

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

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

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

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

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

Beth Martin: Which camp were you in first?

Lowell Brown: I was in Logan, Utah, up in the Cache National Forest. And that's where we were inducted. We went up there and we had our tents. That was before any wood buildings were built. We went up there and we worked with the forest service building all of the buildings up there in Logan Canyon.

Beth Martin: Then where did you go from there?

Lowell Brown: Now we worked there and what we did, do you want to know what we did there?

Beth Martin: Not there.

Lowell Brown: All right fine. Then in October they decided that it would be too cold to stay in that area because of the depth of the snow and so forth and all the freezing stuff that went on. So they transferred us down to LaVerkin, Utah. We came down on a train part way and then they put us on trucks because the trains didn't come into that area.

Beth Martin: Right.

Lowell Brown: And so we came on trucks, and came in and we had the same situations when we hit LaVerkin. We had to put up our tents, then we built the camp all of us, 200 of us built the camp there in LaVerkin right in the mouth of the canyon where you head towards Zion's Park, where we are today. That was in October of 1933.

Beth Martin: Okay.

Brown: Did you want to know where we stayed?

Martin: When did you first see Zion?

Brown: We saw Zion about, I would have to guess, about a month after.

Martin: After the camp?

Brown: Yes, after we had built it because we weren't allowed out.

Martin: Was this your first trip to Zion?

Brown: Yes, that was the first trip that I'd ever come to Southern Utah.

Martin: What did you think of Zion camp?

Brown: It's the most fabulous place in the world. The first time that you go through it and of course many times afterwards, it just awes you just to look at it. How in the world that this thing could've been formed in such a beautiful place and it still today and it has been preserved so beautifully. Yes, this was the first time that I had ever come was in 1933, yes.

Martin: Okay, what facilities were in Zion then?

Brown: There was very little. I don't recall any buildings whatsoever in Zion at that time. There may have been a little house here and there I don't know.

Martin: Was there roads?

Brown: Yes just a dirt road, a very small dirt road

Martin: A dirt road?

Brown: Right where it is today, and of course it isn't tarred. Yes that was here, but they had started, I'm sure that everyone knows, that they started that tunnel up there in the twenties.

Martin: Twenty-nine.

Brown: Twenty-nine okay. Then when we came in in 1930 it was completed all but the bedrock in the bottom. So they sent us with gravel and we went up there in our old CCC trucks, the GMCs and the Chevys whatever they were.

Martin: Was it old army equipment?

Brown: Yes. It was old army equipment, and we took it up in there and put the gravel through that whole tunnel.

Martin: Out of LaVerkin?

Brown: Out of LaVerkin.

Martin: Where did you get your gravel?

Brown: Down in one of the old pits there along the road. I think it was more over towards Toquerville back in the canyon of Toquerville. There is a river bottom as you go down into the river bottom and there was a road that cut off to the right through the farmer's land. That's where we went back in there and got it and hauled it all the way.

Martin: All the way by truck.

Brown: Yes.

Martin: And you put the gravel in the bottom of the tunnel?

Brown: Yes, in the bottom for the roadway.

Martin: Did you do any of the roadwork on what they call the Nevada Switchbacks?

Brown: No we didn't—oh coming down out?

Martin: That's what is called the Nevada Switchbacks.

Brown: At that time all that they were was a dusty road, a dusty trail practically.

Martin: Just a trail?

Brown: Very hard to get up through there, yes, because of it. It was mostly developed, but no tar or such as that. It was all gravel.

Martin: Was it as wide as it is now?

Brown: No, it was just very narrow. In fact, what you had is you come by those switchbacks you have places where you could pull off to the side and let somebody go by if you was having traffic, but in those days there was very little traffic. My, gosh you could stay for two or three hours and never hardly ever see another unit coming through. It was very slow. Everything was very slow. That's what I remember.

Martin: Okay, what did you do then with your jobs in the CCC's?

Brown: See of course when we put in the ditch in, the water pipes, for instance, that came down out of here up from one of those springs.

Martin: That would be what they call Pine Creek. That's not off of Virgin this is the one going up by the switchbacks that's called Pine.

Brown: All right, we went up in there and we brought the pipes. Now you've got to consider that we were only here six months. Now in six months you can't put a water line six miles from there on down to the mouth of the canyon. So they just had this one little spike camp we called it. I think there were eight tents and there were eight men to a tent.

Martin: Yes.

Brown: Went up there and they stayed there that entire time right through because there are no tough winters up in here. It was warm it was nice. So they took picks and shovels and dug that and brought it as far as they could. Now someone told me here some time ago they only came about a mile and a half with that pipe at that time. Then, this crew that they had here in this part took over.

Martin: But you did the first work?

Brown: Yes, we did.

Martin: Bringing that water down. How far did you think you brought it?

Brown: About a mile, probably about a mile down. So that's what they were saying. The men were needed, in fact, down in Virgin and I think that's what, as Mr. Adams told me as a foreman, at that time is that the reason that they pulled the men out was because they needed the extra help down here. When this camp moved in with 200 men, they could handle it.

Martin: Right. Okay what other type of work did you do in Zion?

Brown: Just mostly digging. You know digging and putting the pipe together. Yes, that's what we did.

Martin: And it was screwed pipe?

Brown: Yes, it was still a tough old pipe to put together, galvanized pipe.

Martin: Galvanized pipe.

Brown: Galvanized type pipe yes. Every once in a while we would put a tap, a spigot up in the air so you know so they could drink. I don't know whether it is there today, I don't know. This was years ago.

Martin: Have you found any other evidence other than what you've done up at LaVerkin?

Brown: I haven't looked up there beyond that. Now down below here yes, but not up there in Zion's park itself.

Martin: Zion Park itself?

Brown: This is just about what we did.

Martin: Who did your cooking in the sub-camp?

Brown: Oh what they always do; they always send somebody out. I think we had a fellow, the fellow that went up here was Henry Bradbury and he was out of Logan, and then he moved. Even today as we're talking right now he is still alive in Brigham City, Utah, and has a café there. Henry Bradbury is still there and he has a nice café, but he was one of the cooks.

Martin: Okay, what do you remember? What was a day like for the CC boys? Okay let's talk about the spike camp here. What time did you get up?

Brown: Hey, we had to be up at five o'clock. Now this is true, now some of these fellows are saying later than that.

Martin: Did you have bugle calls?

Brown: Yes.

Martin: At spike camp?

Brown: Yes, there was a fellow that would come out and played *Taps* and up you came. Yes and then you immediately grabbed your towel and went over to the creek and washed there was no hot water. We just went over and washed. You didn't need it. You really didn't need it because here we came from the north pole of Logan for heaven's sake and coming down into this beautiful canyon. Gosh the 80 degree weather was wonderful that water didn't bother you. We even drank it you know.

Martin: Oh sure.

Brown: Which you can't do today. I mean, gosh people say if you drink out of that river that you have some kind of disease in thirty minutes.

Martin: You bathed in the creek. What kind of sleeping? Did you just have a cot?

Brown: All right I'll tell you what they had. They had some army cots that were made with canvas, and they had a folded situation like this. Okay, just about what they have today if you want to buy them with the folded canvas camper. Then they brought in a bunch of

baled straw. They brought these big bales up there. We had these big cloth bags that fit the bed that zipped, I mean tied at the top while you filled these full of straw much as you could put into it and tied them up and put them on the top. Then you had the regular old army blankets, these old brown ones you know with sharp needles in them that stick you.

Martin: Wool?

Brown: Yes, that old thing and that was what we had. Yes, just like that and that was how we slept. And there were eight in each camp.

Martin: In each tent. Okay what was breakfast like?

Brown: Very good. Now what they usually had was scrambled eggs and I would say you had them every day. And they had one of those big black pans that were about five inches high and I'd say about 16 inches square to 20 inches square whatever. Then they would beat them up and they would put a little bit of, oh gosh, like cornstarch or something that would puff them up. And we had that. We always had bacon and that was no problem. We had ham; we had nice ham. I'm not complaining about the meals, but their ham they'd always cut it up into little hunks, and they'd throw it of course into the...

Martin: The eggs?

Brown: ...and mix it up. And they always had fried potatoes. Now this was in the morning always. Kept them fried and kind of made them like au gratin today they call them. In those days we didn't call them that. We had other names.

Martin: They were just good old fried potatoes?

Brown: Right, and if kids drank coffee they were entitled to have it, if they had, well cocoa most of the time.

Martin: Was keeping things cold a problem?

Brown: No, it didn't seem to be. I mean we would keep them warm so forth. Oh, I see for spoiling?

Martin: Yes.

Brown: I don't think so.

Martin: In the spike camps?

Brown: No, I don't think it was too much that way.

Martin: Did they prepare you lunches? Did you take them out on the job?

Brown: Yes, always took lunches.

Martin: How much time did they give you?

Brown: One hour to eat them. One hour. We had from twelve to one.

Martin: And you worked from what time?

Brown: We started at eight o'clock in the morning. We worked our regular eight hour days.

Martin: Tell me what was in the lunch, how did they sack them up?

Brown: All right, they had regular little paper sacks just like you normally have. They would take two pieces of bread and they would always put butter on them and they would usually use a little brush like a paint brush with warm butter and spread them. Then they would put usually a slice of spam, that type, but in those days it came more in a block. You know what I'm talking about? A block four inch square by a foot long, instead of coming open in a can and running it around and using it. We had that. We had the, what do they call that other where they zip the can open. Well, anyway they had the cheese. They made that with the cheese, the ham and the cheese together normally. Then they would give you another sandwich of fruit, like your strawberries, raspberry, or apricot and that would make us with peanut butter. That always went together. Every meal you got that as far as a lunch. Now what we used to do to make those so they were delicious, we would go out and build a little bonfire and make us a little toastwich. We would put it on a stick or on a piece of a shovel, hold a shovel there and heat it over the stove until it melted and it would make a cheese melt or whatever. They were delicious sandwiches and this happened all the time. This was a regular thing. Then you had your apple and orange or whatever or a banana even.

Martin: You had a...

Brown: Just about every day, and they always had some kind of a drink. We'd either have a lemon type of a drink or something in a big jar that they made up, and it was kept cold. And that's what we had. We always had our own little canteen situation like the army had. You had a little cooking frying pan like thing. Then you had the bottle that the kids even use today with the cloth around them that keeps them cold.

Martin: Canteen.

Brown: Yeah, a canteen and on the end of it had a little tiny cup and that was used for shaving and hoped that you washed it, so that you didn't drink some soap the next morning. This was how their lunches were all the time, and they were good lunches.

Martin: And how many hours a day did you work?

Brown: We worked eight hours a day.

Martin: And then about what time were you through?

Brown: We would start at eight, go to twelve. We'd have the one hour and we'd get through a little after five.

Martin: And then what did you do after work?

Brown: Then we came back to the camp. Some people were handling horses. If they were doing work with horses, they had to take care of those horses. They had to feed them after; that was an after deal.

Martin: After the eight hours?

Brown: Yes, the reason they did that was because everyone wanted to drive a horse. Everyone better well wanted to drive a truck, so they said okay you take care of them. See that was an extra shot in the ear for them so they had to do it. And that was done. Of course I can tell you some of this a little later in a sense it's down here.

Martin: Come on tell us.

Brown: No, I wanted to tell you about down in Virgin.

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

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

Martin: But in the spike camp.

Brown: But in the spike camp up here mostly I'll to you what it mostly was boxing. We'd done a lot of that. We didn't have any ring or anything, but we'd get out and put on boxing gloves and just do that to take the frustration away once in a while. And a lot of wrestling, a lot of horseshoe, we played that. Oh, there were some good horseshoe throwers I'll tell you. So we did that. So we had some, we didn't have any volleyball or that sort of thing because they didn't have the nets and stuff.

Martin: Probably the space too, wasn't it?

Brown: Yes the space, yes a lot of that.

Martin: Where was the spike camp at? Can you tell me where?

Brown: I think it has to be about here because it wasn't very far from where the pipe work was done because we walked to it. We didn't have to take the trucks to go to it. So we walked to it.

Martin: So you walked?

Brown: So it wasn't from way down here and walking up there you know four to five miles to it. No, it was up in there further to it.

Martin: On which side of the river?

Brown: It was on this side of the river what we would say the river was on that side.

Martin: It was the west side of the river.

Brown: Yes, on the west side of the river, you bet.

Martin: So you had some hours to spend.

Brown: Yes, we sure did.

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

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

Martin: What kind of light did you use?

Brown: Lights? We just had lanterns. Yeah, just those plain old gas kerosene lanterns. That's all we had. You see, there's no power up in there.

Martin: Oh no. But I guess here though ...

Brown: In the regular camps you had electric, you betcha.

Martin: Electric power okay.

Brown: But we didn't have that.

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

Brown: Yes, the thing that I took advantage of was -- when I was a youth going to school there in Logan I worked for a contractor in the summertime after school was over. So through

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

Martin: That's what you did after you got out of the CC?

Brown: Well, see the war broke out.

Martin: Oh yes.

Brown: You know. Okay, then when the war broke out I didn't get called into the service, but I got called into doing service. We were building the boxes that took the guns and the ammunition that was sent to the islands, and we built them there in Logan at that time for the service. Now this is starting in 1940-41 and right through there.

Martin: Okay, how long were you in the CCC's?

Brown: I got in the CC camps in 1933, June the 14th of 1933, and I got out April 15, 1935.

Martin: So two full...

Brown: Just about the two full years, twenty-two months.

Martin: Because that was the average time?

Brown: Twenty-two months is what. We were supposed to sign up for six months at a time, but due to that last one I went to them and asked them if they would release me.

Martin: Well what type of classes did you attend?

Brown: Mostly carpenter classes.

Martin: Stayed right with the construction business?

Brown: Yes, I sure did.

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

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

Martin: Was it done by the army?

Brown: No, I was taken down to the Logan Hospital, down to the Cache Valley hospital.

Martin: Well that was when you were up there.

Brown: Yes, that was when I was in the Logan one, yes.

Martin: Did you find that the medical was well?

Brown: Well, of course you had your local doctors do it. You didn't have them do it.

Martin: You didn't have the army doctor do it?

Brown: He wouldn't do it. He was there, but he wouldn't do it. So he just sent us down there. We all went down that way when we had problems.

Martin: When here in Zion was there ever much need for any?

Brown: I hardly saw any in Zion, anything like any problems with anybody. Never seen anyone get sick, you know to that extent I mean.

Martin: Was there a camp character when you were here in Zion?

Brown: I was one of them.

Martin: Did you do any stunts or tricks?

Brown: Well, just lots of kidding around was all, tying guys' blankets together when they tried to go to bed, just the silly little things.

Martin: I know but that's part of living.

Brown: Yeah that's right. and we used to take their sweatshirts and tie the knots so they couldn't crawl into them. Lots of times you would tie the sheets up different so they couldn't get in or just silly little things like that. But nothing that was real mean.

Martin: Nothing real mean?

Brown: No, no I don't believe so, not that I recall.

Martin: Do you remember any camp songs?

Brown: I don't remember them now, but I know they had a few of them yes. And they weren't bad. Let's see, I was going to try to say this if I can get this lettering right. It was:

S is for the slop we get for breakfast.

H is for the ham we never see.

O is for the olives set before us.

V is for the veal we never get.

E is for the end of this enlistment.

L is for the last I'll see of ye.
Put them all together they spell 'shovel' the emblem of the CCC.

Martin: Oh that's good. I like that. Did you gather any lasting friendships?

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

Martin: That's nice.

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

Martin: You know the names of anybody who was here at Zion?

Brown: Yes, I sure can.

Martin: Just give me some of the names of the boys that worked right here at Zion with you at the spike camp.

Brown: There was a fellow, a big, tall fellow by the name of Robert Rust. Now he lives in Logan. Yes, he was one of them that worked there. There was a fellow, let's see what did they tell me, two or three of them told me. There was a boy by the name of LaVar Fifield that worked there, and he was from Logan. There was another fellow by the name of Lynn Skabeland, and he was from Logan. There was another fellow, well Herb he'll be over here, but he worked up here. Let me see what I've got [looking at notes]. Let's see there was Herb Macey over here, and also Bob Broberg. Now that's four I can remember those four. But I don't remember some of those other kids offhand.

Martin: Were they mainly all from Logan?

Brown: Yes, most of those from Logan.

Martin: Cache Valley?

Brown: And Ogden and Salt Lake and Preston which is going into Idaho.

Martin: Can you see the areas change?

Brown: No, I don't think so, really.

Martin: Well, the beauty hasn't changed.

Brown: Hasn't changed one bit.

Martin: No, but I'm talking....

Brown: I see yes, well coming through and you see a tree chopped off and something like that. No, the rock and everything is sliding down the same, and I just think that it is holding real good, if they'll just keep the bulldozers out, you know.

Martin: Well, they are.

Brown: Just keep the homes out.

Martin: Well, they won't ever.

Brown: Yes, I don't really see much change in it, to me really.

Martin: Do you think it is better or worse?

Brown: I don't think that you could've made it better in our day, I mean better than what we had. The only thing is you see all the brush is gone all the stuff that we dug it out and moved it and burned it and whatever. Sure your campgrounds and that are much prettier.

Martin: I think so.

Brown: Much prettier sure.

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

Brown: Like we were doing?

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

Brown: I'll tell you the main basic things, I think as far as coming and putting in a water line coming down through there, that could've been done very easily with a bulldozer today or with a clam and dug it out or whatever they had that would've been very easy and very quickly. But show me equipment that would go up and build that beautiful trail from here on up to the top of that mountain. Couldn't make it, take the one that goes up through the tunnel and off across there, you couldn't have done it and still can't.

Martin: Did you work on the trail above the tunnel?

Brown: No, we were not, that came after. See that didn't start....

Martin: That's right.

Brown: That started a couple of years later.

Martin: That's right.

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

Martin: Get the water down

Brown: Right, so we can continue on. I don't know whether they visualized what they were going to do for eight years. I didn't know that.

Martin: Okay. What have you been doing then since your CC days?

Brown: Since then, well let's see. Course I left Utah finally. I went down to here and I was in here until 1935, the early part of '35. Then I got married. I got married and we lived in Logan until 1939. I was in construction at that time. I was building things in Logan with this general contractor I'd worked with as a youth. Then the war broke out so I went from here, from Logan down to California. I went into the San Francisco Bay area, and we built all the navy stuff along the estuaries and then where Kaiser has all of his work. I worked for the Bethlehem Steeling Company building slides for their ships, and also helping build a few ships, the hull part. Then we stayed through that and I helped build camps at what they called Camp Stoneman; that was up in Marysville, California. I helped in Pittsburg, California. We built all of the camps in there. We built all of the navy base where General Nimitz had his headquarters. I helped on all of that.

Martin: Then you think then that it was your experience in the CCC?

Brown: Yes, absolutely. It helped to teach me responsibility for myself and not be afraid to work. Like I've told everybody in my life, I've said "If you want to make a good living. If you've got the nerve to go to California and work hard you can work all of your life and have a good job, but if you're not that kind of person, don't bother to go because they don't need you. And you can really make it."

Yes, and I think of this. Getting up at five in the morning was a great thing for us. It taught us to get up. It taught us cleanliness. Go in and brush your teeth, go in and take a shower. Get in and do these things, and get all your clean clothes on. We had to wash all those clothes. One, we couldn't wear a shirt the next day that we had worn the day before.

Martin: That's interesting.

Brown: Any of your clothes.

Martin: How did you launder them?

Brown: We went right out and we laundered them right out in a regular big building you know with a regular wash room, and we went and scrubbed them just like our mothers did years

ago on a scrub board. Yes, we had the big old round galvanized tubs. Yes, we had clothes lines.

Martin: And you had clothes lines?

Brown: Yeah, we had to go clothes lines hanging on the outside, and we used to hang them. Yeah, but they had to be down that night. You couldn't leave anything overnight at all.

Martin: What about the ironing?

Brown: We never had to iron those things. No, they were just regular khaki type army stuff.

Martin: Did you send some of that pay money? I didn't ask you what you received, but I about know. How much was sent home?

Brown: Out of the money we were paid? Well, they gave us thirty dollars a month; that was basic pay. We only received five dollars.

Martin: So how did you spend that five dollars?

Brown: Hey, I spent it right there in camp practically, or going out maybe and buying something in the local stores in LaVerkin and Hurricane. Yes, that's what we spent it on. But see I was a little bit the type that I wasn't satisfied with five dollars. See I used to take KP duty from fellows who wanted to go home on Sunday or Saturday, and I told them "A buck a day." I said "No way out." We used to get little cards at the commissary. They were about two inches by three, four inches long and they had five cent markers on them. But they would stamp out as you bought stuff see. Well I would take these cards and I would take their KP duty for that whole day which was three meals, but ninety percent of the guys were gone, so it was just a little tiny group, so there was nothing to it. I used to help cook. I would go into the kitchen and help them cook, stuff like that.

Yes, and another thing too. They had what they called a recreation advisor. Now that was a big name to give me, but I had to go out down to the College get them to put on programs. They gave me seven dollars a month more for that, so you see there I had twelve bucks, while these other kids were getting five. I was getting twelve so that made it nice for me. That was for programming. Then they gave me another job of getting all the recreation things which I had to bring in the baseball teams in there. I had to bring the basketball team. That was the reason I went up to Tuff Linford up there at Dixie College when he was coach, and asked to play basketball against him. Well, that gave me another four bucks. I was in big money. I was a lieutenant practically . . . in pay.

Martin: Oh boy.

Brown: Yeah, I did that. But I had a girl friend who was going to school. I married her; she's over here. Her dad worked for the railroad, but he wasn't too anxious to give her money, so I bought her yearbooks. I would send home money so she'd have a little pair of shoes.

I liked that little girl, and that's what I did. I married her and I've been married 57-58 years.

Martin: All right, we only have a few more minutes on this side of the tape, but that's all right you can talk as long as you want. We can turn it over.

Brown: Well you have others to do.

Martin: We still have thirty minutes if you would like.

Brown: Well let's continue then now.

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

Brown: Most any subject you wanted to take.

Martin: No, I'm talking about entertainment.

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

Martin: What types of songs did they sing?

Brown: Oh....

Martin: The hits songs of the day?

Brown: The very hits of the day. Yes. [singing] "On a day, like today, we pass the time away, writing love letters in the sand."

Martin: Oh, those kind?

Brown: Yes, this is the type they would sing, many of them.

Martin: Musical instruments?

Brown: Yes, they used to come up, bring their violins; they'd bring their guitars, mouth organs, anything. If we had a piano, they'd play it. Yes, and lots of good plays, little cutie plays like Shakespeare and different things.

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

Brown: Oh absolutely not, not one second.

Martin: Did you ever go back home during the time that you were here?

Brown: We went home for Christmas. They let us go home for Christmas for two weeks. Rode in a truck clear from there all the way to Logan, and then all the way back. They gave us two weeks off.

Martin: You didn't take the train then?

Brown: No, they gave us two weeks off, so they just took their trucks and took us. There must have been like seven or eight in the caravan, took us all back because we were all from that area from Salt Lake to Ogden to Logan.

Martin: Well, Mr. Brown, this is about all of the questions that I might ask right at this time. If you have any more comments to make, even about the work that you did in LaVerkin you just go right ahead and tell us.

Brown: This to me is very interesting because I just I love that area of LaVerkin and Hurricane. I know a lot of people, older people today there that I have met recently, in regards to that camp that we had at LaVerkin. Now the camp was located as you come along from Toquerville towards LaVerkin just as you enter into La Verkin where it makes a left turn if you're coming from the north going up toward Zion, our camp was just a block east on that road, and on the left hand side. Even today in 1979 [sic 89] if you go by there, any of you, look to the left and you will still see about three or four old dilapidated buildings with the roofs just in on the ground which I'm sure in a few years will be gone, and that was the camp that we built. Some of the buildings were removed.

Now as you go up the canyon, this is a new road as you leave La Verkin, just up a little ways the road changes and swings toward the north. When we were there, you only went a little ways up there and it turned to the right and it went up a ravine up the right where your new road, you won't see this but up this, this was a very interesting situation. The road used to sluff off there every winter because of the rain, and so it would sluff all that gravel down across the road. So we, as you look up there now I want you to look off at the right as you drive, you'll see a beautiful rock wall put all away along there runs for about three quarters of a block, retaining wall of rock holding up that side of the mountain. That is still there. If you were to follow that old road and get on it and go up a little further because it swings away from your main road, you can't see it anymore there's another one of those same type of rock wall still there holding that road just as beautifully, and that had been over 55 years ago. That's a long time for that type of a wall. There was no mortar used. It was just put by what we called rip-rapping. Some long rock went back into the dirt and others were even so that it would hold.

Most of our work that we did after we were released from coming into the Zion Park area was right in Virgin itself. Let me tell you about Virgin. When we went in there the Virgin River, you know, in the spring of the year has a tremendous wash problem taking out the

cherry trees or the apple trees or the apricots or the nut trees or whatever was in there and it would wash those things away. Well we went in there, and these baskets now that I'm going to tell you about was made of a mesh wire. That mesh wire is about a quarter of an inch round, and they're in squares of about six inches square, all welded together.

Martin: Is this what they call basket dams Mr. Brown?

Brown: This is the basket; yes, this is the basket work. What you do is your wire comes in about an eight foot length is all in big long rolls, 100 feet 200 feet long, but they're only that wide. So what we would have to do is roll it down and roll one next to each other and then we had to weave it where the joints came on the long way all the way to hold them together because they could not break apart. Now you would lay this down along the river where you want to do it then you would pile rocks on there and we had men just dozens of men piling the rocks slowly along building it up as you came up and it was about ten feet wide as you went up. Then as you came up you brought the wire up and let it stick up in the air just so the rocks wouldn't sluff off and fall. So it would hold it into a square block, we'll say eight by ten feet. Anyway it would hold it like that. Now we would build that up and then when we would get to the top of the height whatever the engineer said "Hey that's far enough" then we would bring the wire over the top and tie it all together so it was a solid basket, could not get away.

Today after all of this time if any of you ever have a chance to go into Toquerville, and I'll give you a chance to see one of those, now this is a smaller version of it. But when you go across that narrow bridge where it says "Go down to one lane" stop on the one side, walk to the west, and look over the edge of the bridge and you'll see one of them still there. But that little river did not do any erosion after we left so it is still visible, but it is a much smaller version because we didn't need a big one. We started all through the town of Virgin, every bit of that was all done, and I have been back there two years ago, 1987. I was there in '87 and I had a chance to go with a man by the name of Wilcox who owns some of that land, I mean his dad owned it, and he's still living, and he's about four years younger than I and I'm 76. He took me down there to show me what we had done, and all that was left of that rock wall is just an inch or so above the ground. Now that's ten foot of soil that eroded down that river and kept dumping it and dumping it and dumping it and made him a beautiful big pasture in there and he showed me the whole thing, this whole thing that we had done. All the way down that river, it's that same way, and we did it for I would say a couple of miles at least all through there.

We even took it up above Virgin where the water comes close to the road. We had to dike that and run it out of there to stop that from taking that whole road out. That's what we did in the Virgin area, and we got all of the rock from the top of the mountain. We used to go up there and roll the rocks down and let them roll down the roads, any little lane that went through. We would take our trucks up there and haul them down. Now, also we had what we called the "gun boat" and that was a big piece of flat steel and it was about five or six feet wide and about eight feet long, and it was bent up on the front, and we used to hook a team of horses to those and we would take those in the tougher places to get the rock, load them on this, and then we would drag it over to the edge of the hill

where the hill would slope and let it go down over this edge and then it would slip and off go the rocks and roll down the road. And we did that all through the Virgin, all where the cemetery is built in Virgin. We cleaned all those rocks off up through there. We went up those canyons heading toward Cedar City, took all the rock down off those hills. I know that there have been a lot grown there since, but we did take a lot out of there. So this is very interesting. I spent quite a long time doing that on that particular part of the river, but I enjoyed every bit of it.

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

Brown: Well, I don't know, I was talking with me friend over here and he was trying to tell me to remember this and this, and now, you know when you get a little bit old and the old senile part starts getting in there, boy it creeps up on us.

You know, I made so many friends. Today, if we could have a reunion similar to this one that you people are having here, with us as guests I have to say, I would love to have one going into this other area and get a hold of those fellows.

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

Brown: Who was the one who started this one?

Martin: I think it was the one man who was sitting, oh dear.

Brown: It wasn't the old fellow from the army?

Martin: No.

Brown: That's all right.

End of interview.