

Usher Wilcock
Zion National Park Oral History Project
CCC Reunion
September 28, 1989

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Beth Martin: Okay. Beth Martin interviewer, interviewing Usher Wilcock, the 28th of September 1989, the CC Oral History Program. Usher where are you from first?

Usher Wilcock: I was from Panguitch Utah. I was born and raised in Spry, that's north of Panguitch.

Beth Martin: Okay.

Usher Wilcock: I was born and raised down there, maybe about seven miles north of Panguitch.

Beth Martin: All right. And this is where you came from, and is that where you joined the CCCs from?

Usher Wilcock: Yeah.

Beth Martin: That's where you joined?

Usher Wilcock: Yeah.

Beth Martin: What did you do before you joined the CCCs?

Usher Wilcock: Well my dad was a farmer and I was just a farm boy. I done everything that they do on a farm (laughs).

Beth Martin: That's good enough! Why did you join the CCC's?

Usher Wilcock: Well, growing up, winter months were lag time on the farm and we finally needed the money and they had more than they could support in those days. To be honest with you, I was one of eight children.

Beth Martin: How many brothers and sisters, well, I mean, how many older brothers, where did you come into the family?

Usher Wilcock: I was the "U" out of "A, E, I, O, U" Then there was the dog; [he was] number five.

Beth Martin: Okay, what day, then, did you enter the CCC's?

Usher: I don't remember. It was 1938, the fall of the year, that's about all I can say.

Beth: Just the fall of 1938? That's okay. What about then how long were you in?

Wilcock: I was in six months then. Then I got out for about six months then I came back in '39 for six months and the same in '40.

Martin: You were one of those then that went back to the farms in the summer?

Wilcock: Yeah.

Martin: You came and worked in Zion during the winter months, the six months. Were you ever in any other camp or just in Zion?

Wilcock: Just in here is all I've ever been in. They had the spike camp at the Bryce Canyon in the summer, but I was never in Bryce.

Martin: You never was in Bryce? Okay. What was your first impression of the Park? Had you ever been here before you came?

Wilcock: No. It was just a place to work. I was just over at the camp over here and it was a place to work. Like I said, we done whatever we was assigned to do.

Martin: Okay. Was there much tourism while you were here? Did you notice much?

Wilcock: There was a little but not near what there is now. Back in those days, those old cars, well, we had visitors from all over the world here, but those old cars couldn't get around like the cars do now-a-days. There wasn't the money for them to get around?

Martin: How were the roads, were they dirt?

Wilcock: Well, as I remember, they had some oiled roads in the Park, but most of them was gravel. And most the roads around was graveled roads.

Martin: Okay, now when you were here, during those months, what type of work did you do?

Wilcock: Well, I done a variety of work here. I [was] assigned different projects. We worked here up on this rock quarry they had up here. We quarried out rock and we built these ranger's homes up at Oak Creek.

Martin: In Oak Creek. Okay.

Wilcock: I did mostly work in the quarry up south.

Martin: You did work in the quarry, cutting the stone?

Wilcock: Cutting the stone.

Martin: Tell me how did you do that?

Wilcock: Well we just used a hammer and a chisel. And we had blacksmiths that'd keep our chisel sharp and we'd use a chisel. To get the thickness of the stone we'd follow the grain of the stone. You'd chisel along it until the seam would open up and it'd just fall off and we'd smooth it up and same on the other side. We'd get the thickness then whatever size they wanted or whatever we'd get out of the rock, we'd cut them that long and just chip the chisel across. And quite often, they'd break off and we'd have to keep chiseling them. We'd just cut them off with the chisels to the size we wanted.

Martin: What type of equipment then did you use to lift and move the rock?

Wilcock: Well, they'd blast the rock out to start with. And then they had Cats and things they pushed the stones around. They'd just push them off the side and we had to roll them around by hand and get them to where we could get them flat or whatever. And we'd just work on them like that. Then when we'd get a stone to cut the shape, there'd be a lot of small stones. And they'd push them into a pile and then they use them in these rock cribs to crib the creek up, up through here. It was just a ways from the cutting of the stone up there.

Martin: How long did you do this?

Wilcock: Oh, I'd say about two or three months out of the six months I was here the first time. The next time I was here we worked on other projects.

Martin: Tell me about what you did on these projects.

Wilcock: Well for a long time I worked up here at that first turn after you come below out of the tunnel on this side. That's what they called the Utah [sic] switchback. Utah [actually Nevada] Construction Company went broke on that curb. And that hill was never sloped off the way it should be and it kept coming down and just covered the road completely with those boulders. And we'd have to get up there and haul it out and load it and haul it. There were lots of trucks. And then we'd scale the hill until, well, until we got it where it don't slide down any more. But it slid down all the years that I was here and at different times we'd have to go clean that up. We'd go out to the east entrance in trucks and then we'd go back in those hills and we'd make fire roads with Cats and stuff like that. My main job, I remember jackhammering a lot. I'd drill holes and we'd blast it off and push the dirt over to the sides with bulldozers and things like this and make fire roads up in there. And we went all back in there. There was quite a number of different roads back in that east entrance to the Park.

Martin: Did you help build the one up over...Bridge Mountain was right here...Cable Mountain?

Wilcock: Cable Mountain. Yeah we went right up the back of Cable Mountain. The fire road never did get right up to where the saw mill was at Cable Mountain, but we got up there

close. Then the last time I was here I was a night guard. And I was watching here at the camps.

Martin: Now I haven't had talk much about that with any of these other men, they weren't sure if there was even a guard.

Wilcock: Oh, yeah. We had guard duty. We had to go around and in the winter, like I say, check the fires in the barracks and there was two or three times that we had the top of the barracks get on fire. They'd start too big of a fire and then go to bed and the stove would get hot. It was one of those little old steel stove pipes, you know. They'd get hot and we'd go in and smell smoke and we'd look around and finally see a spark up there and we'd call some of the men out of the barracks to put the fire out on the top of the barracks. We never did have one get on top and really burn.

Martin: Really burn.

Wilcock: But we saved them from, probably from getting burned up if they hadn't had the guard or somebody to find it; they probably would've been burned.

Martin: Okay, what hour did you go on guard duty then?

Wilcock: Well, it was me and Boyle Campbell and we took turns. One of us would go on in the evening and to until midnight and then he'd go to bed and the other one would go at midnight until morning and then sleep in the day time.

Martin: You would sleep during the day time. So tell me about. What was the routine then that you didn't have to get up?

Wilcock: No, we didn't have to get up if we didn't want to. They'd usually leave stuff in the cook shack for us to eat and we'd go eat and then we'd go to bed when the rest of them got out of bed, cleared out of camp and then we'd go to bed and get a pretty good day's rest when it was cool enough. Lots of times in the winter it wasn't that cool.

Martin: No.

Wilcock: We had to make a round around the barracks. We had to go through every so often. And we'd go through at ten o'clock, usually one of the officers in charge would be there. We go around and do what we called a bed check and we'd check each other's bed and make sure that all were in at ten o'clock. You were supposed to be in at ten o'clock during the weekdays.

Martin: Was this mainly on weekdays or was this weekends or the whole?

Wilcock: No. We had to take took turns on weekends and any time there were men in those barracks we had to go around and patrol their exits and things like that. If any fight broke out we had to run and call one of the officers.

Martin: Was there much of that? Was there much fighting?

Wilcock: There wasn't very much, no, very little.

Martin: Did you remember anything about the other camp across the river this side?

Wilcock: No. The only thing I remember about the camp on the other side we tore it down and got it out of there. (Laughs).

Martin: You tore it down?

Wilcock: We tore all the buildings down, yes.

Martin: What year was that?

Wilcock: I don't know. I think it was in '39, but I wouldn't be positive because there would only be three times that I was in here.

Martin: Did you ever get acquainted with any of the other boys in the other camp?

Wilcock: While I was here the other camp was vacant all the time. It never did have anybody in. It just had the one camp and they had the vacant buildings. It was right in this area or somewhere.

Martin: Well, okay. You go right straight from the parking and you walk that road under the bridge from where the visitor's center is at Oak Creek over right here.

Wilcock: It's down in that area, yeah, down on this side of the creek.

Martin: Well, that...

Wilcock: I remember that wasn't there when I was there.

Martin: Never at the time of your period.

Wilcock: The three years I was there it was just a vacant camp and like I say, I helped tear it down while I was here. (laughs).

Martin: Nobody's ever said that. That's really, really good.

Wilcock: But I don't remember what year it was so probably somewhere in the history it will tell, but I don't remember.

Martin: I don't think anybody knows.

Wilcock: I don't know.

Martin: Nobody that we were with today.

Wilcock: And I helped tear it down.

Martin: Well, that's great.

Wilcock: We tore it down, board by board.

Martin: What did you do with the boards that you tore down?

Wilcock: I don't know. We gave them to the Park Service and I think they gave a lot of them for branches around for lumber and things like that. They'd just come up on trucks and we'd take a board off and throw it down and pile it on the trucks.

Martin: You don't feel, then, that discipline in your camp was much of a problem?

Wilcock: Yes, they had a little discipline, but it wasn't much.

Martin: What kind of discipline was given?

Wilcock: Well, actually I don't know. They'd have to go see the captain and what he'd do. They'd kick some of them right out of camp and things like that. But other than that I don't know what kind of discipline the captain would dish out. It was up to the captain to dish out the discipline and actually I don't know. I never was disciplined myself, but I knew quite a few drunks that would come in that were sent up to see the captain and things like that. But that kind of discipline was...

Martin: Was there much drinking or were most of you LDS people, boys?

Wilcock: Well a lot of them was LDS and a lot of them it didn't make any difference. At that time I was LDS, but I wasn't active. I'd go out of town and maybe I'd have a drink, maybe I wouldn't, things like this. I never was one to drink much, a drink or two and that was it. I never got drunk. There were crowds around like a lot of them did. I used to run around with some. Any time they got away from restricted [the area], they was just drunk. You know what I mean?

Martin: Yes. Yes. I do.

Wilcock: But I never was that type.

Martin: Okay, other than that guard duty then that routine was just almost switched. Let's go back and have you tell me and describe maybe what the routine of the days before you were on guard, the times you were enlisted. How did you start the morning? How did they start the mornings?

Wilcock: Out on the work shift?

Martin: Yeah.

Wilcock: Well the first thing we would do, we'd get up and they'd have, let's see, we'd have reveille in the morning. They'd put up the flag we'd all stand out. We wouldn't salute the flag but we'd stand there while they raised the flag and the army officers would salute the flag while it was being raised. Then they had so many minutes to get ready for breakfast.

Martin: Did you have to bathe or wash at this time or did you do that at nights?

Wilcock: Most of us bathed at night because you come in dirty and sweaty and you'd bathe at night and then you'd just get up and run and wash and get dressed and fall out for reveille and go wash up and...

Martin: About what time in the morning would this be?

Wilcock: Seemed like to me that we got up about six and we had breakfast. We had to be ready to go to work at eight o'clock. They called just before work. They'd have all the trucks lined up for the different projects that were going on and all the men knew their boss and which trucks to get into and then just walk and get into them. And they'd take them up to where they was working.

Martin: What was your breakfast like? What do you remember your breakfasts being like?

Wilcock: Well, most of them was pretty good breakfasts, depending on what it was. A lot of times they'd have bacon and eggs, bananas and cereal, a lot of stuff like this, they served a pretty good breakfast.

Martin: You felt that it...

Wilcock: It was good service.

Martin: Overall, food was good?

Wilcock: Yeah. It was good.

Martin: Prepared well?

Wilcock: The biggest part of it was, yes. You have a certain number of people complain if you fed them steaks every day and things like that. But which you didn't get, but once in a while you'd get steaks and things like that. It was just ordinary good food.

Martin: What did you do for lunches?

Wilcock: Well, there is where they had some complaints. They'd put up the lunches here, they'd carry them with them, and by noon the meat in them had turned green and things like this. I never did hear anybody getting poisoned, but there were a lot of complaints about it. And they finally had them quit doing that. They'd have somebody to bring the lunches out. They'd consist of big pots full of sandwiches and stuff like that. Then they'd usually have a hot pot full of some kind of soup or beans or some such thing as that. And then, you'd have a fruit dish or something like that, or a banana or apple or something to go with it. But, like I say, the sandwiches take up more and it was just too hot of that. Lot of them turned green and then they really complained about some of that and then the next day they changed the deal and had them bring the lunches out just before noon.

Martin: Okay, now what kind of pay did you receive?

Wilcock: Well, to start off with I got to five dollars a month, my parents got twenty-five.

Martin: And it was needed at home?

Wilcock: Yeah. It was needed at home. It really helped out in those days. A dollar was a dollar.

Martin: I guess that's right.

Wilcock: And then later we got eight dollars a month, my parents got twenty-two.

Martin: Okay.

Wilcock: And there was a little bit more money to go around, they tried to give us boys a little more money to spend.

Martin: Did you have any way of earning extra money? I've heard some of the other stories and they're quite helpful.

Wilcock: I never did, but I knew some of them that found other ways to earn money.

Martin: I have heard of real ingenious methods of earning extra pay.

Wilcock: Yeah.

Martin: How did you spend what was left and how did they give it, did they give it to you in cash?

Wilcock: Yeah, they'd give it to us in cash. Pay day we went by the pay master and he'd count out five paper dollars in cash.

Martin: And that had to last you one full month?

Wilcock: Yep. Just to show you how conservative some of them were, we had one fellow here from Escalante and in six months, he got five dollars a month at camp in six months, he saved twenty-five dollars and he was going home one day a month (Laughs). So the one thing he went home with to Escalante, the bus driver wouldn't take that much to give him a ride home. There were a few other boys that had cars. They'd park them down outside the park here. And there were a couple of companies that had cars. I'd always ride with them when I could. It was like that.

Martin: Were you ever an assistant leader?

Wilcock: No. No, I was never an assistant leader. Gale, my cousin, was.

Martin: What do you know about a canteen book?

Wilcock: Well, they'd give them out, and we'd have to sign for them when we got paid. It was just a little coupon, but I think the coupons were about a nickel or a dime or something. We'd go out to the canteen and buy whatever we wanted to, candy or gum or whatever. It was a dollar, anyway, in the canteen book and you'd just sign for it and take that out of the payment before we got paid (laughs).

Martin: Okay, what do you recall about the entertainment in the camps? What went on for entertainment after your evening meal?

Wilcock: Well, I don't remember much entertainment to be honest with you. I know we used to go out to dances to Rockville and some time to Toquerville.

Martin: Did you ever go over to Kanab?

Wilcock: I believe they made a few trips over to Kanab, things like that.

Martin: You did not go to Kanab to the dances?

Wilcock: Not that I remember.

Martin: Just locally.

Wilcock: Just locally, yeah.

Martin: Did the local people accept you as okay? Did you have any problems?

Wilcock: We never did have any problems that I ever knew of. We enjoyed the association with the local people around here.

Martin: Did you go to church at the LDS church here locally?

Wilcock: Like I say, I wasn't active at the time (laughs).

Martin: Okay.

Wilcock: I wasn't a very good church member.

Martin: That's all fine.

Wilcock: But, I'll tell you that it wasn't until after I was married that I become really active in the church. I had a good home teacher that would come a lot, and my oldest daughter was about five years old. They didn't understand that that little girl was supposed to going to church and I wasn't to send her to church, I was to bring her to church (laughs). Then I got a little bit active.

Martin: You remember anything about lectures?

Wilcock: What's that?

Martin: Lectures.

Wilcock: Lectures.

Martin. It was after hours.

Wilcock: Yeah, they used to give us quite a few lectures and things like that, and they had a pretty good education program.

Martin: Did you take advantage of the education classes?

Wilcock: Yeah. I took advantage of a few of them. One time I could braid a pretty good belt. We had a guy come in from, I believe he was from Virgin or somewhere, and he taught us knot tying and things like that. I could tie a pretty good belt and things like that. I was a pretty good amateur photographer. I taught a lot of the boys how to develop pictures and things like that, and print them and everything. We had a dark room there.

Martin: You didn't make any money doing that?

Wilcock: Nope. Never did. I could have done. But I had done my own home films and stuff like that and we'd have to order the paper stuff and there would be a little left over and I'd do my own. Get that much free out of it. That's all I got. But I had I had to be responsible for it. We'd charge so much a picture for them to develop a picture and the paper cost so much money we had to figure out. It was self-supporting. In other words, we had to buy all of our chemicals and stuff out of what we charged to do the film. I don't remember what we charged now, but I think we had done quite a few films, developed films and that. Send the boys out to do their own printing and developing and printing and things.

Martin: Did you ever have any need for the medical services here in the CCC's?

Wilcock: Well, there was only once. I got pneumonia and was pretty sick but other than that.

Martin: Did you stay in camp or did you go to a local hospital?

Wilcock: Oh, I stayed here in camp.

Martin: And who was the doctor that took care of you?

Wilcock: Doctor Clark.

Martin: And who was this Doctor Clark?

Wilcock: I can't even think of his first name. He's on the list of one of those pictures I've seen in there.

Martin: Was there very many other fellows that got ill or needed the medical assistance?

Wilcock: Oh, yeah. A few of them would get hurt now and then. They'd get a foot mashed or a toe mashed. We had one guy that was up here and he was out and they blasted rock out of the mountain and rock just come sailing down right like that and caught him in the back of the leg. I happened to be there and they came and got me to help the doctor take care of him when they brought him in. In the winter they have these long john underwear on, you know, and when the doctor cut his underwear off there was a piece of bone about four inches laying out and the doctor looked at that and threw it away. Then they just packed him up and sent him to Salt Lake and I understand, I can't even think of who the guy was, but I understand they kept experimenting. They cut off his leg and put it together. They just cut off the bone and shortened it and everything, but they kept experimenting until he finally got gangrene and died.

My brother, Wallace Wilcock, was here in this Zion's camp, I don't know the dates. It was after I was here. He was quite a bit younger than I was. But anyways he was here in this camp and they sent him and this truck driver with a truck to go to Bryce Canyon to get a load of lumber. They loaded the lumber at Bryce Canyon at that at the spike camp that was there, and when they got the lumber loaded, they, it was a closed truck, I guess, and they had a bunch of fifty gallon drums and they just threw them, empty drums, and they just threw them on top of the lumber. Well they come down through the spike camp and they got down below Red Canyon. In those days, the roads were rutted in there and gravel and the barrels got to rattling. The truck driver turned to my brother and he said, "I wonder how those barrels are riding." He says, "I don't know; I'll look and see." So he just opened the door and stepped out on the side of the truck and of course as soon as he stepped on the side of the truck, he cleared the door and the door was shut. And the truck driver figured he'd got out and then he jumped out from under the wheel and looked over. He got over and seen my brother up on the side of the truck. In the meantime, the truck was going off the road and before the truck driver got back in to bring it back on the road, coming up next to a telephone pole and his head took a three foot section out of the

middle of the telephone pole, left his head in the middle of this telephone pole holding the three foot section of the telephone pole together.

Martin: No.

Wilcock: So, this was after...

Martin: That was a real tragedy, then?

Wilcock: Yes, it was a real tragedy.

Martin: Well it still had to do here with the Parks.

Wilcock: Anyway, just one of those accidents that happened. The driver was really in bad shape for two or three weeks afterwards. You can imagine how men feel in that way. It was, well you might say, a foolish and a tragic accident on two kids not thinking.

Martin: Yeah. Well they were young.

Wilcock: The kid was wrong. My brother was wrong for climbing out on the side of the truck and the driver was wrong to let the truck go and getting over to see to it, so they both made a mistake.

Martin: Did you remember any camp characters?

Wilcock: Well we had a lot of camp characters (Laughs). I don't like to talk about them.

Martin: Oh! Why not?

Wilcock: Anyway. My night watch partner, he was quite a character. Well he had a habit. He'd just collect any old piece of wood he could, you know, to use for kindling. We had to start the fires in the morning and things like that.

Martin: That was the...

Wilcock: So the barracks would be warm when the men got up. He'd pick up any old piece of wood he could and they called him a pack rat. Because of that he went by the name of 'Rat' all the time.

Martin: Oh, so his nickname was 'Rat.'

Wilcock: Yeah.

Martin: So then that was part of the guard duty then?

Wilcock: Yeah, that was part of the guard duty. We'd have to watch the fires until they went out at night and we'd have to start them in the morning before it was time for the men to get up. We'd go around about five o'clock in the morning and start the fires so that the men can get up to a good warm barracks. Had to be quiet as you could, you know, so you don't wake the men up.

Martin: Well, did you just walk all night or what did you do during these four hours?

Wilcock: Oh, we had to make a round every so often; we'd go in the kitchen, sit around, drink coffee, and have a bite to eat. They always left food out for use so we'd eat and stuff like that and then just mosey around the camp otherwise. We had to go around every so often, to make sure that everything was all right, make sure there was nobody burning up or anything. Make sure there was nobody sneaking around with various goings on. We had a few people sneak in and we'd run them off.

Martin: Did you remember anybody playing tricks on other guys or crazy things like that?

Wilcock: You can always find that. I don't remember too many of them. There were tricks going on. They used to "short sheet" them. They'd go out and well, this guy's got to come back drunk so they'd take them and pull his bed apart. They'd fold one sheet in the middle and bring it up here and the other sheet in the middle and pull it down there. Then they guy's got to get in and he's trying to kick his way in. Sometimes he'd kick his way in on through the sheets.

Martin: Well, I guess if that was as bad as they did, I guess it wasn't very bad. Did you make any lasting friendships while you were in the CCC's?

Wilcock: Well, I, when I was out it seemed like all of us just went to four winds and there were really no real lasting friendships. I used to run around with my cousin, Gale and Lee French and things like that. But then you get married, you go and you get separated two or three hundred miles and never see them anymore. But, right to this day I don't know if Lee French is still alive or dead or what. Cousin Gale he's here tonight. That's all I know. He's, you might say like I am, living with a limp foot on one and the other foot in the grave (laughs).

Martin: Oh, I don't know...What do have you done, then, since you were in the CCCs?

Wilcock: Well.

Martin: Tell me what you did after you got out.

Wilcock: When I got out, I was only out a little while and went to work on the railroad in 1941.

Martin: Which railroad?

Wilcock: The Union Pacific Railroad. I was section man and took care of the track. Started at Lund and went from there to Thermo, and when into Thermo, and Uncle Sam sent me these little greetings. Greetings from the president of the United States, you know, how they just send them out. Anyway, I was inducted into the army and I spent three years in the army from March, 1943 to February of '46. Well, almost three years.

Martin: And where did you serve?

Wilcock: I served in Fort Eustis, Virginia, then I went to Camp Stewart, Georgia for six months for training for European Theatre. And then we went to Long Island, New York for six months waiting to be shipped to Europe and after six months they said, "Well you guys don't know enough. We're going to send you back to Georgia to teach you how to fight in the Pacific." So we went back to Georgia to learn how to fight in the Pacific for six months, and then they shipped us to Camp Haan, [Riverside] California. And from Camp Haan, California, we were there for three months waiting for shipment.

We went to Fort Lawton in Seattle, Washington, and we loaded on a boat, we were to join the Tenth Army. When we got out into the ocean, about 36 hours, about a day and a half, two days, the only ship that was sunk between here and Hawaii during World War II was sunk just three hours ahead of us. So then, instead of going in a straight line, we changed course forty-five degrees every six minutes. That's the way we went in and we never did catch up with the Tenth Army. By the time we got to Hawaii, they pulled the same outfit that was on our boat out of the off the positions out in Hawaii. One day we just moved in and was there about ten days then we occupied the positions. These outfits that they pulled off, they put them in the Tenth Army instead of us. So I was in an outfit that was always too late. We were too late to go to the European Theatre and then too late to go to the islands. But there was a lot of them that was disappointed that we didn't go with the Tenth Army, but I was a married man with one daughter and I never lost anything in those islands. I didn't want to go down there.

I landed in Hawaii Thanksgiving day in 1944. That was one dinner I'll always remember. I got a piece of bologna and two big pieces of dry bread and I had a cold cup of coffee. That was my Thanksgiving dinner, and I had a great big turkey dinner cooked on the boat. I don't know what they had done with that. They unloaded it just before dinner.

Martin: We have just a few more seconds it looks like on this tape. I'm going to stop it and then turn it over and then I just have a few more things to talk about, okay? [Break]

So what did you do for work after you got out of the service?

Wilcock: Well, I game back to the railroad and I worked on the railroad for thirty-nine and a half years.

Martin: Thirty-nine and a half years. Where? Where was your home?

Wilcock: My home was in Milford, but my work was all up and down the railroad. I worked in a lot of places when I was first starting out, when I was just a section man, I worked around. When I came back from the army, I went to Milford and I went there for five or six years just as a section man. And then I went out as a section foreman, and for quite a few years I was up and down the track as a foreman and we done whatever track work that had to be done. I was a relief foreman for quite a while.

Martin: Do you feel that the work that you did at CCC's or your experience in the CCCs prepared you for the army and for your future work?

Wilcock: Well, I think it did. You'd be surprised at the number of boys that went in the CCC camps that have never done a day's work in their life, and it taught them to work. We had to work here in the CCC camp. We had bosses, if we didn't know how to work they showed us how to do it and we had to do it, that's all there was to it. They didn't force us to, you know. We had a certain work to do and they'd show us how to do it and we was expected to do it. The rest of them were young and they were young men and they done the work they were expected to do. I think that went a long towards helping the people to get work and hold on to work. Like I say, all the people that came into CC camp were city boys that had just been in the city and they had never done a day's work in their life. Like me, I started work on the farm when I was eight years old. I made a pair of stilts and I'd take them out and put them on and go out and harness all the horses up and take them out and hook them to the plow or mowing machine or whatever I had to do and go to work. Some of them horses were too tall for me to harness, I had about a foot and a half on the height of the stilts and that's how tall the horse was.

Martin: Since you were here about the end of the CCC's do you see the park improved or changed much since you left?

Wilcock: Oh, yes. There's a lot of changes since I left, but we made a lot of changes in the Park while we were here. Like I said, [the] buildings up at Oak Creek Canyon, I've never been up here since I was in here. I don't know whether the buildings are still there but I assume they are. And we'd done a lot of them. We built a lot of the trails to different places around here.

Martin: What trails did you particularly work on? Did you work on any of the trails?

Wilcock: Yeah, I worked on the trail that goes up towards Cable Mountain. We done a lot of work on that. I think you call it Weeping Rock trail. We done a lot of work on that.

Martin: Hidden Canyon or Hidden Valley Trail?

Wilcock: Yeah.

Martin: And what did you use? Did you have any big equipment or did you just...

Wilcock: Pick and shovel the biggest part of it (laughs). We used a lot of picks and shovels in fact.

Unknown voice: And backbone.

Martin: What?

Unknown voice: And backbone.

Wilcock: But we done a lot of work on the road up the canyon there.

Martin: Did you do any of the stonework? Dressing of the stone on those houses?

Wilcock: Yeah. Like I say, I've done a lot of quarrying.

Martin: Well, I know you said the quarry work, but did you do any of the dressing of the rock and laying of the rock for the houses?

Wilcock: No, I never dressed any of the rocks; I dressed it up so it was all ready to put in now.

Martin: That's dressing?

Wilcock: Cut it off and then they brought it down there, they just take a bunch of stone the same thickness and they'd lay it in there.

Martin: So your main thing was that the quarry.

Wilcock: To get the rock the right size.

Martin: Did you dress the stone on the outside?

Wilcock: Yeah. And then they sandblasted I think after they got it in the house. They done a lot of sandblasting.

Martin: Well on the one house I know they did to make it look like an old pioneer house that they had. Well thank you very much Usher and it's been a very pleasure to meet you and talk to you because you've given us information that I haven't had before.

Wilcock: It's good to reminisce about these things. My memory and dates and things like that are not very good when thing were done.

Martin: I don't think the dates are too often important. The main thing is that you remember what you did and what you did.

[End of interview.]