated by a CC was the dump trucks, something like that, or tractors, or--

KS: Yeah, okay. But none of the road graders or anything else?

CH: No.

KS: How would you rate the quality of work--I know, you know, first of all, the quality of work that you've done, and then the quality of work that you think the CCC did as a whole?

CH: I think, I think they done excellent work, myself. Because the boys seemed to take

pains with it, and certainly the bossmen I knew over them, they were very sincere in their efforts. I mean, on the building of your trails, the ones I knew, well, I knew them all in that Camp Number 1 over there, and other camps did a lot of it. They was very careful about what they got done, so it was done right. And the boys, well, they seemed to take an interest in it, really. I worked with WPA guys--

KS: Oh, they were up here in the Park?

CH: No, that's after I left the Park--

KS: After you left the Park, okay.

CH: But, the WPA guys, I got a lot of work out of them. But, funny thing is, the WPA guys is like the CC boys would be, the ones I got from the west side of the state, in the hilly, farming section was ten times better than the ones that come out of the tidewater, the cotton and the peanut section.

KS: Really?

CH: Yep. I could go down and, say, oh, back to Roanoke, I done a job in Radford, there. Put in all the () stations that would clear the lake. It was about six men.

KS: Now, this is after the CCC?

CH: Yeah. And I just, I just did it in '38, '37 or '38, right after I come out of the CC's, got out of the CC camps, you know, work up there. I had nine men, I'd done more work than I was doing down in the flat country with fifteen! It takes coal miners (). But I find that everybody up here seemed to be very interested in their work, but . . .

KS: Yeah, took a lot of pride in what they did?

CH: Yep.

KS: You know, it seems to repeat itself when fellows like yourselves come back, and they come back because of the pride that they did have in serving here. Uh--

CH: I--

KS: Go ahead, I'm sorry.

CH: I never met anybody in to the CC camp that had anything bad to say about it.

KS: No, I haven't, either. No, I've done quite a few interviews--

CH: And if you, if you find him, you're going to find the biggest liar in the United States, because he's lying like a dog because it wasn't there.

KS: You talked a little while back about extra jobs that you did. Do you recall of, CCC boys being used as tour guides, for the visitors that came in?

CH: Not legally.

KS: Not legally.

CH: Huh uh.

KS: Okay.

CH: Now, I'd taken care of the weather bureau station at Camp 2, Big Meadows, for a while.

KS: Oh, tell us about that.

CH: Well, I just go over there every afternoon at 6:00, get the high, low reading, wet and dry bulb and rain, and barometric reading, then come back to the camp and look up the, you know, the dewpoints and different things. That was a, about three years of that. Every afternoon () chow, and go to Camp 2 and get the weather reading report, rain or shine.

KS: Now, what did you do with, after you got the information, did you phone it in

somewhere?

CH: I would turn it in, it'd go in to the Geological Survey and the State. See, I was hooked up with the work I was doing between the State Conservation Commission and the Geological Survey was hooked up together.

KS: While you were in the CCC's?

CH: Yeah, yeah. See, the State Conservation Commission and the Geological Survey worked fifty-fifty on all that stuff.

KS: Okay, as far as financing and supporting it?

CH: Yeah, umm hmm.

KS: I see, I see.

CH: And then, now that CC boys as guides, I think I know where that got started. I done that myself. You get short of money, you get a pass to go home. You come down to Panorama, and stand around, be a lot of people want to get through the Drive. And see, the only way to get through the Drive was, practically, Congressional pass. You'd say, oh, heck, I'm going to go home, but I'll take you here, come on. You get in the car with them, you ride up to the guard gate and show them your pass, CC work, take them through.

KS: What did it cost to get in, into the Park then?

CH: Nothing.

KS: I mean, for you, but, I mean, for a tourist.

CH: No, no money, you had to have a pass.

KS: Just a pass?

CH: Yeah, from your congressman, or politician or something.

KS: Oh, really? It was, it, you know, they weren't free to come through the Park?

CH: No, not for a long time.

KS: Okay, what, what era are we talking about, year, early years, '33?

CH: Yeah--

KS: '34?

CH: Something, yeah, umm hmm.

KS: And then, then it open up to the public?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Oh, okay.

CH: So we'd take them through to Swift Run Gap, we'd make them move along pretty good, getting near, we'd get down about 7 or 8:00 in the morning at Panorama. They'd give you ten or fifteen bucks, to get through.

KS: Oh, that's fine.

CH: So then we'd get there and there'd be a bunch in there wanting to, you know, to go through and I'd say, well, I'm in camp up there. You never tell them the truth. Say I've got to go back to camp. I mean, I can take you through. And you'd take them through to Panorama and it'd be another, that'd be as much money as you made, see but didn't pay but \$3 [\$5] a month, you know, if you're just a CC member, the other money went home.

KS: Right.

CH: So you'd make 25 or 30 dollars. In about a month or so, they got wise to that (laughs).

KS: That was a little racket you were running!

CH: Yeah.

KS: Well, you know, while we're on some of your personal experiences there, is, you know, what were your first impressions of the Park?

CH: You know, when I heard, a rumor I bet you nobody's told you about, is, see that's about the time at of the beginning of World War and Germany built that big Maginot Line. It was a rumor started that that's what this Skyline Drive was intended for, in case the Germans invaded our, north, you know, Washington and they come through, there's no, they come through the mountains, they'd have a place to put their guns and encampment up, to turn them.

KS: That was a rumor?

CH: It got started if you, well, see Franklin Cliffs, was a Civil War battle there. You know, when you go across to Stanley.

KS: Yeah, that's where Jackson moved his army across, to Fredericksburg.

CH: Yeah, yeah. So somebody was probably talking about the army coming across here, and rumor got started that this was being built, and these overlooks, put gun emplacements to shoot the Nazis as they come across the Piedmont section. (laughing)

KS: Not a bad idea.

CH: No.

KS: How about the Park, did, you came from, you know, basically a, an urban setting, you know, and now you're out in the mountains of Virginia. Did you have any problems adjusting to that?

CH: No, because I was always a hunter.

KS: Oh, you like it, okay.

CH: In fact, I killed a lot of grouse up here.

KS: There was a lot of grouse?

CH: Oh, yeah. That's for the--

KS: What were the, what was the animal life like, in the Park?

CH: () you had a wildcat or two up there--

KS: Yeah, was, were there many deer or bear or anything?

CH: Deer was very scarce and bear was very scarce. I saw, never saw a live deer in the Park 'til after I left to come back in here. I did find one deer hide down in the hollow where some local guy had killed a deer.

KS: Well, the Park, from what I've read, took a herd, part of a herd of deer out of Mount Vernon and transplanted them here in this Park.

CH: Well, down in where I was raised in the flatland, Piedmont section, you never saw a deer, but now they're down there like rabbits, or worse. But down in the Whiteoak Canyon below where camp was, there's a lot of grouse down there. And a lot of trout.

KS: Did you hunt?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Did you have a, did you have a gun in camp?

CH: Well, see, that was before the ranger, ranger come in. CC camp sergeant, yup, he had a gun, you know, military, one of those ()- type shot guns, 12 gauge. He and I'd go down there, until he got mad at me. He never did hunt grouse.

KS: Why did he get mad at you?

CH: He couldn't hit 'em. (laughter) See, when the grouse gets up, it sounds like the whole country blowing up, but he's not going that fast. And, if it's a tree close to you, he's going to get the

tree between you. () comes up, and they stretch their wings out to make that sail, that's when you blast them. He'd take two shots at them and he'd shoot too quick, and I'd get about three to his one, and he got so he wouldn't let me go with him any more.

KS: Were there any, any personalities, people that you, you, you remember really, really well, from your days, friends or, or officers, somebody who stands out in your mind?

CH: Oh, in the camps?

KS: Yeah.

CH: Well, really, the first captain we had, in the tents, Captain Rissler [sp?], we'd all hated to see him go. And Captain Murphy come in, he was good. And there was one, a lieutenant, we didn't particularly like. And other than that, they was all very good and worked with you. And that was, was . . .

KS: You enjoyed it, then?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Did you ever have an opportunity to meet any of the mountain people?

CH: Yeah, quite a few of them.

KS: And the families?

CH: Yeah, umm hmm.

KS: What'd you think of them?

CH: I liked them all, myself. They were very, I can't say peculiar, but, they looked an outsider over pretty close, you know, coming in. Well, I knew that before I come up there. If a mountaineer ever invites you to break bread with him, you'd better have it, because

() be his enemy as long as he lives. I know I went over one time in Dark Hollow to get some

bootleg whiskey from one of them over there named Broyles, Jim Broyles. Saturday afternoon had been on fire watch in the rain, so I was going to play poker, that's when I was pulled out of the CC camp, then. Going to do some drinking and playing penny ante poker, and I went down to get some whiskey from him, he asked me to break bread, break bread with him, have supper. Boiled turnips, boiled potatoes, boiled cabbage (laughs), maybe that old mountain hog. And the coffee they bought it green and roasted it right there in the () that made the coffee.

KS: Okay.

CH: And I sat down, tin plates, and I had never eaten boiled turnips before in my life, I hated the things. But see, you couldn't leave nothing on the plate, that was an insult. So, I eat it all, and I, I've been eating boiled turnips ever since then, best things I ever tasted! (laughter) But whenever I wanted a meal like that, I always'd go see old man Jim about 5, 6:00 on Saturday afternoon to get a pint of whiskey and whatever I wanted.

KS: And then eat with him?

CH: Eat with him, yeah. And that's about the only ones I really knew. We had one there right close to camp there, Ed Parks, but he was mean little round sucker. He had a couple of girls that was sort of loose around the camp and he watched those (). I don't like to get close to him or his girls, either one, because he's, he'd kill you.

KS: And what was his name?

CH: Parks.

KS: Parks?

CH: It was a place right over the mountain there, about--

KS: We have a, excuse me just a second, but we have a picture of a place, an old shack,

and on the inscription on the picture is that it was used as a house of ill repute.

CH: Is that close to Skyland?

KS: Yeah, I believe it was, yeah, it was, it, is this what we're talking about, the same Parks?

CH: I () it could have been.

KS: Yeah, okay.

CH: 'Cause if--

KS: I mean, did, were they professionals? Plying their trade, or . . . or, or,
just . . .

CH: Well, free-lancers.

KS: Free-lancers, okay.

CH: But, they claim there's a cem--some graves down below the CC Camp 1. About four or five () you know, just rumors, that he'd killed them. Because right over the mountain on the valley side is the Appalachian Trail, and they'd found some bodies down over the cliff, 'deed, I almost think they got drunk and fell off the cliff. So, I don't know, but he had a bad rep for that. They called it his private cemetery, and now whether it was or not, I don't know, but, I didn't want nothing to do with him, anyway. I done some work here around his house and, his girls are running around and trying to make a, get you to make a pass at them.

KS: What kind of work did you do, for him?

CH: I didn't, I was right below his house, I was putting in--

KS: Oh, you were working on the CCC, okay. Let's pause just a second, I want to show you something. Alright.

KS: Okay, let, now, I pulled this photo out of the file, it's classification number

H-52-99 and it shows George Parks' house. Now, you're familiar with this house?

CH: Yeah.

KS: And, tell us a little bit about the house, and about the, Pearl, and--

CH: Well, really, all I, all I know is the hearsay, to be honest with you.

KS: Okay.

CH: It, this house has a memory because, this would have been--what's the date on this?

KS: Oh, the date is 1934. Now, the description here, location on this says "1,000 feet east of Skyline Drive"

CH: Yeah, yeah, I know it--

KS: --southeast of Old Skyland road.

CH: Yeah.

KS: And under the remarks it says, "Pearl Parks and Della Mrs. Skylar Dodson, ran a nightclub for the CCC."

CH: Della, Della Dodson and, and they called her "Red" Parks.

KS: Okay.

CH: But they really done more of their goodness in Luray than they did here. I really, I'd never heard of, well anyway, there's that, that was going on. I mean--

KS: Okay, it was more in Luray, where they, yeah.

CH: But, uh, see, uh, this Parks' son lived there until his wife got burnt up, you see, with kerosine.

KS: Okay, now his wife was Deland Taylor's daughter, right?

CH: See, was that Della, there was one named Ruth, and this Pearl, then he had a son,

Bernie or something. Lived down in Whiteoak Canyon from where Deland Taylor's house, you know where his house was? That road that goes down into Whiteoak Canyon--

KS: Yes, yes.

CH: --about a mile, maybe, down in there, is where that Bernie Taylor lived down there.

KS: Oh, I see.

CH: You know, I thought my memory had gone on me, but indeed I haven't done too bad here.

KS: Well, actually, once, I find out that once you get going and trigger it, that's why we have questions set up, it helps out a lot. Now, while we're on the subject, you know, this is, this is of course one-sided--

CH: Now that could have happened, no, this picture's

KS: Does it look familiar at all?

CH: Yeah, the old shack looks very familiar.

KS: Yeah. Of course, this looks like a very, you know, poor, poor shack. The people who lived in the mountains, that you've come to know, would you say they were poor?

CH: Financially, yes.

KS: But rich in other ways?

CH: Yeah. In other words, they had no, really had no need for money. See, they had the churches give them stuff, you know, back in there, and they're raising all of their food. All they had to buy was sugar, and salt and pepper.

KS: Was a lot of things donated to these people?

CH: You had the Episcopal church in part of the area, you know, had missionaries that

could give you clothes, and stuff like that.

KS: Quite regularly, and then--

CH: Yeah.

KS: -and Skyland, the people at Skyland, I understand.

CH: And then, see, they made moonshine whiskey to get their ready cash. Cash flow.

KS: Was there a lot of, I mean, not everybody made moonshine--

CH: Oh, that was a profession. They, they competed against each other on the quality of the whiskey. () See, most of those old moonshiners had taught their son moonshining and made illegal whiskey before Prohibition. Then, they kept on making it anyway, after Prohibition was over. Most of them had a 65 gallon still, that's about the size they used. When they first brought the rangers up here, down in Whiteoak Canyon, they found, ranger found a still. He was from out of the city. He had his little hatchet, he just cut the worm in two pieces, cut about four or five holes in the still, walked off and left it. And reported he'd found the still and destroyed it. He went back in about three weeks, they found the still, the same one, the guy done patched it up () worm and had it going! (laughter)

KS: But there was a lot of distilling going in there?

CH: Oh, yes, oh, yes.

KS: Okay. Did you, now you mentioned before, of, buying some liquor. Did a lot of the CCC boys get into moonshine, or . . .

CH: Not too much, no--

KS: Not too many?

CH: No, no. Very few.

KS: Drunkenness wasn't a problem, then?

CH: They'd go down to Luray and get a beer or something.

KS: Oh, okay.

CH: And then there was, uh, can't think of the name of the house they used to buy us a drink, you could buy drinks in Luray. You had to cross a bridge, going west, first street to your left. And up about a half a block was a house set up--Christian's, was the name, I believe, and you could buy it by the drink.

KS: Was it a tavern, or a bar?

CH: No, it was bootleg.

KS: Oh, bootleg! (laughs) Okay, you can buy it in there.

CH: I went up there one night to get me a pint. Knocked on the door, had the money in my hand, fifty cents, who opened the door but a cop! (laughter)

KS: I guess you beat a hasty retreat?

CH: I left () faster than I did going in there. He didn't get me, though, but, I stopped going up there asking, looking for any whiskey.

KS: Getting back a little bit more, we're kind of interested in, in the mountain people. Did they, did they spend a lot of time off the mountain, visiting, or traveling out and about . . .

CH: No, about the only--

KS: They stayed pretty close to home?

CH: About the only thing that those mountaineers would go for, every ninety days was when they had circuit courts in the counties. They'd go to that.

KS: Okay.

CH: And maybe if they had a little fair or carnival, but, they wasn't much mixers.

KS: They weren't mixers.

CH: Yeah.

KS: Now, there was a lot of roads that went through the Park when you were here. I mean, right now, you, the only way you can cross the Park is at the entrance stations.

CH: Well, there wasn't too many, had one at Franklin Cliffs that crossed the route--

KS: Is that Red Gate? Or, or . . .

CH: That's right down below, this side of Big Meadows.

KS: Okay, yeah, I--

CH: Then they had one, well, then they put that down to Hoover lodge, see, they built that in, uh, 1929, or '30. '29. See, down to Criglersville, and they had one up there. And there weren't no more up the mountain until you got down to, what is that, Dean Mountain Picnic Ground, I guess. Then from there to 33 you didn't have any more.

KS: Were there trails, a lot of trails, you know, private roads?

CH: No.

KS: Now, how were you treated by the mountain people?

CH: Well, more or less, being I'm from Virginia, piedmont section, and my father's people was raised in the piedmont section, at the foot of the mountain, I never had no trouble with them. None that (). I could walk down the mountain, and they all knew me, though. I could walk up on a still and they'd keep running it, they wouldn't stop. Somebody else walked down there, they'd take off.

KS: I see.

CH: I wouldn't bother them.

KS: Were most of the houses rather poor, or were they, some of them, you know, I know they were plain, but, the distinction between, you know, a mountain family home would be actually run down or comfortable?

CH: Well, they's log houses . . .

KS: Right.

CH: And they kept them pretty well clean. And they had low ceilings, you see, the ceiling would be no higher than the top of that door. And that's on account of the heat.

KS: And that's about seven and a half feet.

CH: Yeah, () on account of heat. You know, and then they all slept in the attic. And most of them was very clean people.

KS: Very clean, okay.

CH: Yeah.

KS: You mean, considering the, you know, the way they were living?

CH: Yeah. They kept things, they had, you know, had a spring close by and lot of them would make their own potash for soap, they'd burn hickory wood or something, take the ash, you know, make a () for the soap. And, well, they's just fairly clean people, that was all. Decent people, I mean, you just, well, didn't have no need for luxuries we'd always been born and raised with, not if your house is always clean.

KS: Right. How about their relationship with the CCC? I mean, was it a problem? Did they resent it, the boys coming in, or the Park?

CH: Ummmm, no, no, no, I'd never say it because the only trouble they had, they had two boys, was the name, Della?

KS: Della.

CH: Claimed tried to rape her.

KS: Oh, Della. (laughter) That would have been, that must have been really interesting. What became of that problem?

CH: Well, they went to the CC camp and old Captain Murphy was here and he thought it was their fault. () get into state law.

KS: Okay.

CH: That was about all, but, () these bootleggers down here, moonshine (), most everybody in the family wore, in the winter time wore long () CC underwear! (laughter)

KS: Was, were the mountain people rather religious people, would you say? I mean, did they go to church a lot?

CH: Yeah, umm hmm.

KS: Most of them were Baptist.

CH: Yeah, Baptist.

KS: Yeah.

CH: And holy rollers. There was church, what you call a Church of God, now, something like that, ()--

KS: Oh, okay, and that was active here in the mountains? And of course--

CH: Well, a lot of them, you see, follow along with what they have () missionaries, the Episcopal church has missionaries in there. They was very reliable, whatever they told you, you

could take it to the bank, I mean, it wasn't no--

KS: They were honest people.

CH: Yeah, honest people.

KS: Very good.

CH: Well, naturally you had a few of them's crooks, but, I mean, 99% of them--

KS: Just like any community, I mean, you have your good and the bad, right?

CH: Well, my father, and he used to deal with them up in the mountains and it'd be on a handshake. He bought a farm from one, two hundred some acres, on a handshake, and the guy give him the deed to the land.

KS: Your dad?

CH: Yeah. The man give, this is on a handshake and they give him a deed to the land, and the whole works, then paid him ().

KS: Is that right?

CH: With a handshake.

KS: Was that in the Park?

CH: No, just a fellow who had been in the Park, and Park had bought him out. And he come down in the flat land, and he bought, and he didn't like it down there. He wanted to go back to the mountains, he wanted a place abutting the Park. Down off 33, south on 33. And he sold daddy the farm, it was 260 acres just on a handshake when they didn't know each other all their life, anyway.

KS: I'll be darned. That's interesting . . . This interview continues on tape 2. Fast forward to the end.

[END SIDE B, TAPE 1]

[BEGIN SIDE A, TAPE 2]

KS: Okay, now we're back. Alright. Some of the rangers have submitted questions to me that they're specifically interested in. Let me go through some of these, and see if you can shed some light on some of these questions. What did Big Meadow area look like before the dead chestnut trees were moved? Was there a lot of dead trees in the meadow?

CH: Well, like a big, well, the land was like a grazing area, which it was. But the trees, dead, looked like a ghost forest. See, that's the, it's a whitish-looking, so with the other trees, it really looked like a ghost forest when you're driving up on it.

KS: Were they pretty thick and dense, the forest?

CH: Yeah. That was really, as I remember, it was more or less what they called a chestnut orchard.

KS: Okay.

CH: You know, where the mountaineers had them (), that was one of their cash flow crops, was chestnuts.

KS: Yeah, that's before they died.

CH: Yeah.

KS: Is this the area where you got your rails for Gettysburg?

CH: No, I got my rails, do you know where Deland Taylor lives? Right past Crescent Rock?

KS: Yes, yes.

CH: Go down to your left, into the Whiteoak Canyon. That's where I got them from. Now, now, over at Camp 2, now, they had a sawmill over there. And they sawed a lot of lumber, chestnut lumber out of those trees.

KS: The CCC did?

CH: It's a CC camp, yeah, but where the lumber went to, I don't know. (laughs)

KS: Okay. Now, most of the trees, then, if the meadow was open grassland, then most of the trees were around the meadow?

CH: Most of these trees were right in there where you got that campground and that store-like in there, right on the Drive. You know, it's a gas station where you turn there off of the Drive, and you got a souvenir shop right in there. Maybe 100 or so, 80 acres in there.

KS: Now, there's a pond in the meadow, now. Do you recall that?

CH: No.

KS: Where there was a big pond?

CH: Huh uh.

KS: No. Let me see, where do we go now? Do you remember the, do you remember the glider club that operated there?

CH: Yeah, uh huh. Duponts.

KS: Du--is that the Dupont family?

CH: Yeah.

KS: The Duponts, I take it?

CH: Yeah, uh huh.

KS: Okay, can you tell us a little bit about that?

CH: Well, on the morning they had those gliders over there, I mean, I was over there at them, and, they'd use a tow rope. Depending on the wind, it would take them off on that road like you're going down to Hoover Camp. Get 'em in the air. The wind's the other way, bring 'em back to the west.

KS: Oh, they took them off the, right off the road?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Oh, okay. And they would land on, of course, on the road, then?

CH: Then they'd come back there and land. Or else sometime land in the valley.

KS: Didn't that attract a lot of people up here?

CH: Not too many.

KS: It was just like a private club?

CH: I don't think that Drive was probably closed, anyway, cars couldn't get in here. You see it was blocked off. Now, one of them there one day, he got killed down in the Everglades, gliding. I've forgotten, I think it may have been Thomas, I've forgotten his name. But he went up here one afternoon and didn't have the instruments properly checked and he went over Massanutten Mountain and got up there about 10,500 feet, you know. He had the record at the time, but his instruments wasn't certified. And he come back, well, they had to build fires and () put lights up, along Big Meadows for him to get back to to land.

KS: Then they never took off off the Meadow, in other words, one of the questions the rangers gave me was when making the runway for the airplanes and gliders, what happened to all the rocks that were cleared away? So, evidently they used the road.

CH: There was no runway up there!

KS: That's all they used, was the road. Okay, that answers that question. Okay, did you ever see, did they ever burn or mow the Meadow when you were in camp?

CH: No.

KS: Just let it grow up?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Were they raising any cattle there, then?

CH: Not there, but going on towards the Big Meadows, going towards Swift Run Gap, on your left, the family of Longs, from down in Stanley, Virginia, kept cattle in there.

KS: Oh, yeah, okay. Now, how about the, do you recall any of the families that lived in the Meadows? I know the Weakleys were there, nearby the camp.

CH: Other than the Weakleys, there was the Phillips, living in near there.

KS: Phillips?

CH: Yeah. That's the one that I knew, right in that area.

KS: Was there a church in that area, a log church?

CH: I don't recall.

KS: Okay, somebody mentioned it, but--

CH: () two Phillips, well, one of them was in the CC camp, then, at Camp 2, and one was in Camp 3, from that Phillips family.

KS: Oh, they were, they lived right there and they were, had two boys in the camp?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Okay.

CH: One of them was right behind where Camp 2 was, right at the head of that Dark

Hollow. That water from Dark Hollow comes out of that low spot. So he'd walk that Dark Hollow stream.

KS: Oh, I see, right up there in the Meadow?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Alright. How about the nursery? Do you remember the nursery the CCC boys had there?

CH: No.

KS: Where they planted trees?

CH: No.

KS: Okay. Okay. Okay, we're getting there. Now, that takes care of those (). What I'd like to talk about, if you don't mind, a little bit about your, your post-CCC. Then we'll get into, I guess, your second term, (laughter) here. But, what did you do, you know, immediately after you left the CCC?

CH: Got to think, now. Well, after I left the CC, I went with the Geological Survey.

KS: Now, that's the government?

CH: Yeah.

KS: And what did you do there?

CH: Stream fluid measurement, town water supplies.

KS: Now, was that all through the state of Virginia, or all over the--

CH: State of Virginia.

KS: State of Virginia.

CH: In fact, I covered the state of Virginia for a couple of years. I don't think there's a

road or county or town I haven't been, except over on the peninsula.

KS: And when you talk about water flow, are we talking about streams?

CH: Rivers, streams, yeah.

KS: How about springs? Did you continue that kind of work?

CH: Not, no more than one little town of Paris, Virginia. I opened up some springs there for water supply. Other than that, it was all surface supplies.

KS: And what did you do with the, what did they do with the information that you gathered?

CH: You know, I thought when I was first started on it, they'd gone nuts. But now, it's done to, for building highways, bridges, industry, you know, the peak flows and you have what they call the hundred year floods. So when the highway's going to build a bridge, they go to the Geological Survey and say, okay, what's your maximum flow for such and such a creek? And they can give you the flow in second feet or cubic feet a second. So you know how big an opening to build, to keep the road from washing away.

KS: I see.

CH: Then--

KS: So this information was, was pretty important for development of the state?

CH: This was right after that big flood in the Ohio River down in Mississippi.

KS: What year was this, about?

CH: '37. And '38.

KS: Okay.

CH: So, that's like now, you see, you have a flood up in here, they'll tell you what the flood

water's going to be in Richmond the next day or the following day? Well, that's from these gate stations.

KS: Oh, okay, yeah.

CH: And they got them all now with electronic flow outfitted, that gauges the elevation of the water at that point.

KS: I'll be darned.

CH: So, down at headquarters in Charlottesville and Richmond, they can dial long distance on those numbers and dial that tower, see the concrete towers that's built been here above where the flood waters should be. Now you can get back to height in feet and inches and hundredths, so then you got a rating curve, you look at your height on that, come across the rating curve and then it tells you how many seconds per feet.

KS: Down here on the Shenandoah River where 211 crosses it, I think that's, from what you describe, I think they have one of them there under the bridge.

CH: It is, they have one there.

KS: Yeah, and it gives you the height.

CH: Yeah.

KS: Because it has, I guess it must be automatic, because they have like an antenna, which would send out information.

CH: Yeah, umm hmm.

KS: That is interesting. And you've been, since you've left the CCC's, your career was always in this field?

CH: In water.

KS: In water. And then, what'd you do beyond that?

CH: Well, from there, I went, things was dull. I went to Newport News for about four months. Operating busses and streetcars. (laughs) That's when they had integration. And at night time, it wasn't safe.

KS: Excuse me just a second. And it wasn't safe where you were driving?

CH: On the busses, yeah, I was operating street cars from Buffalo Beach into Newport News. And busses and streetcars all over Newport News. And that's when they had that, moved the blacks to the back.

KS: Oh, it was, oh, segregated then.

CH: So you'd get a lot of them killed, and I know we used to run down to the negro beach and () beach, part of it. Whenever I run that, you had great bags that you carried change in. I always got four or five dollars worth of nickels and put them in the bottom of that, and take that rope and wrap it around my wrist.

KS: Is that to protect yourself?

CH: Someone come at you, you take that bag of nickels, you could knock the pants off of him. So I left there and went to Radford () making powder. See, we was making, during the war, 800,000 pounds of powder a day, and I worked in the water department there.

KS: Okay, this is gunpowder?

CH: Yeah. And I'd never been in a water treatment plant in my life, but I went in there, I was on an inspection, you know, in this building. So when I went in there, got a job as an operator. So I'd copied the plans of the complete water treatment facility, which handled 36,000 gallons of water a minute. Which is pretty good 50-some million gallons a day. So what I done then, I traded

my day shift and evening shift for the midnight. 'Cause on the day shift, you had too many boss men. So then I'd taken an ICS course in sanitary engineering and I stayed on up for thirteen months. And go to VPI some, to pick up some stuff.

KS: What's VPI now?

CH: Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

KS: Okay. And you took courses there?

CH: Yeah. And along with this other course, within thirteen months I was made superintendent of all the water and waste treatment at Hercules Powder Company.

KS: Now, did you stay with Hercules until you were up here?

CH: I stayed all through the war.

KS: All through the war.

CH: But at the end of the war, I could have stayed on in the home office, up there, Mr. Seigal and Dickerson wanted me to stay, but the company politics at that particular plant, I didn't fit in it. They had a guy that was going to be made the superintendent over the plant, completely (). But all during the war, his people were buying him shotguns, and boats and all that crap, and they come to me to give them money, I said, I'm not paying for my job, I got, I'm working here, I got four brothers in the navy. I'm not working to make () all this crap. So I wasn't good politics. I could have stayed on, () would have protected me () you don't want to work under those conditions.

KS: Then where you'd go after Dupont, then?

CH: At Hercules, I worked.

KS: Hercules, I'm sorry.

CH: Well, I worked with a chemical company in Baltimore, and made water works

chemicals equipment. Activated Alum. I was the chief engineer and sales manager there for about, I went there in '45 and left there in '50. And I traveled the United States, part of Canada, Mexico, and into Cuba a couple times. That's before Castro went in.

KS: And that, doing water?

CH: Yeah. Well, I was selling equipment.

KS: Oh, selling equipment.

CH: And chemicals, and trouble shooting.

KS: Oh, I see.

CH: In other words, see, an expert is somebody 50 miles from home. (laughter). Now, in Charlottesville, after I got in Charlottesville, () all over the country, (), you know, as a professional, and a trouble shooter. But at my own town, where I was raised in Charlottesville, I was to come back here as director of utilities, they had to get somebody else in to tell me what to do. So, I mean, I didn't care, but I (). I gained a world of knowledge in water just by going all over the country, you know, to those plants.

KS: Yeah, right on the job.

CH: Yeah. And we knew, I short cut some things, and then I taught at VPI for about twenty years on the summer school for the water works. And 1969 I got the Water Works Man of the Year for Virginia, national award. And I got the state award the same year for sewage.

KS: Now these water works, are these the ones that supply water to communities?

CH: Yeah. And I was always a nut, then, still am, on pollution of your water supplies. I mean, it's ridiculous what they're doing, I mean, it is very few clean streams left. And, I mean, a politician, I've got a little, small plant, and they let him get, he makes a good donation to him and they

let him get by with murder. Well, one case in Charlottesville, this guy had this one drum of this chemical, and let it get away from him during a rain up there, and he killed fish and everything in the river, down the river, for eight miles. Dead. You know, but nobody knew () expected to know that. Politician let him get by with it. So I fought that all the time, and the ACW, I mean the PPN fought me hard, and give me the devil, a radical, and after I left after about three years called me back and wanted to give me a distinguished service award. ()

KS: Yeah. So how'd you, where'd you finish up your career, then?

CH: I retired from Charlottesville in '74, and went down to Gordonsville, Virginia, as a town manager. () hired for, and I stayed there ten years. And it got so your councilmen was retirees and bureaucrats out of Washington. And those guys'll run you nuts. I know why the government's going broke, now, with their dues, so I quit that and went to Myrtle Beach. And tried to get a job down there, they was building a new water plant, but after about two weeks, they wrote me a letter and said that they had a bunch of applicants and I wasn't in the top ten, so I figured the hell with it. And I was talking to Colonel Adams, the head of the state health department, he said, look, tell me who they are, said I'll call them up, said, I can get you the job, I said, no, I (). That's when I went to the high school as a security guard.

KS: I see.

CH: Yeah. And I enjoy that more than any job I ever liked.

KS: I'll bet, I'll bet. Well, let me ask you this question. I think this is the time we want to ask it. How do you think the CCC affected your life?

CH: Well, in fact, I was, I didn't know what I was going to be, I had no idea in the world. In other words, I don't know what I'd be, I'm being honest with you.

KS: If it wasn't for the CCC's.

CH: Yeah. Because I didn't, at that time there wasn't no money and daddy would have, would have sent me to college, probably had to have borrowed the money. And I wouldn't let him do it, because in case I busted out, he'd be paying off the notes, (). The CC camps, I mean, and I know not only me, I know a lot of fellows it's helped. It, I wouldn't have no idea what I, I probably would be in, working on automobiles, or cars or trucks, or something, like a service station job, I imagine.

KS: What was the last grade in school that you attended?

CH: Well, I finished high school.

KS: Finished high school.

CH: Yeah.

KS: For those days, that was unusual, wasn't it?

CH: I finished high school in '31, yeah, '31, no . . . come on in. (sound of people entering the room) Yeah, '31.

KS: Alrighty. Well, okay, Cecil, I want to thank you for sharing, you know, a part of your life, and for allowing us to interview you, and of course for your contributions to Shenandoah National Park.

[tape stops, then restarts]

KS: Okay, we're going to informally continue this interview. What we have is a company photo of the boys here at Skyland. And Cecil's going to identify some for us.

CH: That boy there is Richards--

KS: Okay, now, wait a minute.

CH: He's from, he's from down--

KS: Richards?

CH: Yes, down around Stanley, Virginia.

KS: Okay, let me, let me mark that so we can, keep it . . . now, what's his name again?

CH: Richards, R-I-C-H-A-R-D-S.

KS: His last name?

CH: I don't know.

KS: That was his last name, Richards.

CH: Yeah, mmm hmm.

KS: Who's that now? Point him out for me, please.

CH: Right here.

KS: Okay, let me stick that there. Now, just put this here. Now, this piece of paper here, James Batman, who's James Batman, now?

CH: He's one of the, I don't see him, I see him right here, I think, I believe. Now this, now this is pointing to Stipes, so that's Stipes, there, he's the sergeant. Over there is Stipes.

KS: S-T-I-P-S, right?

CH: Yes.

KS: And what was his first name?

CH: Odell. I believe it was Odell Stipes.

KS: Odell. Okay.

CH: And this is Captain Murphy.

KS: Okay. Okay, let's put this right here, that's Captain Murphy, okay. God, you know a lot of them!

CH: I don't know these guys here.

KS: Jim Burner is right here. Now, I see here, in this picture, you had a band?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Was it a good one?

CH: A drum and bugle, fife, drum and fife.

KS: Okay, drum and fife corps.

CH: This one right here, Branham, James Branham. I'm thinking my memory's still pretty good.

KS: Help me with the spelling on that. B-

CH: B-R-A-N-A-H-A-M, Branham, B-R-A-N-H-A-M, Branham. B-R-A-N-H-A-M.

KS: N-H-A-M. Okay.

CH: Right here.

KS: That's not too bad. Did you ever get involved with any of the sports that they had, you know, in camp?

CH: No, we had a football () I wasn't much on sports up there.

KS: Okay. Did you follow any of the teams?

CH: No.

KS: No, okay. Now, how long were you in the, how long were you in the CCC before, when this picture was taken? Now this was taken, August '34.

CH: I'd been in there just about a year.

KS: Uh huh.

CH: I went in in '33.

KS: Umm hmm.

CH: I was the one ().

KS: You must have been in one of the first groups, then.

CH: Second group.

KS: Second group in.

CH: I know all the faces, I can't think of their names.

KS: Yeah.

CH: Yeah. That one there, you know that one is Ed Wilkerson.

KS: Who?

CH: Ed Wilkerson. W-I-L-K-E-R-S-O-N.

KS: W . . .

CH: I-L-K-E-R-S-O-N.

KS: Wilkerson. And that's right . . .

CH: That's it, right here.

KS: Right here.

CH: The bald headed () right here.

KS: This guy right here.

CH: Umm hmm.

KS: I got that.

CH: If I had had the list, you know, of the names, you know, of the enrollees--

KS: You could put them there?

CH: I could--

KS: You know that's one thing we don't have, we don't have any of those at all. That's why I like to collect the names. It's nice to put a name with a face.

CH: Trying to find one more, () who worked in my crew, Jimbo Middleton, but . . .
Right here, Ed Collier.

KS: Okay, where was he from? Was he local?

CH: Stanardsville.

KS: Stanardsville. What I'll do, I'll get this all worked out . . .

This fellow here, he just donated this to the, to the Park, this fellow here. Okay, that's very good.

[tape stops, then starts again]

KS: Now what were you saying about, what were you saying about the mountain people setting the woods on fire?

CH: They'd set, yeah, they'd set the fires out, in order to get the work. They'd pay them for fighting fire.

KS: And so they would set fires so they would have some work to do.

CH: Yeah, you could get, like a mountain, right down on Little Stony Man, they got that one out, another one's going over there between there and Big Meadows. So they got that one and there's another one going. I believe they caught some of them there. One of the men had a copper

still and he had another () big apple butter kettle, and he'd take his whisky barrel and saw it in half (), put that over the, an apple butter kettle. Then put the mash around it, and make some moonshine on that. It was against the law to have a still with a worm on it.

KS: That's the coil, right?

CH: Yeah.

KS: Yeah, it still is. They do catch boys down here once in a while with moonshine.

CH: Well, these bird watchers and () guys, flying with wings, and a lot of the people just sight-seeing from the air, it's fun. Down there where I'm at now, they're hunting marijuana.

KS: Yeah, they come in with military planes, now.

CH: For marijuana?

KS: Helicopters. And I think they can pick them up on ultraviolet, infrared or some sort of a scope.

CH: See, they can see that marijuana's color. It's a distinct different color.

KS: Yeah, well, I hear that one of the popular things to do is just to, here, this is done for your signature. You can look it over if you like. They, they like to plant them in the middle of corn fields, so that you can't see them, but I bet you can see them from the air. And that's your address, I wrote it there for you. My signature's here, and then when you're ready, you can sign right there. And I will send you a copy of this.

CH: ()

KS: Oh, yeah, we want you to have a copy.

END OF INTERVIEW

Interview
with
CECIL GLENWOOD HANEY

October 28, 1997

Interviewer: Ken Steeber
Transcribed by: Joy K. Stiles

Shenandoah National Park

Luray, Virginia

Original manuscript on deposit at
Shenandoah National Park Archives

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Tape 1, Side A:

Cecil Haney is a former Civilian Conservation Corps enrollee stationed in Shenandoah National beginning in October, 1933, and serving almost five years. His primary job was developing water sources for developed areas in the Park, from the Piney River area south to Swift Run Gap at Route 33. Haney was first enrolled as a regular CCC worker, then continued work as a Local Experienced Member (LEM). He also served another 15 month appointment under an assumed name.

Haney was assigned to Camp NP-1, Skyland. In the second group of CC boys brought to Shenandoah, he was initially barracked in a tent the first winter. He reminisces about winter, living in a tent and describes the exact location of the Skyland camp, near where George Pollock held his "indian pow-wows". Haney talks about ways enrollees earned extra money by keeping barracks stoves going through the night and by cutting hair. Enrollees who went AWOL are reviewed, which leads to comments about camp food and a strike conducted by enrollees protesting a new cook. Haney didn't feel there was much friction between Virginia and Pennsylvania enrollees, and while acknowledging inter-camp rivalry, he feels this portrayed a deep loyalty the boys possessed. Haney took advantage of educational classes offered, but felt he learned more through on-the-job training.

Haney was initially assigned to a crew removing dead chestnut trees in the Big Meadows area but had friends from the Geological Survey request his transfer to their water works crew. This crew, made up of enrollees from all camps, identified water sources and developed those that could serve developed areas. Haney describes this work. He also worked a few weekends on a crew gathering dead chestnuts from Whiteoak Canyon and splitting them by hand for use as rails at Gettysburg National Military Park. Labeling it the worst job he had in the CCC, Haney tells of walking the telephone line from Big Meadows down to Criglersville, checking the line in preparation for Roosevelt's speech at the dedication of the Park on July 3, 1936. Overall, Haney feels the CCC performed quality work with pride.

Haney was in charge of taking weather readings at Big Meadows for about three years. He then tells of CCC boys, himself included, making extra money by going down to Swift Run or Panorama, getting in tourists' cars, and using their CCC pass to get the car onto the Drive, which was still not officially open to the public. He relates a rumor that Skyline Drive and its overlooks were being built as gun emplacements to defend the United States from Nazis during World War II.

Haney touches on wildlife present in the Park, then gets into a discussion of former mountain residents he knew. Moonshine is discussed, with Haney concluding that the vast majority of mountain residents were honest, dependable people.

Haney fields some specific questions on diverse topics submitted by current field rangers, including the chestnut "ghost" forest, glider plane flights at Big Meadows, cattle grazing, and meadow management. He then talks about his career following the CCC and then concludes the interview identifying a number of enrollees in a 1934 photograph of the CCC company at Skyland.

End of interview.

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