

CCC Interview with
Russell Peterson

Interviewer: Ron Williams

Date: 3/27/02

Russell Peterson's interview will be in Bold print.

Ron Williams-Interviewer will be in regular print.

Interviewer: Ok, this tape is an interview about the CCC experiences with Russell Peterson of Sioux City; today's date is March 27, 2002.

Russell, why don't you tell us a little about when you first went into the CCC Camp?

Russell: Well I guess just at first day I went downtown, I was already enlisted and I got in a car, (pause) a truck and a friend of mine was also going in the same time I was. We actually joined the same time. And we got in the truck and I turned to Whitey (pause tape is stopped and reset.) Well I guess the first thing they did was issued me clothes. They were army clothes, O. D. and khaki.

What is OD?

Olive Drab,

OK (Laughter) I am not use to that term.

No, that is what they call them even in the Army.

Somebody else used that term; I don't know what it was.

Yes, Olive Drab. And they came pretty close to fitting you to size.

Did they issue those to you?

Yes, they also issued you a razor, OK, and even I think even shaving cream to start and then you had to buy your own later. But with \$8.00 a month, you didn't do a lot of...some only got \$ 5.00 a month. It just depended on how their parents were needed for money, and that was a big decision.

We will get to that in a little bit later...

So you said you were from Sioux City?

Yeah, uh huh.

And your age when you enrolled?

I would say eighteen or nineteen years old.

And what did you do before CCC camp?

Just look for a job and hope I could get a job.

Were you just out of high school or did you complete school?

No, I never completed school.

So what kind of job did you have before CCC camp, do you remember?

Oh, I did work a couple of places, but I can't remember where they were, because that was too darn long ago.

So why did you enroll in the CCC?

Oh, I don't know cause I needed a job to do and keep you out of trouble; sometimes you didn't keep out of trouble though.

We will talk about that. (Laughter)

But most of the guys were all pretty good. That was a good deal. I don't know.

And what camp were you assigned too?

Whiting, Iowa.

You said you were never transferred?

No, I was in Whiting for two years.

You went in when?

September 19, 38, No I guess it was September 37.

And got out?

September 39

Personal items you had when you arrived?

Just my regular clothes.

And box?

No box.

Yah, your footlocker?

Oh my footlocker, I got that coming back out.

Oh, ok you got that while you were in.

I bought that when I was in. When you went in they had a footlocker they sold you. They would charge you five dollars for that and they took out \$1.00 a month until it was paid for.

I was going to say you had to work a month just to get it bought huh.

Did you take to camp anything that you were not allowed to keep, anything that they took away from you?

No, no I did manage to buy later some clothes and we also had a store in Whiting and we had to go to Onawa to the court (*hard to understand this word*) just to get our clothes back.

Really, tell about that later on.

Was the camp there at Whiting have barracks or did it have?

Barracks. Eight barracks, a Headquarters building, a rec. hall a mess hall (pause) they had boxes (*word unclear*) too, for the guys to mechanical work on trucks and stuff.

Can you explain a little bit about the barracks you slept in?

Well it was about 25-30 that were in a barracks. They always had somebody designated to take care of the fires in the winter months. And if you wanted a radio, they somebody had to buy a radio. The ship didn't help you pay for a radio. In fact I had one of the radios. So you could listen to music and stuff like that.

Ok, did you have bunk beds?

Regular bunk bed, yah small bed.

Small bed? They weren't two tiered?

No they weren't two tiered they were all single tiered.

Regular mattress's or?

Well the kind of mattress they have in all Army use ...probably old?

Pretty thin?

Yah, They weren't overly thick, but you could sleep in them. (laughter)

You could work hard and were tired so you slept in them?

Oh Yah, you worked pretty hard and we had one guy in there that had to chop trees and stuff and cut them and everything. He'd miss the tree and cut his foot two or three times.

We tell about that later on. But that is another question.

Who would supply the bedding and sleepwear?

They did, they furnished all the bedding and mattress's and stuff and once a week you got clean bedding.

Oh, once a week?

Once a week, Yah this is kinda coming back a little bit,

Well, good.

Do you remember what you got for bedding?

Two sheets and a pillow slip and a pillow, beside the mattress.

Any more blankets?

They had two or three blankets and a comforter.

Ok

That is where I learned how to do some of that stuff when I went in to the Army, that was a break.

Do you remember some of the other people in the barracks by their names?

Yah, I can remember a guy named Johnny Gretchovich. I don't whether know if he is living or not. Not too much, Chuck Whiting, He was not in my barracks, but was in the camp at Whiting. Oh boy.

Too far back, huh?

Yeah there was another one I can't remember his name. In fact he went to the same church we did up here. When I came back out, when I came back out of the service. Oh, Greg Gagdon was it.

First name was Greg?

No his last name was Gagdon, his first name might have been Greg. I don't know for sure.

So generally how did everybody get along? Oh most generally pretty good, oh they did have there fights in there like everyone else. In fact I think I got into a couple of them. I will ask about that in a bit here in a little bit.

All right.

Do you remember anything about the food in the mess hall?

Well have you ever heard of SOS?

Yah, had that a lot?

That was creamed dried beef and gravy.

Sure, Sure had that frequently huh?

Oh, about once a week it was for breakfast

So can you stand eating it anymore?

Oh heck, she takes it and makes it out hamburger now.

(Laughter) I was going to say I love it.

Well there is nothing wrong with it.

I love it.

I never had it in the military though. When I was in the hospital at Fort Des Moines, see I was in the hospital for a for a hundred and one days, a truck tipped over on eighteen of us and in fact I got a crushed vertebrae out of it.

In the CCC camp or what, military?

No it was the CCC camp.

Well talk about that.

Who did the cooking, did they have a chef hired?

No, they had regular guys who were in the CCC Camp.

They went to a cooking school. I am not sure where the cooking school was. That was out of my line on that one.

Did they have help from people?

Oh we were pulled the KP, kitchen work, generally got a week of it so often. And if you didn't behave yourself you got some more of it.

Did you stay there on the weekend?

A lot, mostly of the weekends.

Did you remember being there over a holiday weekend?

Yah, Oh Yah. Xmas time.

Do you remember a special meal?

We had turkey.

OK.

Oh yah, they had turkey. Thanksgiving they had turkey. The meals were all right; in fact most of those guys were better cooks than some of them in than in the Army?

Any thing else about the holiday meals?

No just bigger holiday meal like you would have at home.

Any pie or pumkin pie?

Oh they had pies, yah. I imagine they baked them.

OK *(Sound of flipping through pages)* Boy, you have a lot of paper here?

Oh yah *(laughter)*

So tell me a little about getting paid and payday getting paid?

Well payday was once a month of course. Actually it was \$30 dollars a month but you'd get \$8.00 of it. And you parents got \$22. But some of them got \$5.00 and their parents got \$25.00.

Yah, how was that decision made as too, cause I have been told that they kept anywhere from \$ 5 to \$ 8 dollars? **We got to keep mine was \$ 8 dollars and some were \$5 dollars. Depends on the condition of the parents were for the money situation. But if I remember right my Dad took that money and saved that money put some of it away and then when I got out and couldn't find a job he would give me some of it then.**

Sure, So you got \$ 8 dollars a month. How did you spend it?

Foolishly (laughter)

How foolishly did you spend it or can you tell?

Well no, I can't really tell what I did, but you have canteen checks and you ah I think they were a dollar a book. And you would buy a book and that why most of the time I would get about three dollars cash from it and the rest I paid for the books that I bought. OK That is where I learned a little lesson. When I got in the Army they tried to tell me to get these books and I wouldn't do it. So I imagine that I would have all of my check, cause getting 21 dollars wasn't much from the Army either, wasn't much considering and you didn't get all of that because they took some out for Red Cross and things like that which always dragged me out on the Army deal, cause I didn't feel I should be doing anything for the Red Cross.

Sure

So some of the thing you can tell me about that you did buy?

Candy and stuff like that.

Oh Candy, snack items.

I did manage or be able to buy a pair of pants or two once in a while. I did not have no civilian shoes here I just had regular Army shoes, or boots.

Did you or like on your days off or evenings was there anything you could go to or entertainment wise you could go to? I realize Whiting is not that big of town.

Well they had decoration for you. They had a softball team. A baseball team. I played on a baseball team a while. I think I went to Ottumwa Iowa and played a game of baseball. And they furnished your transportation a lot. Done a little skating in Onawa. But that was on our own. We would hitch hike to Omaha Onawa. We weren't suppose to but did anyway.

Played the game of softball in Ottumwa against?

No, that was baseball. Softball I played at Blencoe a lot yah Blencoe in Onawa.

But when you played in Ottumwa was that against another CCC camp?

Yah, uh huh, Oh yah, Yah all of the CCC camps had a baseball generally had a baseball team. Some of them were pretty darn good too.

That is what we understood, that some of them were pretty good.

We had a pretty good softball team too.

Now these softball games you played in Blencoe were they against other CCC camps too?

No, they were against town teams around the area, we played Blencoe, because I pitched in that.

Ah you pitched in the softball team?

Yes, I pitched in softball and played outfield in baseball.

You had a better underhand than an overhand?

Well, I tried pitching in baseball and I got clobbered all of the time, I didn't in softball.

OK

But when you played some of those country town they had some awful good softball teams. Yah, they had a regular league there at Blencoe.

I wouldn't doubt it there used to be a professional team there in Onawa or a Semi-Professional.
Semi-Pro.

But I remember reading a newspaper article about it.

I had a offer a chance to play in a semi-pro team, but I never played it, because I was in the CCC camp and I felt I wasn't treated to go do a trick like that.

And did the have a some sort of Sunday worship service in camp?

Yah, you could go to that if you wanted too.

Was there a facility for it or did you go downtown?

I think they used the recreation room.

Ok.

Do you remember going to it?

No, I never went to it. I don't now why because I go to church all of the time now.

Yah, you were young then.

Yah, I was young, just eighteen or nineteen years old.

Ok occasionally you said you might have got in a fight. And can we ask the question about any personal conflicts you had and how you dealt with it?

It was just a fight.

Do you remember what it was over?

Nothing, that is a fact. Poor excuse for it.

Just young guys that had too much energy wanted to burn off a little.

Not too much energy, just different views than you did, they took exception to it and so I got into it with them one time that is all that was. He regretted it.

Does that mean you won?

Yah, I won that one that one. Didn't win them all though.

Did you ever try any boxing?

Well I tried it once. That's a mistake.

You would rather have nothing on your hand than pads on your hands?

I think the pads were better, but you still got hurt just as bad. Cause they wanted me to try out for golden gloves and I wasn't good enough for that.

So if there was a scrap between people in the camp did they generally just fight it out or was some other?

They didn't approve of it but they had them.

Did you hide it then?

No we didn't hide it. It just came off.

It probably didn't last too long.

No, it did last long.

What did the rest of the troupes, the rest of the fellows do? Did they show up sides and kind of egg you on at all?

No, not really.

Were they involved?

Well generally that happened were just a few of guys yah just a few guys around that you fought with. The one I had that one time was I forget where were going through, but they stopped the truck and this guy chooses me and we stopped the truck and we fought. I think it was around Blenco or somewhere around there.

So you were in camp?

No we were out of camp. We were on our way to work detail and the leader told us to stop the truck and made us get out and we fought. And they had a guy with him who tried to tell him how to fight and every move he made, I had him. I new what was going on and so he really had no chance. Only thing I can say is you don't gain a darn thing by it.

Well probably not. Feed your ego a little.

Back then you had ego's I guess, then never gone. *Laughter*

Now you had numerous rules in camp that you had to abide by, now what happened to the people that broke the rules?

You went on K.P.

Was that pretty much it?

That was it. That was enough. That was twelve or fourteen hours of work for you when you did that. You had to do all of the dishes and stuff like that.

Did you have to do that fairly often?

Oh yah regardless you did or not you would get a week of that ever so often.

Oh you would did get assigned a week? No, I meant did you get KP very often because you didn't do something you shouldn't have?

Oh yeah, I got it a once or twice.

Enough.

Yeah that's enough. You learn fast not to do to many things like that.

I'm sure. *(Laughter)*

Ok we mentioned a little about some educational or trade opportunities that were available.

There was plenty of them available.

Do you remember any of them?

No, I don't remember. But could remember a guy that couldn't read or write his own name. They got him to write his own name and do a little bit on it.

Do you remember other types of classes?

Oh, there was all types of classes, it was almost like a school if you wanted. And that was done besides going and doing your work.

Are you saying you did that like in the evening?

Yah, be in the evening. No you went out and did your work during the day and then went to classes in the evening.

But you didn't participate in any?

No, I didn't participate in any. I probably should have it would have helped me out more.

So where were these classes held?

I think they were held, I don't know where they were held, by God I think they must have had a building for them.

Classroom for them, I know a lot of camps did have.

Well they had a lot of building there. I don't remember all of the building that were there. Of course all buildings are all gone.

Can you describe, I think I pretty much know where that camp was?

Well it was on the west end of Whiting on the other side of the creek there, there was a creek in fact I ice skated on that creek. Ok and right behind that it looks like a deal for a sewage deal.

Do you think you were on the south side of the road as opposed to?

Yes, south side of the road.

Yah

There is a sewage lagoon in there now and it is not much of a creek it is more of a drainage ditch.

That was always a drainage ditch but there was water in it so you could go ice skating on it.

In Whiting they had a place the flooded in the wintertime.

Did they?

One time I ice skated on it.

Ok what was some of the main projects that your main camp was involved in?

Well we were involved in quite a few of them. We had a dynamiting crew.

Did you work on that?

Yeah I did. I could tell you a little story on that.

Go right ahead.

Ok we were by torn and we were cleaning a drainage ditch off the little Sioux River. The leader decided he wanted to go in and have coffee, if he did I really don't know but anyway he told us to blow that stump out. So we looked at the stump and we looked at the river there. We said lets blow it across the river. We went and set it up on a deal it was wired and we wired it. We knew how to handle it, I think we put three sticks in it, and blew it across the river.

How big a tree was it?

Oh heck it was about like this.

Oh about 30 inches or 36 inches.

Oh yeah about 36 inches. (laughter) Then we were sent on this dynamiting crew we would take ice jams out of the little Sioux river. Down around that area. Oh yeah, we did a lot of that stuff. But then we also cleaned drainage ditches. Put in drainage culverts, did a lot of concrete work. That was all around that area. In fact we put a piling in the Little Sioux River by Ticonic. And we would eat at noon at the city hall at Ticonic.

The old city hall must be gone by now.

Oh it is gone now, Oh, it is gone.

I don't remember seeing a building like that there.

Yah it was there it was close to the church.

On the different project jobs that were worked on, what was your specific duties?

Well I was hooked on one of the pilling end of Ticonic. I and Jack Graham have to do a lot of the wiring we were out over the river doing the wiring over.

Wiring for? **Wiring the pylons together after they are driven into the ground.**

Other types of things you did while you were in the camp?

Well you had deals you had to cut down in a bunch of stuff in drainage ditches. Then we also built floodgates out of some of the drainage ditches there.

Start all over in the hills over there?

Yes, also the area where there was creeks and stuff.

This sort of question ask here asks something about a LAM.

What the heck is that?

I don't know I was going to ask you, it says who trained you the LAM's or who?

Well the civilians they were foreman.

OK.

And they lead us and tell us what to do. See all the Army done was run the Army part of the camp. But they would show and do things. But we were never really trained to do any of it.

I am not sure what that LAM term.

It must be the civilians that were running it.

Do you remember the leaders of your working table ...

Well Haderman was one on them.

Hannaman?

No Haderman. Ed Haderman in fact his name was Ed.

OK.

And then there was a guy named Dean McClarey.

Have you had any contact with those guys since you left?

Well I think both of those two guys are dead.

Did they live around here?

Yah, one was McClarey, Yah both of them Haderman and McClarey worked in Sioux City at the camp anyway. Haderman worked for Roberts Dairy. And I don't know who Dean worked for.

Ok.

So did you get along with them ok?

Oh I had no problem with them, I just did what they told me to do.

That wasn't one of the guys that stopped the truck and had you duke it out?

No uh uh.

Do you remember who that was?

No I don't. He was the one who had the truck accident that yelled we were going to roll over right south of Blinco. He jumped off the back of the truck and I didn't get out.

When I came too I had a bunch of stuff all over me. That is when they got a little more strict about how they put stuff on the truck. And I laid 101 days in the hospital on that little situation.

What was it, broken vertebrae?

No it was a crushed vertebrae, right down close it appeared where you were walking, cause the doctors said I may never walk again. Kind of made a liar out of that situation.

Did you say 102 days in the hospital?

101 days.

101 days.

About 10 (ten) or 12 (twelve) days here at St. Vincent and then they took me to Fort Des Moines.

Were you in the back of the truck?

Oh yah.

Was it an open truck?

No, it was a canvas over the top of the truck there was eighteen of us and thirteen of us were hurt. Wow. One guy had a punctured lung and a broken leg and three ribs busted. Wow. Oh Yah. They he got stealing gas, that screwed him up for getting a settlement from the government himself.

I kind of jumped ahead of myself with the questions.

How did you get your work assignments everyday?

Oh, they lined us up like a roll call everyday. We had a line up. You had to have you lined up every morning.

Did they make assignments then?

No you always way knew what group you were going to be in.

What type of equipment did you use?

Standard equipment.

Just hand shovels?

Shovels and axes.

You didn't get into any big equipment like dozers?

No, well we had dozers, but I didn't get in to any of that, no.

Do you remember how that equipment was issued to you, do you have to go to a tool crib (?) to get it?

We carried a box in the truck and all the tools were in that truck. And when you got out to the job you had your tools.

That makes sense.

Yah, we didn't have to go sign it out. A lot of the time you didn't know what your were going to do on that job. The only one that we halfway knew what we were going to do, was when were on the dynamiting crew. Then we kind of knew we had all that stuff with us. We had the plunger all the wire. You could take a stick of dynamite and throw it up against the way like that and nothing would happen to you. It wouldn't explode unless you had the cap in there. Yah.

So of all the things you did at the CCC camp, which one did you enjoy doing the most?

I think working with the dynamiting crew.

That would be fairly interesting.

It was interesting. I learned a lot about dynamiting

I don't hardly remember it anymore, but I sure did learn a lot about that.

Have you had any contact with the CCC worker since you left the CCC camp.

Oh yah, Chuck Wiley, he worked at the Illinois Central Railroad same as I did. And so did Jack Graham he worked for the Illinois Central Railroad like I did. He is dead now. He had been dead quite a while. But he was a special friend though. Ok.

Do you remember any, quite often in camps the city kids would gang up on the farm kids?

No there was none of that. I did not see any of that.

Do you remember any minority people on your camp?

No there was not black ones in Whiting we had no blacks ones. No Indians. No, no Indians. The only place the Indians went were in the Army.

I had some questions about that but we won't go there.

I can't answer the question. Well, I guess there was some black ones but see that was the first part of the Army and they were all separated. I think they had camps for them, but they kept them separate from us. Why they did that I don't know? Because, when I went to school here hell, I went to school with colored kids. Yeah, I went to Woodrow Wilson up here. There were colored guys in there. In fact one of the colored guys was my best friend. I will never forget that. Because they would never allow him to be on the same team that I was on. In the school and were playing, I was pitching and I struck him out, he dropped his bat and walked right out there and he said, "I want to shake your hand," and I said why. He said, "You're the first guy that ever struck me out". (Laughter) Ok. Strange isn't it?

Sure, Sure.

Now you were telling me about someone who cut his foot with an axe.

Yah, I can't tell you his name. But he done it a couple of times, they finally wouldn't let him use an axe.

Bob Lumis was telling me that they were real specific about who got to use the axe.

Yah oh Yah. Oh they wouldn't let him use the axe. It was a double bladed axe too, you know. Those damn things were sharp.

So was it thought that he was cutting his foot on purpose?

Oh no, he wasn't cutting it on purpose. It was just an accident. Hey that was no fun, he cut it rough.

Do you remember any diseases in the camp?

No, I never had any. Oh there might have been some flu and stuff that was there. In fact I don't think I was ever sick except for that back injury.

Were there any problems with insects or rodents?

Oh they were around there but we had no problems with them.

You got used to them?

No, it is because we killed them off. Especially the mice. Where the camp was at we had alot of field mice.

Those barracks weren't real air tight were they?

Oh they weren't too bad. They were not too bad at all. I think you could get 30 men into a barracks. We had 7 barracks but all 7 were used. I think we had 6 ½ used. We had one that was cut up and the cooks had the other half. Of course you know there was a lot of short sheeting going on. You know about that don't you. (laughter)

Well, I know what it is. Why don't you tell me about that?

Well we had a guy we kept short sheeting every time he would go home on the weekend they would short sheeting him every time he came back. Then they had a leader that they would short sheet also in the same barracks. And he went around and tipped every bed over but two. My bed and Jonnie Getrovich bed he didn't tip over, cause he knew we didn't do it. But we were friends to him see. And I can't think of his name but he was a Pollock I think he really was. There was a lot of short sheeting going on though. I was short sheeted a couple times.

Nah

Occasionally some of the camps did some work in the community, do you remember any?

Most of they work was community work, actually.

I mean for the town of Whiting?

Well the town of Blencoe we done sewer drainage work right in the downtown area right by the school and all over the whole area in right downtown Blencoe. We worked there for about 6 to 8 months.

Pretty much digging by hand in there?

Well we also dug a little bit too. But we put drainage deals in there.

When they did that work or were you paid anything extra or was that part of your duty?

No, No that was part of your duty. There was no extra pay there. I didn't receive any extra pay anyway. (laughter)

OK.

Did you have any contact in the outside community in Whiting or some other community?

No, oh I guess I did have one but it didn't amount to anything. It was all a mistake. I don't really want to talk that one. Well

Who is going to care? Well let's put it this way. I told you about the flooding of the pond in Whiting. And how we went skating one night and we met a bunch of girls up there and we got acquainted with them. We went to their house and one insisted I go to her house and go to the dance with her. And ah I said ok I didn't care. And ah but I ended up going up town one day and I run into the sheriffs daughter too. She said do you know how old she is. And she told me, so I didn't show up for the date.

She was too young apparently?

Yes only 13 years old.

Really!

Oh yah. No way. (laughter) That is asking for trouble.

Sure

Is that the only girl you had contact with?

Yah, but there was a couple of girls but I that the only one I had contact with. But I did not let that contact be very long.

I understand. Did any of your friends meet any girls in the community?

Well some of them married some of the girls. Oh yah. Pete married a girl up there.

Did he stay there?

No, I think he moved back to Sioux City. He was the one that drove the truck that took us to the CCC camp the first time.

Ok

Some camps had some sort of affiliation with group like the Masonic Temple or ELKS or something like that, do you remember any of those?

No not that I know of. No. No.

Was there occasionally when somebody in the community when you had contact with a young lady was there a young man in the community that would object to that? Do you remember any of those situations?

I did not have any of those situations.

Did you hear about any?

No I never heard about it.

Good, Good.

How do you think the CCC camp was appreciated by the community?

They weren't real happy about some of us, cause there are always guys that don't behave themselves, regardless of the CCC camp or Army or anything else.

Sure.

There are always guys that are misbehaving.

Boys will be boys.

Yes, boys will be boys. I told that to a principal here out in the school, of one of my kids. I said "Boys will be boys," she didn't appreciate me too much. *Laughter*

Do you remember some of the incidents that other guys might have got into?

No, I didn't have much to do with that. I stayed pretty much out of the limelight on that situation.

So, what was your most memorable experience there?

Just being there.

OK

Just being there.

Can you think of anything that was the oddest experience you had?

Not really.

Probably was the truck accident.

Well, the truck accident was the biggest thing. Yah, that was a 101 days in the hospital. And boy did they make a fuss when I came back out.

A fuss over you?

Yah.

Did they let up on your work for a while?

Did they ever they made it all most impossible for me to do was to stay awake. They took piling on these drainage ditches that fill these concrete tubes you know. They were dirty and I had to clean them off. And you would sit there and clean that off and pretty soon you were ready to go to sleep. It was too boring.

They didn't want to be too hard on your back, huh?

Oh they were worried about. In fact that winter in fact I went to the Camp Doctor and asked him what about skating? And he said, "No you stay off skates," but I came up here and went skating anyway. Cause I wasn't about to stay off the ice.

So what time of year did that truck accident happen?

It was in September, no, it was in June no the last part of May.

When did you get back to work then?

It was September, yah. They had a special meeting on that.

Like what?

On what I was suppose to do. One of the biggest things was I wasn't suppose to lift.

What about the other fella's that were injured also?

Well they all had their special dues, I don't know what happened to Dailey, he had that punctured lung but he managed to get a car. I don't know how he got that, I think his parents gave him all that money right away. He wasn't getting enough gas, so he would go to jobs out there and steal gas. And they had a little guy on the civilian side of the deal go out he went out there and watched and he caught him. I think Dailey could have got set with the government for the rest of his life. But he didn't, cause he got caught stealing. There was a lot of stealing.

Did he get booted out of camp?

No he stayed until he got discharged they keep track of him.

Sure.

What do you think you biggest accomplishment at camp was?

Gee, I couldn't answer that.

You may have had several.

Oh that was a possibility, yah.

Was it accomplishing some specific?

It could be a sport, I played basketball. I wasn't much of a basketball player, but I played it. I would get hot once in a while, couldn't miss one. But that was an accident.

So was your life changed at all by you being in there?

Oh yah, it changed some.

And did you benefit from it?

Oh yah, I benefited from it. I am sure the other guys won't give it credit but it helped.

You probably went in at an age that went in you were probably somewhat immature.

Yah, I was quite a bit immature.

Learned how to live with some other people.

Yah.

So ah what did you do after you got out? Did you say you were in for two years?

Yah, I worked in a packing house, Armor and Swiss for a short time, before I went to Omaha. Then I worked an upholstery guy in Omaha. Then the draft bill past and then I joined the Army.

When did you get drafted then?

I didn't get drafted I joined.

Tell me about that a little bit about what you did in the Army?

What I did in the Army, well I got myself in to the quarter master corps and I got myself sent to McCornfield (sp) Washington. And I got myself attached to the air corps. Ok. Which was a break. And I was in the fifth air corps the most of my three or four years in the service. I was four years and ten months in the service.

Which was probably during World War II?

Oh yes. I served in Australia and New Guinea.

Good ok.

Three years overseas. I was at Pearl Harbor one week before they bombed it. I was up there the Sunday before.

Ah, just a couple odd questions here, what do you remember about haircuts in the camp?

Short ones. *laughter* Butch or flat tops, what ever you wanted to call it.

How often do you get them to them ?

Oh you paid for them.

You paid for them? Even the first one?

Well maybe not the first one. I don't remember it was in the Army. I knew where I got them. Overseas we had a guy in the Army that cut hair all of the time. He was a little a bastard, a little bit of everything. He only weighted about 260 lbs 6' 4" or 6' 5", we called him 'Tiny Hoops'. I remember more of that than I do of the CCC camp.

And you know a lot of those folks are getting those mixed up, because they both had the Army way of life.

There was a quite different Army life style, quite a bit different.

Did you come home much on the weekends?

Oh, I came home once in a while. At least once a month.

So how did you come home, thumbed it?

Uh, huh. They picked us up.

Did you have any problems getting back then?

No we done the same thing. I could tell you something coming from camp one night in the freezing rain, we were coming back and we hitch hiked, a car stopped and picked us up, it was a Lieutenant Fillback (sp), one of the officers of the camp. OK. He got us in there and got a going along we were talking about the fact that we were getting freezing rain. And you know he said I could turn back, and we said Lieutant if you want to go back we will go back gladly. But he went, came all the way in.

Was that coming to Sioux City?

Yah, coming to Sioux City. Oh, I caught a ride with a gay, going back to camp one time. And. And if I would have realized it, he would have gotten punched in the mouth. *Laughter*

Nothing happened?

No, he let me out. He couldn't get, I wouldn't ok anything with him, so he kicked me out. I think it was about at Salix, Sloan, somewhere down there.

OK. So you had to keep coming from there?

I had to keep coming. I finally got there. We had a guy from Rock Rapids walk all the way from Rock Rapids to Whiting. Cause he couldn't catch a ride.

I wonder what time he got in?

I don't know what time he got in all I know is that he walked all the way. He is the one that got the schooling. He learned how to write his name and a few other things.

What do you remember about getting mail or sending mail?

I never sent any mail because I went home.

Did you get any mail from home?

No. I went home often enough not to have them send me any mail. Oh yah, I got home at least once a month. It was only 30 miles, what the heck.

So how did you sign up for the CCC in the first place? What was that process?

I really don't remember. All I remember was that I was in a CCC camp. I signed some papers and that was all that was to it. I think the old man took me down and signed me in.

And you had a physical probably?

Oh yah, you bet your life you had a physical.

Give you any shots?

Oh yah, I got shots. I got those every place I went. Sure. In the Army part, I saw a guy get a shot he went down on the ground and passed out. I couldn't believe it cause when went they shipped us overseas they give us two shots, three shots and a vaccination. Before they shipped us over seas. You would take two steps and two guys grabbed you and Wham! And you take another step and another guy would give you a vaccination on your other arm and another shot. The thing I remember about that was over in New Guinee and they called us in for shots and they guy said come back here and I said I already got my shots and he said, you got our needle in your arm. I would never pay any attention to which arm they put it in. They would ask "What arm do you want it in?" and I would say right arm. Then when I tried to pitch a game of softball that same night and then I would be ok.

Well we kind of gone through the questions that I have here, is there anything else you want to mention?

Oh, I don't think so.

There is probably things we didn't have down here that was question wise?

Well, there is a lot of things I might come up when I think about them.

Well, if you think about it I will leave my phone number and we can stop back and chat about it sometime.