

CCC INTERVIEW WITH ALLEN “RED” ANDREWS

Location: Ankeny, Iowa

Date: March 6, 2002

Interviewer: Larry Wilson

DNR: Where was your hometown?

Red: Centerpoint, Iowa.

DNR: How old were you when you joined?

Red: 18. July 6, 1934.

DNR: What did you do before you joined the CCC's?

Red: Farm.

DNR: Why did you join the CCC's?

Red: To make money.

DNR: What camps were you in?

Red: 1756. Strawberry Point. Backbone State Park.

DNR: Were you ever transferred from that camp?

Red: I was in Marion, Iowa.

DNR: How long were you in these camps?

Red: 1 ½ years in Strawberry Point and ½ year in Marion.

DNR: When did you join the CCC's?

Red: July 6, 1934.

DNR: Tell me the first time you signed up at Strawberry Point?

Red: Clothing and toiletries were issued.

DNR: Did you take any personal items with you?

Red: No. Just the clothes I had on.

DNR: Did they tell you not to bring anything?

Red: I don't remember.

DNR: Did you have barracks?

Red: Bunk beds.

DNR: How did you get assigned to the barracks?

Red: They just showed you and in you went.

DNR: How many in a barracks?

Red: 12 or 14.

DNR: Was the bedding and sleepwear issued?

Red: Everything was issued.

DNR: Do you remember any of your bunkmates?

Red: Virgil Metheny and Teddy Augustine, Dick Alexander was another one I was with.

DNR: How did you guys get along?

Red: Good.

DNR: What was the food like?

Red: It was good. We went through a line.

DNR: Who did the cooking?

Red: They were CCC cooks.

DNR: Did you have holiday meals?

Red: They had meals at Christmas and Thanksgiving.

DNR: When was payday?

Red: \$25 was sent home. They gave you \$5 in cash. End of the month. They paid us in silver dollars.

DNR: How did you spend the money?

Red: Cigarettes, candy bars.

DNR: What did you do on your days off?

Red: I'd go to the park.

DNR: How far is Centerpoint from Strawberry Point?

Red: It must have been 35 to 40 miles.

DNR: If you wanted to go home on the weekend you would get a pass?

Red: Yes.

DNR: Were there sporting activities?

Red: Baseball and basketball.

DNR: Did you have a recreation hall?

Red: Yes.

DNR: Did you play baseball?

Red: Yes.

DNR: Did you have any personal conflicts in the camp?

Red: No. But the commander would solve it.

DNR: If the commander had to do something about it, what did he do?

Red: You got the dirty jobs for punishment.

DNR: Were there any trade or vocational training?

Red: I didn't know of any.

DNR: At Strawberry Point, what work did you do?

Red: We made bridges over streams. Just above the water. They made several cement fords. We built the bath and boat house. We built the dam. The stones came from Stone City. They're standing perfect today.

DNR: What were your duties?

Red: I mixed mud. I dug ditches.

DNR: When you were in Marion, what did you do?

Red: Broke rock. Worked on farms. Soil and conservation work.

DNR: Why did you go to Marion?

Red: Two of my friends went there. I wanted to be with them.

DNR: Did you go from Backbone to Fairfield?

Red: Yes. I was in Fairfield for 1 ½ years. Then I went to Marion to be with my friends. I got out the 23rd of March. I got married on that date. 62 years of marriage.

DNR: Did you receive any special skills in these jobs?

Red: Yup. I dragged the old logs with the horse team. They just assigned it to you. I helped build the lake bottom.

DNR: How many would work on a project?

Red: Depended on the job.

DNR: How did you get your daily assignments?

Red: They just assigned it.

DNR: Did you have any special equipment that was used?

Red: Wheelbarrows. Grinding equipment for the rocks. The crusher had an engine.

DNR: Where did you get your shovels?

Red: There was a box in the truck where we kept our tools.

DNR: Do you remember any of your fellow workers?

Red: I don't remember.

DNR: The guys in your barracks, they could also be on your work detail?

Red: Yes.

DNR: Have you been in contact with any of your fellow CCCers?

Red: No.

DNR: Did the country boys and the city kids get along?

Red: Yes.

DNR: Were there any minority kids in the camp?

Red: No.

DNR: Do you feel you learned specific skills in the camp?

Red: No.

DNR: Did you suffer any injuries in the camp?

Red: No.

DNR: Do you remember others being injured?

Red: A few. But nothing serious.

DNR: How would they be treated?

Red: We had a doctor in the camp.

DNR: Were there any diseases in the camp?

Red: One guy got diphtheria. They quarantined a whole barracks. They said I was a carrier. I was the only one who got it. Once about 100 people caught mumps. I was in there for 21 days.

DNR: Were there any insect or rodent problems?

Red: No.

DNR: Did you do any outside work for the community near the camp?

Red: No.

DNR: Did you have any outside contacts with the community?

Red: No.

DNR: Strawberry Point is five miles from the Backbone camp?

Red: Yeah, four or five miles.

DNR: Did you ever get into town?

Red: Once in a while we would drink a few beers.

DNR: Were there any Masonic organizations present in camp?

Red: No.

DNR: Did you have any contacts with females while at the camp?

Red: No.

DNR: Did the local boys and the CCC boys get along?

Red: Yes.

DNR: What was the community's feelings toward the CCC camp?

Red: Some liked us and some didn't. They couldn't trust them. But 97% of the kids were good kids.

DNR: What was your most memorable experience in the camp?

Red: None.

DNR: Did you have any odd experiences in the camp?

Red: No.

DNR: What do you feel was your biggest accomplishment there?

Red: You tried to get along. You did your job and do it right.

DNR: How do you think your life was changed by being in the CCC's?

Red: None. I just went back to the farm.

DNR: What did you do after you left the CCC's?

Red: I got married and had a baby. Then I bough some land for \$68 and moved a house on it. I worked for a couple of carpenters. Then I started working for Link Belts Speeder for 37 years. It was a big crane outfit. I built cranes and ran a lathe. I retired on the last day of 1979. I was 65 years old. I got married in 1940. I've been married 62 years. On July 4, 1941 we had a baby girl.

DNR: When you moved from Strawberry to Fairfield, did they move the whole camp?

Red: No. A few stayed behind. They closed the camp.

END OF TRANSCRIPTION – SAM J. HAIM - SCRIBE