

**Hugh Cannon**  
**Zion National Park Oral History Project**  
**CCC Reunion**  
**September 29, 1989**

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Beth Martin: Beth Martin interviewing Hugh Cannon, the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1989. CC Oral History Program.

Hugh, where were you from when you joined the CCC's?

Hugh Cannon: Junction, Utah

Beth Martin: Junction and where are you from now?

Hugh Cannon: Riverton, Utah.

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

Hugh Cannon: I was in school. I'd just got out of high school.

Beth Martin: You graduated from?

Hugh Cannon: No, I just got out of the third year of high school.

Beth Martin: Okay, what was the date that you entered?

Hugh Cannon: The 5<sup>th</sup> of July 1938.

Beth Martin: And when did you leave?

Cannon: I'm not sure whether it was in January or February or the first of part of March 1940.

Martin: So you had a two year...

Cannon: Twenty-one months I was in.

Martin: Twenty-one months. Were you ever in this canyon prior to being [in the CCCs]?

Cannon: Oh yes, I'd driven through a time or two.

Martin: So you knew what the canyon looked like, what is was going to be?

Cannon: Yes.

Martin: I want you to tell me how you feel that things have changed here in the canyon.

Cannon: Well, I don't recognize anything to speak of now.

Martin: What about the growth of the trees, the buildings? Do you see any buildings that were here?

Cannon: Well, this building was here when I was here.

Martin: What was it being used for?

Cannon: It was a cafeteria then. All the little cabins that used to look so nice back in those days, they've pulled out. The last time I've saw them used up here they looked kind of chintzy. But back in those days they were pretty good.

Martin: Pretty first class. Where was the entrance station at that time?

Cannon: Well, it's in the same general area, I don't know, right down the south part.

Martin: Were you here when it was up at the forks?

Cannon: No, it was always farther down this way.

Martin: What about the East entrance?

Cannon: It was still the same. It was up the other side of the tunnel. I don't know if they've moved it or what. We used to have us a trail, a foot bridge across the river, and we would just run across there and head out and not go on the road at all when we'd be going into town. Cut the distance about a third over following the road into town.

Martin: I see, that's great. Was there a character in the camp? Do you recall a character in the camp?

Cannon: There were quite a few of them.

Martin: Quite a few of them.

Cannon: Grant Dalton was quite a character. He walked across on his hands on that bridge across the river down by Hurricane on the railing.

Martin: Do you know what he got for that?

Cannon: Oh just a bet, I don't know.

Martin: I think he got a gallon of wine.

Cannon: Something like that.

Martin: I was told by his wife that he got a gallon of wine for doing that stunt.

Cannon: It was before he had a wife.

Martin: Oh I'm sure! I'm sure of that. Do you remember any of the jokes or tricks?

Cannon: There was always short sheeting everybody and for a while they were going around scalping. A guy would be asleep in bed and they would take scissors and cut half his hair off, all that was sticking up. In fact, I had that happen to me.

Well, the rope on the flag pole broke one day and we couldn't get the flag down, so I volunteered to go up and get it. I shimmied up and got the flag and rolled it up and tossed it down, and then I happened to look up. I was over the mess hall part of the time and looked down on the office the other. The pole was swaying like this and that's when I got sick. All the guys disappeared.

Martin: Now see these are the kinds of things that make camp life interesting and everything, all these kind of stories. What have you done since you were in the CCC's?

Cannon: Oh, quite a few things. I went to school a little bit more and became a licensed air craft mechanic and worked for United Airlines for 44 years.

Martin: As a mechanic?

Cannon: As a mechanic.

Martin: Why did you leave the CCC's?

Cannon: Well I was married and wasn't able to re-enroll, but I got another job. I worked on road construction for Smith and Young Construction on the highway between Hurricane and Zion.

Martin: You met your wife and married her while you were in the CC's?

Cannon: Yes, I stayed there for one enrollment and after that my classification was changed to cook. Cooks can be married.

Martin: Tell me about, when did you do the cooking? I thought you were the book keeper.

Cannon: It was just on paper that I was the cook, to get around the regulations.

Martin: To get married?

Cannon: No, I got married and instead the captains said they wanted me to stay in, but I had to change my classification to make it legal. So they reclassified me as a second cook.

Martin: Did you ever cook?

Cannon: No.

Martin: Did you ever work as a KP?

Cannon: Yes, I worked KP.

Martin: What kind of work did you do while you were a KP?

Cannon: Peel potatoes, wash dishes, scrub floors, you name it. Scrub GI cans.

Martin: What did you do for showers and things at that time?

Cannon: We had good modern showers both at this camp and at the one up to NP-2. Here at the office, the office personnel had their own private shower and bathroom here at the headquarters building. But at Bryce, we all used the same ones.

Martin: You know, I wondered about those kinds of things when you are talking about men, the work areas, how they changed.

Cannon: Well it's not even familiar anymore. I see a lot of the old work that was done while I was in here.

Martin: How did you enjoy the trip today?

Cannon: Oh, it was nice it was.

Martin: Did it bring back some memories?

Cannon: Oh yes.

Martin: I was sitting here thinking maybe they should have done the trips before and then interviewed the men because things are still here.

Cannon: Yes, they are.

Martin: How do you think being in the CC's helped you in your life after you left?

Cannon: Oh yes, I think it did. I think they should have them now. Instead of this Job Corps Program that they have. I think they should get some use out of the people that are in there as well. I think it would solve half the welfare problems by opening up the CC camps again; cost them a little more money but no more than welfare does and they would be getting something for it.

Martin: Do you think it helped you in your work after you left CC's

Cannon: Oh yes, it gives you a sense of responsibility. That helps if you know you have to do something, you'll do it. Or if you go right from school and you might want to work you, might not. I've seen a lot of fellows that come right out of school and don't accomplish a great deal.

Martin: Well Mr. Cannon, do you have any other experiences before we end the tape that you could think of that you would like to share.

Cannon: I think that's plenty.

Martin: I'm looking at your wife. I think maybe she's older and maybe she could even give you some since she was here in this area. Well, we thank you very much and we appreciate this to no end. Thank you!

Added on:

Cannon: During the night the door was lifted off the jail by a two by four and the guys got out. They gave them discharge, dishonorable discharges.

Martin: For stealing the watermelons?

Cannon: Well it was for immoral turpitude is what the charges were.

Martin: Were there other disciplinary actions taken?

Cannon: Well if you go AWOL, you're given forfeiture of so many days pay for going absent without leave. Seems like that it wasn't as strict as army life, but they had to maintain some sort of discipline or half the guys would go over the hill whenever.

Martin: It's been interesting that I haven't been able to find out because none of them said they didn't have to be disciplined so they didn't know about the discipline type measures and you are the first one that has even given me any.

Cannon: Well, that was the only disciplinary action other than desertion. There were a few that took off and went home without getting the benefit of a discharge and decided to get another job somewhere. They were just given a dishonorable discharge for desertion.

Martin: What kind of pay did you receive?

Cannon: \$36.00 a month.

Martin: How much of that did you get to keep?

Cannon: Well, \$22.00 went home and the balance came to me.

Martin: And how did you spend that little balance?

Cannon: Just chasing around mostly. We'd go to town of course.

Martin: Into Springdale?

Cannon: Into Springdale, and we'd go to St. George, and when we were at Bryce Canyon, we'd go to Panguitch, and go home on weekend leaves.

Martin: How often did you go home?

Cannon: Well, not very often after the first six months or so. I met her down here after about...

Martin: In Rockville?

Cannon: In Springdale. Then instead of going home I'd come down here when I had time off, I'd come down here to Springdale.

End of interview.