

Maureen and Mike

Mansfield Library

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Archives and Special Collections

Mansfield Library, University of Montana

Missoula MT 59812-9936

Email: library.archives@umontana.edu

Telephone: (406) 243-2053

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Oral History 298-01

Interviewer: Dan Gard

Interviewee: Bill Sharp

October 6/1993

Dan Gard: This is an oral interview being conducted with Mr. Bill Sharp of Missoula, Montana. It's being conducted at the Missoula Public Library. The date is October 6, 1993. The interviewer is Dan Gard, graduate student in historical archaeology. The interview is being conducted as part of the class project for History 450, archival management under Dale Johnson. We're going back to Bozeman.

Bill Sharp: In 1936, October of 1936. That's when I became- I was 16 that year. So I thought I was close enough to being 17. They started you at 18 for '33 and '34. Then in '35 they changed it. They weren't getting all the troops they wanted. They dropped the age then so they could get more recruits. (Unintelligible). He had a 350,000 number in his mind that he wanted to reach. They never quite made that. I think 300,000 or a little more was it. They didn't count the staff. So they just counted in the Middle East. He wanted to get up there in that number anyway.

DG: Did you need parental permission of any kind?

BS: No, not even at 16.

DG: Obviously you didn't.

BS: No you just had to negotiate welfare, the county welfare, and tell them that you needed to go to work.

DG: So you had done that?

BS: Yes in Bozeman. I did it all in the same day as far as I can remember. When I walked in there, I knew it was open. It was in the paper they advertised they would be enrolling CCC boys. So I got in there (unintelligible) sent me right to the depot. It must have been by mail and no appointment. Nobody liked the depot, because that's night time. The courthouse wasn't open. Anyway, I got in there and we left about four o'clock. All those other guys...

DG: At four?

BS: Yes. That's the way it happened.

DG: So you had walked in (to town)...

BS: Yes all night long.

DG: From the ranch?

BS: I was there by eleven or maybe twelve. I gave myself plenty of time. So I got there. As we loaded onto the train, there were guys from Sidney. all along. They picked them up, Billings, Forsyth, and every city. We finally got to Bozeman and I think that's the last pick up they had. They could have picked some up in Helena for all I know. All I remember is the getting off and the million dollar breakfast with Uncle Sam. They treated you just like you were a customer off the depot.

DG: Did you have some kind of a check or something?

BS: One of the officers from Fort Missoula was in charge and he just had a check-off voucher so that you got so many meals.

DG: Of course, a meal didn't cost much then.

BS: No I think it was 32 cents for breakfast.

DG: Can't get coffee for that.

BS: Nope. That's right. We had a pretty good breakfast as I say. We must have stayed in Helena two hours at least until we got the clearance to take off for Missoula. I don't know. It seems hard for me to think about coming to Missoula and leaving by breakfast time. We must have got there- if you left Bozeman about four- that took a little time.

DG: Yes it's about two hours to Helena.

BS: And then we left there about eight or nine. We finally got underway and came over the hump there. We probably stopped at Avon and all those other towns, Drummond and maybe stopped half hour at each place. We finally got there. It was about four o'clock. It was a long trip going by all the sugar beet cars. It was like a big tunnel. They had them all on sidings. You'd take them up- I suppose that probably came from the Deer Lodge Valley or that part of town. So we finally got to the station. Then we met the army in person, the sergeants and things with trucks down there. They were loading them up. There were some old farmers in there stumbling around. They couldn't even climb in the truck.

DG: Was there a military air to it?

BS: Yes. Of course about that time, the CCCs, you couldn't tell them apart. Some of them had (unintelligible) just like the army. Anyway, they got us out there and by that time, I can't remember that first meal. I remember the first breakfast is all in the dark.

DG: What did you have at breakfast?

BS: Scrambled eggs I think it was and toast. It was something of that nature. It wasn't bad. It was not too bad. I couldn't complain about that. It was cool and dark. They got us up at six o'clock so they could feed the whole group.

DG: How many were there?

BS: I think from off that particular train, there were three others at least. Then they had- I'm not too sure, but I think they already had some guys from Superior or something. I got to stay by just luck. I think it was because my name started with an "S." They picked up this roster and would read names. Here they'd get all the A's gone to Ninemile. All the A's they went somewhere else. They got down to B's.

DG: So Missoula was like a central receiving point and then people just got shipped everywhere else?

BS: Yes.

DG: Were most of the recruits that were in Missoula from Montana or did they come from all over?

BS: They came from all over. Missoula and Helena, they had other welfare and politics. Each county had a quota compared to how many population they had, maybe the welfare rules and different things. Each county had a quota and each state had a quota for guys to go. That kind of put the crimp on anything it could be quality efficient. They had to fill the quota regardless. A lot of guys went in there and they would call home and say, "This is a hell of a place." You call the captain and tell them that you got a job from me and you can get out the next day if you got an appointment. It was that loose. You were supposed to have an appointment to make it official. There were half a dozen that ran away. They had a hell of a lot of deserters. It was pretty hefty statistics. As you crossed the United States, it got worse. I've seen the statistics in the annual report and all those annual reports are over at Montana State College, thank god for the librarian.

They saved them. They'd tell you a lot. You fold them out and you read all the statistics about what happened, why they died, what company they were working for. They're over there. I tried to get them to put them in rare books and stuff like that. Well they've been up there in the Forestry Library for 40 or 60 years. They wanted to just leave them up there. I guess I'm the only one that ever looked at them as far as I know. They're up in the Forestry section on the third floor there. They're in these boxes. Everything here tells us what's in that box. One particular box is just on the CCCs, especially Peckner's reports. They were very good.

I have talked to the (unintelligible) of the headquarters of the alumni to tell them about it. I asked them if they had one that they knew where another set was so we could preserve that. They didn't understand what I was talking about. That's what you get out of it. We got into Montana. Walter knows about it. They (?) too good to copy them. It would be good to have copies in more than one place. You have these fold-outs. I don't know what you do with those. I guess you could copy it and fold them back in there. It would be nice to have more than one copy.

DG: It's a valuable collection.

BS: Yes I tried to find out in the northwest if they had some more in Spokane. Spokane didn't have any. I checked there. The library in Seattle does, but I don't know if it's good. That's what we have for the history of the CCCs on the national level. Of course Fort Missoula had the green guide on that they picked up (unintelligible) district paper. We got those over in Helena. They're bound. Thank god they saved those. The trouble is when Fort Missoula, somewhere around '38, they had an excuse over here shaping it up in the journalism thing, these companies didn't send in their reports.

So you didn't have anything to put in there except what happened around here. So they gave up on it. That was bad news. These company commanders let the ball drop. They should have known that was a good thing, like a record. They should have pushed that. Even their ecology educational advisor would teach (unintelligible). He should have pushed that and kept it going until the very end. Then you go over to Helena to see those green guides, it's a sad deal (unintelligible) June or July of '38, about the time I left the C's.

DG: So you went in '36 and got out in '38?

BS: Yes.

DG: Was that the limit?

BS: No.

DG: You could stay in longer?

BS: Well two years was the limit. That didn't work too well either. They fudged around that.

DG: How long were you in Missoula?

BS: Oh just that three weeks. Then the army trucks came by and they picked up my name.

DG: That's the end of the list.

BS: Yes. About 40 of us and about eight trucks, it was eight in each truck. We had a whole army convoy that went up to Helena. Then we headed for Company 1999, which they thought was at Sun River at Pishkun Reservoir out at Augusta. That's where they summered any way. Company 1999, that's what our assignment was. We got up there and our communications were all shot to hell. You're cutting these down (unintelligible). By that time I was six o'clock or seven (unintelligible) in October. So we got lined out again on the highway for Neihart going from Pishkun down on Sun River through Great Falls down into Belt. The road was crooked then. It's nothing like it is today. Oh my god, two lane, I hope to tell you (unintelligible) over that big divide out to Belt, you'd drop into Monarch down there. There was quite a hump there. In those

days you had to go up and get over it. we got into camp about midnight. It was a long day. It was all day. We were sitting on iron seats on the convoy. The beds were (unintelligible) so we had our meal, first meal, at camp- at Belt Creek camp.

DG: That was the name of it?

BS: (unintelligible) 200 yards across the road away. The boys had been there before. They built the (unintelligible) New Yorkers started it and the Kentucky boys finished it. we had detachments up there all the time at the Belt Creek ranger station. I got on it once or twice. We built rock walls, with masons, professionals. They're still there today at the Belt Creek ranger station. It's just a work center.

DG: They're not using it for a work station?

BS: (unintelligible) CCCs did the Squaw Creek station down there. It's just a work center. You'd come by in two districts. (unintelligible). The next summer or fall, the fall of '37 I got out and I went down to Bozeman and went to the courthouse. I signed up again. They got (unintelligible).

DG: That's a pretty one.

BS: Yes. It certainly is. That's how come- the trouble is they didn't leave me alone there. I thought I was doing pretty good myself. (unintelligible) Squaw Creek, a beautiful site.

DG: Didn't the CCCs build that bridge?

BS: Yes they sure did. (unintelligible). Just when they got there, that was the first time. That was in '34. they just got to Squaw Creek when the bridge was being built. This is the bridge they built. That's the only picture that I kept of that. (unintelligible) of how they fixed them up. Here it is. You can see the old post there. That's in '57.

DG: Company 1963.

BS: Yes. In '37 I was in there in the fall. The bridge was built in the winter of '35, this bridge here. See you're right next to camp right there. The mess hall was right there by those trees. See the guys would just go over and eat hot meals every day. That was a good job. I didn't get in on it because the bridge was all set up.

DG: So how long were you at Neihart?

BS: I was there the whole winter and part of that summer. Then I got up to Squaw Creek.

DG: What kind of projects did you do up there?

BS: At Neihart I was mostly on road crews at the time. I was on roads and we did some timber thinning. I remember that job. They did a lot of roadside clearance of (unintelligible). They

would be fire hazards from cigarettes and stuff. That's what I did in Neihart mostly. That's the first time I was up there. When I got into Squaw Creek, it was the best job I ever had. I was in a game checking station at the end of this bridge working for the Fish and Game. We had a deputy game warden during hunting season. We had a deputy game warden in charge. So he could take care of any legal matters. We were checking the elk (unintelligible). Two of them found a ship and stayed over there (unintelligible). It was a good job.

DG: I guess. Not too work intensive.

BS: Yes you had to report. You had to measure the antlers and where they came from and all that stuff. You had to take a guess at the weight. You wrote all that stuff down and gave it to Montana State Fish and Game. It was just a nice place to do that. There were lots of people.

DG: When you build a bridge like this, you have construction engineers there?

BS: Yes the plans are right here in the Forest Service region. I have copied the plans. They're here too. I copied the plans and gave it to the Historical Society and the ranger station there when they were still there in my early part of history. So here's the water line. It hasn't even been filled up. The bridge is not there. This is a big lime rock. These big lime rock things were there.

DG: That's an interesting picture.

BS: Yes. That's why I took it to match them up. Later I took that picture by chance there. I was driving by. So that was a pretty camp. The only thing it bothered was it should have been (unintelligible) summer camp. The sun, you see, it only shines there just like the university- from one to three.

DG: That's why the canyon is so dangerous in the winter.

BS: That's right. It's a tough one. It should have been just a summer camp. This particular camp here, (unintelligible) show camp for keeping it up in shape.

DG: That's such a beautiful setting.

BS: Oh yes. That's where the station is.

DG: I've been there.

BS: Everything was done by the C's. They even made furniture inside out of logs by hand. It was beautiful.

DG: What was a day like? What would a day in the CCCs be like?

BS: You'd get up for breakfast.

DG: What time did they get you up?

BS: I think it must have been about six or six-thirty at least. You had to go to the washroom and take care of all your problems. There weren't too many beards in the C's that I know of. You had breakfast at seven. It would be about seven-thirty that you'd get out of there and shape up to head for the woods. You'd have to put on a few extra clothing to get ready. Then you'd get to work hall and head down there to get on the trucks. This is the first camp I was in out of Neihart. You'd go down here and meet the trucks down there. This is my barracks, Number One barracks. It was kind of a clumsy camp. Number One barracks had to walk up through that mess hall.

DG: Where was the mess hall?

BS: This was down here.

DG: Oh down at the end.

BS: (unintelligible).

DG: So did you come back to camp for lunch or did they bring lunch up to you?

BS: Once in a while- that bridge deal, of course they'd just walk across it for lunch. They had two shifts on that bridge working. They'd pour that (unintelligible) by summer. So they got it up in that summer. You had a foot bridge down below here. You had to go over this swinging bridge. The crew had to work on the opposite side. Then they worked together, see, brought this bridge in together.

DG: Oh so they started building it from both sides?

BS: Yes. I've got a picture of it. they were from Helena. Anyway, they put that together. They mixed it by hand and in wheelbarrows. All wheelbarrows in every damn cubic yard of that is wheelbarrows. That's a good bridge though. They were really happy with it over there. Of course, in my big picture, I put it in my CCC calendar (unintelligible) half a dozen or more of those pictures away (unintelligible). I've got one extra one now. I'll give it to Ted Turner. He's got a ranch next to us see, with buffalo.

DG: After you came back from dinner, what did you guys do in the evenings?

BS: Oh well we had education. We had to go through the education building, the library in the rec hall and take courses. That was voluntary though. I was always taking something. I took typing and I usually had to practice typing on Saturdays and Sundays. Then they had all kinds of courses. One night they usually had safety lecture for a while. You had to meet for that of course. I took all kinds of courses.

DG: What kind of things did they offer?

BS: A lot of high school. You could get your high school education and pass your tests. Then they had one or two college, by correspondence you know. They took photography, I took some of that, and radio. I got that far, and code.

DG: Oh you mean Morse code?

BS: Yes. It wasn't speaking too much on (unintelligible) amateur radio. Each camp had a radio station to Missoula. A guy, if he knew his stuff and he could bring it with him usually, they had a radio school here after a while. They had quite a radio school here. They would send two or three guys to learn at Fort Missoula and train. (unintelligible) you had to take first aid. So I took all kinds of first aid. I never did get to be (unintelligible). It just didn't open up. It was rougher than hell. They'd get the big boots and stuff.

DG: They provided all the clothing?

BS: Yes.

DG: So when you went in, you didn't take anything but the clothes you had on?

BS: Right. You could keep your skivvies and stuff, your work clothes. A lot of them did. A lot of the boys just mixed them with their army wool shirt or something like that. Some of them wore their cowboy hats until they wore it out, especially those guys from Red Lodge. They didn't have their damn CCC stuff. It was good stuff, that army stuff. When it got real cold, they would backtalk and put their army stuff on.

DG: How many winters did you work there?

BS: Two really. The trouble is that I got up in this camp here and they closed the company from Fort Missoula. It was the 21st of December, 1937. I hadn't been there long enough, but I had a good job while I was there. They sent Kentucky boys into there by January 1st of '38. We got on the damn train from Bozeman again and went up. Lo and behold, I went back to Neihart with that detachment. They sent them to Neihart and a lot of them went to Glacier. They broke up the company you know. There were about three places. Ninemile, Glacier Park, and Belt Creek- I'll be damned if I didn't go back to Belt Creek.

DG: So you were first sent to Belt Creek, then to Squaw Creek, back to Missoula, and from there...

BS: Probably to Helena when we went back to Neihart from Squaw Creek. We got on the train and went down to Neihart on the Great Northern. The train went down that canyon. It was pretty interesting. You drove down this (unintelligible) box at Monarch. Water would cut through this big lime rock formation and they'd put the railroad right up on the shelf over to Belt Creek there from that silver mine. It's long before the C's were ever thought of. It was still running though. That's how we got to Neihart. They parked right at the camp and we unloaded right there. The

railroad and the road to Neihart make it out. That's where we unloaded. We loaded there too when they broke up the company.

DG: What year was this?

BS: This was in '37.

DG: When you got sent back?

BS: Yes. I think this is '37 yes. I got sent back there in December of '37. It was pretty late. It was about Christmas time. There was a Christmas party there. That's where our water supply was coming up out of this run off here. There was a dam up there and we got water. It flows up two or three times and that was a big job. It was an emergency job. You'd dig that thing out and thaw it out.

DG: (unintelligible).

BS: See the water went into the latrines. Of course you'd water them. you had to go to a separate latrine from your barracks. Everybody had to go over here for the washroom and latrine. The only exception were officers. They had their own bathrooms. We didn't have any toilets in our rec hall, but they had one in the hospital here. The only water we had was here, the mess hall, and the latrine over there by the aspen, and the officers'. This is forestry see, and this is ours. What does that tell you?

DG: It's not too well insulated.

BS: Yes. These guys in the Forest Service would (unintelligible). The army had theirs. (unintelligible) I was officer orderly there for a while. I was in and out of it every day. So the officers (unintelligible). I came over with Lieutenant Hanley, he was from Squaw Creek. He got sent with us. Lieutenant Hanley was from the Marine Corp Reserve from the University of Washington. He got in a bind over there for help. He said, "Hey," he told me he was from Squaw Creek. We rode on the train and all together. He asked me if I would like to be officer orderly for him. I said, "I'll try it." (unintelligible) just like the army. The Forest Service had two tables and the army....

[SIDE B]

DG: So what year was this now?

BS: This was in '38.

DG: You were an officer orderly in '38.

BS: Yes. I quit in '37 so we spent the winter there at Niehart. So I stayed with him and we finally got someone in there to help take my job.

DG: What did you do after that?

BS: I went up to road crew for a while. They wanted to build a CCC camp at Malta. So that's my brother. He came in later. When I was in the Navy my kid brother- he's on the end there- Joseph joined later. I was in the Navy a couple of years by the time he got in there. That's him. They all graduated from the eighth grade, every one of those jokers. That was his teacher. He was called the WPA teacher. He was contracted. He lived in (unintelligible) springs. There was quite a family down there. What the hell was his name? Al Vitten, WPA teacher that was him. That's Joe. He got in the eighth grade with his diploma. He had a tough time growing up too because he was an orphan. The farmers worked the hell out of him, but they didn't worry about his education.

DG: So you got most of your education in the CCC or had you been to school before?

BS: I had been to school for eight years. I at least went in and got my eighth grade diploma. You had to take those state tests in Bozeman. That was in '35 when I got out of that. I had to tough out winter without going to C's because I was still too young. It was the winter of '35 and '36. I worked on a lot of neighboring ranches. We didn't have that much to work on. It was only 160 acres. It was more or less wildlife because the eastbound river running through it, the swamps, and all that stuff. (unintelligible) north part of the Gallatin Valley there, a beautiful country. There were deer, jack rabbits and everything.

DG: Is it still there?

BS: Oh yes.

DG: I mean the ranch.

BS: Yes it's still there. It was a pretty good place for kids. It was no real place to make a living because 160 acres and 60 of it swamps, the river meandering through there- there was lots of good fishing. We did a lot of trapping. (unintelligible). That's where we stayed. That's where I joined the CCCs is that ranch on the east Gallatin. Of course Joe was much younger. I don't know why he didn't get his eighth grade diploma out there. The CCCs gave it to him. It wasn't too long after that that he joined the Navy. It was about 1941, before the war. I was in the Navy in July of '38.

DG: When did you leave the CCC and when did you.

BS: I was going to tell you, Lieutenant Hanley wanted me to go with him with his construction crew. There were about 35 of us. The big trucks came over from Missoula and we loaded up. We headed for Malta by great Falls and Fort Benton and all that stuff. We had to go through every town then. You didn't bypass them in those days. You'd be surprised how long it took to go through every town. You'd get up on the highline. We finally got up to Malta during the nighttime. We had a great big old Colonel Saunders. He was from Fort Missoula. They were

shaping up to camp in the dark. I got drafted with the damn cook to cook up a meal for them in the tent.

We had one tent (unintelligible). We put it together anyway, in the dark. It was a fire camp. They got that going. The next morning, the damn tents, it was like an army. This Colonel Saunders liked the army. He really ran those recruits around there. They weren't even recruits. They were just a bunch of farm boys or guys from an east town. They were mostly Montana boys that had worked enough to be useful. So that was our camp in Malta. It's there today. it was right by the bridge there. It's the fairgrounds now. one or two buildings are still there. That's Phillips County at Malta. Then I wrote to the Navy, "I've been on this waiting list for over a year. Take my name off of it because I'm going back to high school." I had talked to Lieutenant Hanley about it and he said, "I think you're too old now. You wouldn't like high school. You've been out too long. You better take the Navy."

They had changed the orders just as soon as I told them to take my name off. Then I got called and went to Butte. I went to Butte to join the Navy. They got me in a San Diego training station.

DG: They had selective service at that time?

BS: No. it was voluntary. I had been signed up for a whole year. I was waiting for my call. So I had to wait. I finally got called and Lieutenant Hanley took me to the Great Northern in Great Falls. We hopped a train and headed back down to Belgrade. Then i had to get reorganized and head for Butte and sign up. I was in the Navy by July 11th I think it was. It was a little bit early because (unintelligible) in Salt Lake as officials (unintelligible). You have another physical.

We had a physical in Butte and then we had an extensive physical in Salt Lake. It was in July of 1938 that I became a sailor. A few years later in '41, Joe came in to that company there. I had a roley-poley little WPA guy. He was from Indiana (unintelligible). He knew his stuff though as far as teaching eighth grade subjects. The teacher went on WPA just to keep a job. He wanted to stay in White Sulphur Springs County to stay with his family and stuff. He'd drive up there and stuff to camp to teach. Then he'd go home. It was a good camp.

DG: How much were you paid?

BS: A dollar a day. (unintelligible) they would leave 50 cents or a dollar (unintelligible). So really between both tables, the Forest Service foreman and the army officers, I was making 30 dollars or 45 dollars sometimes.

DG: A lot of extra money.

BS: Yes in those days it was.

DG: Didn't you have to send ten percent? Didn't they take ten percent?

BS: Yes. You had your choice. I always chose to send \$22 home. I sent it to my grandmother. She would put it in the bank. I had it when I got out. They would keep eight. You could either keep eight or five of your spending money. You buy a one-dollar book for (unintelligible) and convert it into coupons.

DG: That's what you used at camp?

BS: They smoked those up fast. I never did have to (unintelligible). I always bought a lot of these things. (unintelligible) and then stuff like that. There were candy bars and certain things that PX had there. There were souvenirs of the CCCs. I ended up losing those for another pin and bought a pillowcase. It had CCCs written on it. (unintelligible) guy on the antique shop here found one in the trunk and he gave it to me. I passed that on to the Gallatin County Museum downtown so they could have a CCCs.

DG: Did you help set that up?

BS: I gave up on this Fort Missoula thing. I had been giving them so much stuff through the years and they never did display it or keep it visible. So I just gave up on them. I don't worry about them any more. They don't even realize that this was the district headquarters. See this was in 1933. We had most all of our camps, this was as far as we went to Red Lodge from Fort Missoula.

DG: I've seen this map.

BS: The county put that together years ago for souvenirs. They had their camp too, but that's how it was in '33 in October. It was all active camps just that summer. They didn't even know at that time if (unintelligible). They didn't have the money. Then the appropriations came in about October 1st and there they had all those guys and no camp shaped up for winter. They were living in tents all summer. I was going to show you this map here that they started. (unintelligible) how they ended up. Montana had 90-some camps. Here's Neihart. (unintelligible). There's the ranger station they dropped. (unintelligible).

DG: Oh Caretaker's Cabin.

BS: That was on King's Hill made out of logs. They built that too. They came home. Here's our camps about the height of the operation. They weren't all out of Fort Missoula either, but that's the way they ended up.

DG: Fort Missoula was the headquarters and everything was dispersed from there?

BS: Yes. Except the eastern camps, they wised up and said it was too far away. They put those in Fort Lincoln, like in Sidney and Miles City.

DG: They had eight CCC camps in the Yellowstone National Forest. Did you ever get down there?

BS: Oh yes. The two out of Mammoth were shifted through this fort through the winter. They were shifted back and forth. They had district CCCs just like Fort Missoula, but they never really had a fort. They just put it together up in Glacier Park.

DG: That would have been a great station.

BS: Of course that's nine and a half years of CCCs. I think the largest number of camps we ever had in Glacier at one time was eight. That in '33. (unintelligible). There were five right in McDonald Valley in 1933. They always had three camps in McDonald Valley and St. Mary's and Two Medicine. They had a double camp up at mini-Glacier. There were two companies back to back. There's a beautiful picture in Helena at the Historical Society. I gave them a copy of that too. I got that from somebody. These camps were back to back. (unintelligible) over here would be the camps. They were down by the lake. (unintelligible) Sherburne, yes a manmade lake. That's where- they lost three guys in the lake there at Glacier going to work.

It was in '34 or '35. (unintelligible) recruited out of Ronan. You were supposed to know everything about woodwork. He didn't have good judgment. He was showing off to New Yorkers about how he could run that big log taking food over to the guys working on the boundary. They were doing more than that. They were cutting all the dead stuff off of Lake Sherburne. The water (unintelligible). They put the dam in and let the trees go dead. That's what they were doing at Sherburne Lake. (unintelligible). They were out of jobs. Sherburne Lake, here it is. He died at the lake. He drowned in there. You know, right there at Glacier Park, they cheat people out of history. They keep it stored in their favorite cubby holes.

DG: Have you been to their archives?

BS: No not since- they didn't have too many when I was up there working. They've got some in the library?

DG: They should have.

BS: Yes they should have. They've had so many people come and go there, they don't leave somebody in that damn library to keep that thing up to date to file it. Three of them died in that lake there, taking the food over. It was Cooper. He was driving it. He was going top speed and then he was rocking the boat with the rudder. They got swamped so they had these big cans of lemonade. It was about as tall as this. They all slipped and went over the side of the damn motor boat and they took on water. They weren't out too far. They got stranded from the campsite. Cooper was 18 years old. He was running the boat. These two boys couldn't save him. They drowned. They were New Yorkers. They had Italian names like that. All three CCC workers drowned in Sherburne Lake. Two of them swam to shore. They didn't make the report on what was going on. Otherwise they wouldn't have. They probably would have left the bodies.

DG: So there were five people?

BS: Yes in the boat. They were just taking the food over to the guys working on the boundary, the boundary trail. They used to keep the trail open. They were working on the boundary trail. It was running north and south there and also on the (unintelligible). That added up to three CCCs. That added up to quite a few. This guy did. His nephew runs that museum out of Polson.

DG: I've seen signs for it.

BS: I gave him some stuff on this and he gave me some stuff too, like the Western Union message that went to the family out at Ronan that "Your boy had drowned." So I traded with him.

DG: how did you get started in this and what made you start investigating?

BS: I came here in Missoula and I was going back to Glacier. I had worked two seasons and stuff in North Fork (unintelligible). I came through here and that was in '66 or '67. I took some courses out there. I had a little time on spring quarter and (unintelligible) probably the G.I Bill too. So I was from where CCCs. I didn't know all I wanted to know about it. I started looking at papers and different things. I kept asking what they had and it wasn't a hell of a lot really.

DG: So what year was this?

BS: About '66 or '67. so I started accumulating. And I thought, "Well I'm in Glacier Park. The CCCs had been all the hell up here. So I'll start at the library when I get to the headquarters." (unintelligible). I said, "Jesus they might have something on the CCCs." They weren't even better than this place. Nobody ever kept it. Mostly everything they got on the CCCs- well I left a lot of stuff- but it's come in the last ten years or 20 years. It started accumulating there in '75 or '80. it was the late Seventies (unintelligible). She had an ambition to put together- she never got too much operation from the superintendent on that. You got something better to do than that. I don't think they're any better today to really nail down the history and build their own little museum. You get the same thing here at Fort Missoula though.

DG: It's hard to get the (unintelligible) to move.

BS: Yes. The other day I was out looking for some of my stuff. I got some new clues. I thought I'd check some of the stuff I left there. They had hid all this stuff back by (unintelligible) like the *Great Falls Tribune* that I had read and typed out word for word and added stuff there. We know what's down in the Forest Service file and it's really an unorganized mess. Who cares? I don't think Judge Morris even read (unintelligible) came in. He knows a lot of stuff went down there. He doesn't recognize- that must have been the C's that said something about it. They're crippled really. It's sad.

DG: It is because it's a lot of valuable...

BS: To have (unintelligible). Dale's got some of my stuff that I left, my "residue" I called it in the archives. There are three boxes. Of course everything over in Helena is original that I had been given.

DG: Is that where the greatest mass of your collection is in Helena?

BS: Dave Walters (unintelligible).

DG: He just retired.

BS: Not quite is he?

DG: Pretty soon.

BS: He's in that bottom research section taking (unintelligible). I gave (unintelligible) the other day, the second edition. So I knew I had (unintelligible) to California. That's when I said, "I think I'll stay until the first of January." I got a lot of (unintelligible) tied together. I'm going to separate stuff and put the DHD- now here's one of these (unintelligible). He sketched it out on a paper. (unintelligible) take charge and have these guys to help you. Then I'll personally check on him and stuff. Hell, you'd get stuck. These guys (unintelligible). He's still living. He's up at (unintelligible). I've got to write him soon. He had to head up the CCCs. He was the head of the (unintelligible). These guys are all regular too. I guess this was.(unintelligible). They took over the staff you know. There were inspectors, dental officer, (unintelligible).

We had some good (unintelligible) and district sergeants. (unintelligible) end was usually the health inspector of all the camps. You had a dental officer come out and check you. That's the business administration I guess. Then they have the one officer. I always remember him. I worked in a big old fort by him (unintelligible) from Seattle. He stayed there all the time. Each company has a district advisor. Some companies are big enough to have an advisor and an assistant and even a musician too, to teach music.

DG: Each camp?

BS: Yes if you were big enough. You had to have over 200 men. They'd give them more staff. It was this out in the army hospital really. I'll tell you some of these guys are still here in Missoula. He died not too long ago. There are a couple of more. Tom Murray, he's a judge- a lawyer. He started out. He came in the medical section. He had an office at the end of that damn little (unintelligible) where he dispatched band-aids. They took them to all other camps. We had the big quartermaster sections. (?) grew up- one of them is the county commissioner here. One became a lawyer and he moved out to Portland. (unintelligible) that's the same as Fort Missoula. (unintelligible) is still here selling (unintelligible).

We have another one here that I see once in a while. This is (unintelligible). We have original '37 over there at Fort Missoula. (unintelligible) big building. His administration is still there today. it's falling apart and there's a big barn next to it. The CCCs did some landscaping work.

The CCC radio was hooked into the Presidio in San Francisco. This is still there today. the army uses it. (unintelligible) he didn't show up very good. He's still living here. He's still in Missoula. He was dispatching trucks, these logging and mechanic drivers.

DG: (unintelligible).

BS: Oh my golly, it is- holy smokes. (unintelligible) the money you know. It was pretty hard to nail down. The records, when they closed up, this one here (unintelligible) the college has this stuff up there. This is CCCs.

DG: Do they use it?

BS: Oh yes all the time. In fact, I got a telephone call from a gal who was going to teach over there. She wanted to know where she could find some more stuff. I said, "That's everything over there when we had the big party over here in '88." The college put it on. It was a special year for this camp. (unintelligible) at Western Montana College. This is Fort Knox Company 1501. It's a beautiful setting, a beautiful camp. (unintelligible) Western Montana College. They built (unintelligible) roads up there. Then they built a road over here. This probably in a lot of elevations, some old mining town there.

[END]