

START SIDE A

[tape begins with people talking in the background. There is a pronounced hum present throughout the tape. Tape recorder was placed too close to interviewer and not close enough to informant]

E. M. Noyes: . . . give Hoskins a message, about the Park, getting to be-

Mrs. Noyes: Do you have to get back to Luray today?

Dorothy Noble Smith: Yup!

MN: I was going to say, you could spend the night here.

DS: The Park's getting what?

EN: The parks are getting to be, that is, especially Shenandoah, nothing but a wilderness!

DS: Isn't that beautiful!

EN: That's what he said! He said when he was up as a ranger, he was up there as chief ranger, you know. They had the fields, you see that was a grazing country up there, one of the best grazing places in the country. Kentucky bluegrass, the best kind of grass up there. We had gates all the way through, I don't know if you remember that?

DS: No.

EN: All the way through, all divided. And when we went up there, we had to open up all these gates and close them. I don't know how many gates they had the whole length of the Park, but a bunch of them. Big Meadows was a big, big area there, where there was all kinds of cattle. And that one, one day there a fellow was sitting right up there in the air, just as skilled as could be. And the boys out there, looking at him. He was in a, you know, glider. One of the Dupont boys.

DS: Oh!

EN: And he hollered down, "How about chasing those cows out of the way?" So the boy went down there and he chased all the cows over. See, they wanted to land. Just being a nut () and he went and he'd go for a ride that day.

DS: Wow!

EN: He was killed later on.

DS: Uh huh. Well, you're objecting to the fact that nature has taken over and reclaimed what the mountain people had done, the damage that they had done. And now the trees have returned.

EN: Oh, yeah. So, all right, you've got plenty of trees! Well, why's, why not have some nice, clean place? Doug Brannon said, one thing he brought up to me when I'm down there last time, he said, he said, "Ought to have left some of those fields there, they're so much more interesting!"

DS: True, and then--

EN: But you can't see nothing but trees! At Camp 1 now, you can't see a blooming thing!

DS: Umm hmm.

EN: That was beautiful, there.

DS: You were there from 1933, right?

EN: 1933 'til, well, almost, to the end.

DS: Yeah.

EN: And then I went from 1 over to 10.

DS: Now, what was it like in the very beginning, when you first got there?

EN: Is this thing going?

DS: Yeah.

EN: Hmph! (laughter from both women in background)

DS: What's wrong with that? (more laughter) What was it like when you first got there?

EN: Well, let's see, located that camp there, and after they showed me a spring, up from the camp, over the highway. He said, "you can get your water here." But that didn't last long.

DS: Why?

EN: Because there wasn't enough supply.

DS: Oh.

EN: You know Ed, old man Parks ()?

DS: Yeah.

EN: Well, we saw him, we had pulled in to get water. And he said, well, there's a place down below your camp, there, with a spring that's big enough say where a man drowned his wife.

DS: Oh, boy.

EN: So we went down there and looked around and couldn't see any water at all. But he showed us where the spring was and dug down there and we developed that down there, had a good water supply.

DS: So, that's right, Pollock was still there when the CCC--

EN: Oh, yes, he was still there.

DS: And Skyland was still operating.

EN: Oh, yes, very much. Gee, we used to have wonderful times over there, he's a great entertainer, you know.

DS: Yeah, and he invited the fellows from the CCC?

EN: Oh, yeah. We used to do a lot of favors for him, getting him wood and everything else, and we, we renovated most of those cabins. We put in fireplaces, with the boys, stone fireplaces.

DS: Why did you do that?

EN: In Skyland!

DS: Why? To help him? Or was that--

EN: They belonged to the government then, those buildings.

DS: Oh, I see, yeah.

EN: And we renovated them. We did a good job. The boys used to work over there, cleaning up and everything else, and one day a fellow said to me, "Who are these young fellows around here?" Says, "I never saw a bunch of kids working so hard as these fellows are, ()" And I says, "CC boys." He said, "Wait 'til I get home, I'm going to tell them what a CC boy is like!" He says, "I've heard so much criticism." He said, "I never saw youngsters more interested in what they're doing." I went on into Skyland and I told them, "You're going to see some pretty girls coming up here, and with shorts on and everything else." I says, "Go ahead and look at them () but don't glare!" They didn't, never had anyone complain at all about them. Always well behaved.

DS: Were they still making moonshine when--

EN: Huh?

DS: Were the mountain people still making moonshine when you were there?

EN: Oh, yeah! All you had to do is whistle and somebody would come out () haystack with a, a two quart mason jar. Just pass that mason jar around. (laughs)

DS: How much would they charge for that?

EN: Oh, I (), but it's cheap.

DS: And it was good.

EN: I think it's three, four dollars a half a gallon?

DS: But it's good stuff, though, wasn't it?

EN: Oh, I don't know. I had a drink of that years after, and I said, "How in the devil do they drink that stuff?" I'll never forget one time they had some company thing and passing this mason jar around. One of the boys went over to Camp 10, Number 40, can't think of his name right now. He sat there, chatting, took a drink. And his face, all wrinkled up, he () it around there and finally he fell over on the floor. () Finally he got up and sat in a chair, () "Boy! That was good!"
(laughter)

DS: What got you into the CCC's?

EN: What?

DS: What got you into the CC's?

EN: Went down there and applied for it.

DS: Uh huh. And, had you known that you were going to go into the Blue Ridge Mountains?

EN: No one had told me that, I didn't know it. No, I didn't ask that, (). I didn't have an idea what that Park was like. I'd been to Luray, and () we went a little way, and he says, "There's going to be a drive up on the mountains there." That's all I'd seen of it.

DS: Well, you were in charge of that Camp 1, weren't you?

EN: Umm hmm, Camp 1 and Camp 10. And later on down, down to 27, I think it was.

DS: Camp 1 was originally just tents, wasn't it?

EN: Just tents.

DS: How, were the tents all right? Did they keep you warm and dry?

EN: Well, we had, in the winter time they had the barracks built by that time. And the tents, especially where our tents were, they were close together. And the ropes criss-crossed. And they had a lot of horses over in Skyland and they used to let them out and they'd come over there, running our camp down, going through there, () say, knocking the ropes down and down come the tents! (laughter)

DS: Well, there's a lot of work, real hard work that was done by the CCC's, wasn't it?

EN: Absolutely. We helped on that wall, you know. Did all the work, we were laborers, they had to bring masons in, had to do that work. But we did all the labor for it.

DS: Well, now, from what I understand, you can tell us a whole lot about the inception of the Park. Now, that picture that you were showing me shows Lassiter with you. Did he help direct any of the programs that the CCC's did?

EN: Well, I suppose he did, he probably got the orders from Washington. No matter who, the first thing we did was build a trail. We started a trail back from the camp there at Skyland. And somebody from off in Washington, "Oh, this trail ought to be over here." And then somebody else come, "Don't understand why you're building a trail here." So I went down and saw Lassiter. I says, "I want to put in an order for a couple thousand rollers." He said, "What kind of rollers?" "I want to roll these, roll these trails () so we can shift it! He said, "I'm going to put a stop to that!" and he did. () think they had so many people coming out and trying to boss. And nobody knew anything about what this thing was all about, there, anyway. But those boys worked, never had to egg them on or anything.

I was telling, later on, we had to get rid of the Virginia boys. We was putting in a bunch of

boys from Pennsylvania, we got a bunch from Philadelphia, supposed to be the poorest area of Philadelphia and () be a little tough with them. So they got a letter, some sob sister had wrote in to Washington. They got an order up, got an order that () shipped all the Virginia boys out of 10. And Fechner, who was the President's (), with the government, now, he was out there. And I said, talking to him, he used to come out to camp a lot. () I said, "From now on orders come out from Washington. From your office." And I said, "We had one crazy one. First one that I've seen." He said, "What was that?" And I told him, I said, " Taking the Virginia boys out, so'd we be getting boys from the north. They call us names and so forth, just because some sob sister wrote in and was having trouble in one of those camps. We haven't had any trouble, they're mixing good." I said, "What are you going to do when we get in a war? You going to say, 'you come from the north and you come to the south.' Aren't you going to mix them up? Of course you are." () I said, "I don't know who issued that order, but it was a crazy one." He said, "I agree. Why should that still sail?" (laughter)

DS: So, did they do it? Did they do that?

EN: Sure they did, had to get rid of all of them!

DS: Where did they go, then?

EN: Oh, different camps, said I'm all wrong. That was a crazy order.

DS: But I thought that you, didn't you say when I first came in here that the mountain people helped you all along?

EN: Oh, yeah.

DS: How?

EN: () on fires. On fires, and (). (). Hell, I don't know what we'd have done

without them. Take () camp, we didn't know anything about fighting forest fires. And the people they had come out there from California and their method of fighting fires out there's entirely different. Guess they never had any ground fires (). So we learned how to fight it with () say to these fellows, "Well, what do you, what's the best thing to do?" And they'd tell us, and we'd do it. And then we had a big fire there, one time, I mean, () Had to backfire it and stop it. But, didn't have anything a couple of years, you never knew we had a fire up there. Never hurt anything with it. But there was a, I was talking with an army captain there, with a big flashlight, and I saw something, looks liked a little blaze, away from his fire. I () and flashed the light and I saw somebody running. I went up there and here was the fire started again. They were going to start a fire up () from where it was burned, see? And one of these mountaineer boys came over to me and said, "Mr. Noyes () burn that house up." So I says, "If it doesn't burn, then I'm going down and set that on fire myself." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "I'm getting darn sick of you guys, touching these things off up here." I said, "We just caught a fellow up here. We didn't catch him, but caught it in time so that it didn't, didn't spread." "Oh, no, no, we don't do anything like that." But a few weeks after, I came in from Washington that weekend, came out Monday morning, they'd had a big fire. Mile long. This mountaineer came in the office and he said, "Noyes," he said, "I know who set that fire, those fires down there." He says, "I saw them." He says, "I hate to say it but one of them was my nephew." So we--

DS: Do you remember the name?

EN: Huh?

DS: Do you remember the name?

EN: Name of the man? Mountaineer don't like giving (). So, I went down to, what's

the town east of us? ()?

DS: Madison County?

EN: Madison, went down to Madison, and got the, got the sheriff. And he come up and got the boy, and locked him up. () trial down there, so I run down there, and I told this, told this to the district attorney, whatever his name was. I wanted those fellows sent up. Make an example of them. Or they'll be doing this all over the mountain. He says okay, so I went down there, the morning of the trial, and I went over to the courthouse and he wasn't there, and then I went back to-- I went to his office first, and he wasn't there, and then I went over to the courthouse, and then I was going back to his office and I met him. And he says, we got this thing all set now, he says, come on up to the office. And he says, what are we going to that fellow? Malicious arson, or carelessness, or this or that? I said, malicious arson, (). he says, okay. He hadn't made any preparation at all. When we go in the trial there, they had prosecutors for the boys, I mean attorneys for the boys. And they're just pounding this uncle of one of these boys who is a witness. Well, they just kept going and they got through with him and another, then another lawyer started pumping. And I said, I was sitting along side of the, oh, my thoughts (). And I said, "You got a safety net?" Another fellow get up there, and pound down on him. I said, "well, you're going to make a fellow confess something, 'cause he'll get out of it, ()." "No!" he says, he got up and says, "I object." Just then the judge up there, sitting up there, (makes spit noise) spit the () [plug?] clean across the darn room. (laughing) (). Gee, I could tell you a lot of funny things.

DS: Did the fellows get it?

EN: Ma'am?

DS: Did the fellows then--

EN: They got it, they got a year. We never had a fire down there after that, not a one! We used to have a lot in the winter time. I remember the boys with back pumps on, slop over some in the back there and freeze. ().

DS: Did the mountain people help you with learning how to use axes, and the rest of that?

EN: That's what I say about these, these locals, which we had foremen. Then these locals, you know, they would, they showed them and everything.

DS: Because a lot of the fellows had no idea how to do anything, really.

EN: Well, () right down at, down at headquarters there. And we were called in to get our () First job and the boys were () [forming? digging?] the foundations. And the concrete man was, got about half done and it started to rain. And it rained. Did the boys quit? No, stayed right there 'til it was done. And we'd do a lot of cabinet work down there, they had a foreman there, () down there when they need () couple of the two by fours or something over his shoulder. Said, what are you lugging that for? Send the boys after that. No, I says, I send them for a two by four, they'll come with a four by six or something. And the fellows up on the roof, pounding nails into the scaffolding, just nothing to do, didn't have, didn't have the slates up there, whatever they was putting up there, the roof. So, got rid of him, I didn't get rid of him, but I got another man down there, and I told () got your hammer in your hand, gonna hit you over the head with it.

DS: I guess you had to really --

EN: Let the boys do it! Let the boys do! When I come down there, we did everything in those houses, the heating, put in all the heat, everything but the plastering, course you didn't have that plasterboard in those days. Did everything but the plaster. I'd go down there and they'd show me the doors they hung, the floors they laid. And they did it, and they were good. They were working

all the time. Went right up to the roofs. And those houses are better than the ones they built later on down there, you tell me.

DS: Well, you know, being the superintendent of them, the way you were, you really had your hands full, didn't you?

EN: Oh, they had plenty to do.

DS: Because you had to follow the guidelines from Lassiter, as well as Washington.

EN: Of course, I was always very much interested in the boys. That's what that was set up for. They had to, we had a recreation, we had a place where the boys met, then. Then they wanted to start school for them, they wanted to build a building, this is later on. Couldn't just, one they had () so we'd make a school out of it. And I says, they wanted us to build a new one, that was it. So I said, "well by golly, we're going to build a gymnasium." So they're tearing the camp down down below the mountain, I forgot the name of the town down there. And sent the fellows to get some lumber out of it. And the truck come back with the lumber, started the long haul. So I said to the company commander there, I says, "how about sending a field kitchen down there?" So they (), they stayed down there, and we got enough out of that place to build a gymnasium! The only one that was built in the CC camp in the whole country! That caused more trouble, () they, they try to get the buildings, you know. He says, "that thing's caused more doggone trouble than all the buildings in the CCC!" He called me over to the camp () Skyland, and he called me over there. And he said () well, I said, "you keep changing it! () you keep changing the darn thing." () And he said, "well, you can finish that up the way you want to do it, I quit, see? () Finish it up the way you want it to be, go ahead with it." I says, "Okay," so I went ahead with it. Had, down, down in the basement, we had lockers, showers, and all that. I wanted to, I wanted to heat it with

steam or hot water, I said, "what do we got for () a hot air furnace?" That's all we got, just a furnace, nothing to go with it. () I stole pipe from along the roads, you know. So, one day the lieutenant of the camp, he came up to me and he says, General (), I think his name was, went down there () looking at the gym, and he told me, he said, put one, one furnace on one corner and one in the other. And I said, " the hell we are!" And he said, "I can't tell that general that I won't." I said, "I can!" (more laughter) So then I went down there and I said, "how do you like the look of this gym?" He says, "fine." I told him what they were doing, and they'd put the furnaces down in the basement. "Oh, no," he said, "put them up in the gym." I says, "we'd have to build a fence around it, then so they don't fall into it. Look at this room, this thing isn't any too big as it is." Finally he said okay. But that lieutenant had to follow up his orders.

DS: Was Skyland still there when the gym was built?

EN: Skyland was there last, it was still going when we left. Pollock, he was a great friend of mine.

DS: Mrs. Pollock was there, too, wasn't she?

EN: Oh yeah. She had the money.

DS: Yeah. She was a nice women, wasn't she?

EN: Yes, she sure was.

DS: Did they still have their guest cottages?

EN: Yeah, one (). 'Cause it's gone, now, 'cept that house he lives in.

DS: That's right. they're thinking of making a museum out of his home.

EN: Yeah?

DS: Uh huh.

EN: I don't know, it isn't Skyland anymore to me.

DS: No, it isn't Skyland anymore. How about any wild animals, were there any wild animals that you all ran into while you were there?

EN: Well, down at, at the, what you call it when you're coming over the mountain?

DS: Panorama?

EN: Panorama. They had two bears there.

DS: Oh, yeah.

EN: One was a male, one was a female. And some man come in there, and must had one of them clawed him a little bit. And they had a trial down in, down in Luray. He tried to sue the fellow that ran Panorama there. And I was called in for a witness. And they wanted to know whether I was, had anything to do with bears, I seen a lot of bears, wild bears--

DS: Bear in the Park?

EN: No, no, I'd seen them up in Michigan. And I said these are tame bears. Somebody might have had to get rid of them. I said, that bear wouldn't have done anything () if that man hadn't got in, jumped over one fence, got in the other and molested him.

DS: Yeah. But there weren't any deer there, then--

EN: Huh?

DS: There weren't any deer there, then, were there?

EN: No, no, that's what I said.

DS: How about rattlesnakes?

EN: Oh, yeah a lot of rattlesnake. What I was going to say about the bears, so we dumped big boxes with a drop, door, drop down, brought her home, () it, stuck a coca-cola bottle in there,

and this bear come in, cub bear. Let the door down and put it on the truck. Then used the bigger box for the other one, the other fellow's a big one, male. He got in there and he didn't like it and he started to come out. So we had to swing around and let him get in that cage again. So we went up to build a bigger box and stormed him. Finally got him in there, took him down to the south end of the Park, to a camp down there. One night, the boys were sitting around in the barracks there and who come in the door but this big old bear! () and everything else! (). So they took the bear, and put him in the shed or something. The next morning the whole side of the shed was gone, the bear () through. So that bear () they claimed somebody down on the west side of the mountain there shot him, he was interfering with his, I don't know, chickens or something.

DS: Probably the corn. Bear keep coming and eating my corn.

EN: But the old male, the female stayed there, but they got bears up there now, don't they?

DS: They do, they have bear there now. And deer.

EN: The deer. We went down . . . gee, that's the trouble when you haven't think in a ()

...

DS: Elkton?

EN: No, no, Washington, the Washington place. What do you call that? Where Washington was born?

DS: Oh, Mount Vernon?

EN: Mount Vernon, went down to Mount Vernon. I think we had about seven deer there. We loaded them up and put them in the Park and that was the start of your deer up here.

DS: Thank you! We've been wondering how they got there!

EN: That's how they got there. Brought them up from Mount Vernon.

DS: Wow. Do you know what year that was?

EN: No, I can't, it was in the '30's, I just can't remember the year. We'd been up there a little while.

DS: Uh huh. Well, great.

EN: Now, you don't know whether, that, that bear, that female bear () started the bears up there or not. I don't know.

DS: It could be!

EN: Could be.

DS: Yeah. because--

EN: But the old male was killed later on, not right off, but quite a while after.

DS: So, could be she already had a cub form him, yeah.

EN:: That might be the start of the bears, I don't know. 'Cause there's no bear up there, no bear then.

DS: Well, I was always wondering and everybody has, how they knew, how suddenly the deer and the bear knew that there was the Park! (laughter) You know, were there signs?

EN: Well, that might have been the start of the bears up there, I don't know.

DS: Yeah, umm hmm, right. Did you have anything to do with Loft mountain?

EN: Loft Mountain?

DS: Loft mountain.

EN: Loft Mountain . . .

DS: L-O-F-T.

EN: I just can't figure that one out, where was that?

DS: That's down pretty far south.

EN: No, the south end had Camp 3, south of us, way down.

DS: Yeah, that's the one. You were up also at the Pinnacles?

EN: What do you mean, up there?

DS: Wasn't there a conscientious objectors camp there, at the Pinnacles?

EN: No, that was down, foot of the mountain. Down, oh, what's the name of that place?

Can't seem to think of that place. Oh, that was the, that was the foot of the mountain.

DS: Jewell Hollow?

EN: Huh?

DS: Jewell Hollow?

EN: No, down farther.

DS: Shaver Hollow?

EN: No, no, it was, it wasn't in the mountains, down at the foot.

DS: Oh, down at the foot?

EN: Yeah.

DS: Oh, ha! Now, we always thought that the conscientious objector camp was there at the Pinnacles. It wasn't?

EN: No, not while we were around there. Unless they had one later on. This was down at the foot of the mountain. We had a little tractor there and let them have () down there, used to go down once in a while. Had a big snow there, and they had the tractor down there and we didn't have anything! We couldn't get out, the phone went out and everything. Here we were, we were just marooned there! My gosh, they didn't bring that tractor up the mountain there. Then we plowed

out the, plowed out the road down to--oh, what's the name of that place?

DS: Right at the foot of the mountain? Well, the only thing at the foot of the mountain is Luray.

EN: No, down farther. Down farther than Luray.

DS: Uh, not as far as Elkton?

EN: No, not quite to Elkton.

DS: Stanley?

EN: No, below that.

DS: Shenandoah?

EN: What?

DS: Shenandoah?

EN: No.

DS: Well, then the next thing is Elkton.

EN: We used to go down there, and go, I used to go to () down that way. I can't see anything there in that town, 'cept--

DS: Harrisonburg?

EN: No, oh, no.

DS: Huh.

EN: It's a small place, railroad ran through there.

DS: Grottoes?

EN: Huh?

DS: Grottoes?

EN: Grottoes, yeah, that was it, Grottoes. Yeah. Grottoes.

DS: Uh huh, and that's where the conscientious--

EN: That's where this one was, I don't know if they had any more or not.

DS: So at the Pinnacles--

EN: That was a CC camp and they moved up on the mountain, that was the last camp I stayed in, 27. Moved up on the mountain. And we built the camp, () that camp down there.

DS: Well, you went from Camp 1 to the Pinnacles?

EN: To Pinnacles, no, went over to Camp 10

DS: Where was that?

EN: Well, just . . . just north of, north of () a little. What's that big picnic ground there? () on the right side there, as you come up the mountain, first picnic ground?

DS: Oh, uh, now you've got me doing it.

MN: Pinnacles, Pinnacles, isn't it?

DS: That's what I said and he said no. I thought it was the Pinnacles.

EN: Is that what it's called?

DS: Uh huh, that's the first picnic ground.

EN: I might be wrong. Let's look at a map.

DS: Did you know Austin Judd?

EN: Oh, yes.

DS: Uh huh. Sit down! Doc Blevins was a real good doctor, wasn't he, for somebody who hadn't been trained! (laughing)

EN: Used to have more confidence in him than I did with the, did with the, some of the doctors.

DS: Yeah. James Heater, that's the one I was trying to think of. Did you know him? He was at Camp 1.

EN: James what?

DS: Heater.

EN: Heater. Heater. Don't seem to remember that name. See, I'd know him if he had another name.

DS: Yeah, because he was there when they were just tents and then he was there when they built the barracks.

EN: See if you can find any of them, () first row () [sound of movement, perhaps a photograph being shown]

DS: Well, I see Doc Blevins . . . nope, he's not in there.

EN: Not in there?

DS: Nope.

MN: ()?

DS: Yeah?

MN: That's the first camp.

DS: Uh huh, yeah. Well, he's got the khaki--

MN: Well, maybe he's up here?

DS: That's what I was looking, yeah. No . . . because he was telling me about a big wind storm, or a rain storm that you had while the tents were there.

EN: You don't say?

DS: (laughing)

EN: We got soaked, went over to Skyland and asked Pollock if they couldn't have a cabin over there. So we went over there, and the boy was a little fellow there and put them in a room, showed them in there, and one of the boys went up and they found the cabins. It was foggy you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. Been in that place for a day or so. Rap on the door, said, "Mr. Noyes live here?" "No, no." Go to the next one, some good looking girl come out, () go to a party. "What are you?" He () had a party last night. And the next day, one of the fellows said, I asked him to go in there and clean it up, and he said, well, "I'll go in and clean up the lion's club." That's how we got to name that place, () Lion's Club. The boys were just soaked over there. They had a, I think they had a hurricane down around Norfolk.

MN: That was when Bill, I'm going to talk a little--

DS: That's all right. When Bill what?

MN: Bill, our son, you know, he was in the tent. And he was () two dogs, I think, on top of it or something. And they got rid of Bill, too, that night.

EN: They had four dogs in that () (laughing)

DS: Well, gosh, you know, the fellows, after, after you say the Virginians had to get out, and the ones who, from Philadelphia and so on, came, how did things work then?

EN: Oh, beautiful.

DS: Really?

EN: We used to have to make all, a lot of those signs, cut out signs, and all kinds of signs. Then one day, I forget if it was Hoskins or who came around, said, "We've got to have some big signs

up there, () started charging." And I said, "Golly they'll have to be pretty big, won't they?" "Yeah," and he gave me dimensions and he had a sketch. And I was coming into Washington Friday night, and I said, "How soon you got to have them?" "Oh," he said, "a week or so." () so I said to the kids () get back, I'll get them (). So I told one of the men there, and () needed more lumber () So I came out in the morning, no more than got there and up come the ranger, said they got to have those tomorrow! And I said, "Tomorrow!" Great, big signs, you know, even bigger than that door, or as big as that door. And they had to be put together, the boards, painted, and then lettered. And these boys, were from Pennsylvania, and they're sharp, now, making these signs, making all kinds of signs. Well, one of the inspectors came out, from Washington, says, "I like to go down there," said, "who, who's running that place down there? What is it, a regular leader?" I said, "No, just an assistant leader." And he said, "I never saw a boy work the way those fellows do. Just a working, every one, no talking, just working on." Anyway, we had those signs ready in the morning!

DS: What were they signs for?

EN: Put 'em up at entrances, Panorama, the north end, and the south end.

DS: Oh, boy, yeah.

EN: And there was one, two, three, four, let's see--

DS: The Simmons Gap entrance, probably.

EN: There's four big signs. And as I say, they had to be put together, painted, then all lettered. I know the boys worked all night on them! It will just show you what kind of boys they were.

DS: Now, there were rangers there, already, when you were-

EN: Oh, no, no, they came afterward, after we got there.

DS: No, I mean, after you got there, there was rangers there, right?

EN: Yeah, they came after us.

DS: What did the rangers do? Because it wasn't a park yet, was there?

EN: Well, I don't think they came 'til after it was dedicated. I'm not sure, but I think that was it.

DS: Umm hmm, umm hmm. Were you there for the dedication?

EN: Oh, yeah. Old Roosevelt, he was over to the camp. When he first came up, when he first came up to, when he came back to Washington, they asked him how he liked it out there, and he said, "Well, if a crooked road and dead chestnut make a park, they sure got it!" (laughter)

DS: Well, that's true.

EN: Huh?

DS: It was, the dead chestnuts.

EN: Oh, the dead chestnuts.

DS: Yeah, umm hmm.

EN: So we got busy, especially over in lower Big Meadows, there. () thousands of them. We was cutting them down, we'd pile them up in stacks, and burn them.

DS: Burn them! Those beautiful ()!

EN: We worked like (). We got that cleaned up so it didn't look so bad. () out there, and he said, "What'll you do with all that wood?" I said, "Oh, we're just stacking it up over there." He says, "Think, don't you think some people down in the valley could use it?"

MN: You took a lot down.

EN: So, we started to haul it down there. They told us to put it up by the jail. The people'll stop the trucks and want (). "They'd go right along," I told them, I said, "Do it. Go right along, and guess it () cut it out." And they had enough logs stacked down there for their own use, in camp. They had these wood stoves, () winter came along then they went down to get some wood and they didn't have any. It was all stolen. See, we wanted coal () dead chestnut (), but we had to.

DS: Yeah, yeah.

EN: But I was saying about these boys that built those signs. Worked all night on them. Next morning I went around and thanked them, I said, "Boys () mighty nice of you (). He says, Mr. Noyes, can we go out and help put them up?" I said, "Good Lord, don't you want to go to bed?" "No, I want to go out and help put them up." That's the kind of boys they were from Pennsylvania.

DS: Huh. You don't find people like that nowadays, do you?

EN: No.

MN: Well, the boys from Virginia were good, because we raised one.

EN: No, they weren't any better than these fellows from Pennsylvania, I'll tell you that.

DS: Yeah.

EN: You see, they have the poorest name, and things like that. () Appreciated them. A very fine bunch of boys.

MN: May I tell them about our Harold?

DS: Sure, what about Harold?

MN: Well, I think that that's one boy that the state of Virginia should be () proud of, because he got his start in the CCC's. Elmer brought him down one weekend, and he said this boy,

he would like to get into the services, but he can't because of a serious overbite and he couldn't pass any. And he had been raised in an orphanage, an Episcopal orphanage in Norfolk. And he was only the boy and one girl in the whole state of Virginia when they reached the age of sixteen, as orphans, in homes, that they knew nothing about their background.

DS: Oh.

MN: Not one thing. And we went down to () those two children, that they knew nothing about their parents. And so Elmer brought him down, a couple of weekends and he and Bill, they were pals, you know, but there wasn't too much difference in their ages. But we all starting calling Harold "Bill's man Friday" because he would wait on him hand and foot. He was such a () he'd been used to that. And he'd been in one or two foster homes. Then he did go to work in a hospital in Front Royal. But I put him in the hands of a very well-know orthodontist. And () just what it costed [sic]. Straightened his teeth and he's a handsome looking boy! But because of his background, he went to, during World War II, he was in the service, he got in and he became . . . tell me, here . . .

DS: Air force pilot?

MN: Not a pilot, but--

EN: Engineer.

MN: Engineer.

DS: Oh!

MN: He was an engineer, and flew these B-29 bombers and flew with them all over the world, where they were to be delivered to then. So he just circumnavigated the globe.

EN: He's on too much, the planes, I don't like that.

DS: And he was with the CCC?

EN: Yeah.

MN: And we brought him into our home, and he () about it, and he just became part of our family. He's just been so wonderful to us. Wherever he goes, he thinks of us and sends us things. Brings mementoes, this is from Okinawa, and things like that, you know. And he is a wonderful boy. And I always think that the Naval hospital () is directly opposite us, and so we got to know (). I shouldn't go () take up any time.

DS: Oh, no, that's all right, we have lots of room on the tape.

MN: I thought that this boy, () and all the boys that come to see him, they all look back on their days in the CCC. ()

END SIDE A

BEGIN SIDE B

MN: . . . and has a very good income now, of course!

DS: Well, there's one thing I have, I, I'm delighted to hear about that, but there was one thing I was wondering. We were talking about the rangers coming in after the Park had been dedicated. Now, having Park personnel, did that make any problems? You were already under the army jurisdiction--

EN: No, just the, just the camp itself.

DS: Uh huh.

MN: The camp.

EN: Just the camp, itself.

DS: Yeah. And the Park didn't, didn't try and, well you were working with the Park, weren't you?

EN: I wasn't, we () construction end, the north end.

DS: Now, can you give us any insight into the reaction of the mountain people when they knew that they were going to have to move out?

EN: Well, yeah, I'd like to talk to you about that. Because they hated them (). But you had a man, that got them out of that Park. I think he's one of the greatest fellow there is in handling people. And that was Hoskins. He moved them out of the Park. We came around one, one day, there, says, () get a truck here, go down and move out this particular family. And I said, "What's the matter?" He says, "Oh, they're ()." He came around one morning and he said, "Let me have that truck now." I says, "How many boys you want?" He said, "I don't want any. We're going down ourselves." Moved that fellow out just as easy, () no trouble whatsoever. I, I think that's one thing that made him a big man. He () superintendent of, anyway, been in very many of them.

DS: Yeah.

EN: They were, they were darn good, most of them.

DS: Did you ever have any opportunity to visit the mountain people in their homes?

EN: Oh, once in a while, yes.

DS: They were intelligent people . . .

EN: Huh?

DS: They were intelligent people, but they weren't very educated.

EN: Well, just like Dicey, you ever hear of Dicey?

DS: Oh?

EN: She had seven children--

MN: I used to ride horses with her.

EN: --different father for every one. Hoskins asked her one day, said, "Well, Dicey, you going to have any more children?" And she said, "Well, I don't think, think so, the men don't seem to like me any more." Oh, we used to go in the, but () school house down there. Well in the Depression there, they had a man there who was an artist. We'd come around in the morning and work. What would be a good thing () go up there, and try to () this bulldozer, and he'd make a sketch of them there, and things like that. And one day I said, "Well, what about this school house down there? You might go down and sketch that old school house." () he came back with a couple of kids sitting in the doorway. I mean this picture. I said, "What is, what are these fellows doing in there? You put them in?" "No, he said, "they're holding school down there. Maybe you ought to go down and see them." Said, "They're having an awful time."

DS: Is this the school that had been started by the Hoovers?

EN: No, no, no, never () down there.

DS: Oh, all right.

EN: No, this is an old school that was there when we came. And they were having school there. So we went down and fixed it up some, so they had a little more room.

DS: Where was that school located?

EN: Wasn't too far from Skyland, down in--

DS: South? South of Skyland?

EN: About half way down the mountain.

DS: Was it south of Skyland?

EN: No, east.

DS: East. East of Skyland. Okay. Uh huh. And it was one of those one room school houses?

EN: Yeah.

DS: And they taught through, do you know what grade they taught to?

EN: No, I just don't know the grades. They had two teachers there.

DS: Two? Most of them had only one.

EN: Well, later on they did.

DS: So school was still being taught there when the CCC's were there.

EN: No, it started up while we were there. It had been, it had been, but that's why I said to go down there, to this boy, and you sketch a picture of that old school house. And he come back and showing me youngsters sitting in the doorway. () and he told me school was in session. Didn't know one thing about it. Well, we did quite a lot of work, () you know, maybe we shouldn't have, but, we felt sorry for them. And those kids were smart, very smart.

MN: They were all eager to learn.

EN: Yeah, they were all very eager.

DS: The families, did you ever eat any of their meals, there, any meals with them?

EN: I think down at that school house there was one down there a long time! (laughs). I can't remember going into their homes, () I knew a lot of them.

MN: () heard some of their names ().

EN: ()

DS: Corbin, yeah.

EN: Corbin Hollow, and what's the other one?

DS: Nicholson.

EN: Nicholson Hollow. You know, those people down there, they, they got out of the army, in the Civil War. They just, () they're all German names.

DS: Yeah.

EN: () what was it, Hessians or something?

MN: Hessian soldiers.

EN: Of the old Revolutionary War? () That's what they were.

MN: They were deserters!

DS: Yeah.

MN: They were deserters, just like the Hessians were deserters, several of the old ().

EN: They deserted down there like the fellow did from the Yankee army.

DS: Umm hmm, yeah.

MN: Didn't like war. Period.

DS: Well, and they didn't want to go back to Germany.

MN: No.

DS: Yeah, and they liked it here, so they stayed. Yes, well, did you ever hear any of their music? . . . Like, when, would they come up to Skyland when you were there?

EN: Oh, yes. And he was very wealthy.

MN: He knew Mr. Pollock.

DS: Yes, he said that, yeah. Did they play any music for you?

EN: I can't remember any ()

DS: No.

EN: Maybe they did, but I can't remember.

DS: 'Cause they had some good tunes, real good ones.

EN: Okay, I think there were some old fellows that used to play, I just can't seem to recall.

DS: Well, can you tell us anything about your reactions to the beginnings of the Park itself?

EN: What do you mean?

DS: Ah, how you felt about the fact that the Park was coming and that you were a part of it.

EN: Well, I always thought it was a good ideas, but I still think it's more of a garden than a, the big thing that it is, is Skyline Drive, you never hear anybody say go out to Shenandoah Park. I'm going up Skyline Drive. There's something there that--

MN: ()

EN: We were sitting there one day and the, who was the head of the Park Service, then? He died later on. We were sitting there and I was telling him, I said, "What I'd like to do is build a road up to Stony Man." I says, "it can go right around there, get the ()." He says, "It might be a little () for a few years, but it would draw them up." "And put a big coffee shop up there," I said, "that would be the () of the Park, right there." And he says, "Oh, no," he said, "Let them walk up there." Then an old lady come in her car () and I said, "() make that poor old lady walk up there?" "No," and I almost said (). No. But see, that would have been a good thing, do

that, get them where they got the good view and everything. Because it () for automobiles and more than anything else. 'Course they got a bunch of hikers, they can do the hiking. They're not interfering with anybody else.

DS: There're all those trails you built.

EN: All those trails, I mean you got your hikers, but you got more automobiles. For the percentage, though, why there's no comparison. People coming up there in cars, and just for the Drive, and then there's the hikers. So I said that they ought to have a good place to go. Another thing I'd like to have done, is going down the, down the mountain to Old Rag. I mean down in that valley, () place where we used to have the picnics?

MN: Don't ask me, I don't know.

DS: I know the area you mean, yes.

EN: In the fall, we used to have the picnics down. If they had a good road down there and then there's a pretty good road going down in the valley and coming up . . .

DS: Syria?

EN: No, Red Gate. Very good grade there. Just let those guys go down there. Now, wouldn't that have been a nice trip? They could see, get that scenery and everything else? Oh, no, they don't (). The first think they do is double park and lock it up. () let them down these trails ().

DS: Were there many hikers when you were in the CCC?

EN: Oh, quite a few.

DS: But there weren't the trees then?

EN: Oh, yes, you had all the trees you needed. Except these grazed places on top, which

was one of the best grazing places in America, they think, at the time. And I think if we'd left some of those fields open, it'd have been much prettier up there.

DS: Yes, Big Meadows is the only place open.

EN: I noticed, now, the last time I was up there, your outlooks is not so good as they used to be. See, you used to () right down in the, what's that hollow down there? Pollock's place?

DS: Kettle Canyon?

EN: Huh?

DS: Kettle Canyon?

MN: Whiteoak Canyon.

EN: Whiteoak Canyon, yeah.

DS: Whiteoak Canyon, yeah.

EN: Whiteoak Canyon.

MN: That's where the school he was talking--

EN: I cut a lot of trees down there, had them cut a lot of trees. And we saw Old Rag sticking up there, it was beautiful. The last time I came down there, () gee, I'm going to get somebody from the Smokies up here, they got nothing that pretty. But () grown up again now. It was a nice view! () couldn't touch a tree, you know, you're not supposed to be cutting more trees, weren't supposed to cut them. Why not? They're up in the Park, give them these views!

DS: Sure.

EN: Give them the view driving along, while they can see driving along, you can't see anything driving along the Park right now!

DS: Yes, they're growing taller and taller and taller. Well, I think that we should have

Bob Jacobsen listen to this tape and maybe he'll get some ideas.

EN: What's that?

DS: We should have Bob Jacobsen listen to this tape and get some ideas.

MN: Who's Bob Jacobsen?

DS: He's the superintendent.

MN: Now?

DS: Mmm hmm.

EN: Well, he couldn't do anything about it, they wouldn't let him. Well, some of them didn't want to open up the--

MN: Did he take Conrad Worth's place?

DS: Who?

MN: Did he take Connie Worth's place?

DS: No, I forget the name of the fellow who's superintendent before him. Can't think of it; it'll come to me. But you were there 'til 1940, right?

EN: Umm hmm. () the Drive, yeah, () not just one, but two, down to 27.

MN: You were at 5--

EN: I left there and went down, down to Newport News, building houses down there, grading up and building houses for the shipbuilders.

DS: How did the people of Luray treat you?

EN: Huh?

DS: How did the people of--

EN: Oh, fine.

DS: Nice.

EN: () think our boys was about as nice down in that town as any of them.

MN: Never had trouble.

EN: That was one thing I advocated all the time, they sell liquor down there, in that town there. Cause what they're doing, they're spreading the old stuff around there, you know, and getting the boys () and everything else. But they didn't do any of that stuff () Never got in any trouble down there, to speak of. None of the boys, that I know of.

DS: Did they ever go to Elkton or any places like that?

EN: Very seldom. Regular, you mean. That's one of the reasons I wanted to build that gym, it'd save going down, down the mountain, there, because we could play, we'd play basketball between the camps up on the mountain, then. There's three camps, there, see? Four camps.

MN: We used to have () fights there.

EN: We'd have these games in the mountains, they didn't have to go down there, in this ice, which they had so much of.

DS: Sure, right, yeah.

EN: But that wasn't in the works, ().

DS: Did you have any of them going AWOL?

EN: Very few. One day, going down the road there, saw this boy walking along, great big boy. I said, "What are you doing?" Young kid. When they came back, () thick up there, said, "how about a ride?" And he didn't realize which way I was going and the first thing I know, () "I'm right back in camp!" with tears running down his cheeks. So I went down to, to, where there's soda and candy and stuff like that. And I told this fellow, said, "Take care of this fellow. See that

nobody bothers him ()" About a week after that, that boy come up to me, () up there, and looked me up, () "Mr. Noyes," he says, "I want to thank you for bringing me back. I'm just as happy as I could be."

DS: Why hadn't he wanted to go--

EN: Because he was homesick!

DS: Oh.

EN: Most of them were homesick that (). And that's, I think one of the () these boys there, that was one of the big thing there, guys were, were being homesick, they'd never been away from home before.

KS: How did you get the nickname "Skipper"?

EN: Oh, I suppose being superintendent, (). (laughing). Gee, that's all that () know me as.

DS: But that name has stuck with you.

EN: Yeah, oh, yeah.

DS: Do you ever go to any of the reunions that they have?

EN: What, the . . . Park Service?

DS: CCC reunions?

EN: No, I haven't been to any of them.

MN: Yes, you went to the one on the mountains.

EN: Huh?

MN: You went to the one on the mountain.

EN: Where? CC, no, I didn't.

MN: You did, you got a letter.

EN: Wouldn't even go, ().

MN: We were there, at the picnic, I can remember ()

DS: Well, they're having another one the end of September.

EN: Where are they having that?

DS: In Luray.

EN: Yeah?

DS: Uh huh.

EN: See if I can get out there.

DS: The twenty-fourth of September, they're having it at the Mimslyn.

EN: () Mimslyn.

DS: Yeah.

MN: We went to the dedication of the Harry Byrd Center.

EN: Well, that wasn't the CC!

MN: Well, no.

EN: She said it was CC convention.

MN: No, we've never gone.

DS: Yeah. Well, they have a convention.

MN: The CCC's? Oh!

EN: Right many boys get to it?

DS: Yeah, umm hmm.

EN: () see one.

DS: Yeah, they have a great time. Somebody by the name of Cousins is the treasurer.

See if Cousins is in here [sound of pages flipping]

MN: Were they in the camp, ()?

DS: Uh huh. No, he's not in there.

MN: Well, there's any number of camps after that one.

DS: Yeah, right.

MN: Cook? Was there anybody by the name of it, he was a . . .

DS: Well, I just am wondering if there is anything that you had, that I had not asked that you would like to talk about?

EN: () on my mind now. They talking about now, trying to revive the CC camp, you know. Boy, I wouldn't want to have anything to do with that!

DS: No.

EN: Could you get () about now and work practically for nothing?

DS: No.

EN: Huh?

DS: No.

EN: I mean really work. No, you couldn't do it. And mixing them up. () think like that, mixing them up, it made more darn fights.

DS: I know.

EN: That's something we had, very seldom had.

DS: Right.

EN: No, we had a dance there when we, when we opened up that gym there. And they

were going to get an orchestra from Luray, three or four pieces. "No," I said, "Oh, let's get a good band." () up in the army, get it. And he got one from Winchester, I think, it had eleven pieces in it. We had, that place was just crowded, with the people () and all the guests there. Byrd was there, Senator Byrd. And those boys had, talk about behaving! We took, we took three or four of the fellows out and (). Said, "You fellows are the police. You find any fellow getting out of order there, just take him in the garden. Keep him there." Never heard anybody had to be taken out. Those boys behaved just beautifully.

DS: Where did they get the girls from?

EN: Oh, they came from all over. () I was dancing with a girl there, and I swung around, there's a boy, boy sitting there, I said, "How about dancing with that fellow there?" "Okay." "Oh, I can't dance, I can't dance!" he says. And he, just, (). And those boys, a couple of days after that, they said, they come around to me and said, "Mr. Noyes, can't we have another dance?" Said, "We'll chip in, we'll pay for it." I mean, they were so tickled at that thing. I used to try to do things they couldn't, () they were so darn good workers, and everything else, why not?

DS: Yeah, umm hmm, yeah. As you say, they were workers and they were nice fellows.
Yeah, uh huh.

EN: We never had any trouble. We got to be called the first Camp 1½.

DS: What was that for?

EN: Huh? Us stealing stuff!

DS: Okay, what did you steal?

EN: Lumber.

DS: What?

EN: Lumber. Now that, that place where we lived in, we had that all divided up into rooms and everything. Lassiter wanted to just make it one, long building () room on the end (). I said no, they wouldn't have any lumber. I got, they got the thing up as far as the roof and didn't have a roof for it. They were tearing this old camp, this construction camp down over in Big Meadows, tearing it down, and we're supposed to get a quarter of it, and 2 the other, and 3. Divide that three ways. We drove there at noon, the other fellows was gone and we helped ourselves. Then go back to the (), load up, you know, () lumber.

DS: So you were the only one there?

EN: So they called us Camp 1½. We got that thing built, though. You had to, you had to gyp around there like that to get something.

DS: Sure! Too bad that they didn't keep those barracks, though, they would have been, they were nice barracks, weren't they?

EN: () tear that thing down, (). Well, they got one left, Camp 10 barracks. Yes (), one of them.

DS: It is?

EN: (), yeah. If you () on the end there, that was my room (). () used to have a man come in there in the morning, get the fire going for me, and (). Every, every weekend they had to get () stay there, you know, to fight fire and so forth, and look after things. Used to be a fellow that'd come up there, and his wife. She'd just chase him around and he couldn't, she couldn't, he couldn't get out of her way, (). When he'd go to the tower, she'd go with him. And one of the fellows says, "If I had a wife like that," he says, "Boy, I'd () just once!" I said, "What do you mean, () just once?" "I'd take a hatchet!"

DS: Gosh, let's not carry things too far! Golly. Well, it really was quite an experiment, wasn't it, when you think about it? Having the CCC do this construction. The whole Park was a whole, was quite a, almost a dream.

EN: We built buildings over there at Camp 2. You know that was the headquarters for the construction gang? We built practically all those buildings, () for Camp 2. I don't know why we got over there, but we did. And we, we used to go that whole darn Park, way up in the north end, we put all the fences up there at the north end, at the outlet up there. I don't know why they went and asked us to (), we drove right by the other camps.

DS: Hmm. Kind of strange, isn't it?

EN: Huh?

DS: That's very strange.

EN: Well, that's like one of the landscape fellows there said, you can get too far doing most anything. They got a fellow they can't even get him out of that area at all. You look at it as a Park, as a whole. Putting in a water supply at Skyland. That was a big job. And they're still going there, doing it, I was asking about it when I was out there last. It was a lot of work.

DS: Well, that really, I know until I started doing interviews, I hadn't realized quite how valuable the CCC was.

EN: Well, did a lot of work in that Park.

DS: They sure did.

EN: Now, you take Hughes Gap, () get the water down there and the toilet there would go () there. The spring is, going up from, up the road there from Hughes Gap, the spring is way up, and then you got an open space along there, () just as it starts to pull in again, that's where that

water starts from. Run that way down and built a big reservoir, down at the foot, there, just above Hughes Gap, we built this big reservoir and that's why they're getting water to the toilet and the drinking water there. And that's still running. We did all of that, with the boys. And one other foreman.

DS: And when you consider that these were boys that had no training along these lines, whatsoever.

EN: Huh?

DS: These were fellows that had no training along these lines, at all.

EN: No, no.

DS: Had you had any training?

EN: Well, I'd done construction work.

MN: The subways, in New York.

DS: Yeah?

EN: That's a long way from . . . Shenandoah Park. I worked eleven hundred feet under the Hudson River. Eleven hundred feet. How's that?

DS: You, on the Lincoln Tunnel?

EN: No, no, I was on the, () for the water works. () water went down to New York from the Catskills, in tunnels. Then you came across the river. We was on the East side, the shaft () about eleven hundred feet deep, that's what I started to tell you about. ()

DS: But if you had work like that, why did you go to the CCC?

EN: During the Depression? Hah! () any job (). We was in Chicago, () Chicago, went to Washington, (). (). I got selling cars there, only thing you could do was

something like that. I didn't get any money, I mean () didn't make much.

DS: As superintendent, did you get more than a dollar a day?

EN: Oh, yeah. Got 4600, I think.

DS: Wow. That was good.

EN: That was good in those days.

DS: Sure was, yeah. Like Austin Judd said, he used to pray that he could earn a dollar a day. And then the CCC came along, and oh, it was heaven!

[sound of plane going overhead drowns out voices]

EN: I don't know what we'd done without them. () And the Captain, he was Captain of 1, army Captain. He come over and he said, "Skip," he says, "One of our trucks has gone over, has gone over the wall, gone over somewhere, we don't know where it is." Got word from Luray, called up and said this truck had gone over () down below the mountain or (). So, it was foggy as the dickens, night. He called up over to the camp, said, he was calling for () Jim Clore, driving it, ever hear of Jim Clore? He was driving the truck. And they called up down at () Camp 10 and they said, no, they hadn't got in yet. So, gosh, we figured, that must be our truck! So we got in the car and we went down to Panorama. And it was just loaded with police, state police and all kinds of people around there. And they said, had you heard anything? Was there anything--oh, a guy stopped us going down, wanted to know if we'd seen any, evidence of any truck going over the mountain. So we knew when we got down there, this, I told this captain, I said, "You call up Camp and ask them if they, if those fellows are not there. Have them get lieutenant () and get down there, and look in the barracks and see if they're not there, but they're back there sleeping. So we didn't need to (). He said no, when we called up, the fellow said no, we haven't seen them. I said,

"You go down and look in the barracks." And he came back and said they're all () bed! Well, you talk about a ()! Boy, () had an awful feeling. And here was this big crowd down there, you know, and we figured () had happened.

DS: Sure. Boy. Jim Clure, C-L-U-R-E?

MN: C-L-O-R-E.

DS: C-L-O-R-E. Where does he live?

MN: Madison. He's retired ().

EN: He's probably retired, now. He was in the service, World War I, ().

MN: () up there.

EN: And then, last I saw him he was in this sawmill, making flooring. I think he had a chair in that mill, there.

DS: Do you know where in Madison he lives?

MN: Everybody knows Jim Clore. ()

EN: You know--

DS: Madison County's so big!

EN: Where in Madison, in Madison they know him.

DS: Oh, the town of Madison?

EN: You know where that lumber yard is?

MN: You know where the lumber year is?

DS: No, I mean, I can find it.

EN: Well, you go towards the lumber yard and you just cross over the new road. You got to go in the old road into Madison, the old road. Then you cross over the new road and I think it's

the first house on the left, there. I don't know if there's any more houses there, it's right along there, somewhere. He could tell you a lot about CC.

DS: Well, you told us about the CC.

MN: Well, Jim Clore knew so much about the locals and everything ()

EN: Oh, he knew trees, he knew everything.

MN: () and then I walked those trails, I climbed Old Rag with him, picked those raspberries. We'd be walking along and he'd say, well, we'd better get some fishing bait for our wrist poles. And he'd find a stick and open it up and there'd be () in it, he took a whole bunch of those and went on down Whiteoak Canyon, went up to Stony Man, oh, I walked everywhere. He was a real mentor for me, () many weekends, () before they put any, anything on the walls, whatsoever.

DS: That's a good picture that you've got.

EN: I can't name them all, now. Most are all dead, I guess. I know that man, he died while I was in camp.

MN: (). Or was that ()?

EN: I can't name 'em.

EN: I wonder if there's any, any of those old fellows alive?

DS: It would be fascinating, wouldn't it? Or if you could take that picture along with you, to Luray.

MN: Oh, we can't drive that far any more. Now he's turned in his driver's license and I don't feel like I should go too far on these ()

DS: Yeah.

EN: Yeah, I gave my license up three years ago. Because of my eyes.

DS: I'll tell you what, Skipper. Drop a note to the Mimslyn, attention to the boys of the CCC. Tell them to hold it for September the 24th, when they're having their convention. And just write a letter, telling them where you are, and you're just dying to know how many of them showed up there at that meeting. And they'll write you back.

EN: What I was thinking to do would be get in touch with Doc, Doc Blevins, he'd, he'd probably go, he'd carry me home. () can't think of the name.

MN: Well, one has a nursing home.

EN: One had a nursing home.

MN: Next to where he lived.

EN: He's got a nice place there, Jim, I mean Doc.

DS: Yeah? Well, is there anything else you can think of that would be good, historically speaking?

MN: Well, so much has been written.

EN: We'll probably () think of it after you go.

DS: Yup, well, that's the trouble. You do think of things later on and you'll say, oh, gosh-

-

EN: Why didn't I say this?

DS: Yup. Well, all we're trying to do is just get as full a story as we can . . .

EN: Well, I think I told you about the animals.

DS: Yeah, and that was really wonderful to learn about the deer.

EN: I imagine that's where all the bear came from, I don't think they done, I don't know

whether they put any more in there or not.

DS: No.

EN: That started there, ().

DS: Yup, right. You had no problem getting along with the superintendent of the Park, did you?

EN: No.

DS: No. Well, you knew pretty much what he wanted down, and you all were willing to go along with him. Well, I sure do appreciate you having taken so much of your time for me.

EN: Oh, that's all right, I got time, that's all I got.

DS: So, what, you know what I'm going to do, I'm just going to shut that off for a second, and maybe--

[TAPE STOPS IN MID-SENTENCE, THEN RESTARTS]

DS: Now, you say you built a sawmill? Where did you build it?

EN: What's the first overlook you get from Skyland, what do you call that, now?

DS: Stony Man.

EN: No, going the other way.

DS: Oh, yeah, alright.

EN: There's a road right, just below there.

DS: Umm hmm.

EN: We'd make shingles, for Skyland.

DS: Oh!

EN: Had to make them over to Big Meadows, but they didn't make them fast enough, so

we got this old mill and hooked a Chevrolet up, the fellow's own Chevrolet () ever seen that, from Washington or anywhere else, boy, we'd have been in jail! That thing was the most dangerous thing you ever saw! (all laughing)

DS: But it did the job!

EN: Well, we got, we got the shingles, believe me, we made them.

DS: Yeah, right.

EN: God, but that thing, man, it scattered dust () somebody come up there and look at that, because, yeah. And () Chevrolet, hooked up with Chevrolet wheel, god, that thing would really travel! (laughing) But you had to, that's the way you had to do things, though.

DS: Sure, yeah, improvise.

EN: Didn't ask, just go ahead and do it. So we made shingles, another time we made a lot of fencing for Gettysburg. They came down, and they wanted us to use () [an adze,] chip it out, by hand. Well, that was an awful job doing that by hand. So we just took a little stuff and roughed it up and they finally accepted them that way. () I don't know how many of those things we sent up to Gettysburg. Chestnut.

DS: Yeah. You know, that was a crime to let that chestnut just be burned up.

EN: No, what are you going to do with it? ()

DS: Alright, but at least it was put to use.

EN: We'd cut it down and pile it up and then they'd come up there and steal it.

DS: But when you think of the houses that could have been with that!

EN: Oh, gee, () good lumber.

DS: Did you ever see Camp Hoover while you were up in the CC's?

EN: Only when we went down by it, Camp Hoover, yeah. One of the first, first camps up there. Last time I went down there, they was going to build a swimming pool down there for the president. () and the Marines were running the, taking care of that place. And when they went out, we had the job, Camp 1 had to go way down there to take care of that place. And we had to fix that up, and everything else.

DS: It's beautiful there!

EN: () place is just, () just loaded with fish, big ones. Couldn't touch 'em.

DS: Yup, can't touch them.

EN: () house that the Marines were living in.

MN: ()

DS: Uh huh.

EN: That's what I say, we went different places in the park, ().

DS: Sure, right. You know they have a Camp Hoover Day. And you can, there's a bus that takes you down to Camp Hoover, and back again. And a lot of people--it's in August, on the weekend nearest his birthday, President Hoover's birthday. And it's a very nice trip, to take that bus down, and walk around, everything's open, go through it all, and see it.

EN: () haven't seen that old place down there. () set on the log there, talking to the Big Man, forgetting where I was, ()

MN: You want to stop and have a cup of coffee?

DS: Sure!

MN: ()

EN: I think they had more () than they ever had in the White House.

DS: I agree with you on that.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Interview
with
CCC Superintendent
ELMER M. "SKIPPER" NOYES

September 13, 1977

Interviewer: Dorothy Noble Smith

Transcribed by: Joy K. Stiles

Shenandoah National Park

Luray, Virginia

Original manuscript on deposit at
Shenandoah National Park Archives

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INDEX

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INDEX

Side A:

Elmer "Skipper" Noyes is a former Superintendent for the Civilian Conservation Corps in Shenandoah National Park. Noyes worked in the Park from 1933 to 1940, working first in Camp NP-1, Skyland, and later in Camp NP-10, Pinnacles. The first experience Noyes relates is his efforts in locating a dependable source of water for the camp at Skyland. George Freeman Pollock was still in charge of Skyland and Noyes talks about some of his interactions with Pollock, including the fact that his crews renovated the cabins at Skyland. Moonshine is mentioned, then Noyes tells about the tents used for barracks when he first arrived. Noyes had a great deal of pride in the "boys" under his supervision, giving numerous examples of exemplary work they performed. Throughout the interview there are stories of his clashes with higher ups when he disagreed with them. The rivalry between Virginia and Pennsylvania boys is touched on, along with fighting forest fires, arson fires, building a gymnasium at the CCC camp at Skyland, wildlife and the re-introduction of deer and possibly bears, also. A story about making the first fee signs for the entrance stations combines Noyes' high regard for his boys and his exasperation with bureaucracy. Noyes mentions the Park's dedication in 1936, tells of clearing dead chestnuts and ends the side telling of a CCC boy who was an orphan and became a part of the Noyes family.

Side B:

The interviewer explores Noyes' feelings about having park rangers arriving in the Park and his feelings about the mountain people. He tells of having his men fix up a mountain school house located part way down the east side of the mountain below Skyland, possibly in the Whiteoak Canyon area. Throughout the interview, Noyes expresses his desire that the Park's scenic views be maintained, rather than letting the forest grow up and block the vistas. He also advocates putting in additional side roads for touring by car. Noyes touches on discipline problems as he discusses the boys going down to Luray, and boys that went AWOL. He recalls a dance they held in the Camp NP-1 gymnasium, with an eleven piece orchestra from Winchester and describes his boys as having a wonderful time. He touches on a few of the more questionable activities he was involved with, including stealing lumber to finish buildings, and using an enrollee's Chevrolet to power a sawmill used to cut shingles for Skyland. The interview ends with Noyes reminiscing about Camp Hoover.

End of interview.

Key words:

bears	p.14-16		
Big Meadows	p. 1,23	(CCC, continued)	
Blevins, Doc		water supply, Camp 1	p. 3
p.19,20,		winter	p. 5,17-
46			18
Brannon, Doug	p. 2	chestnut trees	p.23
Byrd, Senator Harry	p.38,39	Clore, Jim	p.44-46
Camp Hoover	p.49-50	Cook, Mr	p.38
cattle	p. 2	conscientious objectors	p.17-19
CCC		Corbin, Dicey	p.28
arson forest fires	p. 8-10	Corbin Hollow	p.30
AWOL	p.36	Cousins, Mr.	p.28
Camp 1, Skyland	p. 2,6,	deer	p.15
19,20,44,49		Dupont family	p. 2
Camp 2, Big Meadows	p.41	Gettysburg National Battlefield	p.49
Camp 3	p.17	gliders	p. 2
Camp 10, Pinnacles	p. 3,5,	grazing land	p. 1, 33
6,10,19,41		Great Smoky Mountains	p.34
Camp 27	p. 6	Heater, James	p.20
Camp Hoover	p.49	Hoskins, R. Taylor	p.27,28
conscientious objectors	p.17-19	Hughes River Gap	p.42
dance	p.39	Jacobsen, Robert	p.34
enlistment	p. 5-6	Judd, Austin	p.19,43
Fechner, Mr.	p. 7	Lassiter, James	p. 7,12
fire fighting (forest)	p. 8	Loft Mountain	p. 16
gymnasium, Camp 1	p. 12	Luray	p.35
moonshine	p. 5	moonshine	p. 5
mountain residents	p. 8,9,	mountain residents	p. 8,27-
10,27-28			28
nicknames	p.27-28	Mount Vernon	p.15
park headquarters	p. 11	Nicholson Hollow	p.30
park rangers	p.27	Noyes, Bill	p.21,25
Pennsylvania enrollees	p. 7,24	Old Rag	p.32,45
reunion	p.37-	Panorama	p.14,22
	38,46	Parks, Ed.	p. 3
sawmill	p.48	Pollock, George Freeman	p. 4,13
shingles, Skyland	p.48	Roosevelt, President	p.23
Skyland	p. 4,13,	schools, mountain	p.28-29
	21	Skyland	p. 4,13,
sign making	p.22-23		42,48
tents	p. 5	snakes	p.14
trail building	p. 7	Stony Man	p.32,46
Virginia enrollees	p. 7,24	Whiteoak Canyon	p.33,46

wilderness

p. 16