

Sandy Hook, Gateway NRA, National Park Service  
An Oral History Interview with Civilian Conservation Corps members, Joseph “Pappy”  
Whalen, Joe Czarnecki, Mike Lakomie, Hazel Feil, Peter Feil, and Andy Daino  
Interviewed by Elaine Harmon and Tom Hoffman, NPS  
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Transcribed by Mary Rasa, 2012



Colorized image of CCC Camp 288, Fort Hancock, Camp Lowe, New Jersey

All images courtesy NPS/Gateway NRA

Editor’s notes in parenthesis ( )

(Six people were interviewed at once on audio tape. There were many times that individuals were inaudible because several conversations were taking place. Sometimes it was difficult to determine which man was speaking. If the editor could not determine the person speaking, it is written as CCC member.)

EH: We have a special event today at Park Headquarters and that is the grouping together of CCC members who in fact saw the beginning of the CCC at Camp Lowe, Horseshoe Cove. Three of the seven people here with us can actually recall the early founding of the CCC. I would like to, actually our gathering today was inspired by one of the members, Mr. Joseph Whalen who came from Silver Springs, Maryland to be with us today. The remaining six people are mostly local people but who have also traveled quite a distance to be with us. Let’s introduce ourselves before we get really started.

JW: I would be Joseph Whalen, Silver Springs, Maryland. That’s about it.

EH: And you were known as “Pappy” Whalen.

JW: That was my nickname. Gee, I was so young looking. That's why they gave it to me. (laughter)

EH: And what years were you here? Can you give us a brief outline?

JW: Let's see now. Say '34 to '38. That's covering it pretty good. '34 to '38. Okay?

EH: And you were here at the founding?

JW: At the founding when we were brought in. That's right. We were the first and only camp here at that time.

EH: Okay. That's quite a distinction. Next we have...

JC: I am Joe Czarnecki. Not now, but years ago they used to call me "Whitey."

EH: Whitey Czarnecki, right.

JC: I am with Pappy I came up from Benning, D.C. into desolate Camp Lowe as we knew it. (It was) loaded with poison ivy, sumac and whatever.

JC: Don't mention what I mentioned in the car. (laughter)

JC: Our first experience was cleaning up the camp grounds of all the ivy around and probably in the first two weeks I think we filled the post hospital with probably 300 fellows I think we had 200 in the hospital with poison ivy.

JW: That's true.

JC: That's the truth.

EH: What years were you here?

JC: Again I came up with Pappy. It was '34 when we came and I left in '37, I believe.

EH: And you currently live in Highlands.

JC: And I live, well, originally came from New York, to Camp Dix to Benning, D.C. to Fort Hancock and now moved to Highlands.

GH: My name is George John Peter Haas, nicknamed "Muler" at the camp, Fort Hancock, New Jersey. I came here in 1935 around September the first and stayed until September 1, 1938. When we came here there was no way you could walk or anything else without getting poison ivy. This was our job to clean it up. As Whitey Czarnecki

said everybody was in the hospital. So it took that much longer to get rid of the poison ivy and the sumac and that's the way the story goes. Okay?

EH: Where do you live now?

GH: I now live in South River, New Jersey. When I came to the C's, I lived in Milltown, New Jersey. From there I went right direct to Sandy Hook here. Got an examination at the Post Hospital with Michael (Lakomie) and Jack who came with me as buddies.

PF: My name is Pete Feils. I live in the Highlands. I come to the CCC at Sandy Hook from Washington, DC in July 1935. When we come down here we come down by train and we come into the Hook you couldn't see nothing. The leaves and the poison ivy and the trees was all blocked over. I come in with Pappy Hook, Whitey Czarnecki. It was the three of us here now. We went to work and we cleaned this place up pretty good. Like they said, that poison ivy done a job on everybody. It was really bad but we enjoyed doing it. We had a good time. We reminiscing now about all the things we done and all the fellas we knew and wondering what happened to them and everything. I would like to get a hold of them and have them come down some more. I live in the Highlands. I will be back again.

HF: My name is Hazel Feils. It was Hazel White before I met my husband Peter through the CCCs. I lived in Highlands all my life and now I got my husband living there too. I had many a good time with the CCCs.

EH: How did you happen to come out here? Was it for social events?

HF: Well, we used to come out for the dances. Come out to see our boyfriends. Get a free meal in their kitchen when we could. (laughter) And get deadly sick on it one time.

EH: Really?

HF: Remember that orange juice they used to have? Oh, was that horrible.

CCC Member: Whitey made that.

HF: And its very nice coming out here with some of the fellas that I know, especially my husband is with me.

ML: My name is Mike Lakomie and I come from Milltown, New Jersey and I joined the CCCs in September, the early part of September of 1935 and I was discharged in 1938, the last of '38. And with all I hear about the poison ivy, I am starting to scratch. (laughter) I was one of the lucky ones that didn't catch poison ivy and I still don't catch it. I still live in Milltown.

AD: My name is Andy Daino. I come from Highlands, New Jersey. I originally came from New Brunswick and I joined up in the C's, I think, it was in the early part of '35. I

recall being here for three years anyway. I can tell you a story about some of them poison ivy. The kids that used to come from the city, they were the ones that got it the worst. The kids that lived out in the country didn't get it too bad. I used to show off and rub it on me. I never got it. But I recall there was a couple of fellas from New York City that were on my crew and they heard about the good meals, the good food that was served at the Hospital. So they hadn't gotten poison ivy by then they used to take it and rub it on them so they can make sick call the following morning and go up to the Hospital and just relax and eat that good food that was up there. (laughter) That is the truth. I really enjoyed myself here and it just brings back happy memories.

EH: What years were you here?

AD: I was here the early part of '35 and up until '38 I guess it was. I was here for three years and I really enjoyed myself. I say they were the best years of my life. I live in Highlands. I married a Highlands girl and she passed away and then I in turn married another Highlands girl which happens to be Joe Czarnecki's sister-in-law. He is my brother-in-law.

EH: I am curious to know what your impressions are when you first arrived here? What is the procedure? How did they process you? How did you work your way up from...and also is that right you are very young? You are all 17, 18 years old.

JW: You were about 17 to 26, something like that. That was your area.

EH: Okay. What do you remember basically? Tell me what it was like.

JW: I felt like hopping that gate so fast when I got here. (laughter) You think I am kidding. We got here about five o'clock in the evening, remember?

JC: Oh yeah.

JW: Shall we say, everybody had to make a necessary trip. And where it was, was gods. Forget it. But anyway we ate sandwiches. The kitchen wasn't set up. There was no latrine as such a bathroom. That was out and we all pulled in and I think we all slept on the floor that night. We had no bedding. No beds or anything everything was wild and wooly.

EH: But was there a barracks?

JW: Oh, there was a barracks. That's true.

EH: There was a wooden, long wooden barracks, like this, right? (looking at photo)

(inaudible talking)

JW: That was a barracks. Now, all the barracks were not completed. As you can see there is one there. You all remember that one when we first got here?

JC: Where we would have to fight.

JW: There it is. That's what they used to, they set that up as a stage. In other words, if I had a grudge we got up there and that was it.

EH: Grudge fight, right.

JW: It was all over.

JC: That was the ring. Andy was the champion there.

EH: So you slept on the floors and how long did that go on?

JW: Well, it didn't last for about a week. Wouldn't you say that was about right?

JC: Oh, yeah about a week.

JW: Then things began to get organized.

JC: It was funny coming out of Washington, DC which was the camp of the United States.

JW: That's exactly right.

JC: The camp. That was the elite camp. We had our own private swimming pool.

JW: That's right.

JC: Which we built ourselves.

JW: We built ourselves.

JC: We were really high class guys.

JW: We were seriously.

JC: We were brought down to our size though.

JW: You know when Eleanor stuck her head and looked out the window and saw the CCC guys down there shoveling snow it was too cold. She sent them all back to the camp. This was the truth.

JC: Who did that?

JW: Eleanor Roosevelt.

JC: No. She never done that.

JW: Don't you tell me. I was the leader.

JC: They kept us down there underneath the Lincoln Memorial and brought coffee out to us. Remember when we cleaned the memorial?

JW: How many of you ran it? What was the museum down there? They all went in smiling. They all came out, "Oh god, what a scene."

CCC Member: What was that Smithsonian?

JW: No. The medical deal. Remember the medical deal down on the Mall. That made you sick when you come out. Got you sick. But look, I am afraid we are getting away from here. Let's forget D.C. But this is where our origin began here. That's why I was trying to bring this out.

EH: Right.

JW: Where we came from.

EH: Was there a training in DC?

JW: What do you mean by training?

EH: Were you prepared?

JC: Well, discipline. Let's put it this way.

JW: That was it.

JC: Nothing but discipline.

EH: For how long?

JC: All the time.

EH: No, but I mean was it a six month preparation?

JW: Six months to begin with.

JC: We joined for six months and then you had to rejoin.

JW: You had to get an extension. You had to reenlist up to a certain point of 18 months. If you remember and then if you got in good with the captain and all then he shoved you through for a few more if you were a leader.

CCC Member: Some did three years.

JW: Well, like I said I did longer than that.

(Inaudible talking)

AD: I had 36 months.

JW: You had 3 years.

AD: Thirty six months.

CCC Member: They called him team leader at the time.

CCC Member: I think that started in 19---

JW: In other words, he was the father to the other 42 members in the barracks. Okay. Any problems came up it was up to him to go to the captain and get things straightened out if they were serious. If it was something he could settle right on the spot it was done.

EH: So, a unit was 42 men?

JW: A barracks. We used to call them a group at that time.

CCC Member: I think the original CCC was in '33.

JC: Hey, Pappy how about when you first come down here how about what a job it was to find the mess hall from the barracks.

JW: It wasn't there.

JC: Remember that?

JW: Yeah. Yeah.

JC: All the weeds.

JW: All the weeds. That's right. So, we had to clean up. What they did was clean up where they were gonna put a barracks. How they get in there was your own problem. Figure it out yourself. And the mosquitoes were really big I am telling you.

JC: It was bad until they put the duck boards down so you could walk on them.

JW: Yeah. Right. I remember the duck boards. You know what they are, don't you, Elaine?

EH: Mmm. Hmm.

JW: Okay. That's what we used to walk on between the barracks.

JC: The duck boards, yeah.

JW: Well, you couldn't put any bricks or anything. There was so much sand.

JC: It was all sand.

EH: How many buildings were there?

JW: I would say roughly about 15 or would I be wrong.

Several voices: No.

CCC Member: There were five barracks.

JW: You had six barracks.

CCC Member: The captain was six, the mess hall was seven, and the office was eight.

AD: How about your PX?

JW: How about your latrine?

CCC Member: Oh you had the latrine too.

JW: That was necessary. (laughter)

CCC Member: The latrine was ten.

JW: You gotta have that.

EH: Actually ten buildings.

CCC Member: Five barracks and the officers quarters, the latrine, the rec hall

CCC Member: We had the balloon hanger. (Inaudible talking by several men).

CCC Member: That was our warehouse.



JW: That was our everything garage and all.

AD: We kept our trucks and our equipment and everything in there.

CCC Member: We had a supply room too. That was a barracks.

(Inaudible talking by several men)

JW: Yeah that was part of that building.

AD: The supply room, headquarters.

CCC Member: About five little bungalows for the sergeants and their families. They belonged to the Army.

CCC Member: Army people yeah. That was in Camp Lowe.

EH: The bungalows were right near?

Several voices: Yeah right on our road. As you come in the hanger was right here.

AD: Sergeant Helfer.

JW: Did you remember him?

PF: Yeah.

JW: Do you remember his son Jimmy?

AD: Jimmy Yeah. Big Jimmy, (I) taught him how to box. He went to New York. Remember he went to New York?

JW: Do you know I still get a Christmas card from him?

AD: Is that right?

JW: He has not missed a year. Jimmy Helfer.

PF: I met him.

JW: You did? He lives in wait a minute...

AD: The Marine Corps he was in.

JW: Oh yeah. He was in the Marine Corps.

PF: He got messed up pretty bad during World War II.

JW: I still get a Christmas card from him.

AD: Isn't that wonderful.

PF: He lives local here. Fort Monmouth.

JW: I am trying to think of where it is. Port Monmouth. Port Monmouth.

EH: What's the name again?

JW: Jimmy Helfer.

EH: Helfer?

JW: H-E-L-F-E-R.

PF: Port Monmouth. Port.

GH: He had a pretty sister. They kept her, they wouldn't let her out of their sight. They wouldn't let her near.

CCC Member: He was Army.

JW: Man you were blind. I went with her. What are you talking about?

GH: Did you Pappy? Boy, you rascal. (laughter) Boy Pappy.

JW: I was telling Mike on the way over and this was the truth.

GH: Boy they kept tabs on her...

JW: Captain Myers at what did we call him when we all lined up out in the front? Gave the, do you all remember the order, to leave the Army personnel alone especially their daughters. (laughter) And they couldn't figure out how I got to go with Cathy.

CCC Member: She was a doll, wasn't she?

CCC Member: Sergeant Helfer's daughter.

JW: Just the other day, I was talking to someone down at Silver Springs and he hated the CCCs. The only reason he hated (was) because we didn't fool with the girls we had good times with them. The trucks would go out and they know this when the trucks were sent out to pick the girls up and bring them back in the camp for the dances. You should see

the resentment that came from the local fellas really. There was an awful lot of resentment.

EH: Sure, competition.

AD: The GIs didn't care for it too much here either. I am telling you soldiers on the base here.

JW: This is what I am getting at. If we had been in the state, if we had be in the state it would have been local people, but here it was the military.

GH: They got \$21 and a horse blanket and we got \$30 a month. Then we got \$36 a month and then \$45 a month.

JW: It was \$45 for the leader.

AD: \$45 was the leader. Assistant leader \$36.

JW: It was a comparison of that and the Army. In other words, they were called sergeant and corporals. We were called leaders and assistant leaders.

GH: We used to make fun of them. \$21 and a horse blanket.

JW: We knew they didn't like us anyway. So it didn't make any difference.

GH: Yeah. It didn't bother us. We had a lot of friends though because later on they got used to us.

AD: Joe, Whitey there was a good basketball player. Lefty Marino and we used to compete with C Battery (52<sup>nd</sup> Coast Artillery). C Battery was a cracker jack team.

GH: They were the rivals. That was the rivals. See, they had their own football team, basketball and they lived by themselves. They ate by themselves. I don't think they stood any guard or anything, C Battery. All the athletes were in there. Remember Joe?

JC: Yeah. I remember.

GH: The one on the end. They were top class you know.

JC: They were elite.

GH: But we gave them some good tussles there in basketball.

AD: We even played softball too. The hardest part was when the sergeant came out with that toot tooter and get us all up icy weather and snow and you had to come out

there...(inaudible speaking from another person) stand right out there in the ice out there freezing.

EH: In your underwear?

AD: Well, whatever. You had to stand out there roll call.

GH: Reveille. They came out of the barracks with a whistle.

EH: What time?

GH: Six o'clock.

JW: I would say between quarter 'til six and six.

JC: Each barracks they would come through and they would blow the whistle. That's how they woke us up. Then we would have to stand reveille and about 6:30 we would stand in reveille. You were supposed to have your clothes on.

(Inaudible talking)

GH: It was all Army but we were civilian. Let's put it that way. The only thing we didn't have was guns. They were close to putting them in. they wanted to.

CCC Member: They wanted to give us a half a day's training with the guns but they wouldn't do it.

GH: Why they don't have it today, I will never understand to get some of these kids off the streets of New York and Newark and Patterson and wherever and all the trouble.

AD: Then was chow time right after reveille or did we take care of our bunks first?

CCC Member: Seven o'clock was chow time. Seven o'clock, seven o'clock was chow time.



Mess hall at CCC Camp Lowe.

AD: We had inspection and I mean inspections. And everything had to be just so. There wasn't one wrinkle on your bunk. Not one wrinkle on your pillowcase. Eight o'clock we went out to work. By that time, your bunks, the edges of your bunks had all creases. You had two sides and you creased them, right Joe?

JC: That's right. The top guy would come along and look at it and strip it right up. Strip it off.



Colorized image of the interior of a CCC Barrack. Note the pot belly stoves in the center and the back.

AD: See if the sheets were clean. And your footlocker was right in front of your bunk and your clothes had to hang neatly behind you and we cleaned bunks.

(Inaudible talking from several people.)

AD: I was the rascal. I used to collect black widow spiders. I used to collect black widow spiders and I used to have them up over my bunk in jars. This was great country here. Sand and gravel.

EH: Your collection of jars.

AD: Sand and gravel was great for black widow spiders here. It was terrific.

CCC Member: Andy, what did you do on a Friday morning in the summer?

AD: Friday morning, Friday morning.

CCC Member: Take you sheets off. Throw your mattress out.

AD: Yeah everything.

JW: Yeah. That's right. It had to be summer.

AD: The mattress had to be aired.

JW: It had to be summer.

CCC Member: Come in the afternoon, everybody scrambled to pick out the best mattress. (laughter) Remember that Andy?

AD: Yeah.

CCC Member: Everybody fight over it.

CCC Member: Whitey was the mess sergeant, right and in his bunk he had a fella who had bad kidneys. Remember? And I didn't know this and I am sleeping away and come one night I ripped my sheet open to go to bed and there was my bed. Somebody had done something in it, you know. I couldn't believe this. I couldn't believe this and I went and I said to Whitey or somebody. And right away they knew who it was. They went after the guy and took his bed and opened it up and took my bed and my mattress back out of there. He could sleep on his own. And he worked in the kitchen too.

AD: Remember we used to short sheet all the new guys coming. Short sheet them.

Several voices: Right, right.

AD: Fix the sheets underneath so you fold the bottom sheet up, the back up half way and when they try to get in they couldn't get their feet or their legs past the sheet, you know. They was no how because it was turned back and tucked under. You couldn't get your legs back in there. Short sheet.

(Inaudible talking from several people)

AD: The hardest part was in the wintertime we had the coal pile behind the barracks. Ice and snow and you had to go out in buckets. Buckets to get your coal and we had big pot belly stoves. Three pot belly stoves, one at each end of the barrack and one in the center. You had to keep the fire going.



Andy Daino standing on top of the coal pile.

PF: After nine o'clock you used to have to bank the fire.

AD: Did you have special duty? Did you stay up above?

PF: No. I used to go back and forth and they used to send a truck out to pick me up in the morning and took me down.

(Inaudible talking from several people)

EH: What were you talking about going around the rocks though?

HF: Well, see, they were confined to camp. I don't know. One of the fellas did something so the whole camp was confined. Andy's wife and Whitey's wife and myself and Arty Rake's wife, we walked over the bridge and there was a part of the rocks where you could go around a wire. They used to have it wired off. And we'd go around it and we would sit up there and meet them and then go home and the next time we want if we had a date we would come back out again. (laughter) But that was the only way they could met the girls.

PF: We couldn't come out because you had to have a pass to get out and we couldn't get no pass. So this is what they done to see us.

JW: I think somebody stole something. They were trying to get who it was and they wouldn't let anybody out until somebody would squeal, you know. I don't know.

PF: I don't recall.

JW: I don't know what the heck it was but they wouldn't let them out until it was found.

PF: I don't think they stole it. They just borrowed it for a time.

JW: That's what happened. They wouldn't let them out. They figured somebody would squeal.

EH: What type of discipline did you have? What were the things?

JW: KP. (Kitchen Police)

PF: That's right Joe, KP. If you done anything wrong he was punished by KP.

AD: He used to live on Bay Avenue. Him and Levy used to...

(Inaudible talking by many voices)

JW: Have KP for the weekend. Saturday and Sunday.

AD: But Levy, do you remember? We used to have Levy send in three crates of oranges and the sergeant would charge him for four.

(Inaudible talking by many people) (Tape stops and restarts)

EH: Two things I would like to get a lot of your recollections are a typical day and your uniforms. How they were issued? George Haas, you began to tell us about the man who would come through with a whistle at six o'clock waking you all up. Some of you staggering out in your underwear barely awake and then having inspections and all. Why don't you continue that discussion of a normal day here?

GH: The normal day began at six o'clock in the morning when our sergeant or whatever you want to call him, top kick, would come through with a whistle and wake everybody up. At 6:30 we would have reveille and our officer which was Captain Myers would ask us to form a line and start policing the area for cigarette butts, mess coupons or whatever it is. A lot of times when you are too lazy to pick it up you just put sand over top of it.  
(laughter)

EH: It hides everything.

GH: Yes. Then you go back to your barrack and get yourself ready for breakfast. So at seven o'clock breakfast would begin and you could eat until eight o'clock.

EH: How was the food by the way?



GH: The food itself was wonderful, really wonderful. You had whatever anybody else had. You had pancakes some days. In fact, Whitey was our mess sergeant at one time and he gave us good food. We had pancakes, eggs. We had SS, that's on a shingle. (laughter) That's ground beef which was creamed. We had toast, what did they call that?

HF: That's English muffin.

GH: No. No. Zwieback. We had the Zwieback or you could put bread in it. You could put it on yourself. Plenty of it was there. You could have all you want. You could eat as long as you want as long as you get back to the barrack and cleaned up and get ready for eight o'clock and they blew the whistle and you went out to work different crews. You had about five or six different crews. You had an assistant leader and a leader and you had a foreman for certain crews. Then, we went out on a job and we cut down the old dead limbs and trees and stuff and ivy, poison and sumac, poison and one thing or another. And some of us were building trails through the woods, fire breaks through the woods. This went on until about 11:30 and then we came in to eat. By 12:00, we had our dinner and by 12:30 we were just about done and we had a little time to get ready and back out on the job again at one o'clock and went through the same thing of building roads and firebreaks and whatever. At three o'clock, we came in and got ready. Everybody tried to take a shower and wash up whatever you could. Make sure your clothing was in order and everything else. And by 5:00 we had dinner and everything was usually punctual. If there was anything that wasn't just right you received a punishment for whatever you did wrong. That usually was a punishment when you could go home for the weekend which usually you could if you were close enough. Otherwise you had KP. You would have to stay at the camp for the weekend and you would have three meals to serve until later on when they had an idea on a Sunday night at suppertime they gave you a bag lunch. They gave you a fruit. They gave you sandwiches and told you you could do what you want for that day. You could go swimming or whatever you want. That's how our day went up until seven days a week. But lights were out at 10 o'clock and you could do what you pleased. In fact, you didn't have to go to your lunch or your dinner or whatever you want to call it at night. You could leave the place and go to the town if you wished and stay there. But at 10 o'clock the lights were out and you were supposed to be back and in your bunk when the lights were out. From then on, that was up to you whether you slept or whatever you did.

EH: Could you make use of the theater here? Go to movies?

GH: Well, we also had privileges such as going to the theater which they had movies every night and you could either use cash or we had canteen checks. If you had canteen checks you usually went to our captain. You asked for the canteen checks because you didn't have any money. So, at the end of the month when you got paid they would take this dollar for each book of canteen check. I think you were allowed five. For each one of these book of canteens it was worth a dollar. You could go to the movies or you could buy stuff at the canteen or whatever you like. You had soda, candy, whatever it was but at the end of the month you had to pay back. They took it out of your pay. That's how you, as far as your recreation was concerned they had a YMCA here. You could go

there. You could punch the bag. You could play handball. You could play basketball. It was quite a good situation to be in for young people. I appreciate it. At my age now I wish I could go back to it. I really mean this. I wish they would take a lot of these young people and do the same thing as they did with us and I think it would be a wonderful thing for the whole country, in fact the whole world.

PF: How about our recreation...

GH: Yeah, we had a recreation...

PF: How about our recreation where we used to go in there and had ping pong tables, had pool tables. Sometimes we used to show moving pictures and things and all like that. We had a lot of good times like that. We used to sit down there, play piano. They had sing alongs, maybe go in there get some stationary and write a letter home. Request some extra money to be sent back because you went broke before the month was over.

EH: When you say you were broke, how much did you earn?

PF: Actually an ordinary member would get \$30 a month. \$5 of it he would get and \$25 of it was sent to his home or whoever he would request it be sent to. And you had to live on that \$5. You had to buy your toilet articles. You had to pay your tailor bill, your laundry bill and take your girlfriend out on \$5 and it was a tight budget, a real tight budget and we you would be surprised we managed it. You get by. You didn't smoke cigarettes. You smoke bull dog. You rolled your own cigarettes and everything. You enjoyed it. You had good candy you could buy. You could buy sovereigns. You could buy beer, different stuff like that.

EH: What did you do out here by the way?

PF: My job was taking care of the post horses, mules.

EH: This is Pete Feil, by the way telling this. Tell us about that.

PF: Well, I used to get up in the morning and go through the routine like George Haas said and then I had a truck take me from Camp Lowe to the Post Stables here and I used to go in there and change the bedding on the horses and let them out. Air them out, maybe exercise some of the horses. Cut the lawns. The parade grounds lawns and everything. That was my day. Just before I would leave at night, I would give them a good drink of water. Make their bed for the evening and lock up.



Cutting the grass on Officers' Row.

EH: How many horses were there? Just curious.

PF: Oh, they had maybe about 10 horses and they had about 7 or 8 big mules, Army mules.

JW: The horses were used mostly for military personal...

PF: They were retired Pauley's.

JW: The girls used to ride them.

PF: But we used to ride them a lot. Of course, Captain Myers rode one time and he was down by Camp Lowe and he was riding showing off and the horse threw him. The horse wound up back at the stables. We had to chase him back to the stables. (laughter) remember that? I think Andy Daino remembers that too.

(Inaudible talking)

AD: Remember when the horse took off on me?

EH: Took off on you? What do you mean?

AD: I wasn't supposed to let the horse go on any cement see. When I first got on the horse they said make sure now when you are riding him you ride of the gravel or grass but don't let him ride on concrete or cement 'cause they had the shoes.

EH: Wear out the shoes.

AD: Well, not only that but it was slippery and this horse took off on me and I couldn't hold him and where do you think he was going? On the concrete and I was screaming for somebody to help me. (laughter) I finally got to the grassy spot and I fell off. The horse kept on going. I think he got to the stables hours before I got near him. So somebody had him up near the stables. He went right back home. He knew where to go.

EH: That was Andy Daino by the way, but back to Pete. Where were the stables?

JW: Right over here.

EH: Right behind the Rodman gun.

PF: I didn't know they had recycling building there. That's where the stables used to be. Those big guns that they moved up with all those balls was right in the middle by the stable there. I think Mike and his crew was told to move them where they are now. Wasn't it, Mike? You were told to move them there.

EH: Mike Lakomie was actually part of the crew that moved the Rodman Gun. Is that correct to the present location?

ML: Yes.

EH: What about George Haas? What did you do while you were out here? We didn't get too much about...

GH: I tried chasing girls for a little bit but that didn't help.

EH: That didn't work. What did you do with the CCC?

GH: What did I do? Well, I worked my way up to assistant leader. Of course they had to have a couple of times when most of the guys left camp otherwise I would have still been a member, you know. It wasn't because of brains that I became a leader. It was just because of time. That's all. Seniority rights in other words. Well, I liked what I was doing because I always wanted to be a farmer and here I was a tree farmer in other words. We cut down the trees and made sure that other trees were able to grow properly the way they were supposed to. On this island here is a wonderful thing because you have cactus growing here. You have beach plums, sand plums. You have red cedar that grew here. I don't know if they are still growing here or not. You have holly, the holly trees. Some of them were at least two to three to four, maybe not four, about two or three foot thick they were so large and some of the holly trees have a berry and some don't have a berry and I don't know if it is true or not but they claim that you have to have a male and a female or else they don't reproduce. This is something I learned while I was here. At the same time we had a program in our recreation hall where you would study photography or anything that you would like any hobbies that you would like in our recreation room. We had somebody that would teach us and we somebody....

(Inaudible person speaking)

GH: Yeah. We had our educational person by the name of Bruce. Well, what was his name? It wasn't Bruce. It was something else.

JW: Reed, wasn't it?

GH: Reed, yeah. Bob Reed, something like that. Our photography, where we did our photography work was in the officers' quarters. They had a room set aside and they had somebody who knew something about it that would teach us and we were welcome to go there anytime we wanted to learn to develop or you know whatever you do with photography. Today, it's much simpler then it was in them days because you had to go through all different processes with the certain kinds of papers of one kind or another. Today they have got instant photos. So...

EH: Isn't that one of your hobbies?

GH: Yes. At the time I took it up. I liked it. I enjoyed it. And another thing we used to get out in the woods and see what we could find that was different. We did find a lot of things out there like (artillery) shells that were laying in the sand or one thing or another. Some of them were brought into the barracks. I remember one instance we had one in the barracks in our barrack and we had the company number painted on it and it was painted nice and varnished and one day our captain came in and he looked at that and he says, "Get that damn thing out of here." He says, "That's alive. That shell is alive." And it was. It really was alive.

EH: Was it a crab or what?

GH: No. No. A shell.

EH: Oh a projectile

GH: A projectile. Yes. Oh yes. Absolutely. I thought it was alive. And from what I understand they are still finding them alive and this is 1981 already. This happened about 1935. They still find these shells laying around from what I understand. I don't know how true it is. So boy...

EH: Did you move it very gingerly?

GH: Oh boy, nobody had the idea that it was alive until the captain looked at it, you know. In fact, it even had a nose on it on the brass and had numbers on it.

EH: A time fuse.

GH: I think that's what it was really?

EH: That is definitely alive.

GH: Oh boy, and then he looked around in the other barracks to make sure I think he did find a couple more because everybody had the idea that this was a toy, you know. And

this is what happened there. And I spent a lot of my time going to the movies going to the Y, fooling around with the punching bag.

HF: Going to the dances.

GH: Going to the dances with girls that came up from the Highlands and I also had one friend of mine that was quite a boxer and I used to put the gloves on with him and he felt sorry for me because I couldn't hit a fly with a flyswatter. So, he used to tell me, "Hit me. Hit me." but I didn't like the idea of hitting him.

EH: Was Andy Daino one of the top boxers?



Andy Daino instructing a soldier's son in boxing.

GH: Yeah. Andy Daino, that was his name and he was sure some guy. Oh yeah. He had the fastest hands I had ever seen in my life.

AD: In boxing now. (laughter)

GH: That's in boxing. Andy used to teach us how to box and I sure appreciate it even though I never really learned.

PF: Andy, how about the time we used to go over by the bridge there when the destroyer was there and go crabbing. Remember that? We used to get the crabs. Get an old galvanized bucket. Put them in the bucket. Make a fire and we'd cook them in saltwater and we really enjoyed it. Remember? It was really good. We used to have a good time. Remember that Andy?

AD: I remember digging clams at Kingman-Mills. We had a crew out. I had a crew out. Oh, the stem clams. They have a different name for them. I had a crew working at Kingman-Mills cleaning the brush and the wood. I recall I used to get to sergeant hill, I think it was. Well, you wouldn't call it a barracks. That was his home there. He had like a cabin and I was the leader. So by me giving him the wood. I had the men cut the wood

into stove lengths and he was real good to me. He gave me a pint of Old Drum. In them days that was a favorite whiskey, Old Drum. Snug Harbor and Old Drum, it was a great Army drink and I could always recall it was wintertime and I had some of the boys digging up clams on the beach and we'd have a pot along with us and like Peter said the salt water and start the fire. We were burning brush anyway. Cleaning up and we'd have steamed clams while we were at work.

EH: Mr. Czarnecki, how did get the reputation to be called a lawyer of the pack here?

JC: No. Not really.

EH: What did you do while you were out at Company 288?

JC: Well, first of all when I came out I don't think I was liked to well. I was assistant leader I think. Then, projects on the Hook were numerous and big. Magruder Road, I think, Mule Haas and myself and the mules and a fella by the name of Pope. There was only one road coming into the Hook and then we built Magruder Road to dig it out. Then they worked on Scotland Trail which I thought was another project. The project that went under was our golf course. I don't know if any of you remember trying to build the golf course.

Several voices: Oh yeah.

EH: Where is it now?

JC: Huh?

EH: Where is the golf course now?

JC: I don't know. It never did materialize. We put a lot of time, a lot of labor, a lot of money.

EH: But was it near the barracks?

JC: It was all around the Hook. All around the Hook.

JW: It was to be in officers' town or something.

JC: Right on top of the old fortress. On top of the old fort. I think that was the 9<sup>th</sup> hole or something. I'll never forget that project.

GH: You had to get the mules up there, remember?

JC: Yeah. And then another project was trying to tear the fort down. I don't know whether you guys remember that?

EH: Tear what?

JC: The old fort. Dynamite the old fort down.

AD: Yeah. That's right.

JC: That never materialized. Of course, we put a lot of time and a lot of labor on that. My god almighty.

EH: Are you talking about the Civil War Fort?

JC: Right.

EH: The original Civil War Fort. Fort at Sandy Hook.

JC: Right.

EH: Did you actually set off dynamite?

JC: Yes. We put dynamite in there. We've got pictures. We've got pictures in the book here that shows trucks.

CCC Member: Dead horse Razga was the foreman.

EH: Really? Dead Horse (Sergeant) Razga was the foreman for this project you are talking about?

(Inaudible talking by several people)

EH: Why did they even want to remove that? Why did they even attempt that kind of...

JC: They had the WPA in there too.

EH: Is that right? What year was that? Do you remember?

JC: 1936.

JW: I was going to say '36, '35 in that area. Yeah.

JC: About 1936. The WPA was taking stone out of here.

JW: We took a lot of stone of out here too. No question about it.

AD: We helped make a road with that too.

JC: Yeah. That's what we did.



AD: Sledgehammers and pins. Guys used to have to hold them.



CCC Crew with sledgehammers tearing down the outer wall of the Mortar Battery. Andy Daino is in front center with white hat.

EH: Back breaking work.

JC: And all the work we did and all the time we put in didn't put a dent in that wall. The thing is still there and will be there.

EH: The stone was used to make a road?

JC: That's right.

EH: Where was that road?

JC: Magruder Road.

EH: Road beds for Magruder.

ML Right. Here is that road being built right there.

EH: Oh that is excellent. Good photograph. That's Mike Lakomie's scrapbook we are looking at. Were you in charge of the Rodman gun moving? Was that one of yours?

JC: No. No. I think that was Mike's. Mike was on that project. On the "Eagle Eye."

EH: Eagle eye?



CCC Crew moving 20-inch Rodman gun to its current location. They also constructed the base it sits on.

JC: That's what we called him. What's his name was the foreman.

ML: Rudy Deats.

CCC Member: They used to call him Eagle Eye because he was like, he looked like an eagle. He really did.

JC: Basically my forte was athletics. (I was) greatly involved in athletics playing the GIs baseball, basketball and then intramural football which they wouldn't allow us to play football at the time.



1936  
1936  
1936 CCC Company 288 Baseball Team on Parade Ground.

CCC Member: No.

JC: And that was it. Very good years.

EH: Did you get any more money by the way, for being assistant leader?

JC: Oh yeah see, the price range I think Pete said it before it started at \$30 a month. \$25 went home and you kept \$5. Now, on you own as you became an assistant leader or a corporal in Army terms then you were raised to \$36. Original \$25 went home but you kept \$11. So you did it on your own. As you became a leader, or a sergeant in Army terms you got \$45 and again \$25 went home and you kept the balance. So, whatever whenever, and that was the limit. You could not obtain anymore than \$45.

EH: So \$45.

JC: \$45. That's as high as you can go.

EH: What was it like to be a mess sergeant? That's a very good subject to start on.

JC: Well, you could make money if you wanted to. (laughter)

CCC Member: Well what did the guys call you? What did the guys call you Whitey? Belly robber.

JC: Belly robber. That was the number one term, belly robber. It was interesting, especially being from the city. Well, I started with a fella name Chase. I started as assistant cook to him and then the mess sergeant got himself in trouble and bingo they made me mess sergeant and that's basically what we talked about before.

EH: Did you cook for the barracks?

JC: The whole entire camp.

EH: The whole entire camp. And how many people were in Company 288?

JC: Oh I image 200.

Many voices talking: 250, 200 (inaudible)

JC: Definitely 200. That's all. Yeah. 20 left, they got 20 to replace and bring it up.

CCC Member: Yeah but how about the officers too?

JC: Well we weren't, I am not counting them.

EH: How did the food arrive? Was it, how was it delivered?

JC: I am sorry. Well, you bought your sides of beef and what not from the (Post) Commissary from the Army because this was an Army Post. The only thing you bought

from the outside was your vegetables. But all your meats were bought, all your bread, all your bread was baked on the Post here. So, it was typical Army. Again I say you were so close to Army without carrying a gun it wasn't funny.

EH: Right, but you did have cooperating arrangements with the bakery.

JC: Oh sure. Definitely. Oh definitely. We were committed to buy Army.

EH: Did you know the pig pens, the famous pig pens where the Army did raise pigs? According to John Mulhern, now he was here 1908 to 1927.

JC: Probably Rabbit Hayes. Rabbit Hayes had some down at the dump. It was a little bit before us but he was still here.

EH: But were there still pig pens then?

Several voices: No.

EH: Was any livestock raised here?

JW: Only the horses, only horses.

GH: We had the polo horses, the retired polo horses and we had our mules which we used to build these roads also. Scoop shovels and mules.

CCC Member: And grass cutters.

CCC Member: And grass cutters and trucks.

CCC Member: We had to get them up on the hill and blindfold them to get them to the top. Right, Whitey? Put the bags over the top and you hit them in the rear and up they went.

EH: Blindfold the mules.

CCC Member: We had to. They wouldn't go up the hill. See we went on top of the fort, right.

EH: Civil War Fort you are talking about?

CCC Member: Yeah. It was all sand here so we wanted to make a green for the officers so had to get...

JW: For the golf course?

CCC Member: Right. So, what we did I figured it out. We put a bag on their heads, right. Tied it up. I got in the front and I said, "Okay, Whitey." bo bo boom. He hit them and they went right up to the top.

CCC Member: That's why we call them mules. (laughter)

CCC Member: That's why they call them mules, right.

AD: What happened at 12:00 with the mules? Could you get them to do any work then?

CCC Member: Oh christ, we had to bring them back. We used to bring them back and unhook them. We had a good thing going though.

CCC Member: But basically it was a tremendous life for a young fella. Nothing like it. I can't understand why the government don't put it back together.

EH: How about you Mr. Whalen? Tell me what your responsibility was here and what was it like for you.

JW: Mine was rather various. I had different positions if you want to call them that. Leader, company clerk, captains' orderly and I guess that's about it. You have already heard the duties of the, no I don't think anyone gave the duties of the leader. Did they?

EH: No. Not really.

JW: Okay, it was similar to a sergeant in the Army and under his care was a barracks you would say of 42 men and he was more or less the go between the men and the captain. If disputes came up we could settle them on the spot and be done then. If not it went to the captain. Report to the captain what was what. Of course, under him the men had to keep the barracks clean or he would be held responsible, you know. You got to see that they were out to work on time and their details were taken care of and all that. Now the company clerk, I don't think any of them, were any of you company clerk?

CCC Member: I don't think so. No.

CCC Member: Pappas, Jimmy Pappas.

JW: So his duties were to how would you say run the paperwork of the camp. That's right. I guess that would be about the best way to put it. His list had to be made up for the monthly payments. He had to take care of the PX accounts to see how much would be deducted from the members. So I guess that's about, well he had quite a bit more too, really. What they were right now would be kind of what else, what else Mike? Do you have any ideas?

ML: Make sure your barracks he was in charge of that.

JW: No. We were speaking of the company clerks.

ML: Oh, oh.

JW: That was all paperwork. That's actually what it was, paperwork. I don't know of anything else. Well, there were a lot of things but you know. Never got to be a cook. (laughter) But let's see. I guess that's about it.

EH: How about Mike Lakomie? I am sure you have a lot to contribute. What was it like?

ML: Well, what these guys talk about Joe Czarnecki in passing. Pete Feils, Daino. I don't know if there is anything left. But I enjoyed my days in the CCC at Fort Hancock. I think like the rest of us that was the best years of my life. And I still think about it and I hope they bring it back. My job varied here. Most of it was mason work and finishing. We built curbs and we built the mount for the Rodman gun we repaired chimneys even on these officers buildings and we did quite a bit of mason work around here. We did a tile floor in our mess kitchen there. Czarnecki probably knows about that. We had a foreman, Rudy Deats. I recall us digging around that Lighthouse. We were supposed to cut the bank down. So, I am digging and my shovel struck something hard. So I got down and Rudy Deats was standing right there. So, I dug down to it and I dug up an old bottle that was still good. It had an English crown and my shovel broke it and the liquid spilled out in the sand. Rudy Deats got down on his hands and knees and put his hand down there, sand and all. He put his mouth and he reamed me up and down. "Why did you break it? Why did you break it? This is good stuff and you broke it." I said, "I didn't see it. I didn't know it was there." But it as an English liquor bottle that was probably buried there from the Revolutionary Days when the English were here. The bottle still had that crown. Like a fool I took it and I gave it a sling. In those days we didn't worry about it. Artifacts and antiques and stuff like that, you know.

EH: Ever come across cemeteries? Because supposedly there were several cemeteries on Sandy Hook. One of them was right near the Lighthouse.

ML: Yes. Yes. Yes. The British.

AD: Next to us at Camp Lowe. Just as you came in our road.

EH: I am not talking about the Halyburton Monument. I am talking about different cemeteries.



Mike Lakomie, right, building the Halyburton Memorial.

AD: That was a cemetery where the spies were buried there. English, British spies that were caught about three or four spies and they were buried there.

EH: That we know, the Halyburton story.

AD: I remember walking in two or three o'clock in the morning when you missed the last bus and you are coming by there man and you are walking in the center of the road you know and you are always looking towards that way. You think them ghosts were gonna pop up. Something real scary.

EH: But what about the cemetery near the Lighthouse? Did anything happen that you uncovered?

AD: The cemetery near the Lighthouse?

EH: There was several cemeteries believe it or not.

JW: On the Post here? Are they still around?

EH: Well, we are now in the midst of studying and researching.

CCC Member: They are probably family cemeteries. I know they have them on the farm.

EH: We are not sure.

CCC Member: Because they have them on the farm like years ago.

(Inaudible talking)

EH: Mike was very instrumental in getting the monument built. We know that. I am talking about other areas where there were burials.

(Inaudible talking)

EH: You know very early graves.

CCC Member: Originally the Hartshorne's owned and leased it to the government.

CCC Member: There could be family plots.

JC: If you want to read a whole history the stupid thing, oh my god it goes all the way back.

CCC Member: How many years does it go back, Whitey?

(Inaudible talking)

EH: Let's ask Andy Daino what was his job here. What was his responsibility?



Left: Captain Sheppard's daughter, Ann with Andy Daino. In background, the tennis court is being constructed. This court was located between the Post Theater (in background) and Quarters 1 (History House). Right: Another CCC member with Ann in front of Quarters 1.

AD: Well, I became assistant leader. From that I jumped up to leader and I was under Sergeant Razga. One of my biggest projects was making a tennis court. My crew made the tennis court next to the Theater. Between the Theater and Captain Sheppard's home.



He had a cute little girl by the name of Ann. I have quite a few pictures of Ann Sheppard. The mother was very nice to us because we had hit temperatures of 118 (degrees), I recall. 118 and it was hot. She used to bring us out lemonade. And I can remember talking about the heat quite a few boys went blind. They call it sand blind from the glare from the sand. The sun was so strong that they would go blind. They would have to wear dark glasses for quite a while. Then another project that I had that was big was where Joe Czarnecki had his crew also which was trying to knock down the old fort with blasting, chisels and sledgehammers and dynamite. Then I recall in sports, like Joe was a great sports, basketball and baseball and what not. Joe was in it. Like I said before whenever they had problems they always went to Joe. Different fellas and he would straighten them out. I was on the other side of the fence. I was supposed to be a prize fighter and I helped a lot of guys out like Dusty Rhodes. I was sort of a fatherly to a couple of them. Like Dusty, he would do the clothes, wash the clothes and press clothes for some of the fellas and they would pay him. And it came time at the end of the month a lot of them tried to renege from paying him. So, we would have this list made up. Dusty would tell me who they were and I would have this list made up. Payday at Headquarters we would line up and come through the office there and you would receive your pay and come out through Bachelor. I think his name was Bachelor. He was the clothing (many voices inaudible.) (Tape stops and restarts)

EH: To the tape that just preceded which is a gathering of CCC Alumni who served at Company 288 Horseshoe Cove called Camp Lowe Fort Hancock, NJ and we would just like to finish the few thoughts that Andy Daino was completing about Dusty Rhodes doing laundry and Bachelor, (the) supply sergeant teaming up.

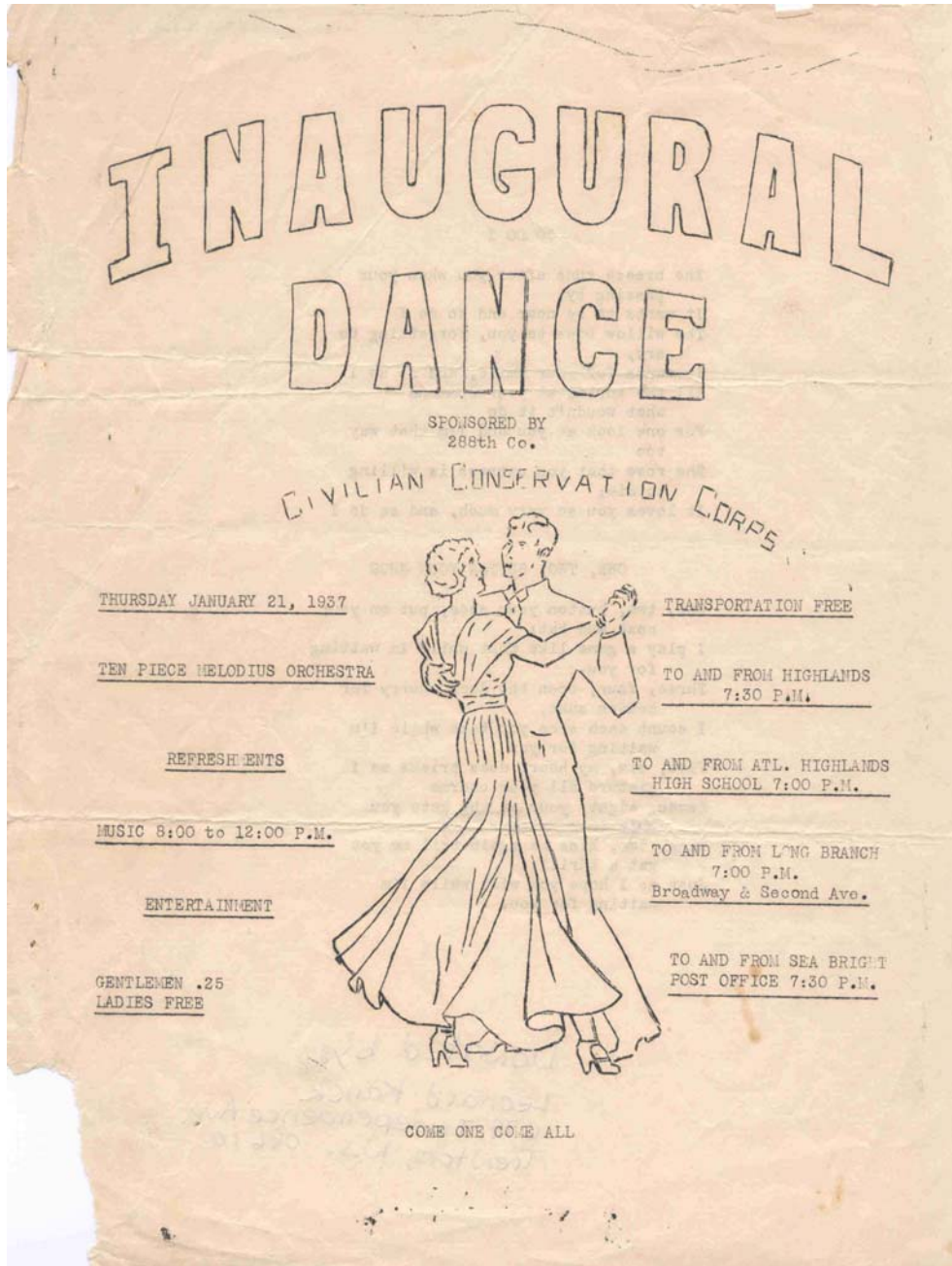
AD: Yeah. We came through Sergeant Bachelor's quarters and as fellas came out Dusty and I had a list made up of fellas that owed him money. As they came out through the door we would call out to them and ask them to pay their debts to Dusty. Some of them didn't like it but they just had to pay it. Which they did and they were very friendly to Dusty after that.

EH: Let's have Hazel tell us about the dances here. How the girls were wrapped up in blankets you began to tell us. It's kind of interesting about the trucks.

PF: Tell them about the weekends too. Girls were allowed to come on weekends. We went out to the beach.

HF: Girls were allowed to come out here with the CCC boys on the weekend. They had big yellow bus. They used to come out so many hours and would stay and we could go out and go swimming or walking. Then the dances they would send a big truck out for the girls. They would have Army blankets because naturally it was cold. It was all open. That truck would be loaded with girls. They would come from Highlands. Another truck would come from Atlantic (Highlands) or Sea Bright and it was chaperoned and Captain Myers wouldn't let the girls go out of anything during the dance or after the dance only to go to the truck to go home. It was very nicely run and everybody behaved. There was never anything out of the way. No fights. No nothing.

It was really nice and I think the boys all enjoyed themselves. Even my grandmother used to go out with me and she would dance with Captain Myers and all them and she'd be dancing with the boys when the rest of us were sitting on the sidelines. She was a, you know, good dancer. But that was my chaperone.



Flyer for CCC Dance on January 21, 1937

EH: Did some of these people eventually marry each other by the way?

HF: Yes.

EH: Did a lot of these girls you met at the dances?

HF: Well, I married Pete and Virginia went to school with me. She married Daino and Eleanor Bailey, she married Whitey Czarnecki. And this George Rueppel married a girl from over I think in Middletown.

EH: So a number of people who met at dances actually eventually married which is kind of interesting.

JW: This was done in almost every CCC camp.

EH: Right.

JW: Local girls married the fellas.

EH: That is kind of interesting. What about the band and the music we were talking about before?

HF: They used an Army band didn't they? For the dances they had the Army band?

CCC Member: They had different bands. They had an Army band and we had our square dance band.

CCC Member: They had the band that was hired from outside. Three or four pieces. Remember we used to pay them five dollars or something like that.

CCC Member: But the CCC's had their own band and we would hold dances. I don't know whether it was on a Friday or a Saturday.

CCC Member: Friday Night and the girls would come from Highlands, Atlantic Highlands and we really enjoyed ourselves. They danced and we danced until 12 o'clock.

CCC Member: And we had near beer.

CCC Member: Yeah, there was no beer. There was near beer. 3.2 (% alcohol) they called it. Remember it Andy, 3.2?

JW: But we had our pretty good band and the girls enjoyed themselves and the guys did too.

EH: Pete you were saying Mike was a one man band. Describe all these...I am sorry George Haas.

GH: The kazoo.

EH: The kazoo and what else the guitar?

GH: Yeah well this one man band this was already when we were out of the CCCs already.

EH: Well, still, what were the talents.

GH: Well, alright. Being that we had a little homemade band brought up with a few fellas we had a fella that played guitars and yodeled and sang. His name was John Goth. Then we had a fella by the name of George Moloch. He played the harmonica. Then we had a fella from New York that played the violin, Eddie Caylose his name was. Then myself played the harmonica. And Mike Lakomie, well he played the chromatic, the jug, the washboard, the guitar, and he sang and what the heck. I guess that's about it. So we also had two auditions with Major Bowes. They weren't satisfied with the first one so we went back and had another one. But the thing of it is when we had these auditions none of us went to school for music or anything except one of the fellas and that was John that played the violin. John Caylose and he lived in New York. He had been living in Milltown before that and that's about all.

EH: Did you have any CCC Camp songs that you made up?

Many voices: Oh yes.

EH: Songs of insults and all kinds. Do you remember any of it?

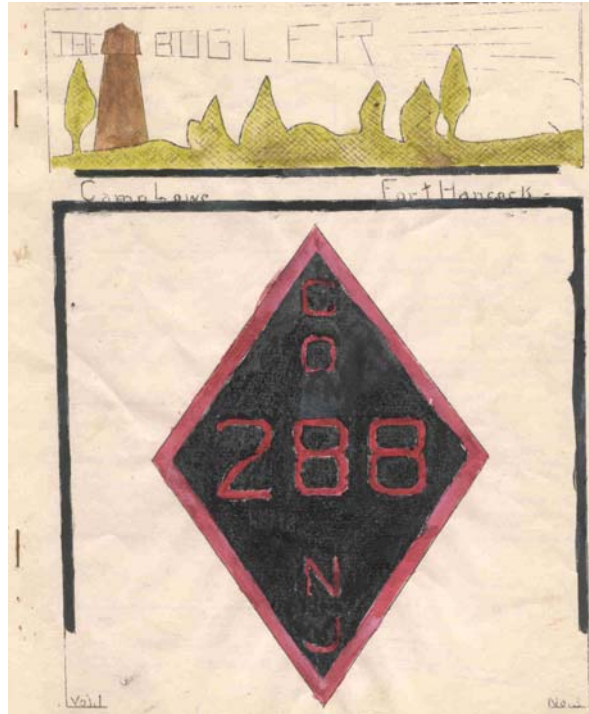
GH: Well, we had this song that went something like this. There was 10 beer bottles on the wall and something like that and there was we drank one down and then there was nine and there was nine beer bottles on the wall. And then there was another one we sang, what the heck was that? Oh, "Glorious, glorious, ten kegs of beer for the four of us. Glorious, glorious be there the more of us. So the four of us will drink it all along." That was a song yeah. I think the whole country had the same song.

EH: Anything that was really typical of this camp?

ML: We did have a company song but I can't think of what it was. There was a company song. One of the fellas wrote it up.

EH: No kidding. Gee wouldn't it be great to have that song now. I would love it.

JW: Does anybody remember if we had a camp newspaper?



Front cover of an issue of *the Bugler*. This was the newspaper of CCC Company 288.

Several voices: Oh yes.

EH: *The Bugler*. We have some in the museum donated by Leonard Kaner. What did you do for church services?

JW: Oh, right in the Rec Hall. Right in the little building.

GH: That church took care of everything. Methodists, Catholic, Jewish, everything.

AD: A truck picked you up in the morning.

GH: Yeah. That's where we went to what do you call it too, to Highlands. We went to the Catholic Church in the Highlands. What's the name of that?

EH: OLPH.

CCC Member: Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

GH: Perpetual Help on the hill.

JW: That's the first time I heard a church called that by initials. OLPH.

EH: Were there many Jewish members?

GH: No. We had about 4.

JW: If you had five then that's too many.

GH: Do you remember Charlie the red house with the tuxedo? Do you remember that?

EH: Charlie with the tuxedo.

GH: Yeah he was quite a guy. He would bring stuff from New York.

EH: Yeah what is this tuxedo.

(Inaudible talking many people.)

JW: We had a little Jewish fella. We used to call him Pope. Don't ask me why. That was his name.

GH: Yeah that was his name, Pope.

CCC Member: Another Jew that everybody said was a good baseball player and he threw, now somebody said now watch the speed of this guy and he threw the ball like this.

(Inaudible talking)

CCC Member: Talk about Charlie the guy who used to sell us all the shaving cream and the stuff. Remember?

JW: Oh, I remember him very well. He came out of Washington. Right. Curly hair.

GH: He had a tuxedo, right. He would rent you the tuxedo for a buck.

EH: Rent.

GH: Yeah, rent you the tuxedo for a dollar for the night but then you would have to bring it back the next day and then he would rent it again to anybody that needed it. Like if you went to something going on like a wedding or something he would rent you this tuxedo. Get all dressed up, yeah. Then the last thing he did was he had a raffle. He raffled that tuxedo off.

JW: Everybody had a gimmick. Somebody was selling something.

GH: He made too much money on it too. He used to sell everything. Razor blades.

JW: We even had loan sharks.

GH: Right we had those too. Right. I was going to say he was the collecting agent.

EH: Andy Daino was your collecting agent?

GH: Yeah remember when he said...

AD: Yeah. These guys, they didn't have any money so what did the fellas do, I think it was the first Monday after payday, one week after payday you lined up at headquarters and you were allowed a book of chits. I think they call them chits. Correct?

CCC Member: Canteen checks.

AD: Canteen checks. I think they were a dollar a book. So, there was a couple of hustlers there and the guys that had money hustlers is what I mean by that is that they would take two canteen books and give you a dollar for it. Yes. That's right. For two canteen books they would give you a dollar in cash. These were the guys that needed the money to go see their girls in town. They needed money very bad. So they would get two canteen books and turn it over to certain guys and ...

EH: It was half price.

AD: For cash.

CCC Member: Right. If a guy wanted to go to town and he needed cold cash and he didn't have cold cash he used his canteen books. I'd give you two dollars for a dollar.

EH: This reminds me that...

AD: Then we had we had a fella. He was a very timid kid and he was in charge of the canteen at the time and I recall a lot of guys used to come in there with their chits and they used to give double chits for half the cash at the canteen. Guys that would spend cash, they would in turn take the cash and then give him double in chits.

EH: Ah ha. So there was a lot of wheeling and dealing going around.

AD: Oh my gosh yeah.

EH: This reminds me of George Haas' photographs I am pretty sure that were pranks about a guy positioned on top of the coal pile holding a balloon. Tell us about that. I am interested in the practical jokes.

GH: I am trying to think of his name. I forgot his name.

EH: It was one of your photographs shows.

GH: I know his name but if forgot.

EH: One of your photographs shows a guy holding a balloon in the pitch black of night.

CCC Member: Waiting for the airplane to go by to drop the mail. (laughter)

EH: Was this a joke that was played on new guys?

CCC Member: New guys coming in.

GH: This guy was so dumb if he wasn't new he still would have done it. He wasn't quite right.

EH: What did you tell him?

GH: One night the fellas got together and decided to flag down the midnight mail plane so they got this certain fella. I forgot what his name was anyway. (We) gave him a piece of pole. The put a flag on the end of it and stood him on top of the coal pile, soft coal and he stood up there for about an hour or so and we kept on saying come on keep going. When the next plane comes over you wave to him. So, we get our mail in a hurry this way. So, he stood there. It was cold and he had his overcoat on and his hat on everything else and he is waving away and everybody's watching him out of the barracks windows and they are laughing because he kept on doing it. He thought everybody was serious you know being that he was a rookie he didn't know any better. Because you send him for a pail of steam and he went for that too. We could have sent him down to the other end of the Hook he still wouldn't have known the difference because he was so young, you know. He didn't realize what was going on. So, this is what happened the night of the midnight mail. We never received the mail. That's the worst part about it so what can we do. We are still looking for that mail.

EH: What's this I hear about a GI boat going to the city on the weekends? What was that like?

JW: The *General ORD* was the Army boat that used to go to the battery.

EH: That's Lower Manhattan.

CCC Member: Drop us off at the battery, stop at Governors Island first and then drop us off at the Battery.

GH: Pick you up later on too.

CCC Member: Quite a few guys lived in the city.

GH: We used to go see Jack's uncle who was a cop and stay there for a weekend.

(Inaudible talking among many people)



GH: We went to the Battery. We went to the train. We went to his uncle's place.

EH: What happened with the two guys you took home with Andy Daino?

CCC Member: I forget the guy's name. He lived in Brooklyn some places.

CCC Member: He smoked Aspens.

CCC Member: He was probably the original coke fiend.

EH: He was a CCC Member.

Many voices: Yeah.

CCC Member: Finally they gave a discharge and we had to take him home. We took the *ORD*, again the boat back to Brooklyn and then somebody to Brooklyn. We got him home and he offered us a drink of iodine I think it was...CN.

EH: CN, really? My goodness. He attempted everything.

CCC Member: Yeah. He just cracked up. He was in the hospital here.

EH: He was in the Post Hospital?

CCC Member: He was climbing the hot pipe, the steam pipe. He was climbing it. He didn't even feel it. He was going up the wall. That's why these guys had to take him home. They took him over to Bellevue.

CCC Member: Talk about the winters.

CCC Member: Cold.

EH: Let me just finish. What were the other practical jokes? I remember seeing I think it was Mike Lakomie's scrapbook you had a rigged up bucket over the doorway so when you opened the door...

ML: Oh yeah sure yeah.

EH: I still want to hear more about the practical jokes if you don't mind.

ML: At around two o'clock in the morning it always felt good.

EH: That was one of the pictures. The other picture I remember very distinctly was a skeleton smoking a cigarette on the steps.



Skeleton taking a smoke on CCC Barrack steps.

JW: Where did he come from that character? I remember.

EH: What were those like?

ML: Well, what we did we tied a bucket of water over a door and we tied the string so if the guy opened the door the bucket went in he would get a bath. So those of us that had it in for each other. That's how we evened things out. (laughter) A guy would walk up to a door and open a door and out comes the bucket of water, not the pail but just the water. I don't know where we got that skeleton from.

EH: Smoking a cigarette.

JW: I remember but I don't know where you got it from.

EH: Any other you know funny things?

GH: Daino was a great trickster here.

AD: One guy, one thing we were clean. That's one thing. All the boys were clean and had to be kept clean and you clothes in order but there was fella, I don't want to mention his name he just hated to take showers. So, we took it upon ourselves one evening coming in from work. We caught him in the latrine. So we got him into the shower and we used a GI brush on him. That's a scrub brush with stiff bristles with a GI, that's the

octagon soap. He got the bath of his life. He not only was clean, he was red as a beet after we got finished with him. From then on he took showers.

CCC Member: Joe played a lot of tricks on people too.

JW: I can't remember them now though.

EH: You are talking about Joe Whelan?

CCC Member: Yeah. (Inaudible)

EH: Did you have any great techniques?

JW: Did I have a lot of enemies?

EH: Can you tell me any?

JW: I don't recall them now.

(Inaudible)

JW: Yeah. Friendly enemies.

EH: I think it was done with great humor which is nice. It was done with great humor.

JW: Seriously though you don't remember when our machos came in from the city we did have to take care of them to bring them down. Someone had to show them or there was no living in the camp. Are you following me?

EH: Mmm hmm

JW: We had these guys from the city who were (making growling noise). Normally you waited until the first week or two when they went out to the woods on detail and normally they picked an argument with you. And you would look at your boss and he would shake his head yes. You and he would go off into the woods. Bang, bang bang. Shake hands. Everybody was buddies from then on. That's true.

EH: Really? There was one way of settling these.

JW: Right. That's what I mean. It kept a lot of trouble down.

(Inaudible)

JW: That's right. They took care of themselves.

GH: We had one grudge fight. I showed you a picture there right.

EH: Right. The grudge fight.

GH: We had these two kids that were just at each other. For some reason or other they just couldn't get along. So even the captain approved of it. They put their gloves on. As long as they put their gloves on they were alright. Especially our lieutenant, he was a man that said just settle these things and not carry a grudge, right. They went out there and pounded that platform. They really went to town on each other. After it was all over, that was the end. They never bothered each other anymore. Got it out of their system.

EH: Were there any hostilities toward various ethnic groups?

Several voices: No.

EH: Irish or Catholic or Jewish or Russian.

Several voices: No.

EH: Were there any black people in the CCC?

Several voices: No.

CCC Member: They had their own.

GH: There were black companies. They were by themselves. At that time they were by themselves.

CCC Member: They were segregated.

EH: Do you know where they, were they in Jersey?

CCC Member: Yeah. Yeah. All over the United States.

JW: All over the United States.

GH: They had their own companies and their own....

EH: And they were exclusively black?

JW: Oh yeah. At that time, don't forget that was 45 year ago, even not too long ago even down in Maryland, I went to Bowie Racetrack, you know, way back and I see where it says colored and you know.

CCC Member: White.

GH: Right. But since then this isn't anymore and that's what happened in the CCCs too. Now it's a different story because they all, the law makes it this way. At that time, there was no law. I think even in the Army at that time you'd never seen a black soldier on this Fort here. There was no black soldiers. They had their own companies. They had their own regiments and they stuck to it. And there was no hatred against us because they were because they realized they were back and we realized we were white and that's all there is too it. But as far as religion or anything like that, no there was no such a thing. The same way like you say sex. Now a days, you got girls in the Army. You got girls in the Marines. You got girls in the, it wasn't that way before. So it's coming with the times but at that time we didn't have this kind of stuff. In fact, we didn't hate the color. In fact, where Mike and I lived we didn't even know anything about Jewish people. To tell you the truth we didn't have one in maybe the whole family. I didn't know nothing about Bar Mitzvah or anything like this. I didn't know nothing. I had no hatred against Jewish people or Catholics or Russians or Polacks. We just lived together. Where Mike and I come from it was Germans. It was Hungarians. It was Russians. There was Irish. There was all kinds and we went to school together and never had any of this kind of problem. You know, because we lived in a small town. We played together. I didn't care whether Mike was a Polack or a Russian. In fact, I never knew what he was to tell you the truth. I never, he was just like anybody else.

AD: We always stuck together. We'd go to town and the town boys didn't care for us too much. We were going with their girls or some of them their sisters or relatives and they didn't care for us too much.

EH: Competition.

AD: Yeah. We were taking their girls away from them. Girls liked the uniforms too, you know.

HF: There was about three or four from Highlands coming.

AD: Right.

CCC Member: I would say that.

AD: There was Rudy. There was Barber. Well, yeah Pappy, yeah. Pappy was the lover boy. (laughter) But we never called each other names. We were very friendly. We had arguments sure. We had arguments. We've had guys, you know, arguing with each other and they took it out and they fist fought and it was all over with and then they became friends. That was the only way they took care of it by fighting with each other. And after that, and no one really got hurt.

GH: I have a good story for you. Do you want me to tell you?

EH: Sure. George Haas has a little gem for us.

GH: Okay. This is quite a jem. I happened to break my collarbone wrestling with one of the Army guys. I had broken it playing football and I repeated this time over here in the YMCA. While I was in the hospital I had a few visitors. You know, the guys came to see me for one thing or another. The biggest surprise was I looked out the window and I see this boatload of maybe about three or four or five girls in it coming up. I said, "How the heck?" They drove all the way from the Highlands. All the way to the end of the Hook, right and they came to visit me, right. They knew me. They all knew me. You know we were all friends. I didn't have any particular girlfriend or nothing like this. They came to visit me because they knew I was in the hospital. Those girls rowed up with a boat they rowed and then they rowed back again after they got done and I said, "How the heck did they do it?" You know, later on I found out how smart they were. Those girls were really smart. They waited for the tide to go out and they come to see me and when the tide went in they went back home.

HF: And we got a lot of blisters too.

GH: Right. And she was one of them. Her and who was the other three. There was four. Sis Hargrove.

HF: Sis Hargrove, she married a Jewish boy and her sister Janey and (inaudible) Snookie Butts.

GH: Five of them. Imagine. I said, "How the heck?" I rowed across from here to Atlantic Highlands. It was calm and come back again. But these girls, I said, "How the heck did they row that far?" That's miles, you know.

CCC Member: About four or five miles.

GH: Yeah. I said how did they do it? Years later it took me before I figured it out. They were hillybillies or clamdiggers. The ones that lived in town we called the clamdiggers.

HF: And the people on the hill was Hillbillies.

GH: Hillbillies, right. I think his wife was a Hillybilly, right.

(Inaudible)

GH: I think her father was a mayor or something.

CCC Member: Policeman, everything.

GH: She was a nice girl.

HF: One time when we took a boat to go down. We stolen the clammers boats and we rode down to the Hook and while we were down there the clammer followed us in another boat with somebody else and took the boat back. We had to walk from the Hook

all the way back. No shoes and I was babysitting my kid sister at that time and I had to carry her the biggest part of the way. But we used to row down there a lot. You remember the boat the CCCs used to have? Once in a while they used to come up.

(Inaudible)

GH: The two ferries used to come back and forth.

HF: Yeah.

CCC Member: How about the time we used to go to the swimming pool down there in Asbury Park? Remember in the wintertime we used to unload all the truck. Go down there and they used to give you a cut rate price to go down there in the swimming pool in wintertime. Go swimming down there. Come out of the swimming pool. It used to be nice and warm and come back in an old Army truck and almost freeze to death coming back. Remember the days too.

JC: How about this? How about in Atlantic Highland, remember they had the scenic railway and everything.

CCC Member: Yeah. Yeah.

JC: They had that big building and the marathon dances there.

(Inaudible)

JC: And they had these guys dancing there who would fall asleep. Yeah, they had the marathon dances.

CCC Member: How about the time we used to travel to Belmar and all and play baseball, Whitey?

JC: Right. Right. Belford.

CCC Member: Belmar and Asbury Park and Neptune and all that.

HF: And Leonardo.

JC: Leonardo, Right.

HF: Because we rode down with Jim Pappas and Joe Czicony.

GH: Yeah. I just showed Whitey his picture in there. He was our company clerk.

AD: The Greek.

GH: You know how he became company clerk, remember? He had poison ivy and he was in the hospital for 50 some days. I think he was (inaudible). He come out and he had all running sores right? Then he come out for one day and worked on Kingman Mills building the road, remember? Then he come back in again. 40 some days. So they couldn't do nothing. He caught it all the time. They made him company clerk.

AD: George he loved it though. These guys loved going in the hospital.

GH: Oh yeah.

CCC Member: Then we lost one kid though.

GH: Oh yeah.

HF: Tony Garrett. (inaudible) The painter.

GH: Right, he was the painter. He was the sign painter.

HF: Yeah because I was going with him.

GH: He painted all the signs up here, remember?

CCC Member: He got an infection I know that. He blew up like a balloon.

GH: You know what happened there?

AD: Poisoning.

HF: Lead poisoning.

GH: That lousy guy we had from Trenton or something like that who was leader at the time. I forgot what his name was. I remember Anthony saying to him he's gonna go to the doctor because he got that pimple on his nose right. He was hurting. So, he said, "God, are you a sissy or something like that?" Three days later he was dead. Remember they got that, they brought him up there for the transfusions and all the guys went up. He died.

(Inaudible)

GH: He was Italian from Trenton I think he was. And he kidded him. He said, "Oh come on you are a sissy." So he didn't go. He should have went. This guy talked him out of it.

CCC Member: Even though we were young kids to me this guy was a real young guy.

GH: Sure from south river. Anthony Garrett.



HF: He's got pictures in there in the album.

GH: Sure. He's in there. Yeah I showed it.

HF: I think there is a picture of him and (inaudible) and Whitey.

AD: I tell you about one thing about girlfriends. If you had girlfriends you had to suffer at times. If you went to town and you happen to miss that last bus coming in you had a five, six mile walk at two, three o'clock in the morning and what generally used to happen was you would sit at the Main Gate that pretty close to the bridge. That's the first gate. You would sit at that Gate and if a car would come by or the milk man, the MP would ask the milkman if he would care to take you in. You had to get in that barrack, sneak in that barrack, get up by reveille time. I recall one time it must have been about three o'clock in the morning walking in. I mean walking. My feet hurt so bad I took my shoes off. Walking barefooted. It was dreary scary spot there that you had to pass. There was no lights. No lights whatsoever. It was just pitch dark. There was a neary dreary place where all these birds used to hang out. Any of you fellas recall where that was?

Several voices: By the S curve.

AD: That's correct at the S Curve. There was a swamp in the right hand side coming in. The gulls and the oddest birds you ever saw or heard in your life and that time in the morning.

Several voices: Osprey, fish hawks.

AD: Fish hawks and everything and they made really terrifying screams and they made you move.

EH: What time was the last bus by the way?

AD: I think 11 o'clock was the last bus.

JC: Lights out at 10.

AD: You could sneak in and that was some long dark walk coming in. That was part of the suffering. (Tape stops and restarts)

CCC Member: The old Ford he had. Dirty filthy grease, oh he was the guy.....

(Several voices inaudible conversation.)

EH: How did this man, Clabby have the money to buy a car in those days?

CCC Member: Oh, you could have bought one for five bucks.

EH: Buy a car?

JW: Oh yes. I bought one.

AD: Top grade mechanic. You could...

EH: Clabby was a good mechanic?

AD: Oh yes. He could do anything with a car.

EH: Was he considered a, you know, a big wheel to have a car?

AD: No. He was what you call him a roust abouter.

JW: He had a very aggressive manner.

AD: Yes. Aggressive.

JW: That was the best way to describe him but he was a nice guy underneath. He would do anything in the world for you.

AD: Yes. Anything in the world for you Clabby would do.

EH: What became of him? Do you know?

AD: Joe, what became of Clabby?

JW: I have no idea.

EH: Where did he keep his car? Where was it?

AD: In town. You couldn't because of the insurance. You had to keep it in town. Clabby kept his on Barbary Avenue.

(Inaudible several conversations.) Tape stops and restarts.

EH: We are going to resume the tape. We have taken a quick break. Tom Hoffman, Park Historian has joined us. We are glad he is here because he has a lot of technical information. But some of the antidotes. We are going to talk about the famous weather out here. We are going to talk about dynamiting the Mortar Battery. Before that, and also the uniforms. We never got to the uniforms you were issued. Before that please tell us the antedote of clean the bus.

JW: That's not for me. All yours.

EH: Okay, Joe Czarnecki was telling us before, "clean the bus."

JW: Mike, don't you have a picture of the uniform in there?

JC: This goes back to our first leave I think when we first arrived in (Company) 288. We were granted a leave and boys will be boys and boys spent the night out in Highlands. Some of the boys over did it. The bus was a little messed up on the way in and it was late. The bus driver said, "Well, who ever did it I want to see him down at the bus depot cleaning this bus out," and he took some names of the fellas who messed the bus up.

EH: Somebody got sick on the bus?

JC: Somebody got sick on the bus. Yeah.

EH: Too much drink?

JC: That's what it was. (laughter) So anyhow, no one showed up to clean the bus. The bus driver showed up while we had reveille on morning. Captain Myers took the bus driver by the hand and said, "Go ahead point him out." He went right through 200 men and he couldn't recognize the guy. Three years later Captain Myers said, "You son of a gun Polack was that you?" (Inaudible)

EH: So, three years later.

JC: So, three years later Captain Myers he knew it all along. He didn't say nothing and that was the story of the bus driver.

EH: George Haas, could you describe the dynamiting operation in the Mortar Battery? First of all, why did they want to you know take it down?

GH: They wanted to get rid of the wall itself for one thing and they needed concrete for building road which...

EH: Magruder Road.

GH: Yeah right. Whitey was our leader, right. We were using it there but at the same time we were getting the gravel over at Navesink. They bought a gravel pit there. They dynamited the gravel and we took it and brought it over and put it on our road that we were building. Meanwhile how we were getting out there was using the railroad ties with what do you call it heavies that you lift things with.

JW: Heavies.

GH: Lifted the ties with. The four of us so we carried one after the other so the truck wouldn't go over. Actually, it was about 12 feet deep we were filling it in. It was a

gully, swamp and we were filling it in so the road would go straight towards where the tailor shop used to be instead of in front of the hospital see because there was a narrow road there anyway. So, this took us around and made it easy for the Army and the CCCs. Meanwhile, while we were doing that too we were building a golf course for the Army itself, you know, the officers. These jobs like coincided with each other. When you could do one, you did it and when you had time, you know, so on and so forth. But as far as the dynamiting was concerned we used the TNT first. Packed the holes with TNT and then took a half a stick of dynamite. Put the caps in the dynamite and that's how we blew the wall, kept blowing the wall. But actually, on the bottom of the wall in some places I am pretty sure it was 20 foot wide because they had rooms in there. In the corners, there were rooms. That's where we were busting up the TNT. So on the top it was maybe about six maybe 8 feet wide. It was like built like a damn. Just like you would build sections like and at the same time we were there the WPA was taking some of that stone. And I forgot where they were using that. Maybe somewhere in here too. Because you know they had projects going with the WPA at that time. We helped them out and they used the rock the same as we did.

EH: Was the project abandoned?

GH: Not until we left. After I got out, like Mike and I got out in 1938 they still were using this. They still were going through with it. But after that I don't know. After '38 I wouldn't know. So, but whether they abandoned it but I think that road is through there now. What we came into. That road is there. Magruder Road whatever you call it. But as far as the golf course is concerned I think the War must have put a stop to that, you know, being that we got bombed in 1941. So 1939, I don't know if they were still building the greens for that or what, but they built the greens on top of the old fort. Actually, there was a plotting room underneath there. They had all this equipment to check out the boats that were coming in. Slide rules and whatever you call it. In other words, you move one and this whole business would move. And it would mark something. They knew exactly the latitude, the longitude, whatever else goes along with it but just moving this. Somebody was in the observation town checking this out. But this is going back.

EH: And above this you were trying to install a golf course?

GH: We had the thing ready. Yeah. We had it there. We dug it out with the mules.

EH: How many holes would you say...

GH: It was nine, right?

CCC Member: Nine.

GH: Yeah. That's what it was gonna be but of course we didn't finish it. I don't know if anybody here stayed that long. Pete, maybe I don't know.

PH: We put some greens in.

GH: Yeah.

PH: We had some greens. We had to take care of the greens. Watering the greens. Mowing the greens and what not. But it was never completed.

GH: No. Abandoned on account of the War. If the Army was still here at the time the way they were peacetime I think they would have kept on going because there was quite a few officers lived over here, you know. Majors, colonels, Colonel Magruder, Captain Sheppard all these, you know. And then there was non-commissioned officers. I don't know if they would be able to use the golf course or not but they were here too. They had a real good thing here. They were real Army, real Army. In the morning, they shot the gun off. I think 6 o'clock in the morning they shot the cannon off. I forget where we were. And then they would have the raising of the flag and then at 6 o'clock at night the cannon would go off again. The cannon and go down the flag and they had their own band here and they paraded. They trained the soldiers to march, you know, precision.

CCC Member: Well, it was an active fort.

GH: Yeah. It was really active. It really was. I was really a wonderful place to be.

TH: I have a question. I have heard the construction projects that were done out here at the Post. I was wondering did Johnny Simpson have anything to do with you operation? Would he be supervising or anything like that?

JC: Mr. Simpson was in charge of a lot of gangs. Groups of twenty guys or whatever and he was a slave driver. (laughter.)

TH: My next question is what was his personality?

JC: Tremendous man. I knew him. I know him personally. I know his sons personally and great man. Great government man. Great government man.

TH: I've seen pictures of him and you could tell just by looking at him he was...

JC: His projects were A#1.

JW: What was his connection with the camp?

JC: Nothing at all. He worked for Post Engineers.

JW: I just didn't want to waste time figuring out who he was.

JC: He did not work for the camp.

JW: Oh okay.

JC: He worked for Post Engineers, but he had charge of a lot of details when we were assigned to work for him.

JW: Right. Okay. Okay.

TH: Now, I was wondering also, I notice the north wall of the Mortar Battery was torn down and also the east wall and more than half of the south southwest wall. I wondering if you still needed more if more of the wall would have come down to your knowledge.

GH: Sure. They wanted to take the whole thing off. I am pretty sure they had the idea of taking that whole wall off there.

TH: The outer wall but I guess you...

GH: But it wasn't any good anymore anyway. You could scale it with nothing. You could go right through.

TH: I know.

GH: It was useless. They would have used it. I think they had more ideas of building more roads, you know, into the swamps themselves. You had to have firebreaks because when those bull rushes or whatever you call it swamp bushes the things with the fans on them now they burnt they could carry across the flames could carry the light palm, what you call it or ferns, you know, the swamp reeds.

TH: Oh yeah the reeds.

GH: Right.

EH: It's called foxtails.

GH: Foxtails.

TH: Phragmites.

GH: They could fly through the air by themselves, you know, so I figured they would want to build more roads through there so they could get fire roads. We had one incident that happened to us. I don't know whether she got this down or not in the wintertime. They had a fire in the Coast Guard homes, you know, the regular Coast Guard, right. It caught on fire. The engine was coming down and by the S curve the engine went right straight through and couldn't make the curve because of snow and ice and one thing or another and all those houses burnt right down. Maybe five six or seven homes.

TH: Down at Spermaceti Cove Coast Guard Station.

GH: That's right. So, they just burnt right down to the ground. Those people lost all they had, you know, like their furniture, whatever they had like their clothing. They lost everything in there and I think I would say about 1936 I would be or '35.

TH: Somebody gave us a newspaper article. Well, it's actually a picture of everything burned smoldering.

GH: Right. All they could do was watch it. There was no water because they couldn't pump it or nothing. The fire truck was in the swamp and I think they wanted even though to protect themselves for anything future that might happen. It could have been a tragedy. You know, there was children there and they could have got killed, you know, by the fire. (They were) fortunate. I don't think anybody got hurt. Right, Whitey. No, I don't think so.

JC: Well, they had several fires out here. One of them was right in Scotland Trail. Remember we got called?

GH: Yeah. Sure.

JC: We were digging for water. We had to dig down right down in the sand to get water to put the fire out.

EH: The fire was right surrounding the Scotland Trail?

JC: Surrounding the Scotland Trail. Oh yeah.

EH: How long was the Trail? I am trying to imagine the distance about, roughly.

JW: This is what your map would show.

JC: It wasn't. From the road it went to the ocean.

TH: Yeah. It wasn't. It was near Horseshoe Cove right?

CCC Member: Yeah. Right.

TH: It started near Horseshoe Cove on the east side of Hartshorne Drive. It went towards the ocean side of Sandy Hook.

CCC Member: Right.

TH: Wasn't it lined up with Scotland Lightship. Is that how it got the name?

GH: Something like that, yeah. At that time, when Scotland Light was out there.

CCC Member: We had a couple or rustic bridges. I don't know if they are still there or not. We put some rustic bridges in there.

TH: That is what we are looking for but it's heavily overgrown now.

CCC Member: Is it really?

TH: Since that time that you built it it's an impenetrable jungle down there.

CCC Member: Is it really?

TH: Yeah. I would like to know who started the idea for that trail. Would you know to your knowledge or was it just that someone....

JC: Well, I think what he's talking about that that Simpson had a lot to do with that.

EH: Johnny Simpson.

JC: Because our foreman would have nothing to do about that or our...I am pretty sure it was the engineers, Army engineers.

TH: Just earlier before we started taping you mentioned it was conserved as a fire break.

JC: Right. I am pretty sure to maintain was like he said the man must have been pretty smart.

TH: But basically you cleared vegetation.

JC: Some vegetation you had to.

JW: You couldn't take it all out.

JC: They even used wheelbarrows to cart the sand on there, right. We got pictures of it showing them laying it down.

GH: The thing is you are talking about the sand. They had mounds and mounds of red slag. Red slag came from town.

JW: You see it around.

TH: Yeah, I see it around on shoes on Sandy Hook. Reddish brown.

JW: They built a road of that. You all remember the road they built when you take the test to drive the trucks.

GH: That's right. That's what they did. That's what they used.



JW: There wasn't that much room on either side and you looked down and where was that road now?

(Inaudible)

TH: There is a red road out where we call North Beach now and south of the Proof Battery there is a red dirt road just like that. Heavy

GH: Heavy slag. It comes from the south somewhere.

(Several voices inaudible)

JW: They used that...and they gave you one of these great big liberty trucks and say, "Here it is. Take it out of there."

GH: They had mounds of it by the Motor Pool.

JW: They had two feet on each side. If you didn't make it you were gone. The truck went down.

TH: Do you know where it came from?

JW: That's what I was gonna ask you. (laughter) It was here when we got here. That is all we know. It was a slag.

(Inaudible talking) (Tape stops and restarts.)

EH: Back the Scotland Trail, who can remember the approximate dimensions like the width of it? What the railing were made out of? What the end gazebo looked like? Anyone want to venture?

CCC Member: It wasn't very wide.

GH: About 10 feet wide.

EH: Ten foot wide.

AD: 12 foot wide.

JW: It only gave you about a foot and a half on the side for the car.

JC: It was built. I don't know. Did we drive any cars?

Several: No. It was a walk.

TH: More or less a sandy path. Did you cut it with hand tools?

JW: Yeah. That is all you had. (laughter)

GH: The sand was easy to handle.

TH: And you mentioned these rustic bridges. They were put in to cross maybe swampy areas.

JC: That's what they were, low swampy areas. It's just a quick path. They couldn't be half the size of a table.

TH: A gazebo.

(Several voices inaudible)

TH: Because there was one.

EH: We have photographs.

GH: Yeah. That could have been put in later on after we were out.

EH: Its' just like a little structure with a satched top on it with railings.

JC: That must have been done later.

EH: With railings, an open shelter.

GH: Just about 1939. The last thing they done.

CCC Member: When did they move out?

GH: About 1939. Six months after we left in 1938. I mean yeah, in 1938 they went to California. I had friends of mine that came from Brunswick...

(Several people talking inaudible)

GH: Well, whatever it was six months later they moved because I got made because I didn't stay in there. I wanted to go to California. After a while I tried to get back in again.

TH: After you built the trail was the camp, the CCC in charge of maintaining it?

JW: Oh yeah. Anything we put in we maintained. Definitely definitely. Cleaning the brush and what not.

TH: So, after you left and other CCC men of 288 came in and probably added to it.

JW: They picked up everything as we left.

GH: Only 6 months that they were there. Friends of mine came in there from where I lived. In fact, one of them works with me, was working with me in the shop there. He is still there. He name was Mackey. One was John Pascow. Do you remember John Pascow? A weightlifter with muscles like that. Well, anyway he was telling me that six months later the camp moved out to somewhere else. I don't know. Whatever it was they moved out. I guess the camp was through then. There were no more CCCs. Then probably 1940, '41 they probably built that gazebo the Army just fooled around just keep them busy. But 1941, when we got to Pearl Harbor they (inaudible)

CCC Member: When they started to build here the national defense in the '40s.

JW: Then these were private people. They weren't CCC's.

PF: No. They had the engineers in here. They built Mills, Kingman and Mills.

TH: Battery Kingman and Mills.

PF: They built those two igloos there.

TH: Yeah. TNT storage units.

PF: They were storage and they were built solid. They built igloos. Dirt, concrete, reinforcers, more dirt and built it way up. I think it is about seven layers of dirt and concrete on there. I would say if we have a bomb it wouldn't affect it.

JW: You were saying it came under the National Park?

TH: Yeah, the National Park Service is under the U.S. Department of Interior.

JW: Interior, alright. Now, where would I go in Washington for your...(tape stops and restart.)

EH: Andy Daino was describing some of the outstanding adventures during the winter here. We would like to talk about the weather here.

AD: Well, I will talk about the winter. One of the coldest that I could recall and we had to keep, maintain the roads and the railroad tracks free at all times for emergency purposes. They had to be kept clear so that vehicles could go back and forth for emergency and it was so cold, bitter cold the tracks froze. It was snow and ice on the tracks and the engine could not go so they rigged up a hose on each side of the engine and metal pipe at the end of the hose and they had two fellas one on each side of the engine in front of the engine walking and the engine created the steam and it came

through the pipe and the fellas walking in front of the engine just held this pipe on the track itself. And they just kept walking forward and as they walked forward the engine came behind them and there were defrosting it that way.



Steam pipe being used off railroad engine to de-ice the tracks.  
Photo is taken in the former Proving Ground Shop area.

EH: Amazing.

AD: Another one was the hurricane. I just don't recall which one it was but it was the first one I was ever in anyway. I was on duty. I happened to be on duty in charge of quarters that night and I had, there was no lights. All the lights went out. I don't think there was any power in the Hook itself and I could recall trying to find my barracks. Walking from headquarters to my barracks I couldn't see from the sand. The sand would blind you. The sand would shoot straight across and it was just blinding you. I finally did find the catwalk or duck walk that we used for a path and I got on to that and I think my barrack was the last barracks. That's how I knew just where to go. So about two or three in the morning they got us all up. Emergency. They had the train out alongside of our barracks because it wasn't too far. I would say oh maybe ten yards, 15 yards from my barrack and my barrack was right up close to the tracks and the engine stopped out there. They called all the boys. They had no Army crew. They had the two civilian, Jim Pike and Tom Kincanon was the engineer. Tom Kincanon, Highlands and Jim Pike was from Navesink. He was the fireman and Tom was the engineer. They got us, all us boys on a car behind the engine and we had a, what's that with the boom...

CCC Member: Crane.

AD: Crane attached to it and I recall boulders from the seawall were blown from the water onto the road and we had to clear the boulders from the tracks and the road in order to create free passage. That's how I recall that hurricane.

EH: Anyone else recall...

AD: Going back to the hottest day, I recall my crew made the tennis court, built the tennis court alongside the Theater. I can recall one day it was 118. That's how hot it was. In this area, it either got hot or got cold. It was the hottest in the country and I think the coldest.

EH: Extremes.

JC: You talk about when we cleared the way. They also had to clear away Sea Bright. The boulders went over right onto the tracks in Sea Bright. At that time, the train was a regular thing there. Not like now. It's gone. But at that time, it came through. It went up along the shore there somewhere.

PF: The Jersey Central.

GH: That's right. The Jersey Central. Right. It came right through like South Amboy, Water Witch, here in the Highlands, Atlantic Highlands. Right along the cedar grove but on the bottom of the cedar grove but what he is talking about those boulders. We had to remove them too for our, far enough to get the supplies in. because at that time we didn't have any trucks. See that's what happened other wise, everything came in by the train at that time.

JW: It was like a tidal wave. I am sorry...

EH: That must have been early. Are you talking about 1935?

GH: About '35 or '36 because otherwise we would have got the supplies in by the trucks. See which would have been easy but our supplies came in with the train. And he's talking about the cold weather, the cold weather we had at that time. You know, a funny thing, we went out to church on one of those days and it happened to be nice out. You know sunny and in those rocks there was a mother that came out of the rocks, a cat with kittens. Imagine that now. It's rain and snow and hail and everything and there was a cat in those rocks. I suppose she was catching mice and stuff like that that lived in there, you know and that's how she lived. But imagine that we are going to church in ice and it got cold.

GH: The coldest in the winter and the hottest in the summer.

JC: Oh.

JW: Evidently it wasn't bad for us. We are here.

GH: One thing, there is one thing about the Hook, there is one thing about the Hook. I don't think the wind ever stopped. I don't think the wind ever stopped. Either from the bay or from the ocean. We used to walk to go to the movies and it almost blow us right off the place. Cold and the trees would be bending from the wind. All the time, especially at night. Sandburnt or sun burnt or windburnt. Oh, I am telling you. And then

we had the mosquitoes. Then we had the gnats. Then we had those green flies. Oh, I am telling you they used to kill you.

TH: Nothing has changed.

GH: Nothing has changed. They are so bad that if you stayed the darn things would cover you legs and you would be bleeding. Honest. It really was something, boy. The weather here, if you could stand the weather here you could go all over the world and stand it.

CCC Member: It had to be the hottest in summer and coldest in winter.

GH: Just like the Long Branch Pier.

TH: What were your uniforms like? Were you issued winter clothing?

GH: Yes.

TH: What would that consist of? Winter and summer wear.

CCC Member: Typical Army uniform.

JW: The material would be like a cotton poplin. That would be your summer attire.

EH: What color?

Several voices: Tan.

JW: We didn't call it tan. No. No. OD. (olive drab)

GH: OD was the green, the Army.

EH: Khaki?

JW: Khaki.

PF: We had three uniforms.

JW: Two. Other than fatigues, if you want to call that a uniform.

PF: You had your wool, your khaki that was for winter. You had an Army overcoat. You had your long johns. Heavy shoes and everything. Summer time you get the suntans. Which consist of brown pants, dirt real light. For work we had blue fatigues with a blue fatigue hat. And that is what you worked in. That consists of three uniforms.

JW: Which is now the womens' style of hats. Believe it or not.

HF: And that's what they wore to court the girls.

EH: What about the shoes? You mentioned they were World War I surplus.

PF: Yeah regular Army shoes. They were put out by Endicott Johnson and they were very heavy and strong and they last quite a while. They were rough.

JW: You had to buy your own shoes for dress wear if you wanted to go out on Sunday or something like that. But that was the only deviation.

TH: Interesting comment over here. You mentioned what kind of uniform would they wear to court the girls?

HF: The blue one. The blue work one. The fatigues, right? (laughter)

TH: You are kidding?

HF: I am not kidding.

TH: Why the fatigues? I thought they would, the more better looking uniform.

HF: Because they were too lazy to dress up most of them. (laughter)

JW: That's right.

HF: But didn't they Andy? You used to go out to see Virginia in the blue ones too.

JW: I used to put on the black tie. You remember the black tie, Mike?

ML: Yeah yeah. We used to have a black tie. A nice shirt pressed nice with stripes on it.

TH: You also had an insignia on the uniforms.

JW: Right. Right.

EH: What was the insignia like?

JW: I am trying to, wait a minute now.

PF: Wasn't it the diamond with the 288.

JW: 288 on it. This is what I am saying.

HF: Black.

JW: Elaine, if I could have a copy of *the Bugler*.

EH: Okay. One of the copies of *The Bugler* has that diamond shape right on the cover.

JW: Right. That was on there. That was on there.

EH: It was donated by Leonard Kaner. So, I am sure that was your...

TH: I just remember the colors. It was a black diamond with...

JW: Right exactly.

(Tape stops and restarts)

EH: 16<sup>th</sup>, 1981 and this is part three of the gathering of the CCC memories of Pappy Joe Whalen, Mike Lakomie, George Haas, Pete and Hazel Feil, Andy Daino and Joe Czarnecki. We were talking about the comradeship of the CCC members and the fact that you did pretty much trust everybody. But Mike was saying before that there were a few cases like petty thievery going on. What happened to you Mike?

ML: Well, I was paid my \$25 or \$30. \$25 was sent home and I got the \$5. So, like a trusting sole in broad daylight I put the money in my pocket. It was where my jacket was hanging. I went out to chow and when I come back I looked for my \$5 and it was gone. Now, I don't know what happened to it but I have a fair idea of just what happened. Most if not all of our people were honest. It was just a few that were dishonest. I think Andrew Daino has something to add to it.

AD: Yeah, you are referring to the security of the money. Yes. I have Mike. But Elaine asked me a moment ago about how the barrack how we were set in there, how our bunks and things were set. Well, the leader had the first bunk in the barrack. As you come in the front door, the leader's that was his bunk and he had charge of the whole barracks and he was responsible for anything and everything that went on in that barracks. He in turn had a little radio and he would have it turned on real soft and their favorite program was *The Hit Parade, Lucky Strike Hour and the Arthur Godfrey Hour and the Milkman's Matinee* which went on all night long until early morning and the leader himself we used to wake up to that music and he really enjoyed it and I am sure most of the other fellas really enjoyed it. And the way our barrack was situated like I say we had 40 in a barrack and we had a large green footlocker in front of our bunks and our shoes were set there in an orderly manner and I mean polished, spit polish and we had a shelf behind our bunk which we had our knickknacks on and at inspection time it had to be completely clear of anything. No objects of any kind were set there. Our clothing, incidentally, was alongside of this on the wall hung on hangers in an orderly fashion and we had three large pot belly stoves that kept us warm in the wintertime. One at each end of the barracks and one in the center. And we had a metal plate under these big large potbelly stove and buckets alongside of each potbelly stove which was controlled by a fella that we designated was the caretaker of the stove and we at times helped him by chipping in



and paying him for the upkeep of the stove and heat which he done incidentally a wonderful job because it really got cold here. And that's about it.

EH: I would like to describe quickly the original bunk tag because I think Mr. Whalen that if you lost this tag you had to pay a fine of a dollar. And since we have never seen one before it is really quite an interesting piece. It's a metal tag about three by four inches with a hole at the top. The top is extended so that you could hang it from your bed and it does say 288<sup>th</sup> Company and then there is the medallion in the center which has the pine tree and on either side of the pine tree is U.S. and then surrounding the tree is the Civilian Conservation Corps. Right below the symbol is the lettering Fort Hancock, New Jersey which is a distinctive bunk tag just for this company which says Camp Lowe and then it says name and then typed in is Peter Feil and then below that it says serial number and then typed in it says CCC 2-146672 and then below that it says rating which is left blank and detail number which is left blank. And this is a metal holder that it's in and that is painted green and I guess green is a very symbolic color for the CCC. Besides having a bunk tag you were issued a green footlocker.

AD: Yes. You asked me before about the footlocker but Mike was referring the security about the money. Well, we did have our underwear and socks and private things that we kept in our footlockers and I was one of the fellas that used to loan these fellas money and they were very generous with me. They used to give me two dollars of chit books and I would in turn give them a dollar bill because they needed the money very badly to see their girlfriends or buy different things that they wanted to. I kept my money rolled up in the fingers of my work gloves and I put them in my locker. Incidentally, I was just a little bit smarter than Mike was and I had good luck with mine. (laughter)

EH: I meant to ask you were there any mascots like dogs?

Many voices: Oh yeah.

EH: Tell me about.

JW: Where is it? Where is it? (Looking through pictures.) Where is my buddy? I've been wanting to show this for a long time.

EH: It just dawned on me there must have been a favorite mascot or you know something that you know gave the men some humor besides practical jokes on each other.

(Inaudible talking by several men.) (Tape stops and restarts.)

JW: While I was at camp evidently a dog had been tossed out from a car, a little puppy and I found him and raised him and he got to be quite a character as far as the camp members were concerned. He was very friendly even though he was a police dog. He stayed with me long enough to take home when I quit the CCCs but he sure was a good dog.

EH: What was his name?

JW: Sandy. Sandy was his name and he seemed to get along with everybody in camp. He was a moocher. Always had to get something to eat.



Sandy, the dog with a CCC Member.

EH: How long did you have him about?

JW: I had him about two and a half years.

EH: Did you keep him outside? Did you have a doghouse for him?

JW: No. He was in my room. My place, oh yes. He was allowed to stay there. The captain would allow him to stay.

GH: We had another dog.

JW: Which one was he now? There was a mutt, a black ....

GH: He belonged to that Irishman. We had to fight the Irishman.

JW: Well, Sandy had to fight one dog down there.

GH: Not the dog had to fight, the guy the master. He was Irish. I forgot what his name was.

JW: Well, he was after my days here then.

(Inaudible talking)

GH: We had a little story that went with this. We went into the mess hall. We were eating on thing or another and everybody got a pat of butter, you know. You took it off the plate, you know, you have your share of butter put it on your bread whatever it is and it so happened we had this fella by the name of Coccomo who was the leader and we had a fella by the name of Smitty. He was a sissy of a guy right. But he was going to college at the time, right. He was in the CCCs and going to college somewhere here, Monmouth, right. So, this man whenever he ate he would eat his meal whatever he left you could have it or anything like this. You could take it or put it in the garbage can. He would say I earned it. I got a right to do with it what I want. That's the kind of attitude this fella had right. So this Coccomo didn't get any butter. He was the leader at the table. He get up he said, "Smitty, I want that butter." "What do you mean you want that butter?" He said, "You heard me. I want that butter." He said, "No." He says, "That's mine." He says, "You are not going to eat it." He says, "That's my butter whether I eat it or not." So they get up and he went to grab the Smitty and Smitty stood up and just at that time our Lieutenant came out. He heard the commotion, you know, and okay he says, "Outside. You want to settle this." You go outside and everybody looking out the mess hall watching these two guys fight. Meanwhile Smitty, nobody thought he was tough enough but he was getting the best of this guy. Somehow or another he slipped and the fella took him and got on top of him and was punching him and Marty Hula was our first aid man right. He looked out the window. He come running out there and he grabbed a hold of the Coccomo. Start pulling him off and he had glasses. Our first aid man had glasses. So this Coccomo punched him and when he did this that's when this Irish fella stepped in and he beat the heck out of this Italian fella, right. The one that owned the dog was the one that but anyway he beat him. They were good friends before then. The two of them were good friends. So then the Lieutenant got him in the office and wanted to talk to him and broke him down to a member. He was no longer a leader after that. He says, "You are finished." So he went out to work. First thing you know he comes back and starts and argument with the lieutenant. The lieutenant says, "You better get out of here." He was a 6'6" man weighs about 275 pounds right, ex-football star.

JW: You talking about Fleming?

GH: Fleming. Yeah. Lieutenant Fleming. So this guy grabbed a hold of Lieutenant and says, "I will give it to you too." The lieutenant got up, picked him up didn't bother to open the screen door and threw right out the screen door. Perfect shot. He said, "I want you out of here within an hour." He says, "You go get your stuff," and he got somebody with the truck and they sent him out with his clothes on and out he went. Never heard nothing more. He was discharged. Coccomo. He was the guy that everybody was afraid of because he was a slave driver. He was a slave driver.

PF: Didn't he almost start a riot in here?

GH: That's what it was. That's with the pat of butter, over that pat of butter.

PF: Start a riot right over in here in the mess hall.

GH: Right in the mess hall.

PF: And they took him outside.

GH: That's what I said. The Lieutenant made him got out. He didn't stop it. He said okay.

AD: Smitty was from Belford.

GH: Right. And he was supposed to be a sissy, right.

AD: He just died.

PF: Oh yes. I know who he is.

(Several voices inaudible)

GH: Nice guy but he didn't bother nobody.

(Inaudible)

EH: I bet very few of the men got demoted or actually thrown out.

GH: Well, there was the one that took the drugs. The one that smoke the aspirins he got kicked out. This one here got kicked out.

PF: Everybody either quit on their own or their time expired.

EH: I think seldom did they have...

AD: What they did was they waited until their time expired and that's when they got out.

GH: If you quit before you time then they considered out, "Over the hill," right Andy?

AD: Yeah. Very few went over the hill.

GH: And not get a discharge.

AD: They generally made their six month tour or 12 month tour or whatever.

EH: Besides the radio, we were talking about the radio programs was there anything as far as the newspapers. How did you know what was going on in the world?

AD: The girls?

EH: Going on in the world?

JW: We had the radio.

AD: Then we had, *The Bugler*. *The Bugler* was the camp paper,

EH: Paper right. Mimeographed paper.

AD: It told you about all the events and whatever happened. Huger events. It told about church hours and any events going on to the fort, the main base up here or different pictures up at the Theater. What was going on at the YMCA and it had different articles about different fellas about we had quite a few. Like I was instructing the guys. And we had Buster Gightner and quite a few of them fighting up here against Army personnel. They used to have fights. I think it was once a week they used to have fights. I had quite a few boys that came up here and fought and won. I had some that went to Asbury Park took to Asbury Park. They had fights in Asbury Park and their names were in the papers you know. And then like I said we had a man a civilian I think his name was Walling and he lived up in the Highlands in the hills and he delivered the newspapers.

PF: Eddings.

AD: Eddings, well he was related to the Wallings. Was he is in the Army? He was related to the Wallings up on the hill. Yeah.

PF: He had the concession of delivering all the papers.

AD: Eddings.

PF: Yeah throughout the Post right.

(Inaudible)

EH: What were the newspapers?

PF: We used to get all the papers. The New York papers, the local papers and so on and so forth and they would bring them in and put them in the recreation hall.

AD: That's right and magazines. In the Rec Hall, the Canteen/Rec Hall was all in one.

PF: That's how we found out what was going on in the outside world.

GH: Yeah and at that time, Hitler was in power. We had a lot of that too where he started building up the country.

(Inaudible)

GH: No. No. He started about 1934, 1935. He was starting to get into power. He actually made Germany a wonderful country but then he over done it.

AD: A ping pong table and a pool table. We spent a lot of evenings in the Rec Hall playing ping pong, playing pool. We had darts. Checkers.

JW: Yeah. Most of the cards were played in the barracks. Weren't they?

AD: Yeah the cards were in the barracks yeah. Oh yeah, we had some dice players. Some of them slickies from the city. Yeah. We had some crap shooters. I guess every camp had some crap shooters. Card players and crap shooters. That was a pastime.

TH: You mentioned earlier and I think we lost this earlier that there was a curfew but guys used to sneak in.

AD: Yes. There was a curfew. I think it was Joe, what...

JC: Yeah, 10 o'clock.

AD: 10 o'clock curfew. Lights were out but as a rule like I say the leader was in charge of the barracks and he knew just who was out by bunk check. Guys used to come in in an orderly fashion and no one ever paid any attention to them. As long as they didn't get loud and boisterous then they got in trouble and then they had to calm them down. Pappy know the kids...

JW: You called him Jim Helpen's boy but it isn't. He wasn't even married then.

AD: No, but it was in that area there.

TH: We were mentioning one of your neighbors well opposite the CCC camp was a fella by the name of Rabbit Hayes, Peter...

JW: He was the one that had the dump.

TH: Yeah. Could you fill us in a little bit about him. He was a very colorful figure in Sandy Hook history.

JW: No. I will let you do it. You know more about him than I do. I am not that sure about him. You know, I knew the prisoner more than I knew about him.

TH: One thing I would like to start if we could start on Rabbit Hayes was his appearance. What did he look like? Was he an older...

AD: Rabbit always wore a flat hat. He was pudgy, very pudgy and he always had his pal with him, dog. Where ever you saw Rabbit you saw the dog. Wherever you saw the dog you saw Rabbit and he was not too clean and I never did see him dressed up. The only

thing I ever saw him in was fatigues. He was in charge of the dumps and he had a little shack which he stayed in at the dumps.

TH: And that's the dumps that were out at like Horseshoe Cove Point?

AD: Right alongside of Horseshoe Curve in the swamp area were the dumps and they were the dumps for the Fort Hancock, the base and the CCC Camp.

TH: And you were mentioning that he would do a lot of rabbits. That's how he got his nickname.

AD: Yeah he was a great rabbit hunter. That's where he got his name, yeah Rabbit, yeah. Well, he ate the rabbits. A lot of the food he cooked himself. I don't know what kind of stove he had but he had a little shack of his own on the dumps and he spent a lot of time, the evenings he generally spent with the boys at the CCC Camp in the Rec Hall drinking beer and telling tall stories.

TH: Can you remember any of those tall stories?

AD: No. I really don't.

TH: How about his technique? His hunting technique you mentioned earlier about blinding the rabbits with the... Who was it?

AD: Oh yeah. We had an MP who I used to buy the shells for him the .22s and he was an MP and he had a buddy that was the driver of the jeep and he would sit up on the fender of the jeep and they would do their patrolling and wherever they came to a rabbit the rabbits would somehow be petrified by the lights of the jeep and this MP I don't want to mention his name would shoot the rabbit with the .22. He had quite a collection of rabbits. He used to hustle them off to people in Highlands. (laughter) He used to get his bottle of Old Drum.

CCC Member: In other words he was poaching.

AD: Poaching or whatever you would call it. He was supposed to be on duty, MP duty.

TH: What happened to Rabbit Hayes eventually?

AD: Rabbit, I heard eventually years later I heard they found him dead laying in a pipe a large pipe of some sort.

PF: No. He was found in one of the batteries either Battery Granger. He went in there and just laid down and died. I think he was due for retirement.

TH: Being a soldier.

PF: Right. He was due for retirement and the dumps and Fort Hancock was his life. He lived by it. He very seldom made a trip into the Highlands. I think in all his time here 27, 30 years he went into the Highlands about 4 times. He lived out here. He liked it out here. This was his life. To hunt, to potato peeling and make his own moonshine. I bet you if you dig down there now you still find quart bottles that he hid down there somewhere. Believe me.

TH: Out where he used to live out there?

PF: Yeah out at the dumps.

GH: Probably preserved them.

PF Yeah. He lived out there and he was a very friendly person. He'd do you more good than harm. He was very friendly and he was a good one for catching possum and cooking. I don't know if you have ever seen a possum.

TH: Yeah. I've see them.

PF: It's like a big rat.

TH: Yeah.

PF: An oversided rat and he used to cook them and they taste pretty good.

GH: Well, they eat them down south.

PF: Yeah, he used to eat possum and he used to catch rabbits and catch raccoons.

TH: When abouts do you think he died? When he was found out here? When abouts was that?

PF: That's beyond me. All I heard through the grapevine they found him and he was dead. He disappeared so they figured he deserted the Army. They couldn't figure why or anything that he would desert the Army and through the course of inspection or something like that or maybe a smell of his body because it laid there quite a while they found him dead.

TH: I would like to get into just a few questions. We started talking about the recreational activities and I notice in you pictures that you could walk around and you know walk around from like your camp and go out maybe to the beach or over into Horseshoe Cove. You could walk more or less around the Military Reservation and I was just wondering you mentioned fishing before, frost fishing in the winter. And who would you know, what could you do outdoors at the different times of you? Who could you meet? Could you meet Coast Guard patrols perhaps, Coast Guard patrolling the beach?



Several voices: No.

TH: Was anybody out here besides yourself?

Several voices: The Army was here.

GH: The Army was here. The Coast Guard was here. The National Guard came here one month. The CMTC came here, that the Civilian Military Training. ROTC came here. The Sea Scouts came here. There was always some outfit that came here to train or put in their time like they do up in New York, you know, the National Guard. Now, the National Guard used to come here. They used to fire these guns. They had a Coast Guard the (inaudible) boat used to tow a target in the back and they would do that. And also they had at the Parade Ground here they would have this plane would come over. Down below they had a .50 caliber machine gun and these guys would practice with the machine gun shooting at a sock that the plane would be towing. When they come up here they would drop it off at the Parade Ground. They would pick it up and they would check. They would relay back how many shots and one thing or another. They had plenty going on. In the wintertime, they had enough going on because you had the YMCA, you had the church like Sunday or whatever it was then you had the movies every night. You had plenty too. You had your own recreation hall. You would come up here. They had like a PX or something up here. They kept pretty busy. Always everything was something on the go all the time.

AD: Then on weekends, Saturday mornings the T boat into the city.

GH: Right, right. Also like a lot of times some of the fellas would want to go visit New York, right. So, they had the regular trip coming from here with the T boat over to Battery Park. They would drop you off and you could go where you want. You could stay there for two days if you want. You know. And then they would come pick you up at night around four or five o'clock or something like that and you would come back over and they would drop you off and then we would come back to the camp. Well, the Army people did the same thing, the same boat. Then if you wanted to you could go down to Atlantic Highlands at that time they had a marathon and stuff like that when we were here. But then they had the *Mandalay* and the *Sandy Hook*, right.

JW: Excuse me, was that boat known as the *ORD*. The *ORD*, it was known as the *ORD*, the O-R-D.

CCC Member: He is talking about the civilian....

GH: Yeah. I am talking about the *Mandalay* and I think it was the *Sandy Hook*. They pass each other in the middle and they had an orchestra on there at all times. You could dance and one thing or another. Back and forth they would go out every hour or so and then they had also one in Keansburg, the *Miss Keansburg* or whatever. Another ferry boat. So there was a lot of things going on. Also like the people would come from New York at Atlantic Highlands there, get off the boat and go to the Monmouth Racetrack.

You know and they would still have music. A regular deal going. Wonderful, really wonderful. Another thing, 4<sup>th</sup> of July you could look all up and down the whole coastline right and you would see fireworks. From one town to the other town and we all saw fireworks over here I think it was every Thursday night from Coney Island, every Thursday night, right.

AD: From Coney Island.

ML: Going back to the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard would have stations along the coast with a lock and key hanging off it and watchman used to come and punch his clock and move back and forth. (Inaudible) One time one of the keys was missing and we were asked if any of our people took that key. I don't know if we were kept in camp until that key was found. I don't know if it was ever found.

(Inaudible several people talking)

ML: It was a patrol that they had to...

CCC Member: Make sure that the guy wouldn't fall asleep.

ML: But they did have for keys on these posts ever so far.

CCC Member: Yeah they had stations to make sure they didn't fall asleep.

TH: Out on the beach you mentioned the frost fishing. Did you get any of that in during the winter months or was that....

Several voices: Sure.

GH: We got a nice story for that. I could talk about it. This one time, you know, the weather has to be just right. The water is warm and all of a sudden this night turns into zero weather just about, right and the fish, the water gets a little rough and the fish are washed up, whiting are washed up on the beach. And these fellas go along and pick them up with the boots on and one thing or another. Well, it was a couple of guys from the Highlands, Parker I think maybe and somebody else. I don't know who they were. They got fish you wouldn't believe. I had never seen this in my life. Whiting, they went into our latrine, they started cleaning those fish. They start cleaning this fish. They threw the guts and everything else into the garbage cans. The walls was filled with blood, the floor was filled with blood, everything.

PF: Take it easy. Don't exaggerate.

GH: No. No. The next day, our captain when we were having reveille in the morning. He says, "Okay, you know who you are and I know who you are. I want you to go to the supply sergeant get yourself some brushes, some soap and you go in there he says and you clean all that mess that you made and wash the mirror and everything else. Clean it

up.” What they did, they cleaned their fish and everything else and they took it down to the Highlands and they sold it down there.

PF: No. No. No. What we done we were going to cook them in there. We took the coal shovel we washed that and we were going to use that as a frying pan. These old fashioned coal shovel with the long handle.

JW: Why didn't you take them into the mess hall and cook them?

PF: It was cold. It was cold.

HF: It wouldn't have be no fun. (laughter)

PF: It was cold and we figured we were doing this on our own. Something different and Lt. Fleming come in and he grabbed me in back of the neck. I said, “Fella I got two feet. I will stand on them. Get you hands off me.” He was big. If he ever hit me I think he would have drove me right through the wall. But I stood my ground with him and he threatened me in every way. And after a while like he said we had to clean it all up and apologize after. But that's what we done. There was about four or five of us. We got them we cleaned them we figured we were going to have an extra meal.

JW: Does anyone know whatever happened to him?

PF: Who?

JW: Lt. Fleming.

PF: No.

JW: Where he lives or anything about him?

PF: No.

JW: He was All-American in football.

TH: If he was a West Pointer you could find out right through West Point. They keep tabs on all the graduates.

JW: What was his first name?

PF: I don't know. Look in the book. I think his name is in there. But Captain Myers.

Several voices: Harry Myers.

PF: Yeah Harry Myers. Captain Myers according to (inaudible) had rose from a Captain to a Lt. Colonel.

JW: Oh he probably did.

PF: This is during...

(several voices inaudible)

PF: He rose from a captain to a lt. colonel during World War II.

TH: You are talking about who?

PF: Captain Myers. And Lt. Fleming.

TH: Alright Lt. James Fleming.

PF: James Fleming, yeah.

TH: He is pictured here on June 8, 1936.

PF: Yeah. James Fleming. That's him there.

ML: And I also have Myers here too.

(Inaudible talking)

PF: Here's his name here I think on my discharge.

JW: It had to be Myers if anybody. He was the only one that could sign them.

EH: You talked about what an outstanding leader he was and you talked about what great admiration all the men had for him and he helped them in a personal way and I thought you know, you were just mentioning it.

GH: You guys talked about discrimination, right? He was Jewish, wonderful man believe me.

EH: And you said he would ask the soldiers if they went to church that Sunday.

JW: He would come around right through the barracks and say Captain, hit truck, hit the truck.

TH: He was good to everyone, Harry Myers.

JW: Yeah.

GH: Like I said, he gave me a pair of shoes.

AD: He was good to everyone.

EH: He gave you a pair of shoes? George Haas.

GH: Yes. I took his place for a month right. He was the officers boy right.

JW: The Orderly.

GH: Like I could say the other one.

JW: You are just jealous that's all.

GH: Anyway, I took his place because he had some time coming, you know, and when I took his place I had to clean out the barracks. I had to make sure the captain's clothes was okay just like he did. Make the bed one thing or another which I did. Then I had to go into the mess hall and get the food ready and put everything on the table in the morning, the pancakes and the butter and everything. They had the best. I ate the best for a month. So anyway, while I am in there I cleaned everything. I polished their shoes and one thing or another. I polished this pair of shoes that looked kind of dusty or one thing or another. So the captain says the next day to me, "How come these shoes are polished?" I said, "What do you mean?" "How come them shoes are polished? They are under the bed." "I was supposed to polish them aren't they?" He said, "They haven't been polished in a couple of years. I don't even wear those shoes." He say, "They don't even fit me right." He says, "And you polished them?" I said, "Yeah." He says, "I tell you what, will they fit you? You are about a size 8 or something like that." Even if I had size 7 I would have said yeah I wear a size perfect. He gave me the shoes. A \$35 pair of shoes, Florsheim's.

PF: Civilian shoes.

GH: Yeah. Civilian shoes. So he gave me the shoes. So then at the (inaudible) he is the thing one time and I am talking to the guys. He says, "Jesus, this George here is really on the ball." He says, "What is your rank in here?" "I am just a worker here." He says, "You are not a leader or nothing." I says, "No." He says to me, "Well I am gonna tell you something." He says, "You are now." I says, "I heard that before." I says, "I am not a leader. I have heard that from other CCCs." He said, "Did you hear it from me?" I said, "No." Would you believe my name was on the board as assistant leader. How about that? Just because I took good care of him, you know.

JW: You didn't finish the story right.

GH: I finished it.

JW: One thing about Captain Myers he was always interested if you had something unusual you wanted. Mike and I he took us down to the game refuge down by Toms

River and I had talked him into raising pheasants. Okay. So we come back with the eggs. We get the okay. We bring them out we got the little chicks. I guess maybe three or four hundred. Okay. George says I came up for time off and I took time off. When I got back the Captain he was really sore and I mean mad. “What the hell did you do to me?” I said, “What’s the problem?” “Half of those GD pheasants are dead.” I said, “Oh Christ. They were all healthy when I left.” “Please take care of them.”

GH: No. No. I had nothing to do with the pheasants.

JW: Don’t you give me that. If you were...

GH: He is wrong. I didn’t have nothing to do with the pheasants.

JW: Get on back here and see that. This is the worst I ever heard Myers. He is always calm. Very you know. I come back and sure enough as I am standing looking at them 35 of them dropped dead in front of me. Okay. Get them out of here. Then I talked him into a firing range. Do you remember that when we had the pistol range? I talked him into about several different things. These guys didn’t appreciate it. Okay. You know where the photo lab was?

JC: That’s where I was working.

JW: That’s because I had him put it in there. Sure, I got everything out of the Captain, see, for these guys.

(Inaudible)

JW: In the officers’ quarters. In the back room, right where the pheasants were raised.

GH: Did you say raised or died? (laughter)

JW: When you took them over they died.

GH: I had nothing to do with it.

JW: Here I am cautious. I am practically staying up the night when I first got them you know, to make sure the temperature was just right. It had to be 95.

EH: Wow.

JW: Well, this was it with pheasants, you know. They boy and just because they got two legs and stand there for a minute doesn’t mean they are going to survive. They are the worst to raise. I would never do it again.

(Inaudible talking by several people)

JW: Father, down in the old Knights of Columbus barracks which was a barracks from the First World War. It was a Catholic Church that was down in Washington, DC where we were stationed. We were stationed about three miles from there in Fort DuPont. I guess you have heard of that? Haven't you?

TH: Yeah. I have heard of Fort DuPont.

JW: Okay. He would come around if he knew that you were Catholic. He would pull the covers right off you. Then he would say any Catholics in here hit the truck. Get moving. And then any Protestants? Hit the truck. He would take, you know, the different groups. Or he had minister, now there was one time, I don't know whether you remember that? Even if it was snowing so bad or something but he had the priest come up to the, oh there was some kind of a scare of somebody having what do you call it?

JC: Spinal meningitis.

JW: Okay, okay, right. We weren't allowed to go out of the camp.

JC: He was the cook. (laughter)

JW: So he had the priest come up there and say mass in the Rec Hall. This is the way they got along.

EH: They were afraid it was an epidemic?

JW: That's right and we couldn't go out.

JC: Well, he was contagious.

JW: But the priest could come in. What was the priest's name? Father, oh gee has a real nice guy. Big fat fella, real nice. Well, you would never sworn you thought they were Jewish and gentile, the two of them. He was right interesting.

PF: Remember when they used to run affairs down at the church.

JW: Yeah and all the CCC boys went down there and manned the booths.

PF: Manned the booths and never a penny missing or nothing.

JW: That's right.

PF: Just in July before we left here he come up and had Special Services when we left here.

JW: Left there.

PF: Yeah. Washington, D.C.

JW: He had a big blowout.

PF: He said if we ever got down there and never went to see him it wouldn't be good manners. He wanted us to stop to see him. I can't think of his name. He was an Irish name wasn't it?

JW: Do you remember the polish priest, Father Wacowski?

PF: Yeah. Yeah.

JW: You know he is still down there?

PF: Still down there.

JW: Yep.

PF: No kidding.

TH: We are going to have to wrap it up.

JW: Yeah. I was gonna say about the same.

TH: I can see your memories are very good ones of the CCC. Very enjoyable.

EH: In closing, where did you leave, where did you go from here?

JW: Oh, that's a good question. Oh you mean when the whole camp went, I can't answer that. I wasn't here.

EH: No, but I mean basically each one of you.

JW: Oh you are talking about going and returning to civilian life. Is that what you are talking about? He went to the Highlands.

JC: No. I didn't. I went in New York.

JW: Oh, you did.

JC: Well, what happened to me, Captain Myers said they were moving out of here. "Did I want to go?" At that time I was supply sergeant. I said, "No way." I had over three years in then. I said, "I have got to get out. I have got to move somewhere." They were going back out west. Now you guys said they went to Idaho or whatever. I said, "I have got to make a move." And you talk about the good of Captain Myers. He said, "Anything in mind?" I said, "No. I got to find a job." He said, "Okay hang on." He



called up whatever connection he had he had a connection at Macy's in New York. He called them up and he said, "Okay go for an interview in Macy's." They hired me just like that and I was at Macy's for five years.

JW: Did you know he was very wealthy?

JC: He could have been. Oh yeah. I believe that.

JW: In New York, Mamaroneck, that's where he came from.

EH: So, Mr. Czarnecki you went to Macy's and got a job there through Captain Myers.

JC: Oh yeah. He got me the job.

EH: How about George Haas?

GH: I came home for about a year. I was just hanging around. I wanted to get back in the CCCs and I couldn't.

EH: Late 1938 probably.

GH: Yeah. Around 1939. I got a job working in a lamp, not a lamp factory a (inaudible) factory working as a buffer and then I would in the summertime I worked on college farm, right. Then I went to work for a lamp factory doing the same thing I did before, buffing. Then I went to work for a wireworks. From this wireworks I went to personal products, Johnson and Johnson. At Johnson & Johnson I spent 39 and ½ years almost 40 years.

EH: Amazing.

GH: And I am retired. I got kicked out for one reason they sold the machine. The paper machine was making tissue. The dryer itself was only one that's only two in the world. Ninety ton weight the cylinder. 59 inches in diameter and the machine was worth about \$10 million dollars. We had two of them and it could go 5,000 feet a minute making that tissue and when that would break in five minutes there was tons of paper on the floor. (laughter) Wet hot paper, believe me. So, I worked on the machine for a while and then I became an oiler in the maintenance and then I left that and went into the police department for a year and I went to the out to the yard department for two years and then I went back into the paper department with the same job I had before as an oiler and maintenance worker. That's where I worked last as maintenance. Retired from there and that's the best thing that ever happened.

EH: How about you, Pete Feil? Where did you go from Camp Lowe just briefly.

PF: Oh from Camp Lowe I took a job at the state hospital and I worked there for about there or four years. I quit that and I went construction. Worked a few years at

construction. Then I went up to Perth Amboy took a job working at the American Smelting Refinery. I worked up there 25 years. It was only going to be just for the winter but 25 years was a long winter and the place closed down and moved out west. I had the option to retire. This is it. Retired at 59 years old.

EH: And Hazel Feil. What became of you rowing a boat back and forth here?

HF: I got too old for it.

EH: Getting in trucks with blankets. (laughter)

HF: I got too old for it and went ...

EH: What year did you marry?

HF: '41. And I worked in a factory until I had my two children and when they got grown up they wanted to go to college so I went back to the factory. Gave them their education and I worked for myself and the place went bankrupt and I got another job in the same place. They went bankrupt and to get rid of me they burnt the place down. (laughter)

JW: I was going to say you were bad medicine.

HF: Oh I yeah. I put in for retirement. I will be 62 next month and I am going to enjoy retirement. I am going to get you home.

PF: That's my wife.

EH: How about Mike Lakomie? What did you do when you left at the end of 1938?

ML: After I left the CCCs I joined the Biltmont Iron Works. We put up steel structures. That didn't last too long. We put up one building and they didn't need me no more. Then I joined a steam fitting outfit. They installed steam boilers, steam lines, steam pipe. I was there for about I think for 5 or 6 years. Then I got into Squibs and I got to be a foreman of the welding shop and the tin shop. I was there for 42 years and I retired. I am 66 years old now.

Several voices: You are old. (laughter)

ML: Now I will turn it over to Daino and we will find out....

EH: Where did Andy Daino drift to after Company 288?

AD: I, the day before I left I got married to the local girl in Highlands. From there I went back home to New Brunswick. I worked in Johnson and Johnson right across from personal products right where my friend...

JC: Industrial tape.

AD: Yeah. Industrial tape work where I worked there for about 5 or 6 years I guess and War broke out. They took all five of my brothers. So, I was the oldest one. I felt like a heel. I am the oldest one and I am home and all my five brothers were gone. So, I tried to sign up. They wouldn't let me go. Industrial tape wouldn't let me go because they said it was a war plant or some sort and I told them they could go where they wanted to go and I was going to take off anyway which I did. I got into the Merchant Marines and I was there for three years. I got out of here. We went back to New Brunswick. I loved Highlands so much I left New Brunswick and packed up with my three boys and came to Highlands. I worked for the water and sewer plant in Highlands and then I was school custodian up there, head custodian for 28 years. Retired and here I am.

EH: Joe Czarnecki, where did you go after Company 288?

JC: I already said. I went to New York.

EH: We got as far as Macy's but we didn't...

JC: Well, after I left Macy's well living in New York and New York started to get bad we got ripped off a couple of times and my wife said this is enough for me. Let's go back home. So we came back to Highlands and I got a job over in Bendix and I stayed with Bendix for 40 years.

EH: Wow.

JC: And I retired last year.

EH: And lastly, the man who actually got us assembled today, was Joseph Whalen who lives in Silver Springs, Maryland. What happened to you after Camp Lowe?

JW: Well, after Camp Lowe things were a little bit rough as far as work was concerned. I think I bummed around for maybe a year and my next door neighbor gave me a letter. I took it down to D.C. to see if I could get a job down there. He was a manager in restaurant. Well, you spoke about segregation a minute ago and when I went to him he said, "Sorry you are not the right, but I will give you a note and you go over to another Childs." Quite a few of you people know who Childs is, Childs Restaurants. I stayed there in the brink of becoming a manager I took and exam for the government and they gave me a call. I went to work for a Naval Torpedo Station in Alexandria as a helper. Then I became an apprentice. Finished my apprenticeship there then I decided after the War, halfway through the War to go into the restaurant business and got a little bit tired of that. Put money away but then I left the government there. Then I went back to the government re-entered again and I stayed in there and came out as an engineering technician. So, that was in the Navy Department in White Oak, Maryland. Have you ever been down to Washington? Anybody ever been there?

TH: Washington D.C?

JW: Yeah.

TH: Oh yeah.

JW: You ever heard of Naval Ordnance Lab?

TH: That's not the Navy Yard though?

JW: No. I went through the Navy Yard for indoctrination.

TH: I know where the Yard is.

JW: Yeah okay.

CCC Member: Is that near Myers, Fort Myers?

JW: Oh no. That's in Virginia. Fort Myers is in Virginia. Fort Myers is not far from the headquarters of the CCC.

AD: Is that near Columbia Pike where you were?

JW: No. You are still in Virginia. Let's get out of Virginia. I was in Maryland, see. I was in Maryland. The Torpedo Station was in Alexandria, Virginia. That's where I served my apprenticeship for machinist. That was in Virginia. Well, its not known as Naval Ordnance anymore. Its Naval Weapons Surface Command. That's what it's called now.

TH: In Dahlgren?

JW: No. Dahlgren is in Virginia. It's odd that you bring that number up because Dahlgren got their hooks into NOL and that's where it comes from. They really got in there and took over.

EH: Before we close Mike Lakomie has a statement. I really I can't believe you people devoted so much time here. I think it's marvelous. It's just wonderful. (laughter)

(Many people speaking, inaudible.)

EH: Mike I am sorry.

ML: Well, I just wanted to add I didn't tell you I was in the Air Force. I joined 1941 and I left in 1945, the early part of '45. I left as a master sergeant.

JW: Where did you go to Denver?

ML: No. I was in Australia, Philippines and New Guinea.

JW: No you training.

ML: We went from Camp Dix to Miami, from Miami to Fort Jefferson, Missouri from there to San Francisco, California. I stayed there about three days and about three o'clock in the morning they got us out of bed. Loaded us up with our bag and onto the ship and away we went. I was on the boat for 24 days and we zig zagged out way across the Pacific. We got almost as far as Australia and we got a submarine alert but our engine broke down and we were stuck there and the convoy kept going and there we were all by ourselves. Around dawn we got an alert that there was a submarine near us so everybody donned their lifejackets and we were waiting for the first torpedo to hit. Fortunately, somehow word got out that we were stuck out there and our sub kept watch over us. So, finally we got our engine going again and we proceeded by ourselves to New Caledonia and from new Caledonia to Australia. We stayed in Australia for about a year and we went to New Guinea and from New Guinea to the Philippines. I was in the Air Force.

GH: This is nothing. Tell them what you did there. (inaudible.)

ML: Well, we started as a fighter squadron with a P38 fighter outfit and the outfit went to Java and they were outnumbered by the Japs and they were really shot down. They lost quite a few. So the outfit, it was called the 7<sup>th</sup> fighter and we came, or they came back to Australia to regroup. But it didn't form a fighter squadron. We turned into a service squadron and we also had what was called a CRTC which was a combat reserved training center. We lost many pilots, new pilots that were, that came from the states and were thrown into combat right away and we lost two or three every day. So they gave them combat training before they were put into combat and our casualties dropped.

GH: Tell them what your job was Mike. What you were doing.

ML: Well in the service squadron I had charge of three different squadrons. One was a fighter squadron. One was a transport squadron and one was a bomber squadron. The B24s the B17s we had the P38, P47s, P38, P39s and the transport C47s and C46s and we maintained those so I had charge of all the welding of those three squadrons. We had quite a few master sergeants near the war end they started sending these permanent party towards the states. Master sergeants, technical sergeants. They came in there like zebras. I would say within a months time these guys started throwing their weight around and they threw it just a little bit too much and they were busted right out of.

GH: Tell them what kind of a citation you got.

ML: I got a commendation from General Kenny. He was the general of the whole Southwest Air Force. I still have it home.

GH: That's a little guy that comes from a town called Milltown with only about 5,000 people and that's what he went through.

EH: That's a conclusion from a modest man of many accomplishment of really everybody and I really feel that the CCC instilled in the members a great sense of pride and was a foundation for truly great wonderful people and I say that.

GH: Don't forget to put in there that we still have the pride.

EH: I know that and each member has still what is so remarkable to me is the sense of pride and the strong character of the people that came from the Civilian Conservation Corps. Thank you very much. The next project is to keep the history alive of the CCC and to round up the remaining members of Company 288 to hopefully have a reunion and pass on the heritage and the ideas to the people, the young people today and give them that same sense of accomplishment and pride.

**END OF INTERVIEW**