

Glen Bair
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
September 29, 1989

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Beth Martin: Beth Martin interviewing Glen Bair. September 29, 1989. The CCC Oral History Program. Glen, where were you from when you joined the CCC's.

Glen Bair: Salt Lake City, Utah.

Beth Martin: And where do you live now?

Glen Bair: San Diego, California.

Beth Martin: How did you hear about this?

Glen Bair: A friend from Salt Lake City phoned me. He said, "Are you going to the reunion Glen?" I said, "What reunion?" "Well." he said, "The CCC reunion." I said, "What are you talking about? I haven't event even heard about it." He said, "I'll meet you down there." I said, "OKAY." It was about a month ago I guess. He couldn't make it, so here I am. I wanted to see if I can find some of my old buddies.

Beth Martin: Well I hope you can. So what date did you enter then?

Glen Bair: When I entered what?

Beth Martin: The CCCs.

Glen Bair: The date? Well it was in the spring of '33.

Beth Martin: How long did you stay in the CCCs?

Glen Bair: Fourteen months

Beth Martin: So that would make it about the summer of 1934, the beginning of early summer.

Glen Bair: Yes, in there somewhere.

Beth Martin: Okay. What did you do before you entered the CCCs?

Glen Bair: I was going to high school.

Beth Martin: Did you complete high school?

Bair: Well that's quite a story; I had to leave about a month early. My teacher said, "Glen, I can't graduate [you] if you go." Well during that depression time I had to go I said, "Well, I'm sorry but I have to go and support my family." She graduated me anyways. I was graduated out of high school then I came right down here to Zions.

Martin: Well that was a lucky thing. Were you in any other camp besides right here in Zion?

Bair: I was in Cedar Breaks for a while, a short time. We were doing a little erosion work. Then we came back down to Zions.

Martin: What kind of erosion work?

Bair: Well, as far as I can remember, of course when you get as old as I am that mind doesn't work right. Seems to me like I did a little road work and then there was some erosion. I couldn't tell you whether it was trek work or what it was.

Martin: What kind of work did you do?

Bair: Here?

Martin: No, in the erosion work. Describe what kind of work you did.

Bair: You know you are telling an old man something that he can't remember. I remember digging steep hills and we had to dig trenches and put logs to keep the water from running down the erosion of the hills.

Martin: Do you remember rocks hauling around these logs?

Bair: Yes, rocks and logs both, but don't ask me where we got the rocks. (Laugh)

Martin: All right, all right. Was this your first time in to Zion, when you came to Zion?

Bair: Yes.

Martin: What was your impression of this park?

Bair: Majestic. (Laugh) It was big. Well, leaving Salt Lake and seeing these hills around here it was just almost like seventh heaven.

Martin: Did you enjoy the area?

Bair: Oh, yes I enjoyed the work and everything.

Martin: Okay, we'll get in to that a little later. When you first came, was it winter time when you came in to Zion itself?

Bair: No, it was spring. Well it was about the middle of the year, because we graduated in I think it was June when I came down here.

Martin: So you came down here before you went to Cedar Breaks?

Bair: Well, no, I went to Cedar Breaks first, and then down here.

Martin: Was the camp built?

Bair: The camp was built itself. I think it was about to be finished when I got here. As far as I remember they just finished it and I think we were the first ones who moved in it in '33.

Martin: You probably were. What type of work did you do when you first came to Zion?

Bair: Well the first job I had, they called it double jacking. That's where you drill holes to put fences and blast out....

Martin: Did you work on this east fence?

Bair: I worked all over the east fence. Yes.

Martin: How did you drill the holes in the rock? I have read history and they tell me there were miles and miles of fence done in solid rock and I want to know how did you drill those holes in the rock?

Bair: (Laugh) Well, that's fairly easy. One man has a little drill that was about eight inches long depending on how deep you went into the rock. He stood there and another man had a hammer that hit this drill and each time you hit it you had to pick it up and turn it a little bit. Then the man would hit it again and turn it. The fellows I worked with would never use a hammer; they were afraid of hitting my hands. Fact one of them did hit my hands and he gave up and he wouldn't use the hammer anymore. So I was the one used the hammer all the time. I got some good muscles out of it too. (Laugh)

Martin: So you are the first one I have talked to that has told me about this project.

Bair: Is that right?

Martin: That's right because there was a lot of work done up there. The boundary line, what they call the east boundary line on the fence.

Bair: Well I couldn't tell you for sure, seems to me like we went down into part of Rockville and worked up this way. Somewhere down in there I can't remember just where it was.

Martin: You did.

Bair: (Laugh) It was quite an experience.

Martin: The East Rim truck trail and you started probably at the camp up there. Were you in the spike camp while you were there or did you come back every night?

Bair: No, we came back every night.

Martin: Describe for me how a day went. What woke you up, what happened?

Bair: Just like the army. (Laugh)

Martin: Yes I know. Okay, well tell me about it.

Bair: You would hear that little revelry or whatever you want to call it. We would get up and raised the flag. In fact I brought some pictures about it. We raised the flag every morning, then you would get on the trucks and you would go to work.

Martin: Did you have breakfast? Did you get a shower?

Bair: Well, oh yeah we had breakfast. We showered when we came home because we got so dirty in those rocks up there that it didn't pay to shower then go get dirty (Laugh). So we showered when we got back. We didn't wear top clothes. It got so warm there with using that hammer all the time. So I would just strip down to my shorts or to my pants and that's the way I went all day long. I got a beautiful tan. (Laugh)

Martin: Okay, what kind of clothes did they issue you to work in or did you bring your own?

Bair: No. No, they were Army G.I. They were khaki pants.

Martin: Khaki? They weren't denims?

Bair: Well, these were khaki that I had as far as I could remember. Maybe you could tell me whether they were denim or what they are. (Picture) That's the kind of shoes they gave us. Isn't that a beauty. (Laugh)

Martin: Well I can't tell from the black and white picture if they were denims or not. You needed to turn your shoes back in for a replacement from that picture.

Bair: Yeah well, it was pretty rough. We had denim and khaki I'm sure. Our dress up I would guess would be the khaki.

Martin: Did you work up there in the winter time?

Bair: Yes, the weather wasn't so bad, a little snow on the ground but it wasn't so bad. That was my first job there.

Martin: Is this a picture of the barracks?

Bair: Yes, that's the camp.

Martin: Okay. I see one chimney. One man said there was a stove at each end. When you came there was a stove in what part of the barracks?

Bair: Well, I think it was at the . . . let's see which is our direction here. It was on the very west right here. This I think is our mess hall over here on this other side.

Martin: Tell me about the stoves though in the barracks.

Bair: Oh honey, I think there was one. I wouldn't know after that many years. (Laugh) I don't know what happened yesterday.

Martin: Did you like the meals?

Bair: Yes, except we had a little skinny guy and every time they put the food out that guy he could eat you out of a house and home. Boy, he would just scoop everything by the time it got to the end of us why we was lucky to get a potato. One very interesting thing I never will forget it. They ordered a hundred pounds of beans. When we got the order I guess they got them from Salt Lake; we had ten sacks of beans. So we had beans for a long time and right to this day I still love them.

Martin: Well this is a precious picture of the mess hall. Have you had these copied?

Bair: Yes.

Martin: Very good. I'm glad you had those copied.
After the roll call and you got on your trucks and left and did you take lunches with you or did you have them bring you lunches?

Bair: They brought our lunch.

Martin: They brought your lunch. What kind of lunches were they?

Bair: Well, a piece of bread. (Laugh) They used to say jam sandwiches, two pieces of bread jammed together. I don't know. I know we ate them.

Martin: And you didn't mind?

Bair: Not then, not coming from a depression town and eating, that was heaven. Even if it was a piece of bread, it was heaven.

Martin: It was having food, wasn't it? What did you do when you came back home then, come back to camp?

Bair: We showered and we had our dinner.

Martin: What did you do after hours on your free time between that and bed call?

Bair: Well we walked around the camp. A lot of the boys played poker, played cards, shot a little dice. I never did. I didn't have enough money; two dollars didn't go very far. (Laugh)

Martin: We'll get into this a little bit down the road again, but was there much entertainment in that first year of camp? They did not bring entertainment in?

Bair: No, the biggest entertainment we had, what's this first little town, just this first little place right out of the park?

Martin: Springdale.

Bair: Springdale, I think it was about once every two or three weeks they had a little show down there, so we went down to a show.

Martin: Movie show?

Bair: Yes, it was a silent picture, I can't remember. It had to be I think. We had a show that was our big entertainment.

Martin: They didn't bring anything to camp?

Bair: I can't recall them bringing anything to camp.

Martin: What about sports? Did you play ball?

Bair: Oh yeah, we played a little bit around throwing the ball and had our games, but there wasn't too much of that at least that I can recall. I would have more pictures of it I think.

Martin: When were the lights turned off?

Bair: When it got dark. (Laugh) One of the other things we used to do. . . now I talked to the people here and they didn't know we had cliff dwellings up over these hills. Here are some pictures of the cliff dwellings. It was a long, long hike up to it and we done a lot of hiking around.

Martin: Is this how you did some of your evenings and weekends?

Bair: Yes, when it didn't get too dark on us. Yes, on the weekends we hiked all over this place. In fact I don't know whether you know inside that people got stranded on the top of the hill here?

Martin: Is that the one up here on the East Temple?

Bair: Yes, I was with that group and I got about oh half way up and I had my big GI shoes on and I was slipping on the rocks. I was the only one that had to come back. So when we got back to camp they said "Well we are going to watch and when they find those people up there they'll are light a fire." So we were staring there for what seemed like hours, then finally we could see the fire up there so that told us they was okay. It was quite interesting.

Martin: What did you do on your weekends? Did you go home?

Bair: Oh no.

Martin: Did you go home at all during that year?

Bair: One time. One of the fellows that had a truck, an old truck and we jumped in that and went home.

Martin: Do you remember what the occasion was?

Bair: Just to get away from camp. (Laugh)

Martin: It wasn't Christmas, it wasn't Thanksgiving?

Bair: No, it was just to get away from camp. At a certain time they would let us go and I think it was five of us took off in this old truck and went to Salt Lake.

Martin: That's a long ways now a days, isn't it? (Laugh) Then I mean. How were you accepted by the local people of Springdale?

Bair: Didn't have too much to do with them. In those days seems like cousins married cousins and it was a very close knit family. We didn't have much to do with the people there, at least I didn't.

Martin: Did you go to the dances, the dances?

Bair: No I didn't. I was too bashful to go and see a girl in those days. Oh, I was the most bashful person there ever was. If you have ever been to Salt Lake, now this is the truth so help me. I would see a girl coming down the street and I would turn around and go around the whole block and those blocks were about a mile back then. So I really got brave one time and I seen this girl coming down so I crossed the street and went up the other side. Well after a few years I was chasing the girls, but it took me a long time. (Laugh)

Martin: Took you a long time, your hormones weren't right. (Laugh) Was there any classes taught when you were here?

Bair: No. It was work, work, work.

Martin: And your weekends were spent...

Bair: Just in hiking, playing cards, going to a show.

Martin: Did you ever have any occasion to have any medical help.

Bair: No, I had good health.

Martin: You didn't even have any first aid?

Bair: No, can't remember of any. I have been very healthy.

Martin: You don't remember anybody being injured or anyone else being hurt or injured on the jobs?

Bair: No, I don't recall any.

Martin: Was there a camp character?

Bair: Yes, me. (Laugh) In fact I will show you a picture here is a character. Him and I, we really got along great. This picture it's worth its weight in gold.

Martin: What is his name?

Bair: Oh I don't know.

Martin: You don't even remember his name?

Bair: Heavens no.

Martin: Who took your pictures by the way? You?

Bair: Well one of the fellows; no I didn't take them.

Martin: Do you remember the man's name that took them?

Bair: Honey, when you get as old as I am. (Laugh) That was my dress outfit. Here we are.

Martin: Well, he was just a little short. That says Mutt and Jeff.

Bair: Yeah, we were the life of the whole place here.

Martin: Did you play tricks on other men?

Bair: Well we may have tied their trousers sometime they go to get into them, but I can't recall. (Laugh) Well, we had some good times.

Martin: And you don't remember his name? It's too bad you didn't.

Bair: No. That's why I wish they would have called us in there in the different years we were there, so that we could have got acquainted.

Martin: Yes, that might be a suggestion for them. Was there any songs, poems or anything? I'm sorry I'm all out of the little poem I had about the CCC's. Did you make any lasting friendships while you were here?

Bair: No. Well I take that back. There was one guy by the name of Bob that's all I remember. He called me on Christmas. I think he had moved to Wisconsin or somewhere, and I said "My word after all these years." He said, "Well, I remember you Slim." I said, "Well, I remembered you."

Martin: So your nickname was Slim?

Bair: Well they called me Slim a lot, but my nickname was really High Pockets. My pockets were so high from the ground. Yeah, I was six foot five when I was younger; about six four now. Old age, you shrink a little. My most interesting job that I had was on these roads right here.

Martin: I guess we should go back because I didn't follow all the way through that next year. So you worked on which road?

Bair: All the way through the whole park up through the tunnel and all the way through patching the roads.

Martin: Did you do any of the sloping?

Bair: No, just all patching. I remember having to race down from the tunnels down here on wheel barrels one time. We had our wheel barrels and we had fun running down that road. (Laugh) Some of us were going to take off and go down that road but it was too steep.

Martin: Wheel barrel races coming out of the tunnels?

Bair: Yeah! (Laugh)

Martin: You did patching. What did you use for patching?

Bair: It was black top. We would level off pot holes and things like that in the road.

Martin: All the way from entrance to entrance?

Bair: Yes.

Martin: Did you go on beyond the tunnel or was it just this side of the tunnel?

Bair: We worked on the other side of the tunnel oh I would say maybe a half a mile so not too far, then all the way through the whole park. Most of it up by the lodge and up at the end of the canyon.

Martin: Why did you leave the CCC's?

Bair: Well, I guess the main reason, one of them would be home sickness. It was the first time I was away from home. They offered me a job when I left here. They said "Well if you stay we can get you into forestry." I said, "No, I think I'm going to go home."

Martin: What did you do after you went home?

Bair: My dad is a painting contractor and he was in California and I was in Salt Lake. His work was getting pretty good down there. It was during the depression time or right at the tail end of the depression, so I went down there to help him out.

Martin: I didn't ask you. How much pay did you received? Let's talk about your pay.

Bair: Where?

Martin: From the CCC's.

Bair: Thirty dollars a month.

Martin: And you sent all but two dollars home?

Bair: Yes.

Martin: How did you spend that whole two dollars a month?

Bair: I went to a show. (Laugh)

Martin: Probably one show.

Bair: Well, the show wasn't too expensive then. If I remember right I think it was about twenty five cents, something like that. Oh, once in a while I would have a candy bar if I was real lucky.

Martin: Where did you buy the candy bar?

Bair: I think it was down by the show house.

Martin: They didn't have a cantina?

Bair: Seems to me like they did have a cantina, but I couldn't tell you where it was or anything about it because I knew enough not to go around cantinas. You mentioned if they had entertainment here. Seems to me like one time they did bring a bunch of people in and they sang a few songs, but I'm not certain about that.

Martin: I know some of the colleges did. What about going to religious services? Did you go out of the camp or did you attend any while you were here?

Bair: No. I can't even recall that they had any. I'm sure they must have, but I didn't.

Martin: Do you think your service in the CCC's benefited you afterwards?

Bair: Oh yes.

Martin: How did this benefit you?

Bair: Mostly, me being so backward and bashful, mingling with the people, talking with the guys, getting acquainted that way. I think that helped me. Then I think the physical aspect of it helped me a lot, being outdoors.

Martin: Let's talk about how you feel the CC's helped you in your later work, the physical work or whatever.

Bair: It helped me in many ways. It helped me to, I guess survive in the world the way it was at that time. There wasn't much work around. People didn't know what to do and the CCC's built up my confidence and I was able to...well I've done painting, I've done paper hanging. My dad used to be working that and I'd watch

him and I thought well...maybe I should try that. So I've done practically everything.

Martin: Even digging post holes through rock.

Bair: Building my own fence.

Martin: You thought though that it did teach you how to work.

Bair: I'm by an army barracks in San Diego and I was able to build me a home and an apartment after that. That helped too, outside work, building.

Martin: You knew how to work.

Bair: Well it was real funny when I first built that home. My dad came out with a square. I just started building and he said, "Son, where's your square?" I said, "What are you talking about? I don't know what a square is." But I was able to build my home to pass inspection. . . .

Martin: Well, thank you Glen for talking to me.

Bair: You're welcome, thank you.

End of interview.