

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

Interviewed by: Beth Martin
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Tape begins in middle of sentence.

Beth Martin in interviewer.

Gale Wilcock: The kitchen, when he came back, he had another key and said, "Now here's both keys." He said, "There's no way he's going get any more of your stuff." He said, "When that thing's opened up," he said "You delegate someone to give you the key to whoever you want." But he said, "Don't give it to Edwards."

Beth Martin: Was he your enemy or your friend?

Gale Wilcock: He was a friend.

Mrs. Wilcock: Sometime out in Bryce he made me a famous cake.

Gale Wilcock: Layer cake.

Mrs. Wilcock: Layer cake before we was married. We all went out to Bryce. When he couldn't come in, we would go out there.

Gale Wilcock: The girls from Hatch.

Mrs. Wilcock: I didn't dare go down to camp with him because I knew that he'd have to go in and it was under guard and I was afraid that we were going to get caught and they'd put us in the brink or something.

Gale Wilcock: I didn't have a bake shop up there.

Beth Martin: Now when you went to Bryce as a baker in these here spike camps, you were a baker there all summer.

Gale Wilcock: No. Just to Bryce.

Mrs. Wilcock: He just went to Bryce.

Gale Wilcock: I just went to Bryce. I never was in the spike camp for that one summer.

Beth Martin: Yes, but wasn't Bryce called a spike camp then?

Gale Wilcock: No, it was the summer camp and this [Zion] was our winter camp.

Martin: Okay, and you did bake.

Wilcock: Up there, yeah.

Martin: Up there where they went to Bryce.

Wilcock: I didn't have a bakery up there. I had to bake in the kitchen.

Martin: I see.

Wilcock: I made this layer cake and the girls and they all had their boyfriends or ones they hoped would be. We'd meet them out there, chase around together. I made this cake special. We'd meet them out there. She wasn't with me, so Reva, Karl Lowder's wife, snuck into camp with me. We didn't get caught. Night guard...it wouldn't made much difference if we had. I had the key anyway and I'd give the cook back. I got the cake and got out, and it was just more fun thinking you were getting away with something, I guess.

Martin: I guess. Who was the camp character when you were in?

Wilcock: Oh there was a dozen of them. What the devil did we used to call him? Blinky Spendlove. What was Blinky's name?

Mrs. Wilcock: I can't remember.

Wilcock: He wrecked two or three cars. He got to blinking and he couldn't see. He lived in Hurricane. I know he died a couple of years ago.

Mrs. Wilcock: Finish telling about the cake.

Martin: Oh yeah, finish telling about the cake.

Wilcock: We snuck it out and got over on the road. We were running down where the car was. She had the cake, didn't she? She slipped and fell and the cake rolled down the road.

Mrs. Wilcock: Just let it roll.

Wilcock: It had one of the real thick china plates that we had in the Cs. Didn't even break the cake or didn't break icing.

Mrs. Wilcock: It was fine. Picked it up and ate it.

Wilcock: Dusted it off.

Martin: Dusted it off and ate it? What have you done since CC days?

Wilcock: Seems like after we got discharged here, I went cooking for a construction camp in Loa, Emery County until January. So that wasn't very long.

Mrs. Wilcock: About a month.

Wilcock: About a month I worked there. Then I went from there to Hatch where she was from and we stayed there till the spring, March.

Mrs. Wilcock: March.

Wilcock: March. That's where I met Tiny Everett. Then I went to cooking at . . .

Mrs. Wilcock: Ideal Café in Kanab.

Wilcock: Ideal Café, and I cooked for her for two years.

Martin: In Kanab?

Wilcock: In Kanab. Calvin Johnson. Know Calvin?

Martin: Oh yes.

Wilcock: His wife.

Martin: Ann.

Wilcock: Ann had a little shop or something there now. That was where it used to be the Ideal Café.

Martin: Okay. Where Fenton's Drugstore is now in Kanab.

Wilcock: Yeah, it was next, east of there. I didn't cook for Lillian. She was widow. And you know she had Thurmon Fuller. You ever know Thurmon Fuller? He was the cook in there. He's a hell of a good cook too. He and I would take turns on shifts of running the café for her. Lillian Thomas was the owner; she wasn't a bit strict with her help. Everybody that worked there was some relation to her, either her niece or her sister or her brother. Her brother was a wino and he was the dishwasher. He'd tap the till every time he turned around. She was going broke. And finally I told her. She came back crying to me one day. Movies were coming in then a lot. She was crying. Lillian, you've got one problem, you got too damn relatives and you got them all hired. I says every time one of the waitresses leaves, she goes in there and gets couple of eggs and a strip of bacon for in the morning for breakfast for her husband. Or they'd take a steak home for the supper. I said, "You're shooting more out the damn back door than you were bringing through the front."

Martin: Okay, let's go to what you did after that, after you left Kanab. Did you join the service?

Wilcock: I was still working there in this café. Lockheed Aircraft sent fellas out trying to get help for Lockheed. They were looking for particular individuals. They were having tests run there in Kanab. I didn't know a thing about it. The newspaper man came over to see me. Said, "What are you doing this afternoon?" I said, "Nothing why?" "Let's go see how smart we are." I said, "What's this all about?" They got jigsaw puzzles and everything. See how fast you can put them together. Lockheed Aircraft was trying to hire some people. I didn't even tell my wife, just went down and took the test. Of course I had this first class operator's license and I put that down. .

Two weeks later here comes a check. Lockheed had hired me, fifty-one cents an hour. I was only got a dollar and half a day at the other place. And then another kid over there, Brown, Dave Brown, he was the only other one there in Kanab that got hired. The two of us went down to California. I started to going to college there. Pasadena Junior College, at night and then worked at Lockheed during the day.

Martin: I see. Do you think that your experience with the CCs then helped you?

Wilcock: In a lot of ways. The main way was the orders, taking orders, and men getting along with each other. It was quite a job you know. You have a lot of these guys. Pretty soon you learned how to socialize, how to be decent. That's what the kids need right now. Those with authority know when they say something they mean it, and you can't talk your way of it. I enjoyed it.

Martin: So you appreciated your days at the CC's even though you got angry at some of them. You enjoyed the CCs.

Wilcock: And all these guys learned something. Dock got to be a Cat skinner. These guys they learned things in there, got to learn to operate the Cats and the cranes and the cooks.

Martin: Did you use your cooking afterwards?

Wilcock: Well I owned my own café for thirty-nine years.

Martin: Where?

Wilcock: In Hatch, Lightning Café. I stayed there in Los Angeles and was in the radar lab. When the war was over, they said we're going to keep you in supervision. I was a group leader of over 39 men. They said we want to keep you and put you in this spacecraft thing they were starting. And I said I can't get out of Los Angeles

quick enough. If Lockheed was anyplace L.A., I'd work the rest of my life for you. I like the job, I like the place, I said, but I can't stand all of these people and the kinds of people they are, you know?

Martin: So you returned back to Hatch and open the Lightning Café?

Wilcock: Built it. And then I went to work at the State Fish and Game at a fish hatchery up there. I was superintendent there in a month. I'd go in and work in the café from five in the morning till seven, then my wife's come and take over and then I'd go up there and do it until five and come home and change clothes and then go back there from five till eleven.

Martin: Okay, then you feel that your CCs was worth it?

Wilcock: Oh yeah, definitely. I just want to say that we made more pie. I still make good pies, and we were selling a hundred pies a day out of that café. We had more top people come in there. Movie stars because they were running a lot of movies here then, for these pies. This colored women sings, big heavy set woman.

Martin: Well, let's end this and then you tell me, okay?

End of interview.