

Carl Stokes
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
September 28, 1989

Interviewed by: Dan Durrett
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Dan Durrett: This is Dan Durrett and right now I'm interviewing Carl Stokes. We're at the Zion Nature Center at Zion National Park. It's the September 28, 1989, at 4:40 p.m. Well, Carl, why don't we just start off and you can tell us where you're from, I guess would be the best way to start.

Carl Stokes: Well, I'm from Ogden, Utah.

Dan Durrett: That's where you were when you went into the three C's? I know you're living down in Virgin, now of course, you're my neighbor, but you were up in Ogden when this all started.

Carl Stokes: Yes.

Dan Durrett: What got you interested in the three C's? Why join up with an organization like that?

Carl Stokes: (laughs) I probably shouldn't tell you this, but I had a little argument with my mother. And she says, if you don't like it around here, you know what you can do. So I went over to my friend's house, and I said, "Walt, let's join the CC's." And he says, "Well, give me a minute to think about it." In a few minutes, he said, "Okay, let's go."

Dan Durrett: Did you have any idea where you'd be going or anything?

Carl Stokes: No, we didn't have any idea. We knew that there were a lot of camps in Utah, but we didn't know.

Dan Durrett: You came in in '34? So, the C's had been running for a year or so, I guess, the program had been running for about a year.

Carl Stokes: Yes, '34. I know we were one of the first ones in this camp. I think they had a construction crew, and then maybe one in between, and then we were the next.

Dan Durrett: The construction was already complete, though, when you got in.

Carl Stokes: The construction was completed. I don't know if there was any between us, but we was one of the first ones.

Dan Durrett: Before we get into that, let's go back up to Ogden. Did you just go down and sign up and they took you right then and you went, or how did that work?

Stokes: Well, I can't remember just how much time elapsed, but it wasn't long. I'd say it was within the month.

Durrett: Did they send you by train somewhere, by truck, how'd that work?

Stokes: We took the old Bamberger from Ogden, from Ogden to the depot and then they trucked us from there. And they hauled us up to Fort Douglas and then we come on down by truck. I don't remember just exactly.

Durrett: Now you say the old Bamberger. Just so I understand, what was that? That was a train, was it?

Stokes: That was a train. It was a trolley train; it went from Ogden, and I think it went on to Salt Lake, but wherever it ended down there, then we took a truck from there.

Durrett: You went to Fort Douglas first?

Stokes: Yes.

Durrett: How much time did you spend there, do you suppose?

Stokes: Very little time (laughs).

Durrett: And then they shipped you right, straight down here to Zion, huh? Okay, were there two camps here or one when you were here?

Stokes: It was two.

Durrett: Which one were you in?

Stokes: We were in the one on this side.

Durrett: On the west side, here. Okay, that was Co.1966, wasn't it?

Stokes: Nineteen sixty-six, Captain Charles Kennedy.

Durrett: Since we've already brought his name up, what kind of guy was he? Did you have much association with him?

Stokes: I don't know what nationality he was (laughs), but he was a small fellow and he had lots of fire. You knew he was boss when he was talking.

Durrett: Was there association much between the two camps or were you kept separate most of the time?

Stokes: We were separate most of the time.

Durrett: So you didn't really get acquainted with them, on the other side of the...

Stokes: On a few occasions, we had a smoker once, and we had boxing matches.

Durrett: Where was that held at?

Stokes: Well, that was held in the other camp.

Durrett: They had a boxing ring set up?

Stokes: Yes, a little boxing ring. It wasn't a big ring.

Durrett: Did you get involved in that?

Stokes: Yes, I done a little boxing. We won most of the fights. (Chuckles)

Durrett: Did you really? Well, that says something for this camp, I guess.

Stokes: 'Course we always thought there was more New Yorkers over there in the other camp, we were mostly all from Utah. We didn't mingle enough to get acquainted with those boys.

Durrett: So you didn't know the Lieutenant Brothers that's here today because he was on the other side, so you didn't really get acquainted with him.

Stokes: No, didn't really get acquainted with him.

Durrett: But the camp was already here when you got here, you just moved in. They brought you down in trucks. Had they already issued clothing to you or how did that work?

Stokes: Boy, that was an experience. We received clothes from World War I and the sizes were . . . well I got a 44 size denim pants, and so two of us got in one pair of pants one night. They started pushing us from one side to the other, and our coordination, we couldn't get to going, you know. And they was pushing us. The bunks were such that two-by-fours were sticking up from under the bunks, and they pushed us against those. Well, we had quite a time showing off these 1918 leftovers.

The clothing was denim and OD's, and the OD's were the type that had the leggings, you know, the wrapped leggings. And the pants, you could hardly get your feet through them, but when you did, then they wrapped. We didn't like those, so we cut a "V" in the legs and sewed any kind of material into them we could find, that was available, to just enlarge the pants so you could get your shoes through 'em, get your feet through them.

Durrett: When did they issue the clothing, was that here or was that up at Fort Douglas?

Stokes: No, that was here.

Durrett: That was here. So you were still in civilian clothing when you got here then.

Stokes: Yes.

Durrett: And what month did you say it was?

Stokes: July.

Durrett: In July, so it was right in the heat of the summer then.

Stokes: I think it was the first day up at Sinawava, we figured it was about 115 degrees. (Laughs)

Durrett: Boy, and coming from Ogden, I bet you weren't used to that.

Stokes: No. (Laughs)

Durrett: Did it kind of bother you a little at first?

Stokes: We thought maybe they'd brought us to Hades. (Chuckles) The scenery was nice.

Durrett: Yes, the scenery was good. Now we talked about bunks, were they double-decker bunks?

Stokes: They were two decker bunks.

Durrett: Did they just assign you to a bunk or did you get to choose where you wanted to be?

Stokes: I think we pretty well chose. The first one in got the best bunk. If you was cold blooded, you'd get next to the stove and we found out later that was the wrong place to get.

Durrett: In the summertime for sure.

Stokes: Yes, and in winter-time. They'd heat the barracks. The barracks they had no insulation whatsoever, essentially you was looking at two-by-fours, with boards on the outside, and then tar-paper and then slats to hold the tar-paper on. The rafters were open. You could see the rafters, and we had one, I guess we had about three globes. There was one here and there along the barracks, just one globe hanging down from the rafters.

Durrett: Not a lot of light.

Stokes: Not a lot of light; you had to get close to a light, so you could write a letter. So, it got too hot by the fire, too cold by the entrance, and it wasn't too comfortable living so far as heat and cold was concerned.

Durrett: I want to back up just a little bit. Who was the friend that you came in with?

Stokes: Walt Carter.

Durrett: Did he come down here too, or did they send him somewhere else?

Stokes: No, he came down here with me.

Durrett: So, were you able to stay together while you were here all the time?

Stokes: Yes, we were here most of the time.

Durrett: How long of a hitch did you spend?

Stokes: Well, I got in here in July of '34, and we got out in April of '35. The reason we got out was because the appropriation run out. And so the captain told us, he says, "You got a good excuse to get out" because they wouldn't let you leave just 'cause you wanted to (unintelligible from wind) So we was here till April, I think, 7th, 10th, whatever the discharge date. But the appropriation run out and he told us, "Now, we're quite sure that we'll get the money, but this is an excuse to get out legally if you want."

So we thought it over and decided, well, we'd try the outside world, see if we'd get a job. So we got our discharge, and left. We went to Beck, who was the superintendent of the park back then, and he give us a recommendation, which helped later. So, we went home, and I couldn't get a job anywhere, so I joined up again and went up into Manila, Utah, to the camp up on Sheep Creek, right there in Manila, Utah.

Durrett: Now if I'm figuring right, you came in in July, so you must have done one six-month term and signed up for a second, and then got out of it early, is that what you did? Didn't they sign you up for six-months?

Stokes: I signed up for, yes, the second. I went through all the same motions that we did to come down here, shots and everything. Yes, I told them, "Hey, I've had these shots, but they didn't pay attention to that. They said, hey come over (Laughs).

Durrett: And then the second time you were only in a month or two.

Stokes: I was only in a short time, but I have to confess, I joined up when I was fifteen years old.

Durrett: So you had to lie about your age and things.

Stokes: So, I was in the other camp, oh guessing, I'd say a couple of months. They called me in one day and they said, "You can't stay in here any longer." I said, "Why?" He says, "You're too young; you got to go back to school." I said, "You found me out, huh?" "Yes, we found you out," and I says, "Well okay."

Well, then they give me administrative discharge because I was too young, so let me out with an administrative discharge.

Durrett: This was in the camp up north?

Stokes: This was in the camp up north; this is the one from here.

Durrett: But you were still too young by the time you were up there, you said, you were seventeen.

Stokes: Yes, they said you've got to go back to school. I said "Okay," so I went back to school, played on the football team, had a lot of fun, went to college.

Durrett: What did it entail, getting in, because you're about the third person I've talked to today that wasn't seventeen when they went in, so did you just have to tell them your age?

Stokes: Part of the application for getting in was your parents had to be poor and I think out of work.

Durrett: Well, yes, but I mean, as far as the age requirement?

Stokes: I should have been eighteen.

Durrett: But, you didn't have to show a birth certificate or anything like that; you just told 'em your age?

Stokes: Apparently not, because they just took us right in, and it was that long before they found out. I said, "Okay," so we went back to school.

Durrett: But you did finish your education after you got out? What about while you were in the camps, Phil Hepworth talked about the continuing education in the camps. Did you make that available to yourself?

Stokes: When we were in see in the early years, and they didn't have any, really, of that education. They just had the work.

Durrett: Before we get into the work, let's go ahead and finish talking about the camp down there. Now, when you moved into the bunk house, and how did camp life go? What time in the morning did you get up? Did they wake everybody up at the same time?

Stokes: The first thing we did was they give us a sack, probably linen or cotton sack and said, "This is your mattress. That straw pile down there, you just put whatever you want of straw in this sack, and that's your mattress." So that's what we did, we went down and filled it full of straw, took it back and arranged to make a bed. I don't know if they issued us clothes before that or after that.

Durrett: Now, was that the army that issued the clothing, I assume, since it was World War I clothing.

Stokes: Well, no, they had their own supply.

Durrett: But it was army clothing?

Stokes: Yes, it was leftovers from World War I, the denim.

Durrett: Was there any kind of an insignia or anything about the CCCs? Was it kind of a uniform that you wore, just like the army? Was there a patch at all?

Stokes: Yes, it was just like the army; there wasn't hats or anything fancy that way.

Durrett: Did they issue you a hat?

Stokes: The little, I forgot what it's called, the little long one. I got some pictures of us.

Durrett: Did the hat or say your shirt have a CCC patch or something that identified you?

Stokes: No, you had to put that on, but they did have patches.

Durrett: Did they issue you one?

Stokes: I can't remember that they did. Now, they might have done.

Durrett: But whatever, you sewed it on yourself then.

Stokes: I don't think I put anything on mine.

Durrett: But if you were going to, you would have had to sew it on yourself, is that the way it...

Stokes: Oh yeah, you done your own sewing. You done your own washing. We made our own washing machine out of two cans, one upside-down nailed onto a stick, used it as a plunger, that's the way we washed.

Durrett: Now that was the clothing, your own clothing that you wore. What about the bed sheets and that kind of thing, did they do that or did you have to?

Stokes: We had comforters, and I don't recall that we ever washed 'em.

Durrett: They didn't get a little ripe after six months?

Stokes: Well, yes, they made us. That's something I remember, seeing these comforters hanging around, you know there. But, I can't remember washing them. But we'd hung them out to air. I can't remember.

Durrett: And then were you responsible for cleaning up your own area, say, in the dorm?

Stokes: Yes, just like the army; you clean up your own bunk.

Durrett: Did they have inspections? Did they come by and see what you were doing?

Stokes: Yes, they had inspections to see that it was mopped out and...

Durrett: And your bed made, I suppose you had to do that.

Stokes: And the bed made. Yes, they had inspections.

Durrett: What happened to the ones, was there discipline?

Stokes: Probably KP (laughs).

Durrett: KP, I suppose everybody hated KP.

Stokes: Well, although we had volunteers that liked KP. Some of my friends went into KP, but I didn't want any part of it.

Durrett: What did KP entail, peeling potatoes and washing dishes?

Stokes: Yes, washing dishes; pots and pans was the worst job.

Durrett: Cleaning up the pots and pans. Was that something that rotated? Did everybody have to do it?

Stokes: I think when it was needed, they had a schedule, and you had to take a turn.

Durrett: So even though you didn't like it, you had to do some of it?

Stokes: As I recall, at first we had to do some of it, and then later, they had enough volunteers that we didn't do much.

Durrett: Didn't have to if you didn't want to. Well that should've made you guys happy.

Stokes: A guy Lemmon, he got in the kitchen because he didn't want to quarry rocks (laughs). That was an easier job.

Durrett: How'd your day go? I'm assuming if it was like the army, it was a little regimented. Did they wake you up at five o' clock or six o' clock?

Stokes: We'd get up with reveille, then retreat and we lined up in a formation, just like you do in the army.

Durrett: Now when they had reveille did they blow a bugle or did they just send somebody in the hall to let you know it was time to get up?

Stokes: I think we had a bugle, but I wouldn't swear to that, it's been a long time.

Durrett: And then what would you do? You'd get up and get dressed and then go out and line up?

Stokes: Yes, go out and line up.

Durrett: Stand at attention, I suppose, while they put the flag up, huh?

Stokes: Yes, and then they'd give you information for the day.

Durrett: Make assignments did they or did you pretty well know where you were going each day?

Stokes: Well, once we were assigned, we knew where we were going. Once in a while they'd make a change, but as I recall, they left us pretty much, except for those in the spike camps. They had to leave for the spike camps, that would take them away. But, I don't know whether that was volunteer. I think a lot of 'em had a choice. They'd ask them if they wanted to, and I think that if they didn't want to, they ...

Durrett: . . . didn't have to.

Stokes: If there was enough of them that wanted to, that wanted the advancement, I'm sure. They'd go to the different spike camps, like Duck Creek, Cedar Breaks.

Durrett: You didn't go to any of those?

Stokes: No, I was satisfied here.

Durrett: Back to this morning reveille, when they lined you up there, did you have to stand at attention, I mean, was that an inspection too? Did they check to make sure everybody was there?

Stokes: Well, it wasn't strict like the army, although you had to pay attention.

Durrett: And you were expected to be there, I assume or they'd come and got you anyway.

Stokes: Right, you bet. You had a spot in line, and if you wasn't there, they knew it.

Durrett: Then after they'd given this information, now that would be who, the army people or the foremen, or who was giving the information?

Stokes: Well, no, the leaders, a lot of them, were civilians. Our sergeant, his name was Kepner, he was a civilian, and he had his family down in one of these little towns. So I guess just the leaders were military, but the foreman were a lot of them civilians.

Durrett: So were they in charge of the line-up, or was that the military that was in charge of lining you up in the mornings?

Stokes: I think the military took care of the bookwork, and then assigned it over to the civilian leaders, and they would take care of you from there. Most of our foremen, I think, were civilian. Most of 'em were from around here; I'd say half of them were from around from Utah.

Durrett: Yes, I think they called them LEM, Local Experienced Men, or whatever it were.

Stokes: Yes, that sounds right.

Durrett: So then, in the morning when this line broke up, then did you go eat breakfast, or did you go back in the bunkhouse or how much time was there in there before...

Stokes: We'd go eat breakfast, and then they'd load on the trucks and take us out to our different projects.

Durrett: What was breakfast like, good food, or poor food?

Stokes: Before or after (laughs)? The first meal was horrible, I remember they took some dried apricots, dumped some water in it, and made fresh apricots, but they were horrible. The first few meals were bad, but then it got pretty good after that. Once in a while, you'd get something bad. Remind me of one time when I found a hunk of this GI soap in the pudding, and boy, I bit down on that, and I pulled it out of my mouth. Here's a big piece of this brown GI soap, I don't know whether somebody threw it in, you know, they probably got cranking around and maybe they threw it in.

Durrett: It seems like somebody said, I heard somebody talk about that, they got a chunk of GI soap, and it was during Halloween or something, it was a practical joke they were playing. You didn't know of anybody doing that, huh?

Stokes: I don't know, I grabbed that thing and headed right up to the office and I said, "Hey, I want you to know what they're feeding us around here." It still had my teeth marks in it. "Here's what we're getting here."

Durrett: So what kind of satisfaction did you get when you took it in?

Stokes: Well, I'm sure they, it didn't happen again.

Durrett: They checked into it, huh?

Stokes: Yes.

Durrett: Plenty of food? All you could eat?

Stokes: Yes, we had plenty.

Durrett: You always had as much as you wanted then?

Stokes: In this camp we did. It was up to the other one, well, here I think we went on strike because the lunches weren't enough and we were working hard. And so, well we kind of had a little "sit down" strike and then it improved after that, I don't think it lasted very long. We made our wants known.

Durrett: Now you say your lunches. Did they provide a sack lunch or did they come back to the camp and eat a hot lunch?

Stokes: Well, if you were close sometimes, it worked both ways. Most of the time they'd bring it out to you.

Durrett: Now you were talking about working in the rock quarry. Was that far enough away that you stayed out there to eat lunch or did you come in?

Stokes: We stayed out there.

Durrett: Stayed out there. Now they brought it to you, they didn't send a sack lunch with you?

Stokes: No, they brought it to us, you didn't take it with you.

Durrett: Was it a hot lunch then, stew or something, or was it sandwiches?

Stokes: It was mostly sandwiches, but I think at times they'd bring out pots and have a hot meal. They did a both ways.

Durrett: And then would you work an eight hour day and come back to camp in the evening?

Stokes: Yes, we'd, it was eight hours but that included travel time.

Durrett: And then you'd probably come back about five to the camp, something like that?

Stokes: We started about eight. Yeah, we'd get back between four and five.

Durrett: And then did you eat supper right then or did you have time to get cleaned up.

Stokes: We had time to get cleaned up before we ate supper.

Durrett: They had shower facilities I assume.

Stokes: Well, the latrine was way down at the end. (Laughs). It's the one that went cross-ways with the camp. And, yeah, we had shower facilities.

Durrett: Now were the bunk houses on each side running north and south, and then the latrine was down at the end, making the "U"?

Stokes: Right, the barracks was two rows going down the river. One was fairly close to the river; in fact you could almost spit out and hit the river. Yes, it was quite close to the river. We had another tow and a latrine at the end and the captain's quarters at this end.

Durrett: Now this end, you're talking about the north end?

Stokes: Yes.

Durrett: Were there any other buildings?

Stokes: Yes, there was the blacksmith shop.

Durrett: Where was that located?

Stokes: Well, it was, these directions get me. You know, this is south, this is north, and this is east and west.

Durrett: So your (reporter) turned off?

Stokes: Yes but it was on the highway side and the blacksmith toward the back.

Durrett: Okay, but in the same row running this way.

Stokes: Not clear to the back, but that was the blacksmith shop.

Durrett: Now there were two rows of buildings on each side?

Stokes: Two rows on each side, latrine on the end and the captains office and things on this, east end.

Durrett: Northeast actually. There was no other building that blocked off this north end then? I mean like down here you had the latrine, up here...

Stokes: I think there was another little building, but I can't recall.

Durrett: Where was the mess hall?

Stokes: The mess hall was the first building by the bridge, and just down the bridge.

Durrett: It would have been next to the captain's quarters then?

Stokes: Yeah, well the captain's here, the mess hall's here.

Durrett: Right next to one side of it then, okay. Doing your own washing, if you had to make your own washing machine, then you must of just done that right in the bunk house. There was no wash facility?

Stokes: You used your own ingenuity.

Durrett: So there was really no wash room of any kind then, as far as washing clothing?

Stokes: Yeah, I think over by the shower, I think where we got the water for the wash. Yeah, they did have a place. I don't recall too much about that place. I must not have been very clean (Laughs). Except in Manila, there the water was so hard that we had to pay a guy to do our clothing for us, 'cause the water was so hard the soap would just turn into gum. You couldn't wash your hair without that gummy feeling.

Durrett: So then to get back to the end of the day, the routine, you'd come in from work, and everybody would take a shower, you'd get ready for supper and then go eat, I suppose. What did you do the rest of the evening, after?

Stokes: Oh, the evening was your own.

Durrett: You could do anything you wanted?

Stokes: Provided you didn't leave and then if you left, you had to have a pass, I believe.

Durrett: You got a pass to leave camp. If you wanted to walk to Springdale, you had to have a pass.

Stokes: Or else you was AWOL, it just like the army, in that sense.

Durrett: Now you keep saying it was like the army, if you was AWOL, what happened if you left? What would they do to you? How was the discipline, was there a brig or...

Stokes: No, they'd give you a dishonorable discharge; I guess that's about all they could do.

Durrett: And what would a dishonorable discharge to do you?

Stokes: Well, it would limit you for your employment in the future. [Unintelligible].

Durrett: It did pack some weight though?

Stokes: Right, I think if you ever wanted to work for the government, I think that would have an affect on it, or maybe even prevent it.

Durrett: What did most of you do in the evenings then? What was there to do? Obviously there wasn't any TV back in those years.

Stokes: Fight a little, argue (laughs), write letters.

Durrett: Actually, fight a little, argue, you fight, I mean actually wrestle and that kind of thing?

Stokes: Oh yeah.

Durrett: Actually get mad at each other and fight?

Stokes: Sometimes. Sometimes they'd have grudge fights, put on the gloves and go to it (laughs).

Durrett: What about recreation? Was there a rec hall of some kind?

Stokes: Yes, we had a rec hall.

Durrett: What was in it?

Stokes: I think, I can't remember what was in it.

Durrett: Did you play cards?

Stokes: I didn't spend much time there. I didn't play much. I don't think there was pool tables because we'd go down to Springdale to play pool. I can't remember a pool table here. They may have got one later, but when I was there, I can't remember playing pool in the camp.

Durrett: So the evenings, mostly you just kind of sat around and write a letter home. Read, did you read in the evening?

Stokes: Read, write letters; we did play little cards. I didn't know much about them, I didn't know how to play poker then, and I don't now.

Durrett: So you didn't gamble much. Didn't any of them gamble, I mean as far as...

Stokes: We didn't have many gamblers; I mean we gambled, right?

Durrett: Well, if you only got to keep five dollars, out of the thirty, it about had to last you a month.

Stokes: Got five dollars and got to spend it on anything you'd want, a month.

Durrett: Course, five dollars then went quite a little ways, I guess.

Stokes: I used to buy two kinds of candy bars: cherry elette and a caramel whip. I'd make that thing last a day or two; I just wanted to nibble on it once in a while.

Durrett: They cost a nickel, I suppose.

Stokes: Yeah, a nickel bar.

Durrett: Nickel bar, and you had five dollars. You could buy quite a few of them in a month then.

Stokes: Oh yeah, (something)

Durrett: Did you have to buy anything else, I mean like toothpaste and then shaving soap? Did they supply that, or did you have to buy it?

Stokes: I think we had to buy our own toothpaste and shaving equipment. And you had to buy your own smokes, but I didn't smoke, that's wasn't a problem. They used to have Bull Durham and they had a big sack of 'as advertised,' or roll your own.

Durrett: Now you say they, was there a PX that you could buy this stuff from?

Stokes: Yes, he was a little Jewish fellow run the PX.

Durrett: Do you remember his name?

Stokes: Avery Gordon

Durrett: Avery Gordon. And what did the PX have? Obviously they had a little tobacco, toothpaste, and candy bars.

Stokes: Well, they had candy bars, combs, and mostly necessity toiletry articles, shaving cream.

Durrett: Where was that located? Was that in the mess hall or rec hall?

Stokes: I think it must have been in the rec hall, in one side, or at the end of the rec hall.

Durrett: Now, if you wanted to go to Springdale, or did guys go to Springdale? What was in Springdale, what was worth going down there for? What was at Springdale?

Stokes: Well, they had beer for five cents (laughs). As I recall, the building on the corner that sells jewelry and stuff, I think that was the beer hall and beer was five cents.

Durrett: Now could anybody, now obviously, I mean even the ones that were the right age were under twenty-one, could anybody go down there and buy beer?

Stokes: Didn't have any trouble, if you had the money.

Durrett: What about in camp? They didn't care if you went down in town and drank, huh? Or did they care?

Stokes: Well they didn't care if you didn't get drunk. I mean, you get drunk and get out of hand, then they care.

Durrett: What did they do if you got out of hand? What was the procedure?

Stokes: Well, one that I knew of, they just took the driver's license and he wasn't a truck driver anymore. (Laughs). But the discipline, I don't remember much discipline. I think we were a pretty good bunch.

Durrett: That's what I was going to say. Back in those days, kids kind of did what was expected of them.

Stokes: Yes, the only drugs that I heard anything about was a guy that got a bunch of sleeping pills and swallowed them. (Laughs). Took a long time to wake him up to go to work. Well, a few of 'em got out of hand.

Durrett: How about cars, any of them have cars? Now they didn't allow them in the camps, did they?

Stokes: I don't know anybody having any car.

Durrett: So Springdale really was about the farthest you could go, unless it was an organized thing where they took you, I guess.

Stokes: Right, that's true.

Durrett: Did they organize excursions, load you up and take you to St. George or something?

Stokes: Yes, they'd take us to St. George to dance, to Hurricane to dance. One time we went to Las Vegas and they took us out to Hoover Dam, and we was one of the last ones that was allowed down into the bottom of the dam before they started backing up the water.

Durrett: So water still hadn't started backing up yet when you were down there?

Stokes: No, we were down there walking in the tunnels behind Boulder Dam.

Durrett: So they were just completing it then, about then. I bet that was a fun excursion for you.

Stokes: Yes, it was, except, in Las Vegas it was a mess. Some of the boys get to drinking there, and they rented the American Legion hall, and that was a sad story. We couldn't stand it. This friend and I we went out and slept in the truck; it got a little stinking. He got a little mad. (Laughs.) So, yeah, they took us on excursions once in a while.

Durrett: Now down in Vegas, you said they rented the American Legion Hall. The three C's did? You didn't have to pay anything for it?

Stokes: I don't think we did. Now, I wouldn't swear to that. We might have paid for it, I don't know, I can't remember.

Durrett: Pretty much the trip down there was furnished by the housing and how 'bout the food, what did ya eat out down there, or like in the hall, did they serve the food there? Do you remember?

Stokes: I can't remember what we ate down there, I really can't.

Durrett: 'Cause if you only had five dollars for the whole month, you couldn't eat your meals out very long. How long were you down there, were you there a couple days or?

Stokes: I think we was only at Las Vegas one night. Good thing, that's about all I could take. (Laughs). So food probably wasn't a big problem, but I don't remember them serving any food on the trip. Have to ask one of these young boys, maybe they can remember.

Durrett: Oh yeah, I ask 'em all. Everybody remembers something different. You're all getting the same questions anyway, basically.

Stokes: You can put it all together and come up with something general.

Durrett: We sure will. That's the whole idea. On these closer excursions, like to the dances, were these just dances the town was putting on? The CCC didn't organize it then, they just took you to it, or was the CCC in charge?

Stokes: Well, they had dances here in the camp and they'd haul girls in from Hurricane and these little towns, haul the girls into the dance and then take them back at the end of the night.

Durrett: I bet that was quite a thing. They'd truck them in just like they'd truck boys down to town, huh?

Stokes: Right.

Durrett: Where'd you dance at, was there a hall big enough that you could dance?

Stokes: Well there was a hall here big enough for a dance.

Durrett: In the CCC compound?

Stokes: Yes, either here or the one across the river. Now, I don't know. One of them had a hall big enough because I can remember seeing the girls coming into camp in the trucks. So they did have the dances here.

Durrett: Now did both camps get together when they'd have one of these dances, or did your camp have its dance and they'd have their own?

Stokes: I think they were separate, pretty much. Although my friend said they had a dance and there was a couple of girls that they liked and they started to get in an argument and almost a fight. And so the girls, the boys that had the girls worked the kitchen, so they brought 'em over here and they had their little get together in the kitchen over here (chuckles) away from the party. So, other than that, I don't know, I didn't dance. I just remember them bringing the girls in the trucks.

Durrett: You didn't even go to the dance or did you go and watch?

Stokes: No, I didn't go into this one and watch, but when they'd go to St. George or Hurricane, I'd just sit along the edge and wish I could dance, but I couldn't.

Durrett: How many men was in the camp, roughly?

Stokes: I can't remember.

Durrett: Hundred, two hundred maybe?

Stokes: Oh, I'm sure there was at least two hundred.

Durrett: So when they'd bring these girls in, could they locate two hundred girls to come into the dance, or was there a shortage of girls?

Stokes: Well, there was usually a shortage of girls, but there was also a shortage of boys that danced at that time, they didn't all dance.

Durrett: So it all worked out?

Stokes: Yes, just like me, I wished I could but I couldn't. I didn't want to try, too bashful.

Durrett: Well, before we run out of tape, we don't want to just talk strictly about the recreation. We got to learn about this rock quarry. Is that basically where you worked the whole time you were in?

Stokes: Well, we started out down in Sinawava. We wheeled gravel out of the river bed to enlarge that parking lot down at the end of the park.

Durrett: And that was all done with wheel barrow and shovel and pick?

Stokes: Wheelbarrow and shovel and pick. That was the first project that most of us had down there until they got us organized.

Durrett: So that parking area up there then, what it's sitting on is what you guys hauled in wheelbarrows?

Stokes: Yes, we'd eat lunch under those cottonwood trees.

Durrett: How long did that last?

Stokes: Oh, it didn't last very long, less than a month.

Durrett: Did you kind of switch off or was there one guy that was a wheelbarrow runner and they give another guy a shovel, or did you just kind of everybody did a little of everything?

Stokes: We just kind of did it all, wheeling, shoveling.

Durrett: Pretty hard work then?

Stokes: Oh yeah, it was hot.

Durrett: Probably didn't need a whole lot to do in the evenings, you were ready for bed by the time you...

Stokes: It was over a hundred down there.

Durrett: Didn't need a whole lot of things to do in the evenings, other than lay down in bed and die for the evening.

Stokes: No, we didn't have any trouble with resting. Then I went from there to the rock quarry.

Durrett: Now this is the rock quarry right down here by Springdale?

Stokes: Yes, they'd blast the rocks down off the cliff and then we'd go and quarry the rock. They had roads built all up and down. Wherever there was a pile of rocks, we'd build a road to it and quarry the rocks all by hand.

Durrett: What were you doing with it making it a certain dimension?

Stokes: First we'd start out with trying to get the building stones out of it, that is, the good stones. We'd slice it first off the rock, and then we'd draw a mark across the rock with thick holes about every six inches. And you'd pick a long hole, along the back from the edge, I don't know about two inches from the edge, you'd pick a long hole, and they'd do that all the way across the rock. We had some blunt wedges about four or five inches long, and they was blunt, and this blacksmith would sharpen the picks and temper 'em so you could pick in that sandstone and make little long holes. Then you'd start this wedge,

first wedge, the second, and all the way across the rock, and then you'd tap those in until you got them tight so they started to bind. Then you'd take a rock hammer and tap it down the edge, fracture the edge with the rock hammer on both sides, then you'd start hitting these little wedges until they finally started to fracture.

Then when you got the rock in the general form, then you'd take a square and make marks and chisel off the corners. The rocks that were good enough for building stones, they'd use them for that. And that that wasn't quite that good, they'd use them for curbing, and the next grade was for flagging, and then that that wasn't good for that, they'd haul into these cribs for soil erosion. Lay the heavy wire down and put them in there. They'd dig the trench first, put the wire in, put the rocks on and then when we got them filled up, pull the wire on top. That's what's still down on the river.

Durrett: Still right there, you bet. Did you get involved in any of that?

Stokes: I worked for a short time on one of the cribs, but not for long.

Durrett: That was all pretty much all wheel barrows and just strictly hand work?

Stokes: Well, the trucks would back right up and dump them all in. But the handling of the rocks was all by hand with the exception of the bigger ones, they used A-frames. See, we didn't have any loaders, or anything like that. So they used A-frames and block-and-tackle arrangements, pull the rocks up and then the trucks would back under and then let them down. All the other rocks was all done by hand.

Durrett: Now out there in the quarry, I assume there must have been a foreman or maybe several foremen that showed, or did you yourselves learn enough about it that you could say, "Okay, we can make this size rock out of this." Or did someone point out to you "Okay what you want is a six-foot rock" or whatever?

Stokes: There was a foreman that'd keep you lined up straight and choose the rocks that were quality enough that you could quarry it out and still have a good product. You know sandstone runs in different grades, and the good sandstone, they'd pick it out and say, "Okay, do that. Make so many of that size."

Durrett: Now would it be one boy for each rock or were there three or four of you working on, 'cause you evidently had to have a whole line of chisels, so were there two or three of you working on it

Stokes: Well, usually we had two men on a rock, until it come to the dressing stage when they'd square it out. Then, one man's all they needed there. The other guy'd be in the way.

Durrett: What about the blasting that was going on up above? Would you guys be working down here? Would they move y'all out of there when there was gonna be new rock coming down?

Stokes: Right, when we first started out, why, they'd blast and we didn't have the electric charge, the powder monkey had to put the cap on the fuse down into the dynamite. When he put it on the fuse, we didn't even have a crimper and they'd crimp it with their teeth.

Durrett: With their teeth, yah.

Stokes: Yes. But in a couple of months maybe, then they got the electric charge so the plunger would set them off all at once. Up until that time, they'd have to count each blast and they'd do it at the end of the day.

Durrett: After you guys had moved out of the quarry down below?

Stokes: Yes, they'd blast it and count the shots so that they'd know if they all went off.

Durrett: Now were they separate crews or did you change off on this stuff? Was there a blasting crew that did just strictly that?

Stokes: Well, there was those that were powder monkeys. They didn't do any rock work; they just they just done the blasting.

Durrett: And then you guys that were dressing the rocks, is that all you did or did you help load them on the trucks too?

Stokes: Oh yeah, we'd load 'em on the trucks.

Durrett: You did everything in the quarry, whatever needed to be done then. If you weren't tapping chisels then they'd probably call you to help load.

Stokes: We'd do everything, roll 'em down there hill, and we do a lot of that too. We'd roll them down the hill to the road, and then stand there and throw 'em in the truck.

Durrett: Well some of those were big old rocks, probably took several men to roll them.

Stokes: Well yes, there were all sizes (chuckles). If they were too big, we'd break them off or slice them off, or something. When they blasted, a little guy by the name of Dobson, they'd hang him out over the cliff there and he'd put the powder in. He used to carry the dynamite up that little canyon to the left. He'd carry it up there and around and up on top, and the little guy would put this dynamite and they'd blast it.

Durrett: Now did they drill holes or were they just sticking it in the cracks?

Stokes: Yeah, I don't think they'd drilled any holes up there, they'd find a natural crack and put whatever the powder monkey figured would knock it off. We had some pretty good boys; some of them was from a mine area over there. Lucases, they were really trained in that. Yeah, we had some that had experience; they knew what they were doing. They were pretty good.

Durrett: Anybody ever get hurt?

Stokes: Well, I can't remember of anybody getting hurt serious, just mashed fingers and toes, but nothing real serious. I can't remember anybody getting killed. Maybe they did, I guess they did through the years, but not in my time.

Durrett: I don't know. I haven't interviewed anybody that said anything about it. You think that'd be something people would remember, so, I don't know as if I've asked 'em if anybody ever got killed, but I think that would come up.

Stokes: But I've used this rock-work through the years.

Durrett: Something, a skill you've learned that you used

Stokes: I still play with rocks as you can see down there.

Durrett: Now when you got out of the C's, it wasn't long before the war started. Did you end up in the war?

Stokes: Boy, I had a wife and two kids when I got drafted.

Durrett: Still went to fight anyway?

Stokes: I still had to go.

Durrett: Did you find that the three C's, the regiment and everything was a help when you went into the army? Was it disciplined?

Stokes: Well, the only thing I knew was a little bit about what they expected of me, but I wouldn't say it helped that much.

Durrett: How about in your career, then the rest of the time in your work through your life, was the three C's a good educational experience?

Stokes: One that helped me was the superintendent of the park here, Beck, gave us recommendations when we left here, and we used those to get jobs. My first job in accounting, I just seen the guy that hired going along and I walked up to him, there was a crowd surrounding him. Well, I jumped up on a platform, and I went and handed him this letter from Beck and he wrote me out a ticket.

Durrett: You went right to work?

Stokes: Yes.

Durrett: How about your education, what you learned from it, do you feel like you learned? Was it a valuable experience to help you as far as learning how to work?

Stokes: Well, it was good practical education. Now, when we were here, they didn't have the education part of it, so it was good practical work.

Might mention too, they had an archaeology crew in this camp, and they found an Indian granary right close between here and the road here on this cliff, and they found it right close to this campground.

Durrett: Is that what they did, went around looking for archaeology or did they dig them out?

Stokes: Yes, I don't know, I had a friend that went with the archaeologist, the archaeology group, and I've been trying to find him ever since, I don't know where he went.

Durrett: So they didn't have any prior training or anything?

Stokes: No.

Durrett: They just assigned them and they learned it as they went?

Stokes: Well, the foreman might have, but the CC boys didn't. They just chose a few; I guess the ones they liked. They had to climb a lot, and they wanted the ones that wasn't afraid of heights.

Durrett: Johnny Excell, was he the rock foreman when you were here?

Stokes: He was one of them, although my boss was an Indian from around here, Hy Justet. I don't know if he'll come; real nice guy.

Durrett: Good rock man, was he? How many in your crew?

Stokes: Oh, you mean in the whole crew that worked in the quarry?

Durrett: Well, I don't know, that was under this Indian fellow, this Hy Justet? How many of you were there that worked for him?

Stokes: Oh, I'd just have to guess at that, but I'd imagine twenty men.

Durrett: So, he was one of the locals then; he wasn't a CCC boy?

Stokes: He wasn't a CCC; he was local. He was considered an assistant boss because he was the one that kind of watched us, looked over us, whether there was another one, but I don't know what his background was.

Durrett: You say, you know, it was a dollar a day, but then weren't there some skilled, like college kids and things that were kind of foremen over some these things? Was there any differential in pay, I mean as far as skill?

Stokes: Yes, I remember our sergeant; he got \$45 dollars a month and he was the one that lived, had his family down in one of these towns. And the powder monkey told me he got \$36, so, the increase wasn't very much.

Durrett: That's the tune, I've always heard that there were \$36 men and then \$45 men.

Stokes: Yes, but now, from there on up, I don't know.

Durrett: I've about run out of things I was going to ask you. I think we've pretty well covered it, don't you? Is there anything you remember, I mean special, something that's always stuck in your mind, something funny, or something whatever?

Stokes: Well, the tricks we used to play on each other, you know. We'd pull the nails out of the bunk, the nails that held the bunk up, pull them out and then drive matchsticks in, just to hold it long enough to hold the mattress and the three boards up. And when they'd come in at night, you know, it'd break down with them. Stuff like that. Snipe hunt, you know. Take 'em up the river, with a sack. We used to get some warm cow dung, catch somebody asleep and wipe it on their hands here and then tickle their nose with a feather (laughs). Just some of the old tricks.

Durrett: The old standbys. Everybody pretty well got along together though, there were no problems

Stokes: We didn't have any real problems that I can recall.

Durrett: And probably pretty well enjoyed it, I suppose.

Stokes: Yes, most of 'em were pretty good workers. We accomplished a lot and they're still making use of the work that we accomplished.

Durrett: Well, did you find your experience enjoyable, and is it one of the things that you look back on with good memories?

Stokes: Well, I had a good memory of the park and the surroundings, and that's why I ended up buying a lot in Virgin and built my little rock veneer house down there.

Durrett: So how long of you been down here in the Virgin area?

Stokes: Well, we took about five years to build that house. It's been about six or seven years since we bought the property in the first place.

Durrett: So did you live most of your life then up north somewhere?

Stokes: Spent most of my life around Ogden. I was an engineer on the railroad. I ran Amtrak the last six years. So, I had a good life, good income.

Durrett: You're having a good retirement hopefully.

Stokes: Having a good retirement.

Durrett: That's great. You got a good place to live. I've only been down here for three years, but I like Virgin fine.

Stokes: Yes, we made a lot of good friends, and I can't wait to get back down here every fall.

Durrett: Is that what you do, spend the winter down here and then go back up

Stokes: Winters here and summers back in Ogden, in between traveling. We travel a lot.

Durrett: So, you're getting a lot of that done too?

Stokes: Yes, went to Alaska this year, caught some of their salmon.

Durrett: Well, I hope you're going to have an enjoyable time here. I've been excited about it so far; looks like everyone is really having fun visiting with each other.

Stokes: They are, this group that I know. There was a few friends that I was hoping to see, but I guess they didn't have the information to notify all of us.

Durrett: That could be. The way it all came about, we didn't have a chief naturalist and he was the one that was supposed to be in charge of it. But I don't know, after listening to people, I'm not going to be surprised if they don't decide they gonna have to do it again and make it an annual thing, of course, that will give more time for people to...

Stokes: If we live long enough.

Durrett: Well, you all look like you're in good health right now.

Stokes: Well, there's quite a few. Most of 'em here are from the camp across the river.

Durrett: I've interviewed six people today, and two of them were from this side. If that's any indication, that'd be a third of you, a third of my interviews. Well, that's why I wanted to see it happen because you guys aren't getting any younger, for sure. If we'd waited twenty years, then we would lost all you totally. So, I say, let's get together and get them all together and interview as many as we can.

Stokes: It's too bad we [U.S.] can't do the same now, as we did then. We'd have to pay them a lot more, but I don't know what the problem would be in regard to automobiles. See, we

didn't have the automobiles to chase around. You had more control over the kids. I don't know how that'd work nowadays.

Durrett: It's something that's needed, I think, but there again, I don't know how to...

Stokes: And how expensive they are too. But, at the time, it was better than nothing.

Durrett: Well you say you worked pretty cheap, but that was the going wage, then, wasn't it, a dollar a day.

Stokes: Well, yes.

Durrett: I mean your average labor, that's all you made, no matter, some skill or something, but I know as far as, of course I've been in ranching all my life, but I know us cowboys wages was thirty dollars a month, you know, I mean that was top dog.

Stokes: That would supply the food and...

Durrett: . . . tobacco, and that was it, you know. So, you know, I think probably if you look, compare the times, yeah, today it would cost more, but everything else costs more too, you know. Minimum wage today probably isn't a whole lot different than it was then.

Stokes: It all averages out.

Durrett: With your five dollars, you could buy a lot of those candy bars, you know, and today five dollars would only buy you enough for a week, you know.

Stokes: That's true. Money goes fast; people get rid of a lot of money these days. But my family needed the money then. My dad had a job, but he was laid off most of the time. So when I was down here, that twenty-five dollars that went home it helped a lot.

Durrett: Did you have younger brothers and sisters?

Stokes: Yes, I had younger brothers and sisters and they could use the money and they were glad to get it.

Durrett: Yes, I think it was a pretty good program overall, seems to me like.

Stokes: We learned to work hard; of course I've always worked hard (laughs). I think it's good for you.

Durrett: I think so, that's always been my recreation, is my work. I don't fish or hunt or anything like that. I just like to do what I'm doing. I never had a job like this where you got paid for talking to people; this is something else, I tell you.

Stokes: (chuckles) Everybody has their own skills.

Durrett: Well, I guess we'll call that quits, then. I do want to thank you for taking your time to share your experiences with us.

Stokes: It's fun to reminisce. Some of them had trouble remembering the spot, I did remember the spot.

Durrett: Well, it's all different now; it's all been leveled.

Stokes: All those years.

Durrett: Yeah, we had the three guys here, or it's been a month ago I guess, I got them all together so we could kind of train everybody to ask the right questions and what not. So, we had these three guys that they talked about up there on the stand today. We got them down there then none of the three of them could quite agree on just where those camps were and they were both here obviously here in the early days, so they knew where both camps were, but it's changed enough that it's really hard to tell exactly where they were.

Stokes: That's one advantage in interviewing a lot of 'em.

Durrett: Right, because you can keep getting closer and closer.

Stokes: If they agree on it, then you know that that's where it was. If you're doing it separate, if they come together and agree on those things, well ...

Durrett: Yes, if the majority says it was here, then one or two guys that are a little off probably are not remembering it quite right.

Stokes: Well, that arch up there, you know, we were looking up into that all the time I was here.

Durrett: So your camp had to be down where you could look up under it.

Stokes: As long as that arch holds up, I'll know where it was (chuckles).

Durrett: Well, it's been there a long time; I guess it will probably be there a lot longer yet.

Stokes: I used to like to go up the river here and go on a little hike, you know. One time we were here, they were shooting a movie up the river, and it was a western movie.

Durrett: Now this is while you were in the three C camp?

Stokes: Right, and it was between here and the bridge up there, can't hardly pick out the spot now, but they'd run up the little road in a wagon, and then come out, and they'd do it all over again and I thought, "Well, you know that's a movie, but it seems kind of boring to me, repetition all the time." I guess they made a few movies.

Durrett: Oh yeah, they made a lot of movies over the years here.

Stokes: There's one of the powder monkeys right there, real clever fellow with the straw hat on.
He was one of the powder monkeys.

Durrett: Well, this has been great. Getting about time to go eat, I think..