

**Hazen Madsen**  
**Zion National Park Oral History Project**  
**CCC Reunion**  
**September 28, 1989**

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Hazen Madsen: My name is Hazen D. Madsen. I was here from, as I recall, from July 1940 to July 1941, and it don't look like they spelled my name right there.

Nancy Harms: I didn't write that. I'll redo that one.

Hazen Madsen: Okay.

Woman: Do you want him just to talk? Talk Haze.

Nancy Harms: Just to go ahead and tell us about your times, what camp you were in?

Hazen Madsen: I was in the one right across the river from here, Company 962. Clayton Edwards was the first sergeant. Captain Edward Wall was the commanding officer. I worked on the rock crew that built the rangers' dormitory back of the present Visitors Center. I don't know when they moved the visitor's center down from up on the corner where it used to be.

Nancy Harms: Where was the location?

Hazen Madsen: Just as you come down from across the switchbacks and hit the road that goes up to the other road it was just here on the corner. It was here when we had to go up and shovel three cars out of the snow slide at Checkerboard Mesa. People stopped to watch the snow running down the hill and all at once it all came and buried three cars, but we got extra leave if we volunteered to go up and shovel snow off and dig out those three cars. The year that I was here they had the rock slide up the canyon. It blocked the whole canyon off. I guess it must have been a 120 foot deep rock slide to come down and block the river and everything else up there. That year I grew ten inches in height. When I came in, I was five foot two inches tall and when I went out I was six feet even.

Nancy Harms: Are you serious?

Hazen Madsen: I grew ten inches in that year. I was in for a change of clothes every two weeks it seemed like. I'd just grow out of them.

Nancy Harms: How old were you?

Hazen Madsen: Seventeen.

Nancy Harms: Seventeen.

Madsen: Used to swim here in the river. I remember that. During the summer we swam just right down here. I chased a lot of deer through here with my camera taking pictures of them. I hiked nearly up to Bridge Mountain, but didn't quite make it. Coming back from that trip we come back via the tunnel, the east end of the tunnel is where we come out. We started walking through the tunnel, hungrier than a bear with six cubs. We watched some of the tourists there feeding the chipmunks cookies. She asked us if we'd like to finish feeding the package to the chipmunks' they had to leave, but the chipmunks didn't get the rest of the cookies. We'd left camp without a lunch. I don't remember too much about little things that happened, except the time we nailed the first sergeant's shoes to the floor.

Harms: What?

Madsen: He had the habit of turning and just getting out of bed and getting on his shoes and tying before he ever took a first step. One morning we had his shoes nailed to the floor.

Woman: Was that Scipio?

Madsen: Yes. He said, "If I ever find out who done it, I'm going to kill them to my dying days." So when we went and visited him last Saturday night, I didn't tell him about that. He is in a rest home, has been for sixteen years, but I didn't tell him that I'm the one that nailed his shoes down. But I haven't seen an awful lot of people here from my era. There are more older ones, '33s, '34 camp. Now anything you want to know?

Woman: Now what about that lady that you saw at Virgin that said she used to come up and dance with you guys? Where was that at Springdale?

Madsen: Oh I don't know. I don't know their names.

Woman: Did you have dances on Saturday night?

Madsen: Not that I attended.

Woman: What'd you do on your day off?

Madsen: Chased deer across here with a camera taking pictures of them.

Harms: What was your salary?

Madsen: Thirty dollars a month. Twenty-two of it went home and we got eight.

Harms: You got eight.

Madsen: I supplemented a little while I was night-watchmen. In the winter I'd build a fire in the barracks, had the barracks warm by the time they got up, which paid me twenty-five cents per month per man.

Woman: They paid him, not the CCC.

Harms: Oh.

Madsen: The men in the barracks each gave me a quarter a month to have a fire going when they woke up.

Woman: Tell them about the fire hose.

Madsen: Well, the guys would go get drunk and they'd come home from town drunk. In the summertime they'd always took the windows out and just had screens in the barracks' windows. These guys would turn the fire hose on and run up and down the barracks you know with the fire hose going through all the screen windows. Everybody was always short sheeting the others, figuring some new way to wet their bed. I came up with the idea to put a cup up above the rafters, one of those GI cups you know with the tilting handle and fill it full of water and then a long string somewhere.

But I think the most ingenious one that somebody thought up was they took a flat whiskey flask and put a hole in the cork and then they'd put it down in the bed and punch a hole in the sheet and tie it to the end of the bed. Somebody would come in and feel it with their feet and reach down and pull it out and that'd pull the cork out and a string of water up the whole way.

Harms: You came to Zion from where?

Madsen: Gunnison, Utah.

Harms: Gunnison, Utah, and you currently live where?

Madsen: Murray, Utah.

Harms: Murray, Utah.

Madsen: The first month when I first came in, we went in the Salina camp, and we were there for just one month while there was a group forming to bring them down here. And then that's when we come down here and then I was up at Bryce for one month as a spike camp and other than that, it was right here at Zions.

Woman: Warren Schow, a friend of his couldn't come today, but he said that he got the thirty a month and twenty-two went home, but he barbered hair for fifteen dollars extra, so he had eight dollars plus the fifteen dollars for barbering whoever wanted their hair done.

Madsen: Well, he was rated; he got thirty-six a month.

Woman: Oh.

Madsen: He got six dollars extra because being crew leader type thing, but he had done barbering on the side. He still cuts my hair up there now; he's got a barber shop in Salt Lake.

Woman: He couldn't come, but he was from Escalante, and came down here to Zion in what '38, '39?

Madsen: No, '39, '40, '41.

Harms: And Schow is that S-C-H-O-W?

Madsen: Yes.

Woman: That's Warren Schow, and he was the barber for the camp. Did the men pay him or did the CCC?

Madsen: No, the men paid him if they wanted their hair cut.

Woman: He said he made fifteen dollars a month doing that. But I've heard several of the CCC people say it was some of the best months of their life, the year they spent here.

Harms: That's what I've heard too.

Woman: And they worked.

Madsen: We went and visited the first sergeant last Saturday night. Nearly everybody here said, "No, you didn't visit him; he's dead," but he's still alive. He's been in the rest home for sixteen years. Looks like death warmed over but he is still alive. Clayton Edwards.

Woman: He must have been really liked, Clayton Edwards.

Madsen: He had a very good reputation round here. Good personality.

Woman: They've got a picture. They took a copy of it. Doesn't look like that now, does he?

Madsen: But he was 6' 4" and 240 pounds. Now he's going to have to hurry to go to a hundred and ten. His eyes sunk way back in and just don't look good.

Anything else you want to know?

Woman: What kind of food did you eat, I'm curious, because the country wasn't very rich either?

Madsen: Well I remember we had good food. I know they ate potatoes because I had to peel two sacks of them one day.

Harms: Did you have anything to do with the channeling, channelization of the river?

Madsen: No, that was after my time. Our project was this dormitory right back of the visitors' center.

Harms: That was your main project?

Madsen: Yes. That's what I go most of my training on.

Harms: So you got to learn rock work then as well because I understood not a lot of CCCer's did rock work.

Madsen: Yeah.

Woman: He took photography from that Mr. Robertson and he did these pictures and developed them himself by learning photography.

Madsen: Some of them, not all of them.

Woman: Some of them, yeah. Here and that's why he's got a lot of little pictures. He couldn't afford a better camera.

Madsen: This is the main project that we built on and that's the ranger's dormitory. I understand now it's the girl's dormitory or something.

Harms: It's the boy's dorm.

Madsen: Boy's dorm?

Harms: Yeah.

Madsen: [Holding photo album] Well, there's what the camp looked like up from up on the side. This smaller one is of the different pictures of the dormitory in progress. Just picking my brain here, they said they didn't have names of people who were here, but between myself and two or three people I've run into in Salt Lake there, we have come up with about 65 names of people that was here.

Woman: Mr. Manns has a copy. Did you want a copy? You didn't need one, did you?

Harms: No. Did you think there was a lot of visitors at that time, visiting here?

Madsen: Through the park?

Harms: Through the park.

Madsen: It seemed like there was quite a few, but it isn't anything like the numbers today.

Harms: Were you here during the Easter times when they had the pageants?

Madsen: Once.

Harms: Do you remember those, once?

Madsen: Once. Yeah.

Harms: Where was the pageant held when you were here?

Madsen: Oh, I don't remember. It was up on one of the side hills here.

Harms: Up in the main canyon area, up past the grotto, what's now the grotto? Do you remember that much?

Madsen: I don't remember that much, but I do remember they had the Easter pageant here. I was on the carpenter crew at one time and night watchman. I chipped rocks up here and was on the road crew doing road work on the switchbacks and I was on the crew that hiked the full length of West Rim Trail and Angel's Landing busting rocks and clearing the trails. Other than KP duty once in a while, that was my jobs.

Woman: Did they have forest rangers here then?

Madsen: Oh yeah.

Harms: Park rangers.

Madsen: Park rangers.

Woman: Park rangers, I meant, yeah.

Harms: What kind of facilities were available then? Do you remember the motels and the cabins?

Madsen: I had nothing to do with them at all, but the campground here it seems like it was fairly busy all the time. We swam in the river, just right over here, quite a bit. If we went to town, it was to Springdale. I did get around one time as far as the bend in the road before you turned into Rockville. But we had to walk everywhere we went. The only time we got out of the park other than when we went home on leave is on a recreation trip. They went over to what is now Colorado City, Short Creek.

Harms: Yes.

Madsen: The baseball team was playing a game over there and we got over there to see a baseball game. I got into Hurricane one time. There was one of the fellas lived there and we went home and spent the weekend at his place, but other than that I didn't get out of the park unless I headed up this way toward home.

Woman: Did any of you plant a garden because it's so good to grow here?

Madsen: No, we were working during the days.

Woman: So nobody planted a garden.

Harms: How were you accepted by the locals, the area residents when you ran into them? Did it seem good?

Madsen: I was LDS and went to the church once in a while and I was accepted there when I went to church, but that time I didn't know what girls were.

Harms: What about CCCer's? Did the locals seem to appreciate CCCer's?

Madsen: Some of them. Some of them always had a chip on their shoulders and wanted to fight and they would fight with anybody they had a chance to fight with. A lot of time they picked them just to get in a fight. I was never that kind. I never went with any girls locally.

Harms: When they began teaching you to work, because you came here as a green kid at seventeen and you hadn't been doing rock work before.

Madsen: Oh no they just, "What can you do?" Like I say, I was on the pick and shovel and the sledgehammer busting rocks.

Harms: Yes.

Madsen: I did get on the carpenter crew remodeling some of the buildings, the visitors' center up here on the bend of the road, and I got to go to Bryce Canyon for that month on a remodeling job on the carpenter crew.

Harms: Now, did they teach you as you go or did they have a separate class?

Madsen: Well I had a little carpenter experience working with my dad who was a carpenter and cabinet maker at home. And I had a brother at the camp here. He was on the carpenter crew. Had a brother that was here at the same time and he was one of the rated thirty-six dollars a month instead of thirty. They needed a carpenter at one job and through Mr.

Dooley and my brother, why I went to work on that crew instead of hammering, beating rocks to pieces. But that wasn't awful long and then I got on over here chipping rocks and running the jackhammer drilling holes.

Woman: How did they handle dynamite? Did they have it?

Madsen: Oh they had dynamite, yeah.

Woman: Who handled that, the CCC or professionals?

Madsen: I don't know. Well one other job that I got on that I liked was trapping deer. We would trap deer here and haul them way back in the park and turn them loose when they would get too many here.

Harms: Oh is that right?

Madsen: Yeah, but they had cages that they had to move around and bait them, bait the traps. That's the part I liked is they baited them with apples. We would catch deer and transport them. They would get in one trap that had screen on both ends, and once they were in there they would open on both ends. They couldn't wait to get the apples and that would trip the lever and then they would open up another cage, if you will, on the other end that was just open on one end and they'd pull the dark side up and didn't see the open up there and away it would go and drop the lever. Then we'd load them on trucks and take them in the backcountry and release them. So that's one other job I had here. I talked to one of the Pryor boys and he said that's the one he worked on a lot of the time.

Woman: Was deer trapping, huh?

Madsen: We done a lot of the hiking right here on the foothills, chasing deer and taking pictures of them as they would run, but there was a lot of them, a lot of deer.

Harms: Did you hear any of the stories when they were building the Watchman Trail, when they [were] building any of that?

Madsen: No, no, that was before my time.

Harms: Before your time.

Madsen: Other than building the dormitory, ours was more repair and maintenance than actual construction.

Harms: When you were working or walking on the trails, did you run into many tourists, visitors?

Madsen: Not that many. I think the day that we hiked the West Rim Trail, which is what eight or nine miles long. I think we run into three or four tourists that were hiking that. Some of us were armed with picks and some with shovels and some had double jack sledgehammers. I had a sixteen-pound sledgehammer for my trip up there. But we walked clear to the end of the West Rim Trail and the Angel's Landing, busting any rocks that was on the trail, making sand out of them and spreading it about. But, it was happy times there.

Harms: Have you gotten a chance to visit many of the areas since you've been in Utah? Have you gotten a chance to come back and revisit the park?

Madsen: Well, we live in Utah.

Harms: Right.

Madsen: Yeah. We have been back here, not often, but this past year we spent the winter in Hurricane in a travel trailer and it's still over there. That's where we're spending our time now.

Woman: Where did you put your feet in the water, that you said you put your feet in 49 years ago?

Madsen: Oh, it's up here at the start of the Narrows. There I'd sit there at the river and dangle my feet in the water as well as over here in the creek.

Woman: It's a little, what is it, it's not a grotto is it?

Madsen: Oh, not hardly. Can't think of anything else....

Harms: You said that there were things that you used to do as far as everyone trying to get each other's bed wet and things like that.

Madsen: Yeah, short-sheeting.

Harms: And short-sheeting, yeah.

Madsen: Anyway to get somebody's bed wet, hot footing or something, just to keep people annoyed.

Harms: Any traditions that was basically just to keep them annoyed.

Madsen: Yeah, that was the time that I was night watchman. They had me sleeping in the cook's barracks. I had one fella there that just insisted that I wasn't supposed to get any sleep during the daytime. He was always sticking the cigarette paper up your nose or something, and lighting it, or put shoe polish on your shoe and lighting it, hot footing

you. I just told him, I said, "If you want to sleep, you better let it alone." He just kept it up. So for three days, soon as he'd go to sleep I'd tip his bed over or pour a bucket of water on him or something, and finally, "truce, truce," he said. I understand, talking to someone else that he went on to be a music teacher down in Las Vegas.

I don't see an awful lot of them, but once in a while I run into one that I knew here in the CCCs. Chasing down names here, the same name I found two or three other guys that were in the CCCs but not this camp. One was from Ivins.

One night I was going home, hitchhiking home after work and I got as far as Mt. Carmel Junction up here and it got dark and cars just weren't traveling at night and I had no place to stay. There was another CCC camp there, but they were all boys from Missouri and through there. I just went in and asked the sergeant there at the desk, I said, "Is there any empty beds around here?"

"Any of those three; they're gone for the weekend. Help yourself."

So I did get in there and had breakfast the next morning with the group and then out on the road and found my way home.

Harms: You said that those boys were from Missouri and that area. Were most of the people you were working with from Utah?

Madsen: Uh-huh. Escalante was a big representative, Milford, Fillmore, Hurricane.

Harms: Is that how they set up camps was what states they were from?

Woman: Probably what counties.

Madsen: I don't know, but the one from Mt. Carmel Junction or maybe it was the Orderville Camp, anyway it was the camp from over there, they were nearly all from the South. But I did get bed and breakfast from them at no charge and then onto Gunnison by way of the thumb.

Woman: Now you had a brother down here in the carpenter for a while.

Madsen: Yeah, yeah he was carpenter crew.

Woman: Your other brother went to, where?

Madsen: He went to Ferron Camp.

Woman: Why, did he go to Ferron, because he was in sooner than you?

Madsen: Yes, he was in four or five years sooner than we were.

Woman: To Ferron, Utah?

Madsen: Yes.

Woman: Oh, okay.

Madsen: He supplemented his income there by painting pictures on the back of men's leather jackets. He painted a lot of pictures of the Moab Arch and stuff over there. He's still a famous Utah artist and that's his livelihood now. He goes by the name of Matt Madsen, at another camp, but still CCC and he pursued it to make a life-long career out of his artwork.

Woman: There were eleven children and three sons.

Madsen: Twelve.

Woman: Yes, but one died. Anyway the three children would send the 88 dollars.

Madsen: Sixty-six.

Woman: Sixty-six right, and that's what the family lived on.

Madsen: The 22 dollars that I sent home that bought the family their first refrigerator they ever had. They used to use what they call a "cooler" with screen wires and burlaps stretched over with a pan of water on the top and the burlap in there and it'd evaporate down. That's the cooling process.

Woman: Tell them what Warren Schow said about one of the first automobiles they had here.

Madsen: That's his first automobile.

Woman: Yeah, that's what I said, tell her. The three guys went in together to buy it.

Madsen: They went up, I think it was Cedar City, and bought a car. After they bought it, they found out it wouldn't run and they had to work on it three days to get it to run.

Woman: It had a new paint job and new tires.

Madsen: But it wouldn't run, and they say they finally got the engine running and it went down the road like this [gesturing], king-pins.

Woman: So anyways, that's where they spent their spare time after that was getting that car to run. Did Warren say anything else?

Madsen: Oh, just that he was one of the crew that went looking for a fight when we went to town, but he's changed since then.

Harms: Even though you'd lived here in Utah, had you visited Zion prior to the time you'd come here as a CCCer?

Madsen: Oh, no, I hadn't been out of town.

Harms: So when you first laid your eyes on it, what did you think?

Madsen: It was quite a site to see.

Harms: Did you figure out why it was set aside as a national park?

Madsen: Yes, yes, the rock formations here and when I see if some of your buildings here and the grounds, they need us back. [laughter] We never used to see the grounds looking like they do now, tree stumps like this, they would be gone, the grass trimmed.

Harms: Did they used to pull out the tree stumps, dig them out?

Madsen: Not that I had anything to do with, but like I say you just wouldn't see that laying around at all. Last year we went up by the mouth of the Narrows canyon, broken down fences and lots of dead fall wood. To me it was just distracting that we didn't have when we worked here.

Harms: But you understand now the importance of leaving the dead fall wood, letting it set out?

Madsen: Well, I've heard them say that, but that's just like a fire, let it burn, Yellowstone.

We used to keep firewood a lot at the campsites here where the people would have wood to burn and that took care of a lot of the dead fall wood. The bulk of my work was just right up that canyon on the dormitory.

Harms: Did you work on any of the smaller houses up there as well with some of the stone work?

Madsen: No, I didn't know that they were up there. They worked up on the side hill up there, chipping rocks and brush to make the hillside safer. But the big share of the work that I did more time than anything was up there on the dormitory.

Can't think of anything else unless you have some questions?

Harms: Was anyone a songwriter in your group that you remember writing songs about the people that they worked with or happenings that were going on that type of thing?

Madsen: No.

Woman: There is a CCC song you know.

Harms: Right.

Woman: And you have the words to that?

Harms: Yes.

Madsen: Starts out, "When I was young and in my prime" that one?

Harms: I think so. It was just something I looked at briefly when they were handing us out the information.

Madsen: "I left my home for the very first time, was happy as I could be; 'cause I'd been called a CCC," is that the one?

Harms: Keep going, just in case it's not.

Woman: I have it in my purse. You want me to bring it tonight?

Harms: Okay.

Madsen: I tried to go through it the other day and I couldn't quite remember all of the words, but she does have a copy.

Everybody had a nickname, nearly.

Harms: And yours?

Madsen: I don't know. They just always called me by my last name, and my brother, they called him by his first name when he was here. One guy they called 'Whop;' he was Italian lived up in the Helper area, but I thought I'd done good to remember their names let alone their nicknames.

End of interview.