

Woodruff Pollock
Zion National Park Oral History
CCC Reunion
28 September 1989

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Date transcription began: 28 February 2011

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Carolyn Hinton: This is a Zion CCC reunion, September 28th, 1989, at Zion National Park. Let's see. This is the Nature Center. That's where we're at. I'm Carolyn Hinton, and I'm talking to . . .

Woodruff Pollock: Woodruff Pollock.

Carolyn Hinton: . . . Woodruff Pollock, sometimes known as Woody. Were you known as Woody then, too?

Woodruff Pollock: Oh, not too much. Mostly, I hadn't been nicknamed Woody until after I left the CC camp.

Carolyn Hinton: Now, where are you from today?

Woodruff Pollock: Washington, Utah.

Carolyn Hinton: Okay. Would you like to give your address?

Woodruff Pollock: 1160 East Telegraph #238.

Carolyn Hinton: What did you do before you started work, before you joined the CCCs?

Woodruff Pollock: I went to school, done chores (chuckles). I was sixteen years old when I joined.

Carolyn Hinton: And why did you join?

Woodruff Pollock: Well, it was bad times, you know, and my dad had a big family, and he couldn't support us all. So we went to CC camp so we could help support the family.

Carolyn Hinton: And how did that work out, I mean, how were you paid?

Woodruff Pollock: I got paid, I think, six dollars a month, and the rest of it went to the family.

Carolyn Hinton: And they mailed that directly to the family?

Woodruff Pollock: Yes.

Carolyn Hinton: About how long were you in the CCCs?

Woodruff Pollock: For a year.

Carolyn Hinton: What were the years?

Woodruff Pollock: When they discharge you, it says July the eleventh, 1938, that's when I went in. And June—[it] doesn't say the date—in '39, when I finished.

Hinton: Why don't you just read that little note to us?

Pollock: Okay. It says, "To Whom It May Concern: This is an honorable discharge from the Civilian Conservation Corps." "To all whom it may concern: this is to certify that Pollock, Woodruff . . ."—supposed to be "B.", but it says "S."—

CC 9283396, a member of the Civilian Conservation Corps, who was enrolled July the 11th, 1938, at Camp NP-3 at Bryce Canyon, Utah, is hereby honorably discharged there from by reasons of not desiring to re-enroll. Said Woodruff B. Pollock was born in Tropic in the state of Utah. When enrolled, he was 18 years of age.

Which I wasn't. I told a fib. I went in when I was sixteen.

Hinton: You were only sixteen. [Laughs]

Pollock: Yeah. It says I was a laborer and had blue eyes and brown hair and medium complexion and was five feet eight inches height. "His color was white. Given under my hand at Bryce Canyon, this thirteenth day of June, one thousand nine hundred and thirty-nine. Edward R. Wall." He was first lieutenant in the infantry, and he was our commander at that time. Now on the back, it's a record of service in the Civilian Conservation Corps. "Served from 7/11/38 to 10/6/38 under NPS Department at camp NP-3, Utah. Type of work: pick and shovel, road construction. Manner of performance: Satisfactory. From 10/7/38 to 5/4/39 under NPS Department of NP-4 Utah," Which was the camp here at Zion: "Type of work: pick and shovel, road construction. Performance: Satisfactory. From 5/4/39 to 6/30/39 under NPS of NP-3 . . ." I worked at both camps, at that time, as a cook. I worked part-time in Zion's Canyon and part-time in Bryce Canyon.

Hinton: Where was this camp located?

Pollock: Here. Right straight across the river.

Hinton: The one that's right here.

Pollock: Yes. Right over against—right under—well, it's called the Bridge Mountain Camp. It was right under Bridge Mountain.

Hinton: Did you have to get passes to go back home? Were there certain times for you to leave?

Pollock: Well, yeah. Almost like the Army, we had to have a pass to leave camp every time we left camp, and whatever.

Hinton: Why don't you go ahead and finish that?

Pollock: Just the remarks: “A satisfactory worker. Combat: good. Habits: good. Educational qualifications: completed two years of high school. Occupational qualifications: laborer. Reasons for not staying in:” We just said, “Desiring not to re-enroll,” but the reason I left the CC camp at the time: my dad needed help and so I go out at the time to help him with the lumber contract that they had. So I left to help him at the time and this says, “Discharged June the Thirtieth, 1939, at Camp NP-3, Bryce Canyon.” And it was signed by Edward R. Wall.

Hinton: And you were living in Tropic?

Pollock: Yes. I was living in Tropic at the time.

Hinton: And did you settle in this area afterwards or did you go back to Tropic?

Pollock: No. After we finished the lumber contract in Dave’s Hollow, we was cutting red cedar, and my uncle was cutting the lumber up East Fork Mill, just below the old CC camp. And they took it out to Salt Lake, and that was for inside the building for the old Auerbach’s Store in Salt Lake City, all that red cedar, for the clothing store.

Hinton: When you came down to Zion, was that your first time you’d ever been down here?

Pollock: Yes. First time I’d ever been to Zion, you know. When I came down here, it was late in the winter. I stayed at the spike camp at Bryce Canyon until in December of ’38. The snow was about nine foot deep, and we was fighting bug timber up there. And then, finally, we got snowed in there, and they had to come in and move us out, and we moved over to Zion’s Canyon in the wintertime.

Hinton: And you cooked down here?

Pollock: Not then. I spent the rest of the winter on the Nevada Switchback throwing rocks off the hill, trying to level the side hill up there. (Chuckles)

Hinton: What other kind of projects did you work on?

Pollock: That’s the only project I worked outside of the kitchen in Zion Canyon. When the main camp moved back to Bryce for the summer, I stayed here with the sub camp and cooked here and then later moved to Bryce Canyon.

Hinton: What was your impression of Zion, anyway?

Pollock: Well, being raised in Bryce Canyon, my impression was that it was huge because we see Bryce Canyon from the top looking down. Even where I was born and raised in Tropic, we were looking up at it, but, it wasn’t majestic like Zion’s Canyon.

Hinton: Were you quite impressed by that?

Pollock: I was, really impressed with Zion’s Canyon . . . always have been.

Hinton: Were there many tourists there?

Pollock: As I remember, there weren't too many tourists at that time, in '38. That was a bad time. People didn't have money to travel. I don't remember too many tourists. There was a few, but not a lot of tourists at the time.

Hinton: What particular people do you remember? Is there anyone you remember?

Pollock: I remember the Crawford family in Springdale, where we are. The Jackson family. The father of the Jackson family was one of the rangers here, and they had a daughter that had [??] and [??], and we'd give them away down at the church in Springdale. And we danced in the Gold and Green Ball, and I danced with Lavonne Jackson.

Hinton: What about the fellows that you worked with? Is there any of them that you remember?

Pollock: Oh, yeah, there's some special that I worked with. Dee Henderson—everybody in the camp knew him at the time. DeLoy Bowns—you probably knew him; he was from Hurricane. DeLoy Bowns. And I worked with him and Dee Henderson in the kitchen. I also worked with Lewis Davenport. He was one of the main cooks here at the time, and I worked with him. But they all left me, and I ended up alone here with seventy-five men to cook for. (Chuckles)

Hinton: Oh, my gosh.

Pollock: It took a lot of rice.

Hinton: And what did you do for entertainment?

Pollock: Well, we'd hike down to town and give Garth Church a bad time. I don't know if you remember Garth Church or not, but he was the town marshall in Springdale. I remember two or three times he locked us in jail, and there was a big rock in the bottom that we could push out with our feet. We'd push the rock out, and then, when we'd get out, we'd push it back in, and we'd beat him back to the dance (chuckles).

Hinton: Sounds fun. Did you go on any of the trails around here?

Pollock: I was always too busy in the kitchen because that was a full time job, and I never did get out on any of the trails 'cause I never worked on any of them. I didn't hike on many of the trails.

Hinton: How were you accepted by the residents of Springdale?

Pollock: Oh, most of them, real great. The Crawford family—I'll never forget them—they lived in a little rock house that's still there in the corner. We would go around the corner and walk there. The Crawfords lived there. The Jacksons lived on downhill where the town curves again, and they lived in a rock house there. And we got along real good there. We'd go down and visit. And the Giffords, I knew most of them, and the Winders, that had the ranch where the camp is down here now. The Watchmen Campground was the

old Winder ranch. That's where the Winders used to live, and we used to spend a lot of time with the Winders. We just usually made ourselves to home with most of the families in Springdale.

Hinton: Did they offer you any education while you were here, or was it just plain work?

Pollock: Mostly just work, I didn't have anything special in education while I was here.

Hinton: Did you have a barracks that you cooked in?

Pollock: We had a big mess hall that was built right down on the river. The CC camp was built back against the hill, and the mess hall was built right down by the river. Our kitchen was right on the riverbank, down in the trees where it was cooler than up in the hot barracks, 'cause they were out in the sun.

Hinton: How many . . . you said you cooked for seventy-five men?

Pollock: Yes, there was seventy-five men.

Hinton: Was that three times a day?

Pollock: Three times a day.

Hinton: Well, you didn't have much time, then, did you, if you fixed all three meals?

Pollock: No, we'd usually start at five o'clock in the morning and get through at eight, nine o'clock at night.

Hinton: How did you get your supplies?

Pollock: The supplies were brought in. Willard Pectol was one of them that hauled those supplies in. He'd go to Cedar City with the—we called it the *pie wagon*. He'd bring the old truck over there and gather up supplies and bring them to us.

Hinton: Would they come in by the train?

Pollock: Yeah, they'd come in on the train. They were furnished by the Army, and they'd give us supplies direct from Army supply.

Hinton: What were some of the things you cooked, do you remember?

Pollock: Well, I remember one time up in Bryce Canyon. We had an old icebox that wasn't too good to keep our storage in, and we had some pork loins—three pork loins that we'd had quite a while—and they started turning green. I decided, Dee and I—we was always working together—we decided that it was spoilt and bad to cook, but we couldn't throw anything away until we let the doctor inspect it. So we got back to camp over there, and he inspected the meat, and he says, "Oh, cook the pieces, they won't know the difference." He says, "After it's cooked, it's just as good as it ever was." So we cooked

green pork chops, and I couldn't eat a pork chop for years (laughs). But we had good dinners, there's tenderloin . . .

[wind blows over tape]

We used to make our own menus for the day and hang it out on the board in the mess hall so they'd know what they were coming to eat. And we found most of the guys liked certain things, and if we had the material, that's what we'd cook.

Hinton: Did you make cakes and cookies?

Pollock: Oh yeah, we made cakes, and I had a good teacher. My older brother was Matt Pollock. He was the head cook of the whole camp for years. We made a lot of stuff. I remember one thing that we made that really went over good with most of them was Jell-O, fruit Jell-O. We made a big bowl of fruit Jell-O.

Hinton: Was that fairly a new item?

Pollock: Yeah. That was really good.

Hinton: And you had iceboxes to freeze it in?

Pollock: Yeah.

Hinton: What kind of cooking facilities did you have?

Pollock: It was gas stoves—or oil stoves I think, not gas. It was oil stoves, huge commercial ranges with ovens and the whole works. I remember when we cooked breakfast, it was usually a whole case of eggs and sometimes more. If you mix your hotcake batter, you'd mix it up the night before, and by the time you got there to start cooking hotcakes in the morning, why, it was raised just right, so we'd just scoop it onto the grill.

Hinton: Had a pretty big grill, I imagine.

Pollock: Oh, yeah, a huge grill.

Hinton: Just one?

Pollock: No, seems to me like—'course after fifty years, it's hard to remember—but it seems to me like there was, on one of the ranges, the whole top of the stove was a grill. It was a huge grill.

Hinton: Icebox. Does that mean you had to get ice to put in the top of the icebox?

Pollock: In Bryce Canyon we did. But it seems to me like we had electricity in Zion's camp. We didn't have no electricity at Bryce Canyon, but it seems to me like we had electricity down here. We had regular refrigeration at that time, but Bryce Canyon didn't get electricity until 1940. But there was electricity here at the time.

Hinton: Any camp traditions or rituals you used to do? Get-togethers?

Pollock: Oh, the main thing, not so much in this one because we didn't have the same people, but in the Bryce Canyon camp, we had some guitar players. And every night we'd get in the recreation hall, and they'd play the guitars, and we'd sing. Dilworth Cox and Steve Lansmith were guitar players. I remember Steve playing so long that his fingers on the strings would be cut so bad they'd bleed. My main activity here when I was working with Dee Henderson and Burris was boxing because Burris, he was the camp boxing champion. I was his punching bag (laughs).

Hinton: Oh. He'd practice on you?

Pollock: Yeah.

Hinton: So they'd set up boxing in the evenings for entertainment?

Pollock: Yeah. We had boxing for entertainment. They had ballgames, and I remember—

Hinton: Baseball?

Pollock: Yeah. I remember one time going to Pinto to play the Pinto Camp. Another time, I think we went down and played the camp at LaVerkin. But that's the only two ballgames I can remember of going to, to leave here. We had a big recreation area out by the camp there—kind of a makeshift golf course and a ball field. We had plenty of recreation. And we'd go to all the dances, especially down to Hurricane High School. We'd take two or three trucks down there every time they'd have a dance at the Hurricane High School.

Hinton: Then there were dances at the church?

Pollock: Yes.

Hinton: Did you make any lasting friendships?

Pollock: Yeah. There's a lot of the fellows that I've met here today that's been good friends throughout my life.

Hinton: Can you tell me their names?

Pollock: Gale Wilcox and Jim Cooper and George Middleton. A lot of them, I can't remember their names. But I had one special friend—Bud Wilson—and I was hoping he'd be here today, but he didn't make it. We'd always hitchhike. He was from Escalante, and I was from Tropic, and when we'd get a leave from here, we'd hitch-hike from here home and back again.

Hinton: How many days would you have off?

Pollock: Well, sometimes we'd have two or three or four days off. Then Garth Martin and I, we had friends in St. George, so we'd hitchhike from here to St. George.

Hinton: How has it changed—Zion and around here? Has it changed much?

Pollock: Zion itself hasn't changed, but I remember this campground here not as big as it is now, but there ain't much change in the campground, because when we'd leave camp, we had a footbridge across the river, and we'd just come across the bridge and hike back through the campground and down to Springdale.

Hinton: So it's basically the same?

Pollock: It's basically the same except for the Watchmen. Like I said, that was the Winder Ranch at that time, and I don't know when they done this, but I was kind of surprised last year. I redone all the locks here in the park last November, and when I went into the Watchmen campground, it kind of took me by surprise because I remembered where the old Winder house sat and everything, and here it was a big campground, now, and all the ranch was gone.

Hinton: What have you been doing since the CCC days?

Pollock: In '39, when I left the camp, as I said, I worked with my dad for the rest of the summer on that timber sale. And then after that was over, I went to Bingham, Utah, and went to work for the Bingham Bottling Works. I made soda water and peddled it to all the stores. And I done that all that winter. Then the next spring, I went to work for the Logan Dairy in West Jordan and delivered milk from West Jordan to Bingham. I done that for a year and then went in the Marines. I spent, like, two in the Marines, and then I came back.

Hinton: Was that during the War?

Pollock: Yes, that was during the War. Got out of the service and came back, moved back to the Salt Lake area and started working in the cutlery business and ended up in Las Vegas and lived there for thirty years. Then in '74, my wife and I moved to Washington across the street from the Iversons.

Hinton: You built that home right across the street, too?

Pollock: Yes.

Hinton: What do you think were your benefits from working with the CCC's?

Pollock: I think the main benefit was At the time I was sixteen years old, and I'd outgrown school. Now, at that time, if you were in high schools, after three years, there wasn't any more to learn. You just were kind of stagnant, so I think I learned a lot more by leaving school and going in the CC camp because I was able to mingle with all of these people and learn different things and do different things, and that was a good education.

Hinton: It really probably benefited you *and* your family.

Pollock: Yeah, it did, very much.

Hinton: So you said you were in the two camps, then?

Pollock: Yes. NP-3 and NP-4 was actually the same camp. It was a movable camp that we moved. This was the winter camp, and Bryce was the summer camp, and it just moved back and forth every year.

Hinton: And when you were at Bryce, you lived right at the camp?

Pollock: Yes. The camp at Bryce was about two miles from the lodge back at the head of East Creek, and we all lived right there. There, we didn't have barracks we lived in tents.

Hinton: What were your cooking facilities like?

Pollock: They had a good mess hall. They had built a mess hall with a nice kitchen. It was about the same as the one here. But we had tents that four men lived in—it was a four-man tent.

Hinton: Can you think of any other experiences you had with the CCCs you would like to share?

Pollock: Well, the one thing I remembered was When I first came down here, I was riding in the back of those crew trucks, on the switchbacks (chuckles), and I remember Jim Cooper especially and Steve Lance were two of the truck drivers, and they'd race down the switchbacks. They told us all, "Now when we get to this corner, y'all move to that side, and when we get to this next corner . . ." to see who could win to come down the switchbacks. [It was] a wonder we didn't run off the hill, but we didn't (laughs).

Hinton: The tunnel was finished by then?

Pollock: The tunnel was finished. Yeah. The main thing I remember about the tunnel was that was our hideout when we were dynamiting the rocks off the Nevada switchback. At the time we started on that, it didn't slope like it does now—it was straight up-and-down ledges—big rocks. We shot all of that stuff off of there and cleaned it off and made it so the rocks wouldn't fall down and harm them.

Hinton: So when you were ready to dynamite, then you'd run back . . .

Pollock: We'd go in the tunnel.

Hinton: Is that where they'd detonate it?

Pollock: Yeah, from inside the tunnel. The first big window there. We'd go up to the big window so we could watch it when it'd explode.

Hinton: And before that whole hillside was straight up and down?

Pollock: Yes. It was just straight up-and-down ledges. They had a picture. I noticed in those pictures, there's one of them there with part of the Nevada Switchback, but it only shows it up just a little ways, and they had it partway sloped, but then up about halfway, it was just a big ledge, straight up and down.

Hinton: Then you'd go out and roll the rocks on down?

Pollock: Well, we'd get up on top and drill it and shoot it and just keep shooting it off. I remember one incidence. We shot one down, and it didn't shoot one big rock apart. It was probably maybe thirty-foot square, and it landed right in the middle of the road. Just sat right in the middle of the road, and we couldn't get by it. So Wayne Johnson was our foreman, and Keith Henderson and I were running the jackhammers, and Steve Lance was our powder monkey. So Wayne asked us if we could get that rock off the road, and Steve told him, "Sure," he says, "we can get that rock off the road." And he says, "You don't even have to clean the road." He says, "I'll just sweep it clean." Wayne says, "Now make sure you don't damage the road." He says, "We don't want to repair the road again." So we drilled it. Steve loaded it with about two boxes of dynamite, and we went up in the tunnel and watched it. When it blew, it just blew dust all over the canyon. We went back down, and it looked like he'd swept the road. It was swept clean (chuckles). Owen couldn't believe his eyes when he saw it. He says, "I don't know how you done it," but he says, "you sure done a good job."

Hinton: Any other experiences or you want to give your wife's name or how many children you have?

Pollock: My wife's name's Ardith, and we have three children, two boys and a daughter. Our oldest boy's living in Washington in our home. Our youngest son lives in Las Vegas, yet, and my daughter lives down Redlands, California. Her husband owns an insurance agency there, and they are great. I love them.

Hinton: So you think the CCCs really gave you a head start on life?

Pollock: Sure did. I think that's what started me off in life was to be in the CC camp and get the experience that I did for that year because it was great experience—just to be with the fellows, mainly.

Hinton: Felt like it was a great program?

Pollock: It was. It was great.

Hinton: Anything else?

Pollock: Oh, I could probably think of things afterwards, but right now, I can't think of much.

Hinton: I certainly appreciate you taking time to give us this interview today. Thank you very much.

End of interview.