

Orril E. Sorensen
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
September 28, 1989

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Jeff Frank: My name is Jeff Frank. I am interviewing Orril E. Sorensen of Tucson, Arizona. It is September 28, 1989, at 3:40 p.m.

Welcome back! Boy, if I seem a little choppy it might be because I am; there is a lot to think about. I have been speaking with a few people today and there is so much to think about, you know with what went on here.

Orril Sorensen: I can believe that. (Whew)

Jeff Frank: And this is just one park out of many.

Orril Sorensen: Well, as far as I am concerned there wasn't very much that I could tell you because I was doing mostly office work all the time I was down here from the time I first arrived here until we left for the summer camp up in Bryce again that fall.

Jeff Frank: In 1934 when you enrolled, where was the town you enrolled in? Or how did you find out about CCC?

Orril Sorensen: Well it came out in the newspapers or something, I don't know. I had just graduated from high school; in fact I hadn't even graduated from high school when I put in my application. My father was more interested in getting me into the CC camps than I had anything to do. Suddenly I was in and that was it. I went over to Richfield one day and was interviewed real quickly. I was very young at the time; I was seventeen years old when I went in.

Jeff Frank: You enrolled in Richfield then?

Orril Sorensen: (Shakes his head)

Jeff Frank: What was your home town up there than?

Orril Sorensen: My home town is Central, which is five miles south of Richfield.

Jeff Frank: So you went up there and that is where you went. Did you know you were coming to Zion prior to coming?

Orril Sorensen: Well, we were going to Bryce. As a matter of fact they had told me that they were going to pick me up at a certain time and I think they had told my step mother and she had neglected to tell me and the truck pulled up and I wasn't ready. In fact I wasn't even any place around. When I found out what it was for, I said that I will just take off and go down to Bryce Canyon myself, which I did. And I was enlisted the next day after I

arrived. I arrived there that night; I was very fortunate to make it to Bryce from Richfield in one day in those days.

Frank: Oh I bet. Truck right behind the other one?

Sorensen: Well all I know is there was a truck that picked up all the CC boys or the “CC I” as they called them at that particular time -- draftee’s if you wish because they hadn’t been sworn in that particular time. But I know that when I got my physical it was in Bryce Canyon and they had all had theirs the day before and I came in with a bunch of fellows over from Kane County over in Kanab. Our medic up there in Bryce at that particular time was a Doctor Shrank; he was an old Navy type. He wore an army uniform at that particular time, so whether he had switched services or not, I don’t know. I can remember he had told us that we could all go and we were all sitting there in the nude, and he said, and I said, “Hey, how about me?” And he said, “Don’t ever hey me!”

(Both Laugh)

Sorensen: That was my introduction into the “army” if you want to call it that. But we became very good friends after that.

Frank: Well, this sounds like it would have been a more warmer month? You know when you took off.

Sorensen: Well, it was June.

Frank: It was June?

Sorensen: June of 34. I graduated in May of 34, and it was about right around the middle of June. I don’t have the exact date, but it was right around the middle of June.

Frank: But you say you began at Bryce and got back down to Zion, well how did that all happen?

Sorensen: I could make a long story or a short story out of it but....

Frank: We got sixty minutes.

Sorensen: It was after they had completed filling the company up at Bryce. That was for the summer camp that they had there. I know they hadn’t been down here for the winter camp at all prior to that time. They sent a contingent or a boot camp, if you want, over to Cedar Breaks National Monument. About, oh I would guess between twelve and twenty of us, I don’t know how many. I signed up for it because all my friends were going. So we went over there and after I had been there for I guess up to about a week or ten days, I’d just barely gotten over there, and I was riding on the back of a pickup truck standing up with my arms over the hood of the car or the top of the car rather, and I had heard the

foreman tell the driver to go up to a certain point. I knew where he was going and when he had got to the fork in the road he had just kept on going straight and so I was leaning in like this (shows with his body) and I said “wow he is not going” and then he had remembered he had to go and about the time I had straightened out he made the turn and I flew out the opposite direction (Laughs). Now to make a long story short I just ripped my elbow open long and through here (shows elbow) and so they had to send me back to the main camp. And I wasn't good for anything else so, since they knew I was a clerical type they sent me down to Zions to be the time keeper while they were building their barracks. As I recall now, I was the only CCC man from our company that was down here at that particular time, although there were two or three that came down before the main camp came down.

Frank: Was this the first barracks? Was this the first camp built in Zion at the time?

Sorensen: No, no, they had had the one on the roadside. This was what we called the Bridge Mountain Camp and it was the one of the Ruthers was talking about this morning, the one that he was in charge of building.

Frank: Mr. Lewis that was just here was on the camp across the lake [sic].

Sorensen: Yeah

Frank: He watched that being built and we were just talking about that. So you were the time keeper in doing all the paper shuffling and construction and that job then?

Sorensen: Yeah that's right.

Frank: So you knew this gentleman that we spoke about....

Sorensen: Oh yes.

Frank: Did you two work together awhile?

Sorensen: Well, I spoke to him this morning; it's been a little over fifty years ago or well probably closer to 55, well, it is 55. I am sure that he doesn't remember me (laughs) but I remembered his name very well. As a matter of fact he was very instrumental in helping me get what I consider some of the fun jobs in the CCC camp pod while I was in there. He liked me and I liked him.

Frank: So you started out with time keeper here and this was still maybe about June-July some while in there?

Sorensen: This probably was in I would guess about late July or early August while they were building the barracks. They were building them real fast because they knew they had a time schedule to go on and I remember it was early October, if I'm not mistaken, at least

November hadn't shown up yet and the main camp hadn't shown up down here from Bryce, and they pulled a sub-camp out from Cedar Breaks because they were snowed in. They had to plow their way out.

Frank: Oh is that right? They had a whole camp up there and...

Sorensen: No, it wasn't the whole camp; it was just about those twenty men. But they boarded up and came down because the snow came in real heavy.

Frank: They weren't expecting that.

Sorensen: No, I don't think they expected it and probably not for another two or three weeks by which time the rest of the camp would have been here. They had all come up within two or three weeks of each other as I recall.

Frank: More or less, you opened it up for them then?

Sorensen: Yeah.

Frank: From here in Zion then, what would be a day to day for a time keeper? Did you have a full company or a full camp?

Sorensen: Well, I was relieved of any duties at that particular time, but I was called back in. As I recall it was not until probably about mid-winter that I came back in as the company clerk. In the meantime they sent me out with a crew and I worked up in the turnaround there in the Narrows where they were building an arrowhead shaped design up there. Maybe it's not there anymore, I don't know, but it was when we built it.

Frank: Well the turnaround there is the gateway to the Narrows Turnaround.

Sorensen: That's it! All I remember is it was bitterly cold up there because we would go up there and the sun would come up about eleven o'clock and go down about one o'clock.

(Both laugh)

Sorensen: The wind got to us around the same time. Now this was right at the Narrows, right at the Temple of Sinawava is what I am talking about.

Frank: Did you work on that trail?

Sorensen: No, I didn't work that trail. I don't think there was even a trail there when we were there, and I think that trail was built after my time. I'm not certain but there was a trail, but it was not a built trail, let's put it that way.

Frank: It was a route or . . .

Sorensen: It was a path was really what it was. But I remember we had a crew of about six men and I remember only one of them, little fellow by the name of Johnny Zetto and we took turns on a shovel and rubbing our hands to keep them warm.

(Both laugh)

Sorensen: It was awfully cold.

Frank: Oh you bet it gets bitterly cold up there. Was that all pavement by that time?

Sorensen: No it was gravel at that particular time.

Frank: Oh it was gravel.

Sorensen: But what we did, we actually made the stone outline of the arrowhead. That was what we did first. Cleaned out everything on the inside, everything, and then built all the stones around there and then hauled in all more earth. Then there was a tree planting crew that would go out. They would go out all around the area here and got different species of trees which they put in there.

Frank: Hmm

Sorensen: But our job was over by that time. I think about that time was when I came back to work in the office, and I also worked in the canteen.

Frank: So it sounds like as an administrator, your job is everybody else's job.

Sorensen: Yeah. I enjoyed it; I had a lot of fun.

Frank: So you kept all the files for the company and if there was anybody that needed something, a paper a correspondence, you were the gentlemen they chose to handle that.

Sorensen: There was no such thing as a tape in those days. (Laughs) Correspondence and reports. We would have to send in all the different reports that were required, both from the park standpoint and from the, I suppose, the Department of Interior and Department of Defense; they were both involved. Sometimes I am quite sure that the park service was the one in the interior, but that's perfect conjecture on my part because fifty five years ago I didn't care. (Laughs)

Frank: Well, like the company commander, did you do all the paperwork for this gentleman, dealing with personnel matters?

Sorensen: Yes, I knew them all very well. None of the lists that I have seen are the ones that I worked under. There was Captain Whitney, Whitney was the commander and then Lieutenant Brothers was his adjutant and the medic was a Doctor Shrank. I haven't seen shrank, I haven't seen him any place. But I know he was here when we got our second

contingent after the camp had opened up in the winter. But I don't see Shrank's name there and then the educational advisor is a name that is foreign to me, but I worked as assistant educational advisor when we went back up to Bryce and his name was Williams, as I recall. I don't know; maybe he just came in at Bryce, I can't remember. But I know he wasn't down here.

Frank: Maybe we are looking at the difference between the two camps.

Sorensen: I think so

Frank: Maybe one side of the river to the other.

Sorensen: Because Whitney for example was not up at Bryce; he was only down here. And this naval type that Colonel Brothers was talking about this morning. I don't remember him either.

Frank: Did you have much contact? Here you are working in Zion National Park and you have the park staff also; you have people running at this time this building here; you had park rangers running around. Did you have much contact as the administrator company clerk, did you go back and forth between the park services and the three Cs people?

Sorensen: Not personally. Usually that was handled by the adjutant, in other words by Brothers himself. Though I can remember Brothers taking me up to the park service up to the main office and showing me how to run an adding machine. I had never handled an adding machine in my whole life up until that time. And then after I left the CC camps I went to business school down to Santa Ana, California. And they had an adding machine so I was very adapt to it at that time (laughs).

I remember that they also had a class in the business school. This was a little off base, but they had one of their courses down there was called Business Arithmetic and the idea is to be able to add up a column of figures about ten across and ten down or something like that and I being a young kid still at that particular time I asked the teacher; I just don't understand why we are doing this while we got this adding machine setting over there in the corner. It didn't make any sense to me at all. (Laughs)

And I think I was on the right track. The thinking back in those days wasn't really mechanical or electrically motivated at all. Everything had to be up here (points to head).

Frank: That is real interesting you know because now I think you have a generation that is saying the same bloody thing, you know except for the hand calculators you know it's just reached now to the point where it's...

Sorensen: Well I have noticed, even when my kids were going to school I think they were starting in on the calculator arithmetic, what I would call it now. They call it modern

arithmetic but actually that was what it was turning everything into decimals and meters and different, I can't even remember the name of the thing.

Frank: The metric system?

Sorensen: Well, not necessarily the system but compounding numbers and so on.

Frank: So it sounds like, boy by the time you left the three Cs you were quite an administrator with a lot of exposure, more so than most.

(Laughs)

Sorensen: That's why I have been in administration for all my life. I firmly believe that I picked up my administrative ability from what I had learned in the CC camps. Because when I was drafted into the army in 1941, within two days I was working in the office because I knew a lot about morning reports, I knew about how to handle rosters and a lot of this I learned in the CC camps, and I was in demand!

(Laughs)

Frank: In the army?

Sorensen: Yeah

Frank: The requirement to take care of all that clerical.

Sorensen: Yeah knowing how to do it.

Frank: This is just kind of an aside also. Other clerks in the army, did you find anybody there handling that kind of work and also returning through the CCC ranks? Your peers?

Sorensen: If I did, we didn't talk about it.

Frank: Did you find many soldiers or people you worked with or find anybody else talking about the CCC's?

Sorensen: Well one of the fellows that came into the CCC camps the same time I did, I think he probably had me out-ranked by about three days; he came from Millard County from Kanosh. He and I lived and batched together for about the next, well until we both got our draft notices at the same time in the army, and he went to work up in the park office as a matter of fact. He wasn't so much a clerical type as I was, but I was able to wrangle the job for him and we were very good friends. He is dead now; he died about four or five years ago. That is one good example as far as I am concerned of how you can maintain your friendship and things that you know people can do from the time that you met them in the CC camp.

Frank: It's phenomenal. As an administrator here then, you took care of the Bridge Mountain Camp. Did you know your counterpart across the river?

Sorensen: No! I was talking to one of the fellows there today and he said, "You must have taken my place." (Chuckles) And I said, "I don't think I took your place." I said, "I don't think we were in the same camp." (Laughs) And that's what it turned out to be. He was on the roadside. I never even tried to find out anything about that camp, and surprisingly enough this is what amazes me today, is that the two companies just absolutely ignored each other. One or two fellows I talked to today talked about sometimes when we would swing across the river. We would get one of those Tarzan like ropes and shoot across the Virgin River when we would go into town. He was telling me about it this morning, he says, "All of a sudden everybody is getting dumped in the river and he couldn't figure out why and the guy over there in the other camp would push them back in." (Laughs)

But that's the first time I had ever heard anything like that because they had very little in common and I don't know what they were doing. I guess they were working some of the other projects, that was all.

Frank: Not even a ball game you remember?

Sorensen: No

Frank: A rival team right over there and

Sorensen: Nope

Frank: Dances?

Sorensen: My guess is that all of this happened, I'm sure they got closer together probably the second year. But you see now I was only in for a little over a year and we came down in November and then took off the following spring, so there wasn't much rivalry as far as the intramural sports. I do know that I have heard this later that they did keep a sub-camp down here from our old company that went back up to Bryce, for example, which makes sense.

Frank: Yeah

Sorensen: But in fact I believe if I am not mistaken, the one, the road camp as I call it, was a permanent camp year round, wasn't it?

Frank: I believe it was. Bridge Mountain, I think, eventually evolved into that for a couple years.

Sorensen: Well it might have done. But see this kept up until 1939. I was out in 35's so what happens in four years is a lot.

Frank: Is a lot -- different projects begin and wrap up. So you had a buddy in Kanab [sic] that was going out to Bryce being also the administrator down here. I know that there were other camps outside of Fredonia and Pipe Spring, south of 389 at Pipe, then Short Creek and down here you know at St. George, did you have any connection or liaison with any of the other camps aside from that?

Sorensen: Nope not at all.

Frank: Did you take care of all the transportation logistics, food in food out?

Sorensen: No I didn't take care of them, I knew about them, in other words for the typing up and all this kind of stuff. See, I was what you might call an "Indian." All I was doing was the typing.

Frank: Oh you did. It's a hard job you know.

Sorensen: Yeah I know, but the logistics part of it I didn't get into that. When I went back up to Bryce and became the assistant educational advisor then I got more into that more than I had done down here, just strictly on a job basis. Besides that I was very young, I was seventeen and eighteen years old.

Frank: Weren't asking a lot of questions yet? (Laughs)

Sorensen: No

Frank: Well how about some of the dances? You must have invited some of the folks from some towns to come over. Did you have many social activities?

Sorensen: I recall one dance that we had down here at the new camp, but most of the time we would go down to Hurricane and attend the dances down there.

Frank: Everybody would pile up in the truck and head on out?

Sorensen: As I said, I remember one dance that we had that must have been, well it must have been in spring of 35' when we had that dance, but I don't remember any details or anything like that.

Frank: Oh I bet. How about down in town? What did you do for entertainment? I hear there was a bar down here in Springdale that some people frequented.

Sorensen: I never went to Springdale.

Frank: No?

Sorensen: Well as you know, there were about five hundred CCC boys around here or pretty close I guess.

Frank: Had two companies.

Sorensen: Two companies and Springdale wasn't the size of town where you couldn't have any more than about a dozen girls so you had to go someplace else. (Laughs) Everybody went to Hurricane or St. George or Cedar City or someplace else. Or just take time off and go home. (Laughs)

Frank: Back home, here you are working in the camps down here and every month you got paid, you know, five dollars, and all that other money getting sent home; how was that? How did you feel about that? Was the family appreciative of that or did you catch any compliments?

Sorensen: My personal opinion is that it saved a lot of families. As I said I had just graduated from high school when my father wanted me to enroll. His idea was that I would go in the CC camps and send the money home and he would save it to help me pay my way through school when I got out, and I said that's fine. I got out in, I believe it was late August or early September of 35'. There wasn't any money there (laughs). I didn't feel badly about it because . . . Well as a matter of fact he did send me some more of it back while I was out going to school down in Santa Ana, but I was just working my way and so it didn't bother me. (People in background talking) But as I said it helped him because my father had a large family and without that twenty five dollars, I don't think he could have made it.

Frank: Hmm

Sorensen: You would be surprised what the poverty level was and how it worked in those days. If you could figure out trying to make do on five dollars for a whole month and sometimes I can't even figure out how they did that. I ran the canteen here in Zion, as I told you for a while, and some of these guys, you know we worked with canteen books. You had a two dollar canteen book or a one dollar canteen book, whatever it is. They would actually turn over a two dollar book for a dollar and a half. It was all the same to me; I pocketed the half a dollar, and what they did with their money I don't know. They went down probably to this bar you are talking about because I know that they went down to Springdale, but bars didn't bother me in those days. I was too young to get into those things; I couldn't get in anyway.

Frank: That's one of the things that I think is fairly misunderstood or no one is thinking about it, you know like five dollars. I don't know how you could compare five dollars today you know in relation to what you are looking at today. You know today you have a billion different items that you could buy or back then I think you were more less worried about food, clothing, shelter and maybe a book or some form of entertainment. But there are so many choices that we have today. A lot of that money going back to family. You know twenty five dollars a month was a great assistance, but overall the country I think

pumped back in when you look over the nine year period three to four billion dollars going back in.

Sorensen: Well economically I'm sure that it started to pull us out. See that was just after Roosevelt got in that the CCC companies started. As I understand it the plan had already been formed under Hoover's administration, but Roosevelt was always taking the credit and I don't know. But it doesn't make any difference, but there was one thing that I think economically it did for the country was start a little money going and moving around. Money was tight! Of course, being a kid prior to that time and being a schoolboy I never missed money much anyway because all of this was during the depression and all from 29' on up. My father had lost his farm; I think he had lost it in 31' and so I never had any money. To me if I had five dollars a month, I had five dollars more than I had ever had before (laughs) to myself. Well almost not entirely because in the summer we did farm work like growing beets and weeding and things of this nature that you get paid cash for but now all of that was spent on the 4th of July and you would have to start all over again (laughs).

Frank: So you really didn't see that much cash-money in hand or even circulating around prior?

Sorensen: No

Frank: It just wasn't there.

Sorensen: No it wasn't there. It was tight! Money was tight, you never saw any money. But you saw that five dollars because you were paid that at the end of every month and of course unless you bought a canteen book in the meantime or something like that. Cigarettes for example cost ten cents.....

Frank: Per pack?

Sorensen: For a pack. But nobody ever smoked them. Everybody was always smoking Bull Durham, but they might buy a pack of cigarettes on their going into town or at the end of the month when pay day came along. But the rest of the time they were rolling their own, chewing it or something.

(Laugh)

Frank: Not too many folks are talking about, you know, handling all the paperwork. So that's another one of those unwritten kind of sides to it.

Sorensen: Oh I don't think a lot of people knew there was paperwork involved.

(Laughs)

Frank: Well I saw a lot of that. It's kind of interesting, but we don't have the time and this is really just the weekend to do this, but when you go up in the files here, the archive files, those old onion skins, they have the originals. Just out of curiosity okay this is the age of photocopy okay and I look in these files and I see they are real crisp and then you get a copy of something. What kind of typewriter would you have used in the three Cs? Do you remember the name of that sucker?

Sorensen: Oh it was probably an Underwood or an LC Smith would be my guess, most likely an Underwood.

Frank: Is that what you used when you were here?

Sorensen: As I recall it was Underwood. In fact I can remember even after I got out of the army and went down to work down in Tucson, I got hold of an old Underwood down there and I said "this is like old home week." I can type faster on a manual than I can on an electrical typewriter. I've gotten now to where I can handle electric all right, but your hands are heavy and all of a (makes a noise with his mouth symbolizing typewriter) it's gone.

Frank: (Laughs) Different touch, different feel.

Sorensen: But there was still a lot of pencil pushing. I mean the typing is in the back of my mind is really not as predominant as you might think. There was a lot of typing done. I did a lot of it myself with your morning reports and your rosters. We typed up your rosters of course. We didn't have computers for that kind of stuff.

Frank: (Laughs) I bet you didn't. How about how many copies? It appears to me, I have no basis this is just a hunch, but when someone would sit down and type especially in that era in that time, these are memos I am looking at from the twenties and thirties, whether the government or the CCC now I don't know because we have copies of the reports from the CCC camps. I don't think you just put one piece of paper in there.

Sorensen: Oh never! Never would you just put a single piece in. You would always put one copy and then you couldn't burn a copy. If you wanted more copies after the original, why you'd have to retype it. So you know, usually you would type, you would use anywhere from four to five carbons, sometimes lots more and it would never go through so you would have to go through a second draft anyway.

Frank: You just go as much mileage as you could. You would stuff it sound to me as many as you could.

Sorensen: You know back in the old days if you look at those old typewriters that little lever went over, \); the idea was for the hardness of the thing so you would put it way over onto the light side, so that you could get say anywhere between eight and nine carbons in there

and then type hard. Boy you had to hit and you couldn't do it wasn't like the electric today where it just hits the paper and back off again. You had to make sure that impression went through seven or eight copies and carbons. That's a lot of paper. If you ever get a chance and look at something like the old relic typewriters they got back there, you will find that the platens on those things are just, they look like the rocky road. (Laughs) They are bumpy and that's the reason because they just scroll in every piece of carbon paper they could and every one. That was just a common way to go. I even use carbon paper today which I know a lot of people don't. (Laughs) That is something that I haven't thought about for quite a while, but it's true we had to make a lot of copies.

Frank: Well everybody, you know the common thing in the office today is oh what did we do before there were copy machines? You know everybody I think deep dark in the back of their mind doesn't want to think about carbon, you know, how many carbons used to go in there. Even here at Pipe Springs just five years ago everything was manifold copy.

Sorensen: Well another thing that which you don't see that much today is your mimeograph machines. If you really wanted a mass distribution then you put it on a mimeograph. Are you familiar with mimeograph at all?

Frank: Uh huh; you type your stencil and run it off.

Sorensen: Yeah. Of course I was entirely, that was a process that was entirely different than the carbon copy because then you had to type light so that you wouldn't cut the "O" out, you know anything that had the letter with a circle in the middle. If you hit it too hard than it would cut it right out. Then you really set it off on the light side for the same reason because if it didn't hit so hard, but you knew that you didn't have to hit hard.

Frank: Did they supply with a new typewriter back then? Was this something the army did?

Sorensen: I can't recall any typewriter being new that I saw in those days.

Frank: How about file cabinets? Did you have like a regular office that you know up to date or more or less or a telephone? Did you have phone communications in here, radio or anything like that?

Sorensen: I really don't believe we had phones in the company. If you wanted a phone, you went up to the park office. No I don't recall a phone being in the main office. I can't vouch for that though. But a phone in those days was not a common household appliance you know. You didn't even have it in your own home. If you did have one, it was a crank type where you had the long and the short and that kind of stuff. Maybe in Salt Lake or in a few of the larger cities here in Utah, they had them but through here they didn't have them I am sure.

Frank: Well no phone, no telegraph I don't believe. So do you know if the Rockville telegraph was still operating at that time?

Sorensen: I don't recall it.

Frank: Nothing like that. How about the post office? Now the old fellows, all of you must have had mail?

Sorensen: Yes but we would work it right out of the canteen. When the mail come in, we would just open the canteen and yell out the names and everyone would pick up their mail.

Frank: Did you go into Springdale or Rockville to pick up mail, or was it delivered to the camp?

Sorensen: It was delivered. We never did pick it up. Now they might have delivered it up to the park office, I don't know. See we had another sergeant in there that would probably be doing that kind of late work, what we called the top kick. The one we had, I can't even remember his name. I heard it once but all he did was sit in there and play pinochle in his shorts. I think he was one of the fellas that was in the other camp across the way. They're army types, but that's about all they had to do besides call the role in the mornings and a few things like that.

Frank: Go back and play a few hands.

Sorensen: Well you know there was quite a lot of animosity especially between the regular army, the people who were in the CC camps and the CC boys themselves.

Frank: Oh is that right?

Sorensen: The principle reason being that we were making to their way of thinking twenty five dollars a month and they were a private in those days was making eighteen. They got it all, but we didn't, but they weren't thinking about that.

Frank: Well that's interesting, a private in the army.

Sorensen: Private in the army in 1933 was making eighteen dollars a month.

Frank: So that was something that all of you didn't understand.

Sorensen: And they didn't go up to twenty-one dollars a month until I think about '39 or '40, someplace along through there and then they raised the private's pay up to twenty-one. 4See I was drafted in 1941 and I made corporal before my first ninety days were up and I was still drawing twenty one dollars a month even though I had two stripes on my sleeve (chuckles) at that particular time.

Frank: I have never heard that before. Well like the bonus that army people talk about so much, do you have any thoughts on that? There was a march of veterans back in Washington and there was a bonus army trouble in the 30's.

Sorensen: Yeah but that had nothing to do with anything we are talking about. It had nothing to do with the CC camps or anything else. I think that was more of the veteran's thing more than anything else. Mostly that would be the World War I group; our dads in other words.

Frank: Hard?

Sorensen: Our dads. My father that was in World War I. No, the Veteran's march was World War I Veteran's. So we didn't have one.

Frank: Well what are we forgetting to talk about?

Sorensen: I don't know.

Frank: You don't (Laughs)

Sorensen: No

Frank: If there is one thing that we have talked about, it seems like even to this day that there is a few carry over things you know as far as it was interesting to hear that you still use carbon paper today and that sort of thing. If there is one thing that probably you remember the best or did the most for you over those years, aside from a skill, is there any one thing in particular that that would be?

Sorensen: Are you speaking of what the CC taught me that I could use in later life?

Frank: Sure

Sorensen: Well actually that is exactly where I feel like I had what you might call "basic training" because I had just got out of high school, I had taken a business course in my last year of high school. I was interested in business and in book keeping and typewriting and short hand and all these. I could do all of those things. My father was just absolutely upset to think that I would take shorthand and I said, "Well it's a good, it's a living." You know you have to look at it from that stand point.

So when they had found out that I could do that in the CC camp, they picked me for it and then what I picked up in the CC camp, when I got into the army. . . Incidentally, I'm an army retiree. I put in 28 years in the army after I got through the CC camp and school and a couple of odd jobs. So I feel that what I picked up in the CC camp as far as the army method of doing things helped me considerably to further my career there. For example, I never fired a shot in anger and I stayed in the army for 28 years and that is because I was an administrator. Every place I went there was administrative type work.

Frank: You went through several wars almost; it sounds like three wars.

Sorensen: Yeah.

Frank: One war and two conflicts.

Sorensen: Of course, about 95 percent of my army career was spent in intelligence and I was in what they call the attaché system which was embassy duty. In other words, we just transferred from one capital country to the other with the assignments in Washington D.C. and the Pentagon, and as soon as a spot opened up, you would take it up and go off again. I had a wonderful time and I feel I owe it all to the fact that I could do these things when I got into the army.

Frank: Hmm. One thing that, see I'm kind of not sure if one thing led to another; it started out with another train of thought when we were talking about your career in the army. Well is there any other thing you would like to add? If you had to have something said about the three Cs, anything at all what would that be? Anything in particular? You know a summation?

Sorensen: Well in summation all I can tell you is that I feel that it was one of the best things that could have happened to the young men in this nation at that particular time. If we ever get into a situation where the United States is as bad off financially and economically as it was in those particular times, they couldn't find a better method of taking care of the youth groups than to do two things or three things really; one is to get them off the streets, second is to try to teach them something and the third is trying to give them a little money to get the economy going. These things I think are very important for them and would be now.

Now that to me is a summation of the CCC camps. I think they did a wonderful job. The things that you see here in Zion's Canyon are just magnified in my opinion all over the nation. They have been doing things like this any place you go; oh this was done by the CC camps you know (Laughs). I had a fellow, I told him I was coming up to this CCC reunion and he says, this fella is about well I guess ten or fifteen years younger than I am. He says, "You know I can remember one thing about the CCC camp. I was living back in Pennsylvania at the time and they had all these big elm trees" back in his town and he said that all the trees got the Dutch elm disease. He said they brought in the CCC camp boys and they had cut them all down (Laughs). He said it didn't leave a very good impression on the people, but he says that in retrospect that's what they had to do or they would have had Dutch elm disease all over the whole country and so that's what they did. These types of things that you hear about that the CCC companies have done throughout the country; and I don't care whether you go through here you can go up to Mt. Rushmore you can go almost any place where a lot of people go and you will find that the

CCC company has been there and done some work and made it nice for the people in the mountains.

Frank: There is no doubt about that.

Sorensen: And so I would do it all again.

Frank: (Laughs) Ready to enroll again, huh?

Sorensen: Not in the same category but if I had to do it all over again I wouldn't hesitate a minute to get into it.

Frank: Well there isn't one man I have talked to that hasn't said the same thing. It was a good time.

Sorensen: You know I have had some lasting friendships and I have met people out here that I didn't even know were in the CCC camps. They all came in after I did.

Frank: Well you ought to look up that one fella that I was just talking with. How quickly I forget. He wasn't in your camp, but he was right across the river and he came in and would have been July of 1934 was when he came into this camp. It sounds like you were right over here across from where he came in.

Sorensen: Yeah

Frank: Maybe you guys can get; he played clarinet! Maybe you may have heard it one night or someone practicing across the river and he was telling me that he made a couple bucks a night every time he played.

Sorensen: No I don't remember. It seems to me they had a bugler over there though, which we didn't have. We would hear it every once in a while.

Frank: You ought to ask him and see if it was him.

Sorensen: I say there were a lot of them that didn't realize that there were two companies here, two separate companies. I knew it all the time because. . . I don't know how I knew; I just knew it was there. I think the main reason was because our company moved back and forth between Bryce and Zion's at least during that particular time but I don't know what they did after that, I have no idea.

Frank: I was under the impression that maybe there had even been a third company up by the lodge area. You know there was, in some of the records you hear, maybe it was a spike camp from one of these companies here, one of the two. But there was some areas there just below the lodge, you know, in the flats that; I can't remember the area's right off the top of my head that they had men stationed down there also.

Sorensen: It's entirely possible especially if they had enough work to put them off so they wouldn't have to take them back and forth because it was quite a distance away. For example we did the same thing with Cedar Breaks and Bryce and it would have been fool hardy to try and get them back and forth from Bryce over to Cedar Breaks every day or even once a week, especially in those days. But those are the kinds of things. There was a lot of work to be done over there. That was the trashiest place you could imagine. Over there we did a lot of just timber clearing, you know just clean things up.

Frank: Trash in the sense that there was just a lot of dead fall.

Sorensen: Yeah

Frank: Along the rim and there was . . .

Sorensen: No it was, well mostly right around where the campground were. I think that they were looking at it from the fires standpoint more than anything else.

Frank: Hazards

Sorensen: Yeah fire hazards, and besides that it was unsightly.

Frank: Oh I bet. Were there any roads in there at the time?

Sorensen: Very few, very few.

Frank: Did they have that one road that goes all the way down Rainbow Point?

Sorensen: To tell you the truth I wouldn't be able to tell you. I wasn't in Cedar Breaks long enough to even identify one place or another.

Frank: Oh I was thinking of Bryce when I said that. .

Sorensen: Yeah

Frank: That lodge up there, did you ever go into that lodge and have dinner? Or did you ever have the opportunity to come to the cafeteria in here.

Sorensen: Not in the lodge. Well there are two reasons for that if you stop to think about it: one is that we didn't have the money and second one was I guess most of it was strictly from economic standpoint, but your clothing you know was not really suitable to go into the lodge. I've have been into the lodge both here and up there; where we used to go when we were in the CCC camps up in Bryce that was over to Ruby's Inn. That was a pretty good gathering place besides going to Panguitch.

Frank: Sounds like that would have been a day's trip going in to Panguitch.

Sorensen: Yeah it was. That's why I got busted because I couldn't get back in time once.

Frank: Had too good a time! (Laughs)

Sorensen: Didn't matter as far as I was concerned; I was just about ready to get out anyway. But our ride broke down, I just couldn't get back. We had a weekend deal we were going someplace and I was in charge of so many men and I wasn't there to take charge of them, so they said that you will go out on so and so's crew tomorrow (Laughs) That was it. It was all right.

Frank: Anything else?

Sorensen: Not a thing, unless you have something that you would like to ask specifically?

Frank: We have gone through quite a few categories, I thought it was interesting about some of those pay considerations with the army. (Flipping through pages) There are so many different facets you can take.

Sorensen: Another funny thing with those pay considerations in the army when you stop and think about it, I was talking to a fellow he was a fellow colonel and I was talking to him about this and he was one of the officers that was in command or second in command of one of the CC camps someplace. He said, "You know, they were a God send to the army reserve," and he said that once in a while that if you got a lot of time in there, he said that all of a sudden you got promoted out of job because in the table of distribution, they only had one captain, one first attendant or whatever it was. He said that if there was already a captain there and you became a captain, see if they didn't have a vacancy for you someplace else, you were out. That was interesting to me. I never even thought about it from that standpoint, but I guess that did happen to some.

Frank: You know as an administrator, you know, especially after the three Cs and this sort of thing, in your career, did you meet any other fellows, your peers this sort of thing, that had similar experiences with the three Cs and this sort of thing? Not necessarily administration.

Sorensen: Well I have met a lot of them that were in the CCC, a lot of them.

Frank: Even today, you know some of your pals and that sort of thing, you still you know have that experience behind them also?

Sorensen: Yeah, I was playing bridge with a couple. He is a retired warrant officer just like I am and I have known him, I guess, for around thirty years and I told him I was coming up to this reunion. I told him how I had learned about it and he said, "Hmm that's interesting. I was in the CC's too, and I didn't know it" (Laughs) Here I had only known him for thirty years and I didn't know he was in the CCCs. It happens all the time. I would guess that,

well maybe you know more than I do, but I would guess that probably twenty percent of your young men during that particular time at one time or another got into the CCC camps.

Frank: I couldn't give you a good statistic on that but I wouldn't doubt that in the least. I wouldn't doubt it if it was even more than that.

Sorensen: Well it might be. I was using that as a bottom line because, how long did they go? They went for about 1933 to 39', 40'?

Frank: Forty-one.

Sorensen: They go clear up to 41? I guess they did. I was down in California at that particular time and I can remember that I went to work for an electric manufacturing company and the bookkeeper's father was a cook in the CCC company and this was back in was about in 36' I guess. So, that has nothing to do with the 41' I was drafted in 41' but I didn't know they went to 41.

Frank: I think it was June 30th was the last date when most camps closed up and all that material went to the war effort from what I have understood.

Sorensen: Yes

Frank: There was a small record about having it torn down and this equipment and material being shipped you know again for the war and that sort of thing. It was thirty two I want to say, it was March 1932 was the first enrollee really showed up. I mean it was almost like within Roosevelt's legendary hundred days. This little brief that was handed out was a nice summary.

Sorensen: I haven't had an opportunity to read it yet I picked a couple of them up today because primarily because of my buddy I was telling you about who I played bridge with the other day when I found out he was in the CC camps I just doubled everything up that I picked up today. But what surprises me really is the fact that it looks like a lot of places they have been having reunions for years and I knew nothing about it.

Frank: I guess Bryce has one just about every year.

Sorensen: Well I understand that they had one two years ago. I was talking to one or two of them and I said "Put me on the list." (Laughs).

Frank: Yeah, it would be a heck of a thing to come back to this here at Zion. You know, I am really happy to see there is something that they are able to hold on to. Up at Pipe Spring and these areas too, I don't think when I was working up there, I don't think a week went by when somebody [from CCC] would come in and sign the register and I know that's where a lot names initially came from. You know just a broadcast mailing activity.

Waldo O. Hubert one of the commandants after several years showed up one day and we sat and chatted for about five hours and I didn't even bother recording it.

Sorensen: That's too bad.

Frank: Oh man. He was coming up there at that time once I met him; he came up two or three times a year. He did write a history that is in the vaults over there, but at that time there was so much of that going on and I didn't even think to turn on the tape.

Sorensen: Yeah it's; anything that goes away goes back a ways you don't look at it as being a historical fact until it's gone.

(Both Laugh)

Sorensen: I know that I have got some photographs someplace, but I can't for the life of me find them. I wouldn't know where I put them. I know I don't have any at home, I looked through everything I have, so they got lost in my folks home or in a trunk that I lost someplace, but they are gone. I think a lot of them are in that trunk because I had my school pictures when I was in about the sixth grade and all this kind of stuff which is very important to me, too. (Laughs).

Frank: Oh I bet. Well there is going to be one heck of a feed here in a little bit.

Sorensen: I guess it is getting pretty close to that time isn't it?

Frank: Well we got, there is one more person that....

Sorensen: I was going to say one thing about these Utah people is they certainly don't hold up on the food or desert.

(Both Laugh)

Frank: No. Well it's because it's Southern Utah. Well Mr. Sorenson it's been a pleasure.

Sorensen: Well I have enjoyed it; I hope I have done you some good.

Frank: Well we went right up until the end.

Sorensen: Well good.

[End of interview]