

Kenneth and Pauline Topham
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
September 28, 1989

Interviewed by: Jeff Frank
Transcribed by: Natalie Whittier
September 30, 2011

Kenneth and Pauline Topham
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
September 28, 1989

Jeff Frank: This is Thursday, September 28, 1989, Zion Nature Center, Jeff Frank interviewing Kenneth Topham and Pauline Topham. Here we are, you said you were in the three Cs and that's why you are here, and Pauline, you probably didn't have any choice to show up huh?

Pauline Topham: No.

Jeff Frank: How did you hear about the reunion?

Kenneth Topham: Well my friend, John Whit Roundy come to my place two years ago after they'd had one over to Ruby's Inn and wanted to know why I wasn't to it. I said I didn't hear anything about it, I didn't know about it. He said well they had one and will have another one next year and I says "Well I want to be to it, but I want to know when it is so I can be back for it." Through all of this he wanted to know if I could round up some names for him and give him them to Jim Cooper over there to Panguitch and so I did the best I could and then I talked to another CCC fellow there in Paragonah. He said "Gee I've got a whole list of guys that was in the CCs there in Zion." I says well can I get a copy of them and he give me a copy and then I run some more off and I sent one to Whit and sent one to Jim Cooper and through this route we got a few names on the roster today. But that was the way I got the word and then somebody, I can't remember who it was, brought word to me that they were going to have one in Zions, so I contacted _____ man and asked him about it. I says "Is this just for the men who was in Zions or for all of the CCCs? He said "No it's just for the ones in Zion." I says well I was in Zion for a short while, but I said there was a lot of guys that I give names that were in other camps but he said "We're trying to get this one going so we can maybe later on get it for everybody." So that's how that turned out.

Jeff Frank: When you said you were in Zions for a while then with the three Cs, how long were you in the three Cs?

Kenneth Topham: Well I was only in about ten months.

Jeff Frank: Ten months? Well there was six month hitches you know you had to, you could only go in for six months at a time?

Kenneth Topham: But the company got a letter from my folks saying they needed me, so they let me leave then. And so I got out then to go and take care of some of my dad's livestock.

Jeff Frank: Back up in Paragonah?

Topham: Uh-huh.

J. Frank: Well how old were you?

Topham: I was eighteen, just got out of high school. I was eighteen, turned nineteen just after I got out of the CCC's.

J. Frank: Did you complete high school?

Topham: Yes, I graduated from high school.

J. Frank: And then how did you hear about the three C's in high school? Did someone come to your school or did friends talk about it?

Topham: Well I wasn't too concerned about it. In fact, I felt like I was drafted into it. But my folks were on what they call WPA and then threatened to take him off WPA if I didn't go into the CC's. So that's how I went in; it was kind of under protest. But as I got older and smarter I regretted all of the days that I could have had more fun than I did. I was in the Duck Creek Camp for the forest service you know and it was really a good camp. They fed good, they had good projects, and all of this. I don't know if you want to know what we done there then.

J. Frank: Duck Creek? You bet. Is that up on the mountain like Kolob area?

Pauline: No, it's up by Navajo Lake.

J. Frank: Oh, I was thinking where in Zion is there a Duck Creek? Yes up by Navajo on the mountains, you bet.

Topham: Right. But that was a good camp. We widened the road on the south side of Navajo Lake and we also raised the dike four feet across the lake and we built a lot of campsites for tourists.

J. Frank: At Navajo Lake?

Topham: At the Navajo Lake. And then at Duck Creek we enlarged the campground there and built a tennis court. I don't know if we built the road clear through to Panguitch Lake or whether there was already a road there and we just improved it, I can't remember. But we had a spike camp at Panguitch Lake and we was working both ends. That was my work there at Duck Creek. It was a good camp, and then the 18th of October why our camp was split up and I was sent down here to this company on the west side of the creek. It was 1966 was the company number.

J. Frank: On the other side of the creek, the Virgin River here? Is this here is Zion now? October 18th? What year was it?

Topham: This was 1935.

J. Frank: Nineteen thirty-five. So that's about the height of the CCC's.

Topham: Yeah there were two companies. One on each side of the creek, and the one on the east side of the creek they was the ones that worked on sloping the banks up on the switchback. I don't know what all their projects were. But, our project, the main one that I was on, was up on the East Rim truck trail. We made a road into what they call the East Rim Lookout or something like that; I don't know the name of it. We was just going through virgin land building a road up through there.

J. Frank: Today if you were to go back to this place where would it be?

Topham: Well you leave the highway up by the east entrance and you go back up through the hills to the west. I think the way I understood it that was one of the trips [at the reunion] that we was taking and I signed up for it because I thought I'd like to see what it looked like after it was finished. I was a little feller. I only weighed 118 pounds soaking wet. I was running a 60 lb jackhammer running over a cliff about 30 feet high.

J. Frank: Here at Zion, you were on the trail crew that built that east overlook. Today I believe it is called Canyon Overlook. Right on the other side of the tunnel?

Topham: Yes.

J. Frank: Okay so you were one of the fellows that was on the end of the rope with the jackhammer.

Topham: Right, I was. It was kind of scary at times but I got used to it after a while.

J. Frank: And a lot of confidence in people that help you there?

Topham: I don't know how come I did that because I wasn't very brave. There was about three or four of us hanging over that cliff running these hammers and drilling blast holes to make this road around a straight up cliff, but I don't know how. But, anyway, that's the way it worked out.

Pauline: Probably because you was the littlest and the others decided you would.

J. Frank: Sounds like he was one of the feistier ones with an 80 lb jackhammer, or 60 lbs.

Topham: Sixty pounds. On flat ground I used a 75, but on a ledge like that, that was too heavy for me.

J. Frank: I bet. Well let's see now, when you were working out there it sounded like it could be summer.

Topham: No, it was the middle of winter.

J. Frank: In the middle of the winter you were up there huh?

Topham: But the snow only got five or six inches deep up there all the while I was there. It might have been one of our drier seasons or something because I know it does snow more than that up there. They would bring us a hot lunch from camp here, up there, and we would sit around a camp fire and have our hot lunch and then go back to work. But we was always back to camp by four o'clock.

J. Frank: So October 1935 into 1936, this is the project you worked on.

Topham: Well most of the time. There was probably once or twice maybe that we couldn't get up there. I don't know for sure. I can't remember now. But, they put a bunch of us on cribbing the creek up there above the bridge. We done some cribbing there. And then there was one place up above the lodge that they had to shoot a point off and I done the drilling there for that. But other than that, that's all the projects I was on while I was here.

J. Frank: When we first came to Zion with the three C's you worked up in Duck Creek and then they broke that camp up in October and they moved all those men down to here.

Topham: Right.

J. Frank: When you came in to Zion now, did you come by truck?

Topham: Right, open truck. Our gear and everything was loaded on these trucks. We come from Duck Creek, it was snowing when we left but it was nice down here.

J. Frank: And they took you right up to the barracks and said gentlemen this is where you are going to stay.

Topham: Well no, they pulled us up to headquarters and we were assigned barracks and a cot. We had to go up to the commissary and get our bedding and things like that, mattresses. I know in Duck Creek we never had sheets but I can't remember down here whether we did or not. We just slept between them wool blankets and a comforter, it's called a comforter, to throw over the top, but as far as I can remember now we never had sheets. I know we didn't in Duck Creek, but down here I can't remember.

J. Frank: The commissary, when you went to headquarters did you meet with like a commanding officer?

Topham: Well, somebody in charge. As far as who it was, I don't remember. It was probably just the sergeant.

J. Frank: They sent you over to another building and said "Pick up your gear."

Topham: Yeah, get your gear. It was pretty much military as far as the camp was concerned. But then we got out on a project and it was under the direction of the park service, the forest service.

J. Frank: When you received your gear, did you go up to a counter or screen? How did it work?

Topham: Just a counter, then the things was issued to you. Course we had our clothes and everything prior to this, but if you had to have other things, you went to the commissary to get them. That's where you got your blankets and your bedding and your clothes and shoes and gloves and all that sort of thing.

J. Frank: Then you took that over to the barracks?

Topham: Yeah, and then as far as I can remember now we just picked our own cot or bunk, whatever. Most of them, well there were some bunks but there were some cots too. I was always lucky to have a cot on the floor.

J. Frank: How was that set up inside? Was there all like one side of it? Did they have restroom facilities and sleeping quarters?

Topham: Oh no, no. I can't remember what they call them -- a comfort station or whatever was in an out building. The barracks were just lined with beds on both sides of the walls and they were, oh maybe four or five feet apart. It was our responsibility to keep these barracks all clean, spic and span, floors mopped and everything, down the aisle, between the beds and up between each bed. So it was house duty along with the rest of everything else. And then you had to pass clothing inspection and all that every once in a while.

J. Frank: Clothing inspection? They checked your creases huh?

Topham: Yeah. That wasn't very often, but every once in a while they did.

J. Frank: Well, we are looking at a beautiful place here in October as opposed to Duck Creek when it comes to warmth and sun but Zion come January can be a cold place. How did you guys keep warm besides a wool blanket and comforter?

Topham: Well we had a coal burning stove, pot bellied stove, in the barracks, two of them, one in each end.

J. Frank: Oh two of them huh?

Topham: Yeah, those barracks were probably 150-200 feet long.

J. Frank: Wow that is impressive size. I have some photographs I'd never seen. I worked here for three years, I was telling you earlier you know, and I looked at some of the photographs they had, but there are a few here of the barracks that I have never seen. I didn't know they were that...

Topham: Well they had these barracks all over the country when the CCC's was going. They had some down here in LaVerkin, down to Leeds, and some in Cedar and Parowan, and the ones here and up in Duck Creek. Course, the ones in Duck Creek we just had tents up on platforms. But, our mess hall was a big, long building.

J. Frank: It was a building? Is there any of that still there?

Topham: No it was cleaned up; you wouldn't know there was ever anything there.

J. Frank: Is there any structure that you remember today, that you know of that is still standing? I mean that is a CCC structure?

Topham: Yeah there is some of them down here in LaVerkin.

J. Frank: Is that right?

Topham: Yeah, I don't know if there is any anywhere else, but some poultry farmer bought those buildings and I think that's probably the reason they are still there.

J. Frank: Are they barracks?

Topham: Well, I've not paid that much attention.

Pauline: Those that were close to the roads, one was burned down and the other torn down.

Topham: Well they've pretty well dilapidated now, but that is some of the remains that is there.

J. Frank: I'll be darned.

Topham: And the one in Parowan was just a sub-camp if I remember right. I think there was a sub-camp in Cedar, each side of Cedar there at one time too.

J. Frank: Well here you are, you are now in the barracks, you just come down from a cold spot and they put you to work. So, in the mornings when you would get up did you have like reveille or . . . ?

Topham: Yeah, roll call every morning just before we went in for breakfast.

J. Frank: That was a head count sort of thing.

Topham: Yeah kind of. Yeah, if you didn't say "here" or something, why they'd start checking on you.

J. Frank: If you didn't show up, what would happen to you?

Topham: Well they would give you extra duty, maybe KP or something like that. Over there to Duck Creek me and my cousin we were a little late getting back from weekend leave and the ride we were supposed to catch they backed out and wasn't going, so we had to hitchhike and we was an hour or two late and we got a little extra duty for that. We had to do some excavating and cleaning around the captain's quarters and one thing or another.

J. Frank: Oh boy.

Topham: But, they had their disciplinary actions just like in the military.

J. Frank: For the whole entire time you say you were here about ten months here in Zion or in the three C's all together.

Topham: All together.

J. Frank: Here in Zion about how many months were you in?

Topham: Well that would be the 18th of October to the 10th of March, would be about five months, six months.

J. Frank: And then after in March you went back to work cattle with your father.

Topham: Yeah.

J. Frank: So here in Zion that was the one project you worked on the whole time, or did you . . . ?

Topham: That was most of my work, was up on that trail.

J. Frank: Chasing around (unintelligible)

Topham: Well I never did get any extra duty down here, but the morning I left I was on KP and they called me and says get ready to go to Cedar City with OD truck with the company on the other side of the creek. They was going into Cedar. So I never had many minutes to get ready to go because that truck was ready to go. I grabbed my stuff and threw it on the truck and headed to Cedar.

J. Frank: And that was the end of your time with the three Cs. So in the mornings then you would get up here, have your reveille and then go eat breakfast?

Topham: Yeah, and then we would go back and I guess go back to our barracks for a minute or two and then we would go out and get on the trucks and head back to work.

J. Frank: Well you said it was under protest that you're in the three Cs now, but all them breakfasts would it make you feel pretty well?

Topham: Well we had real good food in Duck Creek. I never could complain about the food we had in Duck Creek. We had three good meals everyday and when we was out on a project course we had a hot meal brought out to us from Duck Creek over to Navajo Lake. We always had good hot meals over there. It was really good.

J. Frank: What kind of food did you get, just out of curiosity?

Topham: Oh, the one that I remember the best right now and I was just telling my wife about it is every Wednesday they would come out with stuffed bell peppers with ground hamburger in it. Then of course they had the potatoes, baked potato, or something like that. Then they always had a pastry at noon, and so course I don't drink coffee now, but we had all kinds of coffee then or punch, whatever we wanted. We had the basic foods that we needed. But after we come down here it was kind of a let down here as far as the food was concerned. That's why I always favored the forest service over the park service.

J. Frank: They serve a lot better huh? Well what kind of breakfast? Are we looking at eggs here? Hotcakes?

Topham: We had scrambled eggs the biggest share of the time, scrambled eggs and bacon. We always had bacon. We could have cereal if we want it and plenty of fresh milk. Somebody brought fresh milk everyday, and we had fresh bread. We had bakers bread in those days too then, it was probably just coming out but that's what we had then.

J. Frank: Do you remember this building in camp? This must have been very close to you?

Topham: It was there. I came over here a time or too while I was in camp. I never made enough money to buy any of their stuff.

J. Frank: Do you remember the visitors coming in and out of this building?

Topham: Yeah, you bet.

J. Frank: Did you have any sort of contact with them?

Topham: I didn't, I really didn't. The only time I ever come here was probably in the evening after I had a little spare time after four o'clock and our evening meal. But a lot of the time we would just go past here and go on down to Springdale. We would walk down there; there would be a show down there once a week. They'd show a movie.

J. Frank: Oh is that right. Where would that be shown?

Topham: That was shown in the church house in the, I think they had a cultural hall in it. That's where we would buy our tickets from the canteen in camp and then we would just go down there. And of course they always had their main movie, but they always run a serial movie too, and that's the one that I remember the most was one with Gene Autry and it seemed like it ran all winter long. So we had that much entertainment and then once in a while they would have a dance and trucks would go up to surrounding communities and bring the girls in or if they didn't do that why they would take us to one of the communities to a dance to one of them. So that was our entertainment.

J. Frank: Here, most of the men that you served with were they from Utah or did they come in from other areas?

Topham: Both the companies that I was in were all Utah men. A lot of them were from the surrounding communities, but in our Duck Creek camp at one time I knew every man that was in there by name and they come from Spanish Fork, American Fork, Provo, Provo Bench it was called then but it's Orem now, some from Salt Lake, Sandy, Riverton, and all these places like that.

J. Frank: I heard there were some Kentucky and Tennessee boys that were around here. Did you hear of any of them?

Topham: I don't know about those, but there were some New Yorkers that come into this camp that I was in after I left and I guess they were such a bunch of bad guys that they shipped them back to New York and as far as I know that's when the camp closed up. I can't remember for sure because that would have been . . . I know it was still there when I was working here as the Utah Parks maintenance, but when they closed up I can't remember.

J. Frank: There was a camp in Fredonia and a camp at Pipe Springs and then a camp out on the Arizona Strip south of Pipe Springs, one at Short Creek and in St. George. Did you have any contact with any of those camps, the men, the drivers? Did you ever go have fights with them?

Topham: No, I was a lover, I wasn't a fighter. I wasn't hardly big enough to lick my lips, let alone fight.

J. Frank: I don't know 118 lb fellow with a 60 lb jackhammer, you got my respect.

Topham: Well, I was pretty easy to get along with.

J. Frank: So when you headed off after breakfast, your stomachs full, you probably drank too much coffee I don't know?

Topham: No I didn't drink much, maybe one cup.

J. Frank: One cup and then you are ready to go. Did they load you up on a truck or did you have to walk up there or how did you get to work?

Topham: No we went on these open, well they had covers over them for the winter of course. And that was miserable. I used to get carsick so easy.

J. Frank: Is that right?

Topham: Oh yeah, back then a truck was the worst place for me to be about everyday. If you can't see and you get those boys in it really don't take much for that to get to you.

J. Frank: So you're sitting there hanging out the back of the truck as much as you were hanging in, huh?

Topham: That's just about.

J. Frank: Did you like have to bring your equipment with you in the morning?

Topham: No, it was all, I think they had tool boxes or whatever they called them that they put them in and padlocked them every night, shovels and picks, and all of our equipment.

J. Frank: You went up through that tunnel and up to the trail head. Did you guys horse around in that tunnel on the way through at all?

Topham: No I don't recall of it, no.

J. Frank: Do you remember any cave-ins or anything unusual or interesting things that happened in the tunnel?

Topham: Not while I was here, no. I know they have had some, but not while I was here.

J. Frank: So how many men did you work with up there on that trail? There was three of you hanging over the side with jackhammers on ropes.

Topham: Well it was about, just off hand, I imagine there was about 25 of us.

J. Frank: Oh is that right? That many?

Topham: I don't know where the rest of them went. I don't have any idea. But I know that's where we put in all our time.

Pauline: They took the rest of them to the zoo.

J. Frank: Well that's what I was wondering if there was like two or three fellows up above.

Topham: Up on top, you secured your own lanyard to a tree or something.

J. Frank: You took care of yourself. There wasn't anybody over you there?

Topham: Well we had the supervisor there, but we was responsible for our own hook ups and everything. So if one of us got away, it was our own doings, it wasn't somebody else's.

J. Frank: Boy, today I think you would have every union in the world on you or something on your back. When you say you had a jackhammer this was a nomadic air operated thing and you must have had like a compressor?

Topham: We had a compressor, we had bulldozers. What else? We had tractors, bulldozers and then there was a lot of stuff we had. I don't know how come we done a lot of marking, butt we drilled the holes with steel and a double jack. I done that for a while, hold that steel while somebody swing a double jack. That was awful scary. I think that was the reason I went to jackhammer. Well we would drill holes in boulders and then put a rod in it and then burn, oh what's that mine over there at Cove Fort? Stinky? Sulfur.

We'd melt the sulfur and pour down in there to anchor them. I'd never heard of that before, but we'd burn that stuff and it makes a solution that is just like glue or something. You melt it and pour it down around there and when it sets up, I guess nothing can bust it loose as far as I know.

J. Frank: Is that right? Sulfur, you would heat sulfur.

Topham: With an open flame yeah.

J. Frank: It would drip into a liquid and you would use that as a setting there huh?

Topham: And that was for, I don't know if it was for fence posts or what I can't remember. But I know we did a lot of that.

J. Frank: You said that the sulfur was brought down from Cove Fort?

Topham: Oh no, I couldn't think of the name and that was the closest I could come to what sulfur is.

J. Frank: Did it come in sacks or blocks?

Topham: Paper bags.

J. Frank: In paper bags, like a cement bag you would buy at the store now.

Topham: Yeah.

J. Frank: Huh? I've never heard of that before.

Topham: Yeah, it was one of the things we used for anchoring these posts.

J. Frank: And before you went to jackhammers, you sat there and you would hold a steel stake while somebody would pound that thing in?

Topham: Yeah with a 10-12 pound sledge hammer. And that's the way the old timers all of them would drill there holes. They would have a star drill or I guess they called them a star drill. They would hold on the hand and one guy swung and then they would just change and you would pull up and every length why you would just turn it a little bit so that it would beat its way down through that rock. We had a little scoop that we'd blow the powder out with.

J. Frank: At lunch time, it wasn't so good here at Zion Park, but what did they feed you up here on that trail when it got so cold? Did they bring you hot lunches also?

Topham: Oh they brought hot lunches up there. I can't remember what they fed us, but I do know that it wasn't enough. Us guys were just pretty near starving to death and usually there was two or three loads of bread that would be left lying around and I as far as I can remember I started a deal that I would take a slice of this bread and go hold it over the coals and toast it on both sides really good and then I would sprinkle a bunch of sugar and pour canned milk on it and then I would just start eating it and it wasn't long til I had the rest of the guys doing the same thing. That's the way we finally filled up was eating that bread 'til it was gone.

J. Frank: Oh so canned milk and sugar, huh? Oh man. And at night what time did you usually knock off, was the sun down by then?

Topham: We were back to camp by four o'clock usually.

J. Frank: Oh that's not a bad time.

Topham: I think we had, I think they figured about seven hours of working time.

J. Frank: Did you all take a shower after that or just hit the bunks? Or did you have showers?

Topham: We had showers yeah. We would shower about every day. About have to, especially when you are running a jackhammer.

J. Frank: Nobody would want to talk to you huh?

Topham: Dirty job. It would blow that dust all over you.

J. Frank: So like after dinner, there you are, do most turn in or maybe would you . . .?

Topham: Oh a lot of them would get together and play games or read; some would listen to the radio; some would go to town to the beer joint and fill up on beer.

J. Frank: Was there a beer joint here in Springdale?

Topham: There was then yeah.

J. Frank: Do you remember the name of that?

Topham: Bills...

Pauline: Canyon Inn

Topham: Yeah, Canyon Inn

J. Frank: Sounds like you were there a couple times.

Pauline: My girl friend's father owned it. I used to go and stay with her and I would work in it.

J. Frank: It couldn't have been during the time of the three Cs could it?

Pauline: No, not while he was here. This was later. He was here then, Bill was.

J. Frank: Bill's Canyon Inn, huh? So were you ever caught in there every so often or did you just kind of shy away from having a cup of suds?

Topham: Oh I'd go in there, oh I don't know how often, quite a few times.

Pauline: They sold sandwiches and things like that too.

J. Frank: Kind of a place to just sit and talk bottom line.

Topham: Well in those days they would put a pitcher of beer on the table and a bowl of pretzels and you'd buy the pitcher of beer or three or four guys would share

Pauline: Eat parched corn

Topham: That's where a lot of them went for their entertainment, just down there to smoke and drink and socialize.

J. Frank: Parched corn? People won't remember that, you know a lot of people won't. So that sort of stuff is, I just believe it's pretty darn valuable.

Topham: Well the first time I'd ever heard of parched corn was my mother used to parch it in the oven on an old wood burning stove. We'd have some of the corn left from our sweet corn that we would eat or dry or whatever. Then she'd shell it off the cob and put it in the oven and parch it. It's quite a treat with a little butter and salt on it, oh and a little oil, you know. Pretty good.

J. Frank: Pauline, the three C's is probably well before your time?

Pauline: Well no, I was around.

J. Frank: Were you around? Do you remember these fellows?

Pauline: Well I didn't meet him while he was in the Cs. . .

Topham: But a lot of her girl friends did.

Pauline: Some of the guys that he knew that was in the camp with him, but I lived in Panguitch and the camps up at Duck Creek and up around there used to come down to dance and I danced with some of them.

J. Frank: What did you think of them three C fellows?

Pauline: Oh, that was really neat to have somebody to dance with. The hometown boys didn't go out much.

J. Frank: No? They were bashful fellows and didn't want to dance with you or nothing?

Pauline: So it was nice to have some new stuff around.

J. Frank: What did the hometown boys think of that?

Pauline: Well I don't think they really cared because they went somewhere else to dance.

Topham: Well there was quite a few of them that was in the camp too.

Pauline: Yes, both my brothers were in a camp, but one was in this camp and the other brother was over at Escalante.

J. Frank: Oh shoot.

Topham: Doug was in Pines Lake camp too. He was in a sub camp, the same outfit I was in except I was in the main camp and he was in the spy camp.

Pauline: He ended up in Escalante.

J. Frank: So it sounds like you had three brothers?

Pauline: Two.

J. Frank: Two brothers and they were both in the three Cs.

Pauline: Yes, one was my younger brother and one was the other brother.

J. Frank: How many sisters did you have?

Pauline: Then I had two.

J. Frank: Two sisters. So you were home with the rest of the sisters, your mom and dad, and your brothers were in the three corps?

Pauline: Yes, well my older brother went first. He wasn't in the time my younger brother was. He was ahead of that and then he was released and went to Salt Lake to work. Was he in the C's when he was up there at that fire wagon up around Brigham?

Topham: No.

Pauline: That was work I guess for that outfit. They had a forest fire wagon in a place where he worked.

J. Frank: So he worked fire work for a while. In the three C's you know the men earned so much money and so much -- five dollars I think -- was kept. You can keep five dollars a month.

Topham: And our parents got the rest of it.

J. Frank: Yeah, back home on the home front, what did you see back then in this area? Twenty dollars or so would be sent back to your parents?

Topham: We got a dollar a day, thirty dollars a month. Parents get twenty-five and the boy would get five. That's the way it was with me and my parents used mine. My mother bought a radio. Radios were the thing that was hard to come by in those days. So she got her a radio and I don't know I guess just sustained their selves with the rest of it.

J. Frank: Did you see that money coming back to your folks from your brothers, did you see the family?

Pauline: My mother wouldn't use it. She cashed the check and then she put it in an envelope and saved it for the boys.

J. Frank: They got their own, hm.

Pauline: She figured that twenty five dollars or thirty dollars. And then my one brother was married besides. She figured he should have it or he and his wife should have it. Course after that why it went to her, but he was married while mom was getting the check. It wasn't much money and it didn't buy much, but it beat nothing.

Topham: Well that was the whole purpose of it.

J. Frank: Well prior to the Cs, I guess we are looking at what is almost six billion dollars going back into the economy in nine years. That's a lot of money spread out amongst so many million it might trickle down to not much but . . .

Pauline: It was a big help anyway. I mean it let them buy things that they couldn't have bought if they hadn't had it. Things they needed.

Topham: Well the things that the CCC boys did was, I think, was way in abundance to what amount of money was spent, the enormosity of it. The benefit that people got out of it, the beautification and all the things that they did.

Pauline: Well so much of it is still in existence. It is still being used. Maybe it has been added too or added upon but it is still being used. I think they did a lot of good.

J. Frank: A pretty good job, I mean there wasn't a lot of cutting corners unless it was made out of stone.

Pauline: These boys learned a lot of things. Some of these people would go in there with, especially the city kids you know, and they would come out of the inner cities and places where there was just nothing but the streets and they would come out here and a lot of them, some didn't of course, but a lot of them learned a trade, learned to do something. I think it was really good for them. It was good for the country and it's good for the area. We all benefitted.

J. Frank: What do you remember most? You know this is a general question for both of you. So here we are the three Cs, as you remember it in the Roosevelt kind of Cs, and that pretty much ended by the mid 40's. But of all of that, what should be remembered? What do you remember about it most? Can we discuss a little about that? This would be the thing that I guess you would shout to somebody's ear if you could. You said a lot right there.

Pauline: My attitude is that there was a lot accomplished. To us, it was a little bit of money I mean in that sense of the word. But, with a little bit of money, a lot was accomplished and a lot benefitted from it. So I think that they did a real lot of good.

Topham: Well it was a lot of hard work; I know because some of the jobs I was on. There were no shirkers that I can remember of. All just young guys you know. I don't suppose there was any of them that was over 25, 26 years old in either of the camps that I was in and they had good supervisors. I remember one man says "I don't want you to work yourselves to death but just damn near." And he got it out of you, too, I mean he wanted the work done, so there wasn't a lot of shirking done. It was not like it is now days. You can go to a job and see a guy just standing around waiting for their paycheck rather than putting out any effort, but in those days I'll tell you, you put out and the work was there to show for it.

J. Frank: You said something though in that quote that was a great comment. "I don't want you to work yourself to death but just damn near." You are talking about a supervisor; you are talking about someone who is in charge and this is their crew and more or less their project. I would think that as you observed you know you walk in and see people sitting around waiting for their paycheck. Maybe is that a comment on the kind of leadership

and supervision? I'm not trying to put words in your mouth. That's the last thing you should do in an interview.

Topham: Well I find it this way, or at least that's the way it looks to me and where I spent most of my life earning my living and my security is that there is so many fellows that goes to work and says, "I'm not going to do anything today. I'll just put in my time." And that's the attitude I find with a lot of guys that they've got the attitude that the world owes me a living, and it wasn't that way in the 30's.

J. Frank: Well in the 30's, here you are in Zion National Park or Duck Creek and you're doing one of a kind projects, never been done before. You got something, like you were saying, valuable for the little amount that went into it, great returns. Now do you think there are projects today? Do they even come close to the kind of value of projects you guys did?

Topham: Well there might be, but my honest opinion is that there is so much organized labor now that it's got it's good points and it's got it's bad points.

Pauline: There's too much overhead.

J. Frank: Too much overhead.

Pauline: Too much fingers in the pie before it gets down to the project.

J. Frank: Did you hear that Tate? There is too much overhead. I like that. That's a stoop.

Pauline: Well it is because it just about every government thing there is from the president on down you just look at it they got oodles and oodles of workers just showing up. They have nothing really to do; they just show up. They take pay and it comes out of this meant for this project down here, and when it gets down here there is nothing left there to do it. So that's why it never gets done.

J. Frank: If you had to remember the one thing that probably benefitted you through the years from CCC you know are there things today or through your career through you adult life, working that sort of thing, is there anything you look back on and think man I'm glad that happened to me back then or geez I wish I never would have seen that? Is there one thing that you maybe reflected back on during or over your adult life?

Topham: Well, the only thing I can come up with right now is the things that I went through as an iron miner, I would utterly hate to go through them again because of the severeness of the weather and some of the projects and things like that, but in those days if you supported your family you had to do some of these things whether you liked it or whether you didn't. And that was one of the things that kept me going I guess because I had responsibilities, and a lot of my work most of the first ten or fifteen years of my work was all outside in all kinds of weather and a lot of times the weather was way down

below zero and the snow up above your knees and trying to drill blast holes with water. Oh the things at midnight I would hate to go through it again.

J. Frank: Was the three Cs the first time you were out and away from home and that sort of thing?

Topham: Yeah, the rest of the time I was working or I wasn't working, I was just going to school and of course family chores that we had, cows to milk, animals to feed, and wood and stuff to get into the house for the evening and stuff like that.

J. Frank: Well you mention earlier that after you got home and you thought back a little on the three C's you felt a little different about them.

Topham: Well this was in my later life when I wised up a little bit more, you know. I should have enjoyed it more than I did because when I look at it now I figure a lot of things that I could have enjoyed a lot more if I would have done -- even stayed in the CCC's longer.

Pauline: If he'd had a little different attitude.

Topham: Yeah, my attitude was the whole problem because I thought I was drafted and that I didn't like.

Pauline: He thought he was being made to do something he didn't choose to do. He tells about being up there at the fishing stream just running right through the camp almost and all these mountain places that he could've enjoyed so much but he wouldn't do it because he was mad.

J. Frank: Oh gee that's great. That is a great thought.

Topham: Well in those days if you see a car go through that Duck Creek area, one car a day and a lot of times there wasn't even any. So, traffic was nothing like it is now and the only fishing that there ever was around and that's the all you can think about now days is going fishing, but in those days the only fishing there was on that stream was one or two of the boys that was in the CC's there. So it's a lot different now than it was then. Course, we expect things to get better.

Pauline: Time changes everything.

J. Frank: Time changes.

Topham: One way or the other, right.

J. Frank: Is there anything that you wanted to bring up that maybe you just haven't yet? Or some thoughts?

Topham: I don't know of anything that has happened that I could have mentioned. Like I said when I came in here I could have told you all I know in fifteen seconds, but we went on longer than that.

J. Frank: Well it's not good to keep you here for hours and hours, you know. You've got a pretty busy schedule. Pauline, is there anything that you think would be fun to say that maybe you just haven't had a chance?

Pauline: Well no, I find when I say things I usually get in hot water, so I better not say.

J. Frank: Well there is no hot water here. I didn't plug in the urn over here so we're all set.

Pauline: It was fun, and I met him when he was working at the cafeteria here like I said, but I had associations with people in the CC camp where he had been and the other one too. My girlfriend's husband worked there and the guy I was going with at the time worked there. I came down to see him and met him, so that's as far as it went. I think it's been a lot of good in ways it wasn't even meant to be as far as the physical work, but the people that met each other and was married through the CCs. He has a cousin that was married to a CC boy or two, two cousins got CC husbands. It did things all through people's lives. I think that it touched their life in some way through the work or through the association or through marriage or something. It was a good thing.

J. Frank: I'm sorry, I bet you guys are probably ready to go see if you recognize any faces out there.

Topham: Well, I don't know. According to what I have been told, they didn't get in contact with any of the guys that were in before '37, so I don't know.

J. Frank: Well I know was in touch with a lot of folks from Pipe Springs down there. They were from '34 on and this was a couple of years ago. It's about '38 '39; well it was in the 40's actually. Boy, those fellows were from all over, you know Missouri, Southern Ohio, but they worked up there on the Arizona Strip and I saw a lot in between Fredonia, Short Creek, St. George and this one. That's why I find it kind of interesting that most of the men from these camps, Zion, were from Utah.

Topham: Yeah, my understanding was when I went is was that they would all be Utah boys. And as far as I can remember they were Utah boys. I don't remember anybody that was from another state in either one of the camps I was in, and the one my brother was in and the one that John Whit Roundy was in. I think there were all Utah boys too. It was a good camp to be in really because of the fact that they were Utah boys and they weren't like some of these New Yorkers they had here. I guess they were really bozos.

Pauline: They didn't know the first thing about law and order.

J. Frank: Well maybe a different kind of law and order.

Topham: Their law and order.

Pauline: The law of the jungle was more like it.

J. Frank: We had one fellow here was that talking about some of the rivalries between some of the fellows and about the gals coming down from Panguitch. That was an interesting story. Did you ever experience any of that? Did you ever get much of those CCC fellows playing over the boys?

Pauline: Well you look at me. Can you imagine, in your wildest imagination, any men would be fighting over me? No, no, the ones I knew or was well acquainted with were Utah people, most of them. There were one or two, I went with a fellow that was in the Panguitch camp up there that was from Oklahoma, Kentucky I guess it was Kentucky. And I knew two or three that was from back east there. But they were real nice guys. I invited them down to my house for Thanksgiving. They didn't know much about our way of celebrating Thanksgiving, but you know it's just meeting different people, getting acquainted with them, seeing their ideas you know. But they were nice people. They were good people. Maybe it's because that's the kind of people you look to associate with. There were people in there I'm sure that was a little more the other way, but these boys that I got acquainted with were all real good people. And I got acquainted with them through friends of mine that was going with one of them, so that's how you get acquainted with them but they are good people, all of them are.

Topham: That's about it I guess, as far as I know. I can't think of anything else.

J. Frank: I appreciate your taking the time. There is more activities in the next couple of days so we'll probably be seeing you, running into each other.

Pauline: We'll go in there and see if there are any of those people we recognize.

[End of interview]