

**Quince Alvey**  
**Zion National Park Oral History Project**  
**CCC Reunion**  
**September 29, 1989**

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Jeff Frank: Jeff Frank, talking with Quince Alvey September 29, 1989, Zion National Park  
Zion Nature Center, this is the CCC Oral History.

Quince Alvey: I lived over in Escalante but I lived in Salt Lake and all my family is up there.  
So when I go up to Salt Lake I go straight up I-15. I've been through here, yes. I have a  
brother who lives over in Orderville, but you know I get over there occasionally but most  
of the time I've gone straight up.

Jeff Frank: If you were living in Escalante at the time (interrupted by Quince Alvey) in the  
1930's.

Quince Alvey: When I was, yes. I had just got out of school in June in '37 and on the 17 of July  
I joined the CC Camp at Bryce Canyon.

Jeff Frank: And you just, you heard about it from down the road?

Quince Alvey: Well, there's a lady who worked for the county that recruited everybody. And I  
think there was about six or seven, there is four of us here this time that went in the same  
day. We all went to school together and we came to the CC Camp together.

Jeff Frank: (chuckles) Did you, and you're all here today?

Quince Alvey: Yep, four of us are here.

Jeff Frank: (Chuckles)

Quince Alvey: Four of us are here and two of them I have never seen until they came  
yesterday, since we got out of CC camp.

Jeff Frank: (Laughs) How about that? That's great.

Quince Alvey: But I saw one of them up to the one at Bryce two years ago, I was up there. The  
one at Bryce Canyon.

Jeff Frank: So you went to Bryce, how did, did you just, did your folks take you down to  
Escalante?

Alvey: No, no this woman from the county took us over there and we got there after they talked  
to us, got all the paperwork done, they took us over to the infirmary, it was a tent and I  
remember old Dr. Clark he was the doctor and he came out with a great big long needle

and he said, "I broke all my needles but this one and this is what I'm going to have to use." And there's a little kid there that said that "Well, I'm going to go look at the park" and he never did show up.

Both: Laugh.

Alvey: Scared him clear out of there.

Both: Laugh.

Frank: So Dr. Clark liked to sort them out early huh?

Alvey: Yeah and the funny part about it was the woman I married after words was a Clark from Panguitch. She was born and raised in Panguitch, her last name was Clark and his name was Clark, see Dr. Clark.

Both: Laugh.

Frank: So what was the, you began at Bryce?

Alvey: Like I said, I worked on the campgrounds with Marion Willis, he was the foreman. And I didn't work there too long, maybe a month and they came and got me and took me over to the museum. So I worked in the museum for a while, you know, introducing people to things around Bryce. Then after, I wasn't there too long and they took me down to the checking station, I was checking cars in and out of the park, worked in the checking station.

Frank: And this was while you were with the three C's?

Alvey: Oh yeah. So, one day an old gray headed man pulled up the side of the checking station, got out and he came over and he said, "Is your name Alvey?" And I said, "Yes" and he said, "Well, which one of the Alvey's are you?" My brother was in too. And I said, "Well, I'm the youngest one." And he said, "Well, you're the one I want." He said, "I want you to go to the warehouse Saturday and get a truck, get all your stuff and go to Zion's Canyon. And when you're going in the warehouse" and he said, "I've already made you a leader." That was forty-five dollars see?

Frank: Wow.

Alvey: And he said, "You go down and take over the warehouse." So I went over Saturday and got the truck, loaded my stuff, came to Zion. First time I'd ever been to Zion. I'd never been here before. And came down to a warehouse, I took that over. I stayed in there eighteen months in warehouse, and I'll never forget the first Christmas Eve. They called me out to get some tools out. They had a snow slide up on Checker Board Mountain and

closed the road. So we spent all Christmas Eve up there getting the road open. And I said, "Boy what a way to spend Christmas."

Both: Laugh.

Alvey: Up there. So I stayed there like I said eighteen months and Frank and I had a dispute about something I don't know what it was and he took me out of the warehouse and I went on survey crew. And they were running the new water lines survey water line for the lodge. And the snow was about eight inches deep. It was cold. We use to park the trucks up on the north end of the camp and we had to walk right by the office and there was a bulletin board and it said Steady KP's Wanted. So I went and signed up to become a steady KP. First time Marion Willis saw me in that KP he said, "Good golly sakes a mighty Quince. What are you doing in here?" (Laughs) That's the way he used to talk, "good golly sakes a mighty." So I went on as steady KP then they started to train some cooks so I went a student cook, then I went second cook, then went first cook, then they promoted me to mess sergeant, then about, oh eight or ten months before I got out, they changed Scipio, that was the first sergeant, they changed he and I around and I went first sergeant and he went mess sergeant. But over those years, when I first got in we had a Cartwright as a first sergeant, here in Zion. And that winter, well it was early spring; he got pneumonia and died right here in camp. And that was when they had the flood and washed the bridge out and all of our trucks was over on the other side of the road, river. So everything was stranded over there and he died while the bridge was out. And that's when Scipio went first sergeant, was when.....

Frank: When you first came down here to Zion it would've been about the autumn of?

Alvey: September or October of 37'

Frank: 37' you come down here?

Alvey: Yeah.

Frank: And you began as a foreman in the tool shed.

Alvey: Uh huh, yeah, warehouse

Frank: Warehouse, excuse me. Um, was that for the three C camp or was that up here at the .....

Alvey: Uh huh, oh yes, we had a warehouse. We had the gas pump there and everything. We'd gas the trucks up and we had to keep track of how much gas we would use and check out all the tools.

Frank: Is this the Bridge Mountain Camp on the east side of the river or on this side?

Alvey: Yeah, the east side.

Frank: So the east side of the river.

Alvey: We had a gas pump right outside of it and that fall, we use to take the tank back and forth with us. Take it to Bryce in the summer and bring it back in the fall. We had a setting, we set it in a hole and the water come down, there was a little canal around the east side of it, and we had it about half covered up and the water running around it and the next morning the water was sitting up on top of the ground.

Both: Laugh.

Alvey: It had raised it up.

Both: [Laugh again.]

Frank: Boy that must have been quite the flood!

Alvey: Oh you bet. Well, there used to be a canal that runs around the east side of the camp. I don't know what it was for. I guess when this was all under cultivation, see, but it run on the east of, right around by the barracks.

Frank: So was your job then as crews would come in and out of the camp you'd issue the tools?

Alvey: Yeah, I issued all of the tools. I used to have to go out on the job and they didn't bring them back every day, they'd keep them, but I had to keep an inventory of the tools, all the time. I used to have to order the gas and check it when it came in that we got what we were buying.

Frank: Gasoline or oxygen, acetylene?

Alvey: No, gasoline for the trucks. I used to have to gas those up; you know how much they used and everything, compressors and whatever they were doing. But it was, and I had a little room for me, I stayed right in there, I had my bunk and everything right there. But I had to go down to the mess hall and everything, and down to the showers. They didn't have showers up there but it was interesting, you know, in the warehouse.

Frank: Hmm, did you also work with the blacksmith?

Alvey: No, I use to take tools to him. And the funny thing about it, the blacksmith at the time was a kid that I went to school with. Porter boy, from over to Escalante, and his father was a blacksmith so he was the blacksmith in the camp.

Frank: So you'd redo the tools?

Alvey: Yeah, the picks and we'd put handles in hammers and things you know. And if we got anyone to work we'd break the handles and we'd figure you didn't have to work, see?

Frank: Laughs.

Alvey: Break the handles, see.

Frank: That doesn't wash though?

Alvey: No, but I will never forget the first morning I opened the warehouse. The first guy that come in and wanted some tools wanted a cant hook. Now, I had heard stories about guys coming in wanted left handed screw drivers and wrenches, you know, and I said, "I don't know where they are. Do you know where they are?" And he hopped over, we had a counter and it had doors that we opened up, and he hopped over and went over and got one. And he said, "Here's a cant hook." There's a cant hook and a PV. The cant hook had a sharp point and the PV has a blunt point, and it's made for rolling logs, is what they are for. And I thought he was trying to pull my leg, see, he wanted a cant hook. Well, what would it sound to you? Can't hook. And I thought he was trying to pull my leg.

Frank: Well these kinds of tools.

Alvey: Yeah, and the hard thing about it was taking inventory. You had to inventory everything in the warehouse and where it was out on the job.

Frank: And you were there for about four or five months?

Alvey: I was there eighteen months.

Frank: You were there in the warehouse for eighteen months?

Alvey: Eighteen months.

Frank: And then after words you were sent on these...?

Alvey: Survey crew.

Frank: This was during the winter?

Alvey: Uh huh, oh yeah, you bet. It had about eight inches of snow up in Zion there.

Frank: Chuckles.

Alvey: So I went in the kitchen.

Frank: So, how long were you on that survey crew?

Alvey: Oh just a couple weeks. It wasn't very long, boy it didn't take me long to get all I wanted to do out in the cold weather. (chuckles)

Frank: And then you saw that permanent KP come out?

Alvey: Yeah, so I went and started that.

Frank: And then how long were you with the permanent KP?

Alvey: Oh I must have been I imagine a couple of months, probably. And then I went student cook, second cook, and all, I don't remember how long.

Frank: In the camp then you were probably here, what, two years or so?

Alvey: Well, I got in Bryce in July in 37' and I left here in I think it was March of 40'.

Frank: March of 40'? So you were here right about the time they were beginning the dorms all that across the street. And that was completed about 1940?

Alvey: I think they were starting those, yes. You see they had another camp on this side of the river. I don't remember the number of that, but they were a New York company there. But, when we went to Bryce in the summer, they went up to Cedar Breaks and Duck Creek and up there, so, we only saw them in the winter. And boy we had a rivalry here with baseball and basketball.

Frank: Did you?

Alvey: Oh yes! Yeah, I played on the basketball team and in fact they photographed some pictures, we use to play, we didn't have any place to play so we played down at the open basketball court down in Rockville. That's where we practiced, down there. But we played all over Southern Utah, St. George and Cedar City and all over.

Frank: Your three C basketball team?

Alvey: Yes.

Frank: Did you challenge other camps or high schools?

Alvey: No, we played in the Mormon Church league. M-Men they called it. We played the M-Men group, but we had a good team. There were two of us from Escalante and there was about four from Panguitch, we had played against in high school. And I think a couple from Richfield, and you see this big tall guy I was standing there talking to when you were hollering at me?

Frank: Yes.

Alvey: He played with us Dee Wood. He was taller than me.

Frank: Well I bet he was handy on that team.

Alvey: Yeah, but we had a good team. We had a Banks kid from Panguitch that I think was All-State in high school. Max Banks was a good ball player. And they had an Englestead boy from Panguitch that was; Max said he was a good player. But Max was killed down in Henderson, Nevada in a car wreck. It was a car wreck that killed Max. But we had a lot of fun. We had our problems. I used to take trucks to St. George, you know for dances, and Sherriff Crentch, every Friday night after the dance he would come get me and we would go up to the jail, and get the guys out of jail he'd put in jail. [Laughter.]

Frank: Take them back to the camp.

Alvey: Yeah, just back up to the jail and we would load them all and bring them back to camp.

Frank: So it sounds like the three C boys when they would get back into town they would have too much fun.

Alvey: Oh you bet! They were no angels, I'll tell you for sure.

Frank: Which camp would this have been?

Alvey: The what?

Frank: Camp. Which camp would these jail birds come from?

Alvey: They would come from ours?

Frank: [Laugh.]

Alvey: Yeah. When I was the mess sergeant they use to bring produce and stuff from California and one time a guy said you know Utah was dry? And he said, "I got some old California Ale, would you like a case?" It was real cheap, so I bought a case and I hid it up in the walk in cooler. It was in the cans like a bottle that would come up and have a screw top on it.

Frank: Oh.

Alvey: And I gave somebody one, a drink, and old Dr. Clark found out about it. So every day he would come over to the kitchen and want a can of old California Ale. Then he brought Captain Edward Wall, he was the commanding officer. He said, "I like this, but I don't approve of it." He would drink it, but he wouldn't approve of it. [Both laugh.]

Frank: He had himself one?

Alvey: But the mess hall sat right down against the river and it faced the east, all the way from the river but the back was off the ground and when you were the mess sergeant you had to order all the food and it came out of Fort Douglas and they would send you ahead of time what was available. I remember one time they had these big gallon cans of food and they had made a mistake on the price, so I had bought about thirty cases, and they still had to give it to us at that price. So I had all under this kitchen to keep it away from the inspectors. When the inspectors came they inspected everything, so to keep it away from all of our surplus we would put it back under the kitchen. Behind the walls so they couldn't see them. I had flour and I had beans and I had everything. Cases of food that I accumulated and could feed a lot better. So the commanding officer before Wall was Capitan Hazard was his name. And after he left here he went to Fort Douglas as an inspector of the CC camp. What he didn't know was when he left Fort Douglas they would call the first camp that he was going to and tell them that he was on his way then where he was going for the next one. He would call the next one and we always knew ahead of time when they were coming so, Capitan Hazard, Denzel Pollock was the baker and Denzel would make some apple pie and I had cheese and coffee. And as soon as he would get there we would bring it out for him. And he used to say, "I don't know how you know Quince when I'm coming." (laughs) He didn't know they would call ahead and tell us.

Frank: So we've had one of the fellas here as a matter of fact who just left here, Forest...

Alvey: Houton?

Frank: Yeah Houton, he was a baker here for a while.

Alvey: Yeah, Forest was a baker than he worked in the PX. I've kept in touch with Forest all these years. Out of I got out of the service I lived in Midvale and he lived just north of me a little ways. And in fact I used to work with his brother after I got out of the CC camp. I worked with Frank Houton that was Forest's brother.

Frank: He was telling me that, as the baker, I was trying to find out where produce would come into Zion from and where goods would come in from.

Alvey: California, mostly, except your regular, now fresh fruit all that came from California, but your other stuff all came out of Fort Douglas. Convoy.

Frank: So, your commodities type of things would, like your flour, sugar, canned goods that would regular army issue?

Alvey: We had a truck that come down one time and over here it, well it's a little town, where it is, is you turn off of I-15 and....

Frank: Toquerville?

Alvey: Yeah. The old road use to come around and make a sharp turn and go down over hill and we had a truck tip over there one time. With the convoys, and boy those people that lived there got all the supplies they wanted before we got it picked up.

Frank: So they came right in.

Alvey: Oh yeah. You bet. We had, our senior truck driver was named John Williams, and he had been here for a long time, John had. And he used to go over with a girl to Cedar City, of course he made all the runs over to Cedar City and wherever they had to go for stuff and Rosalie said to him one day, he was up in the warehouse one day and he come up to him and said, "John, I want you to go to Cedar City and get something." And he said, "Oh and by the way while you're there go up and see that red headed girl you see." (laughs) John didn't know Frank knew it. And I went over one time with Wall, to get the payroll to Cedar City. And when we got the payroll from the bank, he had to go in the store, so he gave me forty-five service automatic, you know automatic forty-five the army issued and he handed me that and he said, "Quince if somebody comes to try and get this money you throw that gun at him and take the money and run."

Both: [Laugh.]

Frank: Two pounds worth of gun?

Alvey: Yeah.

Frank: Ah shoot. Well, I've heard, you know as a mess sergeant you know in this sort of thing, you can have 200 people that are really mad at you.

Alvey: Oh you bet.

Frank: In a quick hurry, you know what kind of complaints did you see?

Alvey: I don't remember whether it was Wall or Husnick, Captain Husnick, well he was Lieutenant then. But whoever, one of them was over the mess and he ordered me to put beans on the menu two days in a row. And boy you talk about an uproar. We had it! They just wouldn't stand for that. No way. And this John Williams, they use to make pies and they'd cut the pies in eighths and John would stand there and put his finger in there and say, "that's my piece of pie" and he'd go to the next one and go all around that pie sticking his finger over every piece.

Both: Laugh.

Frank: That doesn't sound like it would be too popular either.

Alvey: I think I was the cook, but I don't remember, I was in the first barracks south of the kitchen. My bed was in, the first bed in the barracks. Wall got up one time and he was

chewing them up about how they made their beds up. He said, “Now you want to see a model bed you go down in this barracks, the first barracks bed on the left. I want you all to look at it.” And it was my bed. So when I got down there, my sheets my blankets were up in the attic, them characters had gone down there and threw my stuff all over the barracks.

Both: [Laugh.]

Frank: Well, I wouldn't be too mad.

Alvey: Oh no, the first night I was, well no, not the first night, I got in on a Thursday I believe it was and Saturday night and Elwood Campbell, he is here this weekend, and a guy by the name of Nel Fried, got back from Panguitch drunk. When they went down inside the barracks or the tents round up the other side and tipped every bed over, whether there was someone in it or no, tipped every bed over in camp.

Frank: [Laugh.]

Alvey: That's the way things used to go by. One reminded me of the little ditch out on the other side of the camp. John Williams was a very particular guy, he used to sit and roll a cigarette and he say, “Old Camel would walk a mile to put his name on that cigarette.” Some guys came in one night and short sheeted his bed. He walked in just as they were short sheeting his bed. So when they got his bed short sheeted, the barracks had about three steps to the ground and this kid come out of there running and when he come out of there running old John picked him up and said, “Come off the steps.” And he dumped him right in that ditch. It was in the winter, it was cold and he threw him in all over.

Frank: Was this fella from Escalante too?

Alvey: No, John was from Salt Lake. I always remember John, I don't know if you have ever been around Salt Lake or not, but the Coca Cola bottling company was on 8th South and I think 1st West between Main and West Temple. And John lived right by that old Coca Cola bottling company, in fact he used to work there when he was a kid, but that's where John lived. John, after he left here, he became a ranger and went up to Idaho. It's some dam, he was a ranger up there for years John was. John was a wonderful guy he finally got married and had three daughters and his wife died of cancer and left him with these three girls and he raised those three girls and he died, oh, he's been dead quite a few years, John. He used to keep in touch with me; he would come to Las Vegas and see me. He had an old Volkswagen bus and he used to travel a lot in that old bus and he used to come down and see me.

Frank: So there are camps in Bryce. Here in Zion there is actually two camps and possibly three, cause I keep hearing reports of one possible up by Lodge area. There were camps

in Fredonia, down in Pipe Spring across from, well across the way from Pipe Spring there by the Arizona strip, Short Creek, St. George, and as a mess sergeant it seems like you would get the opportunity to travel around a little bit. Did you have much connection with any of these?

Alvey: No. I took the first truck that ever went down to Capital Reef Monument, took a load of supplies down there, that when you had to go right down the wash, they didn't have roads, and they had to build a sub camp down there. They had a CC camp over in Escalante where I was raised, and they stayed over there in the summer and they came down to Veyo. Do you know where Veyo is?

Frank: No.... V-E-Y-O, yes.

Alvey: They came there in the winter but they came up to Escalante in the summer. They called it Blue Spring Camp up North of Escalante, of course that was there while I was still in school.

Frank: That must have been one of the first camps then?

Alvey: Yep. They built; I don't know if you have ever heard of the Hells Backbone over by Boulder?

Frank: Uh huh.

Alvey: They built that road right there.

Frank: That was a three C project?

Alvey: Oh yes. See they never had a road in Boulder until the CC camp built it. They used to carry the mail all over to Boulder on mules.

Frank: So that's Sky Drive.... That's all done by CCC?

Alvey: Yes.

Frank: That was a CCC project? That's a nice road.

Alvey: The guy that was in charge of that was named Chester, from Panguitch, that built that road.

Frank: Did you ever work with a gentleman by the name of Lorenzo Brown by chance, upon the strip country out by Kanab? I just thought I would throw that one in just in case because sometime the world is about that big.

Alvey: No, well I have seen guys over the years that I knew. When I got out of CC camp, I was out only a couple of years before I went into the service. And I saw a lot of guys I knew

that came through Camp Roberts when I was a drill sergeant. I was a drill sergeant in the artillery camp at Camp Roberts for three years. Of course it helped me through the CCcamp, helped me when I got in the army. Because I was only in the army for about 3 months when I made sergeant; drill sergeant. But you couldn't guess in the world how I learned to manual the arms?

Frank: Well, not right off.

Alvey: I was working up to Utah Copper, up in Bingham, Utah and I had an old army guy, a partner. And we learned how to manual the arms with a short handled shovel.

Frank: Laughs. You practiced up there?

Alvey: Yep, and I knew the manual of arms when I got in the army and things like that just helped me. Being in the CC camp taught me how to get along with people, how to live with them and that helped me when I got in the army.

Frank: And that would be the place that you would have to put that to practice.

Alvey: Yep. I will never forget the first night I conducted the retreat here in Zion's Canyon as first sergeant. When it was all over and we went over to eat dinner, ole John Williams said, "Boy, you got a voice better for making love than you have calling commands!" [Laugh.] I will never forget that.

Frank: Oh, that's so much of a compliment; you know to help encourage you.

Alvey: Yeah.

Frank: You mentioned earlier, you know just before we began the tape, that you were a carpenter and you learned your first 45 degree cut here in this camp.

Alvey: Yep, Marion Willis taught me that, cutting longs for campground in Bryce. He showed me how to use a big square, cutting 45's. I've been a carpenter for 45 years and I spent 15 years of it building Mormon churches. I built 16 Mormon churches.

Frank: Whew.....

Alvey: 6 in Salt Lake and I built 8 in Las Vegas. Course I built a Methodist church and a Lutheran church along with them. But when in Las Vegas I was supervisor for the church, but in Salt Lake I worked for a contractor.

Frank: So carpentry then that was something you did at Bryce and it wasn't a lot of work that you did down here. Did you do more?

Alvey: No, see I was in warehouse all the time. My grandfather was a cabinet maker in England, and he had a lot of tools and he used to teach us when we were kids. Then I lived right across the street from a fellow that had a carpenter shop.

Frank: Up in Escalante?

Alvey: Yep

Frank: All right

Alvey: He was a great big man, his name was, Art Magneli. He had a son the same age as me, and he would never let us go in the shop and monkey around. But one time, his son and I went in there and made ourselves little wagons, and he caught us. And I think I still got the print of the saw on my behind where he hit me!

Both: [Laugh.]

Frank: He didn't let you forget that.....

Alvey: No. No way.

Frank: Mr. Alvey, how many brothers and sisters did you have at this time? There were four of you already in the camp.

Alvey: Yeah. My brother just older than me was in, and he lives over in Orderville now, but he has had a stroke and doesn't get around very much anymore. And my younger brother was here, and he lives in Maryland. He's worked in the postal service ever since he got out of the service.

Alvey: And you got five and the twenty went home to your parents.

Frank: How did mom and dad feel about that?

Alvey: Well a lot of the kids their families kept it for them, but my parents needed it so they used it.

Frank: How'd you feel about being able to do that for your folks?

Alvey: Oh I thought that was wonderful, but you know that was right at the end of the depression and it was just almost impossible to get a job. It was a godsend for us kids that didn't have no trade or nothing, you know.

Frank: Yeah, especially up in Escalante.

Alvey: The first job I ever left my dad, I worked on a diversion damn over in Escalante shoveling sand and gravel in an old cement mixer with a short handle scoop shovel for

twenty-five cents a day. Now, you can see the difference. When they paid us, they paid us in a script that was only good in one store. That's the only place you could spend it. Twenty-five cents a day.

Frank: A little narrow in your choices.

Alvey: So you see you go from twenty-five cents a day to twenty-five dollars a month plus your board, room and your clothes, then they had the education. Mr. Robinson here had classes. You could take classes and different things.

Frank: Did you have the opportunity to take any classes while you were here?

Alvey: Oh yes. I took quite a bit in history, history of Zion and Bryce and that, you know. That's where I met Forest Hooton. He was Mr. Robinson's assistant at one time.

Frank: Yeah, Forest was saying he enjoyed that.

Alvey: Oh yes. He worked in the PX there too, Forest did. Of course all of us guys have been in there a long time, we had a lot of good experiences. Forrest and John Williams and Bob Stohl, all of us guys, you know, that had been in there a long time, we were real close because everything we had in common with each other, you know. Nobody had any money. There's nobody that thought he was any better off than we were, you know. We was all equal.

Frank: Everybody's rowing the same boat.

Alvey: Yes that's for sure.

Frank: Well you mentioned one thing, you know, come Friday night and you knew the weekend was coming up and it sounds like some of y'all got out to a dance or two.

Alvey: Oh yes, you bet.

Frank: So where would you begin your weekend more or less?

Alvey: Up here by Orderville or just the other side of Glendale, there used to be an open air dance hall. When you go up the road there it's off on the left and it sat up there.

Frank: Between the two towns there? Between Orderville and...

Alvey: Between Glendale and the top of the mountain, just out of Glendale. You know where the rest stop is up there?

Frank: Yeah.

Alvey: Well it was just south of that, up on the hill and there's a little lake up there and there was a dance hall. We used to go up there.

Frank: If you pulled out of that rest stop heading south now...

Alvey: Yeah it's just on the right.

Frank: Is there still a turn-off? Would it be that first turn-off?

Alvey: Well I don't know whether it's the first or not, but it's on a hill above the road?

Frank: Mile two, three?

Alvey: Yeah, it could've been about a half, three quarter of a mile from that rest stop.

Frank: Oh I'll look for that.

Alvey: It's up on a hill. I don't know whether it's there now or not. I wouldn't have any idea. Fifty years ago, you know, it's been a long time. Then there used to be an old open-air dance hall right off I-15. We used to go over there. We used to go down to Hurricane, used to go down to St. George. When we were in Bryce, they had an open air dance hall down in Panguitch. You know what they used to call Panguitch?

Frank: What?

Alvey: "CC boys Frozen Paradise." That's what they used to call it.

Frank: The frozen paradise?

Alvey: Yeah, up in Panguitch. We used to play baseball down in Panguitch all the time. You know, Panguitch always had a good baseball team. I used to play first base and catcher a lot when I was in the CC camp.

When I was in school I learned to throw the disc [discus], throwing the disc back to the big guys you know, and so when we were at Bryce, they had a Garfield County track meet for all the schools down to Ruby's Inn. So we went down there, and somebody that knew me that I threw the disc[us] wanted me to throw the disc for the school kids. Of course, I'd been out of school two or three years and so I became pretty good expert on throwing the disc for the boys, so I showed them how I threw it. We had quite a time down there at the track meet.

Frank: Was any of the other three C's get in there and compete at all?

Alvey: No. See we were the only ones that were close there at Bryce. Cedar Breaks was the next closest one, and Duck Creek, they had a sub-camp there. We used to go up there and play them in baseball all the time, at Duck Creek, but you talking about going on weekends?

When we were at Bryce and it seemed like every year we were at Bryce, every Friday they had a fire somewhere to keep us in camp. We used to have to fight forest fires. It seemed like every Friday they had a fire.

Frank: Someone would light a fire?

Alvey: Well I don't know whether they did it on purpose.

Frank: No, I was just joking around about that.

Alvey: But it seemed like that's the way it was you know.

We had a truck driver that drove the Army truck. He didn't drive one of the CC trucks. He drove an Army truck and his name was Grant Dalton. We called him Doctor Dalton. He's dead now. He died just after we had a reunion at Bryce. His wife was here yesterday. I took him down to Panguitch one time, and he was going with this woman he married, and when we got ready to come home we couldn't start the truck. We tried and tried. Course he'd come and he'd taken the rotary out of the truck, so we wouldn't leave him. [Laughter]

Frank: Guaranteeing his ride home huh?

Alvey: That was Grant for you.

Frank: Some of these open air dance halls now on a Saturday night or so, and you fellas would have a chance, would there be a full moon when they'd hold these or what time of the year?

Alvey: Oh yeah, yeah. Now the one at Panguitch was open around. It had a roof on the one at Panguitch, but it had big raised window covers and it was all screened in. It was set up west of Panguitch, up in the big cottonwood trees and it set right in amongst the trees. It was a beautiful place to dance.

Frank: Well today, you know, you can put a boombox in the middle of the floor with a tape. What kind of music would you have?

Alvey: There used to be an orchestra here in southern Utah they called the "Footwarmers" and they used to play. They have a good orchestra, but Panguitch had their own orchestra there, but the Footwarmers used to come around. As I remember they were from up around Richfield or somewhere, but they were good you know, considering those days. We used to dance here down at the church in Springdale. Of course it isn't a church anymore. It's the old rock building on the north side of the street.

Frank: The restaurant or shop?

Alvey: Well that used to be the church and we used to dance there. Then down to Hurricane we danced in this high school auditorium down there. In St. George they danced in a high school auditorium in St. George.

Frank: What can you expect for a band when you'd dance?

Alvey: What could you expect? Well they'd have a piano player and drums and two or three horns and maybe an accordion, couple of guitars.

Frank: That sort of thing?

Alvey: Yes. In fact, I was up to the Manti Temple a couple of years ago and I have a sister that is one of the workers at the temple, and she said, "I've got somebody here I want you to meet." So she went and introduced me to this guy and he used to play drums in the old Footwarmer orchestra. So you see how small a world it is, and that was before I joined the CC camp when I used to see them over at Escalante. They used to come over there and dance over there.

Frank: You can tell this guy, so much time later, "I danced . . ."

Alvey: Oh yeah, I danced to your orchestra.

Frank: Do you remember some of the titles or themes that they played?

Alvey: Let me think. I remember a tune that I used to dance to with my wife before I married her. My wife isn't very tall. She's only 5'2" but there was a girl in Panguitch, a Worthlin girl that was almost as tall as I was. I used to love to dance with her. When we were up to Bryce two years ago to the reunion, that evening we had a dinner like we had here yesterday. A girl came up to me and she said, "Are they dancing tonight?" And I said, "I don't know," and she said, "I came clear up here to have a dance with you?" talking to me and I didn't even know who she was, but she said she used to dance with me in Panguitch. Oh, I used to love to dance. Of course in those days that's all there was to do, or go to a show, a dance and we used to hit every county fair down to St. George and Hurricane, up to Panguitch. When they had a county fair that...

Frank: That was the thing to do.

Alvey: Time to go, you bet.

Frank: Can't remember any songs or the title of any songs?

Alvey: No. I can't off hand, no.

Frank: Artists or band leaders or anything like that?

Alvey: Well when I was young old Guy Lombardo was popular and Sammy Kay.

Frank: This would be the theme and music that the CCC's would dance to?

Alvey: They'd play, yeah.

Frank: What aren't we talking about here? I know maybe it's been long into the interview process, I'm not seeming to be following any one particular train of thought or not. What haven't we covered or what is something that, you know, if you would want remembered about the three C's or you want to remember about them what would that be?

Alvey: I think of all the things that I learned in the CC camp is the idea of living close with each other. I learned that. You learn to put up with things. You learn to grieve with people on things. I never was one to argue with people. All my years as a carpenter, I said there's two things I won't discuss. One is religion and the other is politics because I think it's just a waste of your time and I never discussed that all my years working. I never would discuss it.

The things that I learned in the CC camp I'll ever be grateful for the opportunity they gave me. to mingle with people and to live with people. You know people that have different ideas than you, ways of life. We're all different and we learn to take care of what you have, clothes. I used to and I'm sorry to say I don't do it like I used to, I used to never go anywhere by what I had my shoes polished. That was one thing that I took pride in my appearance, even in the CC camp when we were working and when we went away. I never did wear my CC clothes only like if it was for sports. Whenever I went to a dance, I went in civilian clothes. When I went to leave home, my dad says, "I'm gonna' give you some advice" and he said, "I want you to always remember it. No matter what you do or who you work for they hire you because they want you to work." He said, "I hope if anybody has to tell you to get off your behind I hope they kick it." And I never forgot that. That's the advice my dad gave me, and all my life I've tried to do that. The man when he hires you he hires you to work and I've always remembered that even when I was in the CC camp. I didn't goof off. I guess that's why I got where I did because I took everything serious, because I had no more knowledge than anybody else at that time of my life. I had no idea what it required to be a warehouse man. I had no idea what it was, but somebody took a liking to me or watched me or something 'cause suddenly they put me in the museum, they put me in the checking station. We collected the entrance fee just like they do today.

Frank: Well you've seen it all. You've worked for the park; you worked for the three C's, running quite the gambit.

Alvey: The only thing I haven't done in Nevada is gamble. I haven't put a cent in the slot machine since 1952.

Frank: Well it was probably for the best.

Alvey: Oh you bet. I've never.

Frank: Well here you are you know you've built the parks as we know them today. You were a part of that. Now you enter the 90's and we've got very similar considerations today as far as taking care of what we have.

Alvey: Oh you bet.

Frank: And up there at Escalante you're surrounded by all sorts of federal land and public land. How do you feel seeing what you've done to create this monster? You know being a part of that whole thing and now you're looking into the next century as some of that land that's up in that area they are wanting to be set aside. How do you feel that you fit into all of that? How does that leave you?

Alvey: I look at it like this, if we don't take care of what we've got our people behind us are not gonna have anything. I remember when I was a kid I used to throw arrowheads around like they were rocks because there were so many of them see. Now as far as out in the forest and the parks and that, I never marked a tree in my whole life. I didn't put my name on anything because I always adhere to this old saying, "Fools names and fools faces are always found in public places." I've always heeded that. I don't know where I heard it, but I've always heeded that. I never marked anything. I never shot at a sign in my life because my dad taught me that that wasn't the thing to do. The longest I ever had my ears pulled was I called a man when I was a little boy by his first name. Everybody was "Mr." and "Mrs." to me. I called a man by his first name and my dad pulled my ear about that long, and he said, "That's Mr. and Mrs. to you." And I've never forgot it.

I think a lot of the trouble today is kids have never been taught. Now they never value anything. They have no value of anything, but can you imagine what this park would be like and what Bryce would be like if we didn't have control on people. It wouldn't be here.

Frank: It'd be different.

Alvey: That's for sure. You bet.

Frank: Is there anything else we're forgetting?

Alvey: Oh there's so many things that went on in those days that I hope I've helped you some.

Frank: I think you have. One other question that's been coming to mind is, were you at the Bridge Mountain camp or this side, on the west side?

Alvey: I was on the east side.

Frank: You were on the east side of the river. On the west side of the river, did you ever come across or have any dealings with your counterpart over her at this side?

Alvey: Not much only sports. We used to play them in baseball and basketball things like that.

Frank: And these were mostly fellas from New York?

Alvey: Yes, they were from New York.

Frank: And I've heard you know that they were a different bunch.

Alvey: Oh yes. Most of the guys in our camp were Mormon boys and they had all been taught right from wrong. You could leave anything out in camp, put it up on your lock, money and it never disappeared. You didn't worry about them stealing anything or nothing. You could just leave them around. Go to a shower, put your stuff on your foot locker and they'd be right there when you came back. That was just the way it was. I don't remember ever losing a thing when I was in camp. Everybody had their foot locker and their bunk, you know. It was all alike. Everybody was equal. You didn't expect any more. Now when I was a leader that's what they called you when they gave you forty-five dollars, I didn't figure I was any better than anybody else, didn't expect any more than the others, and so they had to have leadership. The foreman couldn't take care of everything so they had to have leaders that helped. I remembered I hadn't been in the camp very long and they was taking drivers tests for truck drivers. Of course everybody wanted to be a truck driver so they didn't have to work, see. So everybody tried out for a truck driver. I even tried that. I couldn't drive, but I remember Burch Everett who was a foreman here in Zion give me a test in a truck, but I wasn't really interested in being a truck driver. But when I got in the Army I was over the truck platoon. I had another sergeant and we was over all the trucks, but I never was considered a truck driver.

Frank: You were good in the motor pool. Again it goes back to your inventory of this and that. When were you drafted into the service?

Alvey: In the army?

Frank: Yes.

Alvey: I was drafted in the army a month and one day after Pearl Harbor.

Frank: A whole month and one day so January...

Alvey: The eighth, 1942.

Frank: Then as soon as you got into the service of all the fellas that you were serving with then did you find a lot of old CCC alumni, not necessarily from this camp but in the program?

Alvey: A few, yes, a few. But like I said when I got in the Army my time in the CC camp served me so well in mingling with people, dress, taking care of your equipment. I was in the artillery. I took a rifle overseas with me and spent almost two years over there and never took the cos mulling(?) out of it. Never loaded it.

Frank: Good Lord.

Alvey: I was in artillery, I didn't need a gun. If they got close enough to shoot with a rifle, you didn't want to be there.

Frank: Well anything else you'd like to add Mr. Alvey?

Alvey: No. I think I've taken up enough of your time.

Frank: Well you know, I'm trying to think of every possible angle to approach this. If there's anything else you'd like to add...

Alvey: Has anybody mentioned in your interviews the boy that was killed up on the switchbacks?

Frank: No. You were here at that time?

Alvey: Yeah. We were working up on the Nevada switchbacks. I wasn't there. I was in the warehouse, but they were blasting and a young fella was in portable toilets. They hollered, "Fire," and as it was told me and I don't remember his name, and he started out of the toilet and they blasted. As he ran, a rock come and hit him and broke his leg real bad and he died from it. There was only two in the accidents that ever happened. One was when the car ride, the first sergeant died, and this boy died from it. I couldn't tell you his name, but it had to be in 1938.

Frank: Must have died from gangrene.

Alvey: Yeah. Now Cartwright died from pneumonia. He was the first sergeant. I remember when we was having that flood, there was no bridge only a little walk bridge. Carter, and I don't remember his first name. I think he was a first aid man or something to do in the office and he crossed the river during that flood with a bottle of oxygen so they could have that. They put a rope on him and he went across the river so they could have oxygen over there for Cartwright.

Frank: Oh boy that was something. A little first aid and comfort.

Alvey: Yeah. Carter married a girl from down here or down from Rockville. I don't know whether he's still around down there or not. I don't even remember his first name.

Frank: One way to find out is to look in the books.

Alvey: Yeah.

Frank: Well sir, I appreciate your time.

Alvey: Well I appreciate talking to you.

Frank: Alright Mr. Alvey I hope to see you again. I work up at North Rim if you ever come on up in there.

Alvey: Oh I haven't been to the North Rim for years.

Frank: Might have to go up there.

[End of Interview]