

**Harrison Brothers
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
29 September 1989**

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Don Graff: Okay, this is Don Graff, and right now I'm interviewing Harrison Brothers. It's two o'clock in the afternoon. We're at the nature center here in Zion National Park. This is the 29th of September 1989. And rather than me making introduction, why don't you just tell us—start off like you did yesterday—tell us how you ended up coming down here to build this three Cs camp in Zion National Park.

Harrison Brothers: I was just telling a gentleman that when I went to college, a person was expected on their way through college, you know, when the government was not standing there to help you out, so that you had—one facility that you could use would be the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. And I liked that, had some military training in high school, and it appealed to me. I liked discipline and I liked the uniforms and I liked the training, and so forth. So I enlisted in the college course at the University of Utah. I spent two years there in the artillery. My family closed their store, which was an old photographic store in Salt Lake City—C. R. Savage Company, who was the pioneer photographer in The Church [of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints].

Don Graff: Is that right?

Harrison Brothers: Established the store there, and it was in existence for over sixty years.

Don Graff: A lot of the early pictures here in the park were—the earliest pictures we have were taken

Harrison Brothers: That's right. That's one of the earliest pictures right here.

Don Graff: And that was your family?

Harrison Brothers: Yes.

Don Graff: Is that right?

Harrison Brothers: I am a grandson of the old Charlie Savage, one of them—I think there are three of us living, Joshua Reuben Clark III, who's been a professor at BYU

Unknown: And myself.

Don Graff: That's tremendous.

Harrison Brothers: So anyway, I took ROTC. And when we transferred to Los Angeles, I enrolled at UCLA, enrolled in the ROTC there, which was infantry I enjoyed the course and completed my training in 1930.

Don Graff: What were you studying in college?

Brothers: I was studying history and political science and had planned to go to law school. And when I graduated 1930, the Army gave me a chance to take either reserve commission as a second lieutenant infantry, where I would participate in the reserves for a period of eight years, or take a regular commission for four-year full time active duty service, and I decided to the four-year service. I received notice from the War Department to report to the Induction Center in Los Angeles, and I had a chance to go to Stanford Law School, and I was accepted up there. And I wrote the War Department requesting that I delay my reporting for active service for a period of three years in order to take advantage of this additional education. The request was granted, and I went to Stanford Law School and finished in 1933. I came back to Salt Lake City and got married and became a law clerk—thirty dollars a month plus six cents a mile for my travel time—and I was there for two months. Then I got a letter from the War Department to report to Fort Douglas. I reported to the commanding officer at Fort Douglas, and he said, “Brothers, we’ve got orders for you to report to active duty to fulfill your four-year obligation in the service of the United States government.” He said, “You report here on the first of September.” And I said, “Yes, sir.” Well, I quit my clerk shift in the law firm there, reported on the first of September, and got settled up there. And at the same time I reported, there were three graduates from West Point about my age that were starting their careers there—

Graff: Is that right?

Brothers: —Indiana citizens—so I knew that if there were just any tough assignments that come along, they’d probably look at me first.

Graff: [Laughs] Right.

Brothers: So I was there about six weeks, and the colonel called me in one day. He says, “Brothers, we’ve got a job for you.” He said, “Congress had created an agency called the Civilian Conservation Corps. The purpose of this Corps is to take a lot of the young men off the streets that are unable to find jobs at the present time. We feel that this will give them an opportunity to enlist in the CCCs for a period of six months, give them a chance to re-find themselves, and probably learn a trade in the CCCs. Our obligation, as far as the Army is concerned: we have to feed those men, we have to clothe them, we have to house them, we have to give them medical service, leadership, and so forth.” He said, “I’m going to order you to go to Zion National Park, which is a national park in southern Utah, to build a CCC camp for two hundred men.” This was Wednesday of the week, and he said, “I want you to be ready to leave next Monday. You report to the post engineer to get your blueprints. And on Monday morning, I’ll assign you ten enlisted men and ten army trucks, and you take off for Zion National Park. And you’re to report to Mr. Patro, the superintendent, to find out where he wants you to locate this camp.” And I said, “Yes sir.”

Graff: [Laughs]

Brothers: I never had any experience in building of any kind—I couldn’t read a blueprint—but I had some friends in Salt Lake that had been in the building business, and I called them. I had two days. I said, “I’ve got to have a carpenter superintendent as a leader that knows

building. We're going to have to build an army campground." I said, "I could pay you ten dollars a day and your board and room," which was quite a good money then.

Graff: Pretty good pay, yeah.

Brothers: So I had quite a few applicants, and I had a chance to pick an excellent fellow who came in. Well, we left off that next Monday morning, and we came down here, and I reported to the superintendent's office. He leaned down, and he said, "I want you to put your camp in the southeast corner of the park, over on the east side of the Virgin River in those trees over there" so that the camp was not going to interfere with the beauty of the rocks and so forth. And he and I went out, and he said, "You've got this area here," and I said, "Yes, sir." Well, I went to work, and I hired a lot of carpenters in Virgin, Hurricane, St. George, Cedar City, Panguitch, and so forth. So in two months, we had this camp built.

Graff: Two months? Wow.

Brothers: Yeah. It was a ten-barracks camp—black tar paper, a big recreation hall, a mess hall, and a refrigerator house, and it was quite a thing. We even had flush toilets here, which was something new in the CCCs, and we were real proud of that.

Graff: I'll bet.

Brothers: Anyway, we got the camp Just after it was completed, we got ready to take the enlistees in here. We'd had a tremendous amount of interest in this area, of people that wanted to come in. So we started to—the army started to send these people in. I got a wire from the commanding officer at Fort Douglas, and he said, "I want you to meet the Union Pacific Train in Cedar City to pick up your new commanding officer." I was the second lieutenant. Each camp usually required a captain or a senior first lieutenant for the commanding officers. I went up one Wednesday to the station and met this gentleman who got off this train, and he was in a Navy uniform. And I went up to him, and I said, "Would you possibly be Lieutenant Blazer?" He says, "Yes, sir. That's me." And I said, "I'm Lieutenant Brothers from the CCC camp—Bridge Mountain Camp NP-4—in Zion National Park. You're our new commanding officer, and I've got orders to take you into your new camp." He says, "That sounds fine."

Graff: [Laughs]

Brothers: So we brought the Lieutenant Blazer into his new camp here. And he had a hard time getting used to this area. He said, finally after a week's service here, he said, "Brothers," he says, "you look after the details of this camp here." He says, "I'm a senior Navy lieutenant. I've been in the Navy for seventeen years, and I've commanded submarines, and the Navy has sent me to the middle of the desert to command the CCC company." He said, "It's awful hard to make the change." (Laughs)

Graff: I bet it was. (Laughs)

Brothers: But he was a wonderful officer. Those people—with all that service—[he] adjusted himself, and he was with us for over a year. He taught us a lot good principles of leadership. He was a good officer. And then we got the camp organized. We spent our winters here. And the first summer camp we had at Blue Springs—that's in the upper Zion here, east of Cedar City—and it was a tent camp, a temporary camp. That was the first location. The following year, we started to go to Bryce National Park because this was a national park camp, and some of that area was out of the park itself, and they wanted to keep our activities entirely within the National Park Service itself. So from then on we started going to Bryce and we established a tent camp at Bryce, with wooden floors and these great big pyramidal khaki tents. And we would spend our summers there. We would leave here about the fifteenth of April, and it was still chilly up there.

Graff: I'll bet.

Brothers: But summer gradually come on, and we got a lot of work established up there, and then we stayed there until about the middle of September, and then we'd start making arrangements to come back. And we established several sub camps, one at Duck Creek, up near Navajo Lake, but we spent most of our time in the two parks. The young chaps seemed to enjoy the life. We had a baseball team. We used to have volunteer night classes. My wife used to teach a course in English, which the boys seemed to enjoy quite a lot. And I spent four years down here and really enjoyed the service because this is a beautiful, beautiful camp.

Graff: Pretty area, isn't it?

Brothers: I know that we did a lot of a good for a lot of people.

Graff: You lived right in the camp, you and your wife?

Brothers: Well, after I'd gotten settled here My wife had been trained as a lawyer, and after I'd been down here for six months, she decided to come down and live with me. So we had a home down in Springdale that had built by a Mr. Excell there, and we enjoyed that in the wintertime. And then she would move to Bryce when the camp moved up and stay at Ruby's Inn, where they had a tent camp set up there. So she tried to be with me as much as she could.

Graff: Now, if I'm understanding this right, the army's duty was you had to make sure the boys were housed and fed and clothed, and all that. Were you involved in the details of where they worked or anything like that?

Brothers: No. As being part of the Army, we would stand formation in the morning at seven o'clock. The men would be dressed for breakfast, and then we would turn over the boys to the park operation at eight o'clock. And we had barracks for the foremen that wanted to live here. Our park superintendent in charge of the workforce was a gentleman by the name of Frank Rozelle, who'd been here for a long time and was an excellent, excellent foreman. And he had a lot of trained people that would do rockwork, and our boys had a chance to learn a lot about stone structures and so forth. And I'm sure a lot of them went into that business after they left this camp. Our duty, of course, was t to turn the boys

over. If they were too far from camp, we'd send the truck out at noon with their hot lunches and feed them and all where they were working. If they were close in, they'd come in, and they'd mess in the mess hall here. And, of course, Saturday was their free day as far as the work service for the park was concerned. That gave the chaps a chance to wash their clothes and go off to neighboring towns here, or those things that they did on their off time. So we had no responsibility as far as the work. But we did pay them. Just like an army payroll, we'd pay them once a month.

Graff: So you had to keep track of all that, too?

Brothers: Yes. And of course we maintained a company store for them where they could buy things at a cost. And then we had a recreation hall. And this little store, it was run by a committee of the men, and they eventually made themselves enough money to buy themselves a pool table. So in the recreation hall, they had a pool table. It was sort of self-sufficient. And it was quite a pleasant life for them.

Graff: I'll bet.

Brothers: On the holidays—for instance, Christmas and Thanksgiving—the local boys could invite their families up to have dinner with them in the mess hall.

Graff: You'd have a special dinner, I suppose, for the holidays.

Brothers: Yes, Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners.

Graff: Now, the cooks—did the army hire them? Or were they CCC boys?

Brothers: Yeah. The army originally started out with army cooks, and then we would have cook's helpers that would go into the kitchen and be assigned to that work, and if they liked that, then they were sent to the cook and baker school of the army, where they could become professional cooks. So a lot of boys went out of here as cooks and bakers.

Graff: Is that right?

Brothers: Oh, yes. We had the best food. You got to have prepared properly if it's going to be edible, and the army doesn't go halfway as far as feeding them was concerned. So they were very careful on the meals that were served, because eating that every day of the week, it gets a little bit tiresome.

Graff: Let me just ask you one thing that came to mind here while I've got it on my mind. Now, there was another camp across the river. Was it here when you were got here?

Brothers: Yes, this camp was here when I came. Zion's Park Camp Number 1. We had such a demand in the area for CCC space that I was assigned after Fort Douglas to build a second camp, which was called Bridge Mountain on the peak here, NP-4.

Graff: Well, it must have been those four years, as near as I've been able to tell talking with these guys. They must have torn that down, though, didn't they, in the four years while

you were here? Because some of these fellows that come in as late as, say, thirty-seven or eight, don't remember there being a camp on this side of the river.

Brothers: It may have been torn down after I left, but there were two camps.

Graff: Both of them were here the whole time *you* were here?

Brothers: And of course I was only here until the early '37s. And then, after I fulfilled my obligation, I had a chance to go to Salt Lake on a thirty-day leave. And I said to my wife, "Well we've fulfilled our obligation. What do you want to do?" She said, "You do what you want to do." So I figured, well, we've fulfilled our obligation; now I'll write the War Department a letter asking that I be relieved from active service to return to civilian life. Well, I got a letter back from the Pentagon—the War Department in Washington—within three weeks, and it said, "Your request from active duty at this time is disapproved. We anticipate a very rapid increase in the armed forces from this period on, and because of the scarcity and lack of trained officers, your services are still required."

Graff: War clouds were already building, I guess.

Brothers: "Your services are still required." I was a first lieutenant by then.

Graff: Even though you'd done your four years, you didn't . . .

Brothers: So, I figured, well . . . Then I came back here after the leave and was reassigned to Fort Douglas, and that's where I spent almost four years there. I was in charge of receiving—what we called reception centers. And a post like Fort Douglas, this was the largest receiving station in the intermountain country, and they received draftees, selectees, enrollees, and volunteers for all services: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. And this is the first place that those boys came to. And they were classified, given uniforms to start with and medical tests, and all that business. And from there, they were sent to the branch which they had applied for, or which their qualification tests indicated that they had some aptitude for, and then . . . This is the first place. I was there until 1942, after war was declared with Japan.

Graff: So then, did you . . . ?

Brothers: No, I didn't see the later developments down here. I went to Fort Douglas. I went to the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth. It was a graduate school of the Army that taught you about the big units, like the divisions in the war and the regiments, and so forth. And after I graduated from there, they sent me to the infantry school at Fort Benning, and that was in the late '30s, so that was a little bit rough going for me.

Graff: Yeah.

Brothers: But I existed. And by this time, I was a captain. And after I had finished Benning, I was a major. So I was assistant battalion commander by then. Our battalion was eight hundred men.

Graff: I see.

Brothers: So I lost track of the activities back here.

Graff: Sure.

Brothers: And apparently they did away with the CCC in about—

Graff: Yeah. In '42.

Brothers: All those men. And my experience was that it not only gave me a wonderful training for the responsibilities I had later on, but these chaps that served here became excellent soldiers—

Graff: Sure.

Brothers: —and [unintelligible] the same time, and then bettering the world. So this training here did a lot of good.

Graff: Including you—good for your army career, I take it.

Brothers: That's right. That's right.

Graff: Did they then assign—after you'd gone to all these officer schools and things—did they assign you, then, over a battalion?

Brothers: Yeah. I was assigned to a training battalion. And they called them provisional divisions. But they didn't have a number yet. But a division is twenty thousand troops, and, of course, you're getting the whole thing together there.

Graff: Sure.

Brothers: I was part of this group, and I helped to build my own battalion. In fact, I had thirty officers in my battalion, and I married some of those fellows to their girls because the families couldn't get away to come to them . . .

Graff: Is that right?

Brothers: . . . from different states to be at the weddings, and these kids wanted to get married before they went into combat.

Graff: Sure.

Brothers: And I was trained to go to Europe, and we were to become a reserve division to invade France after the big push there. But like everything happens that shouldn't happen in times of war, the Germans had introduced a new type of warfare at that time. This was in 1943. They introduced mechanized warfare with these fast-moving guns and fast-moving troop carriers, where you could get a squad of men into one of these fast moving vehicles and go across the country forty miles an hour. So that did away with us marching in a

hurry. And they just beat a lot of our divisions in Northern France. And the casualties were so great that they took our division—almost twenty thousand people—they flew these kids home for five days' leave with their family; then they flew them to Europe as replacements for those divisions. They were all shot. Well, I ended up—I finally had a chance to take a test to become a lieutenant colonel—battalion commander—eight hundred men. And there were three vacancies, and I happened to be lucky enough to get one of them. And I ended up a battalion commander without a battalion, so I got ordered to a training center near Macon, Georgia—big infantry training center—and I was there for about three months. And I got a new assignment, and I was assigned to the 77th division—which is the Statue of Liberty Division in New York City—of Brooklyn troops that I'd never seen, wouldn't even know . . .

Graff: [Laughs]

Brothers: . . . or couldn't communicate with. And I was ordered to go to Schofield barracks in Hawai'i. Well, that meant that I was going to be fighting Japs instead of Germans.

Graff: Sure.

Brothers: So that changed the whole thing around. Anyway, I got on a troop ship and got to Oahu. This was the beginning of 1944. I trained there for six months—jungle training, camouflage, Japanese culture, psychology of the Japanese race, and all those things. And I got orders to join this new battalion of mine on the invasion of the Philippines that was going to happen on the 18th of October, 1944, when General MacArthur was going to come from New Guinea and move back into the Philippines after we'd been massacred down there at the beginning of the war. Well, anyway, I finished my training there. We had a seventeen-ship convoy that left the island—Oahu—on its way to the Palau islands. The Palau islands are two small islands 700 miles east of the Philippines, and our ships—all this convoy—had orders: to sail over there and get in an anchorage and wait for an escort to come across to take us across the South China Sea because the Japs still had the—

Graff: Still had control, huh?

Brothers: Yeah. Still had command of the sea there.

[From here on the tape is very difficult to transcribe; a second or third attempt should be made to transcribe it completely.]

They wouldn't let our troop ships across there because they'd be just like shooting ducks if they ever got up to you. So we got to this lagoon called _____ beautiful anchorage __ the submarines didn't know how to get in there ____ pressure against them the whole time. Well anyway, we got ____ . We waited and waited. The 18th came and went ____ we were still waiting __the 28th of October__ so I joined my battalion the 28th of October _____ major from Texas and ____ we had a few casualties and the kids had gotten a little chewed up ____ he sent me down to the ____ he took me down to our ____ jungle area, beach, hot and sticky and humid ____ the kids had been getting a few days rest ____ each of these kids and as I shook their hands, _____ and I could just tell ____ that's

the attitude I got when I first joined ____ I bought about two cases of whiskey _ trade it or use it on ____ realities of life ____ guarded this whiskey with my life ____ two or three nights we about finished the ____ thirty days in combat to prove these kids that I could at least shoot a gun ____ to be a leader, that broke the ice from then on ____

Graff: It's not, but you know, you got your start right here ____ it seems to me that you had a real good working relationship ____ what you needed to know what you ____

Brothers: Oh no, and me being a citizen soldier, ____ all the people from the street, you understand ____ and a sheltered life away from the general public, so they don't have a means of communication ____ and getting along ____ and that's what you have to do. ____ small units, twelve men, ____ and you're fighting in the jungle and it's a hand to hand combat deal. ____ appeal to them, for instance we would get very few men ____ this is '45 ____ had to get along with what we had left ____ because of the tremendous distances, the number of the troops involved ____ campaign ____ and the reason the War Department had picked Okinawa was because it was the ____ so on the fifteenth of March, we ____ for the invasion of Okinawa. And that campaign was led by ____ we had about about 105 ____ so on this very small island you had a lot of people that were ____ southern point of the island, and after that was the ocean ____ marines on the west and the army on the east ____ July to beat the Japanese ____ injuries and so forth ____ last ____ During that time, we lost our commanding general ____ a wonderful, wonderful general. Great leader, he was inspecting the marine ____ up on a high hill ____ and killed him, so we lost our general there. And by this time, instead of having about ____ around 800 men and 30 officers ____ my casualties had been quite heavy ____ so they pulled the 77th division out and put the 7th division in, which was an excellent division. ____ had some casualties on the ____ operation section which had to do with the operation of our own forces __ and one day, this jeep __ driver opened the door for him and he came __ I'm going in to take over command of the 10th ____ that's the kind of gentleman ____ it didn't take him long to put the spark in ____ it just goes to show you that ____ the different types that people are they run these armies ____ they just blew our headquarters to pieces with everything they could get in there ____ fly there ops in ____ suicide operation. About the fifteenth of July, this young __ driver got out ____ he opened the door ____ That was a different type of general, thirty days ____ of personalities that you get ____

Graff: I bet that you never dreamed that you end up that high up in the army?

Brothers: That's true.

Graff: _____

Brothers: This was in the late 40s ____ I figured well, if you're going to be a full army career officer, you should ____ air force school. And I figured well, I was finally promoted ____ what are my possibilities of advancing ____ So I retired ____

Graff: Did you go into law?

Brothers: Since I studied law, I came back and got a job as a law clerk. ____ women attorneys of Utah and then it was ____ I came back one day and said, "Gosh, there must be an easier way to make ____ had her support. So when I went to law school I figured that a young person ____ can do anything they want in this life ____ an ability that the other fellow doesn't have. And I found that my ____ was in finance was ____ got a job at a brokerage company. And I says to the leading brokerage ____ with them for 15 years ____ I had an ability that the ordinary person doesn't have ____ only had one daughter ____ I said I want to ease off of ____ so we started the Valley View Bank and Trust of Utah. We started out with 75 thousand dollars and now we're at 800 million, so I found that life was a bowl of cherries from that point on as far as I was concerned.

Graff: ____ seems like that you had a wonderful rapport with the boys. ____

Brothers: ____ I was dealing with kids, and I loved those kids.

Graff: ____ school ____ close enough to their age ____ You were still close enough that you could develop a relationship.

Brothers: This training here ____ when I had a chance to become a battalion commander ____ four or five majors that had a battalion ____

Graff: In mind, I've got this ____ law clerk ____ a lot of details here that you had ____

Brothers: ____ had to see that the chow's on the table ____ Cedar City ____ I had to communicate with those merchants in Cedar, made a lot of friends there ____ all dead now ____ but that's life for you.

Graff: ____ a lot of detail there to keep the boys from starving and keeping them healthy.

Brothers: ____ we had assistant leaders ____

Graff: ____ you got them up in the morning and lined them up and then turned them ____

Brothers: ____ in the CCs, you organize them ____ leaders and assistant leaders that have the same responsibility ____ that the boys make their bed and that they don't bother the other people trying to sleep at night and so forth ____ keep these kids from doing that.

Graff: ____ what kind of discipline ____

Brothers: ____ we have in the army ____ we had a lot of local people in our CC camps that were adjusted to this area ____ that some of the boys that came from Brooklyn or Philadelphia ____ different environment all their life and you can't bring them out here and expect them to change overnight. ____ and we had a few ____ and we had a ____

Graff: But did you have, were there certain things that ____ do to discipline them ____

Brothers: ____ ask the local peace officers, the local sheriff ____ full court martial ____ wasn't necessary as our camp was concerned, thank goodness.

Graff: ___ really wish ___ kind of looked out for themselves.

Brothers: ___ that's the training I got personally ___ made real friendships ___ some cooks and bakers, some rock masons, and so forth ___ they did all these bridges out there and all the trails. ___

Graff: ___ Kennedy ___

Brothers: Captain Kennedy ___ as far as bring in supplies and ___

Graff: ___SO you just saw him in passing?

Brothers: ___ baseball team, horseshoe pitching, we had shows, we would got to dances down in ___, we went on site seeing trips. We took our boys to the opening of Boulder Dam ___ we had a regular convoy that went down to the park and Las Vegas and set up a tent camp there.

Graff: ___ something needed to be done ___

Brothers: ___ permission to take the troops down there. Of course, it had to be approved by the athletic department ___ gasoline and so forth.

Graff: ___ here's your ten trucks ___

Brothers: ___ buck stops here ___

Graff: ___ greatest camp in the world ___

Brothers: My pleasure.

Graff: ___ else to ask you ___

Brothers: ___ we did have some classes ___ from the Dixie college ___ so forth ___ Saturday afternoon ___ great geological place ___ millions of years of history

Graff: ___ one big happy family ___ satisfaction to be in change of something like this ___

Brothers: ___ great social programs ___

Graff: ___ one of them that was definitely a success ___ had to be good

Brothers: ___ we had pictures ___ starting to get together ___

Graff: Well I guess we'll quit with that.

[End of Interview]