

Francis and Clifton Spendlove
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
September 28, 1989

Interviewed by:
Transcribed by: Kim Lifferth
Transcribed September 22, 2011

Francis and Clifton Spendlove
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
September 28, 1989

Interviewer: We're at Zion National Park CCC Reunion. September 28, 1989. We have...

Francis Spendlove: Francis Spendlove.

Interviewer: and . . .

Clifton Spendlove: Clif Spendlove.

Interviewer: Tell the camp where you were at. What camp were you with? Francis, what camp were you with?

Francis Spendlove: I was in the one across the river.

Clifton Spendlove: No. 962.

Francis Spendlove: Yes. 962.

Interviewer: And what were the years you were there?

Francis Spendlove: It was '37 and '38.

Interviewer: And what were yours?

Clifton Spendlove: Same. I was in the same time and in the same camp together.

Interviewer: And what did you think of the CCCs? Do you think it was a pretty good program?

Clifton Spendlove: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: What were some of your responsibilities?

Francis Spendlove: We worked on the trail, drove truck and just everything.

Interviewer: You?

Clifton Spendlove: That's about what I did too. I started out driving a garbage truck. I took care of the campgrounds and I worked with a larger dump truck and () the big truck () the garbage truck. That became the campground.

Interviewer: How come you joined the CCCs?

Francis Spendlove: We were starving to death (laughs).

Interviewer: Depression times, or...?

Clifton Spendlove: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: Did you do the same thing, or did you work for a little bit and the rest of your money went to the families?

Clifton: We got thirty dollars a month. Twenty-five of it went to the family. Five of it we could keep ourselves, but I usually sent that to the family too.

Interviewer: Did you do the same, Francis?

Francis Spendlove: Yeah.

Clifton: We didn't have much money.

Interviewer: What specific trails did you work on?

Francis: We both did the last one, East Rim.

Clifton: Mostly. Yeah.

Interviewer: And that's what you did most of the time?

Francis: Well, I don't know the whole thing. Seems like they put most the guys on trails and then they'd get a little older and then they'd get one of the truck driving jobs. Depends on how good a guy you are (laughs).

Clifton: How much the boss likes you.

Interviewer: Who was your boss?

Clifton: Hm. I don't remember.

Francis: The boss, was it Johnny Excell?

Clifton: Yeah. Johnny Excell, and the DeMille guy, Art DeMille.

Francis: Art DeMille, Thad Early, and Virg Averett.

Clifton: Yeah.

Francis: Virg Averett. Can't remember others.

Interviewer: Well, Clif has a really interesting story that I want to tape and you can talk about it.

Clifton: Okay. We were working up in one of the canyons building a water plant [tank?] building. Our job to carry pipe up to the spring from near the road here in the park, and then we had a big pile of pipe to carry up there. So one trip, either going up there or coming back, we had captured a rattle snake, oh about four or three feet long, a large one. What we did, we took our pliers and pulled its fangs out so it wouldn't be dangerous and we took...

Interviewer: Still alive.

Clifton: Yeah. So we put a cord around its neck about, oh three or four feet long, maybe longer than that, maybe six feet long. And when we were getting ready to carry another pipe up, we took the snake and put him on one side of the bush and the stick that the cord was tied to on the other side of the bush. And about that time our foreman, who was Red Irwin, drove up. And we were maybe fifty yards away. We looked back and here was Red getting out of his car. He come over there and saw this big rattle snake here on the side of the bush. So on the other side of the bush there was a stick, so he grabbed that stick to kill the rattle snake with and he lifted it up, the rattle snake came right up in his face. He dropped the stick and high tailed it for his car (Laughs).

Francis: They brought that one down and put it in the museum (Laughs).

Interviewer: Now both of you were living in Hurricane when you joined the CCCs?

Francis: Yes.

Clifton: Yes. We're originally from Hurricane, born and raised there.

Interviewer: Okay. Francis, tell me where you went after, what you did after the CCCs.

Francis: I did work around the country, construction work wherever I could.

Interviewer: You ended back up in Hurricane?

Francis: Yeah.

Interviewer: Cliff, what did you do after the CCCs? Did you go into the war?

Clifton: No. No I went and lived down in Boulder City. I worked on the Boulder Dam until 1941, late '41. And I spent four years in the service. When I got out I worked for the meat cutter in Cedar City for two years. Then I decided I'd go back into the service. Well I put time in the service for 27 years. I retired from the service.

Interviewer: And where are you living now?

Clifton: I live in Hurricane now, and I married a local girl from Hurricane. She passed away a couple years ago.

Interviewer: And you were both residents of Hurricane?

Clifton: Yeah.

Interviewer: Can you think of any other experiences with the CCCs?

Francis: We should've been thinking about some (laughs).

Interviewer: Well when you came to Zion...

Clifton: We had lots of experiences, but we need something to remind us of them I guess.

Interviewer: Had you been up to Zion's before you joined the CCCs?

Clifton: Oh yeah.

Francis: Yeah.

Clifton: We went up there very year.

Interviewer: So you were quite familiar with the area (). Well I appreciate you talking to us. Is there anything else you can remember?

Clifton: I can't think of anything very significant.

Interviewer: Did you meet some people? And you already knew each other and your cousins, so.

Clifton: Yeah we knew a lot of them. There were a lot of them coming and going.

Interviewer: Who were some of the people that you can remember? Any lasting friendships?

Clifton: Well there was a guy I knew. I haven't seen him since he left. His name was Merlin Hansen.

Francis: He got real friendly.

Clifton: I don't know what happened to him.

Interviewer: Where was he from?

Francis: He was from Brigham City, I believe.

Clifton: Yeah. I remember him. I hadn't even thought of him.

Interviewer: Anything else?

Francis: Not that I can think of.

Interviewer: We wanted to record this for the snake story, and this has been a big benefit to everybody (laughs).

Clifton: I think Red Irwin has since passed away. He's been ()

Interviewer: He won't even be able to hear this or read it in the book or anything. Well, what did he do to you? There is a question. Did he find out who did it?

Clifton: Oh he knew (laughs).

Interviewer: What did he say or what did he do?

Francis: And it wasn't just Clifton; it was a bunch of us. There must've been a dozen of us carrying that pipe.

Interviewer: Who caught the rattlesnake?

Francis: Oh I don't know. All of us (laughs).

Interviewer: Who's the one who held it while they took the pliers to its fangs?

Francis: I don't know that either.

Interviewer: You don't remember holding it or you don't remember taking the pliers and pulling out the fangs?

Clifton: I remember pulling them out, but I don't remember who did it. All I can remember was looking on the guy's face when the snake came back towards him.

Interviewer: And then you brought the snake down and put it in the museum? Is that what you said?

Francis: Yeah.

Interviewer: Well thank you very much .