

CCC INTERVIEW WITH ALBERT MASSICK

Date: February 17, 2002

Location: Tracy, Iowa

Interviewer: Larry Wilson

DNR: Where is your hometown?

Albert: Lovilia, Iowa.

DNR: How old were you when you enrolled?

Albert: 18.

DNR: What did you do before you went to the CCC camp?

Albert: High school.

DNR: Did you do any work?

Albert: Farming.

DNR: Why did you join the CCC's?

Albert: To help my family financially.

DNR: You were located at Oskaloosa?

Albert: Yes.

DNR: In Company 2718. You never transferred out of there?

Albert: No. I went in July 1, 1939. I graduated high school in June. You could go in every three months. I graduated in June.

DNR: Where did you enroll?

Albert: The county furnished the transportation to the camp. That's where we were inducted.

DNR: What happened the first day of camp?

Albert: Shots. Typhoid and small pox.

DNR: Did they give you clothing, and toiletries?

Albert: You betcha.

DNR: Did you have any personal items you brought with you?

Albert: No.

DNR: Did they tell you not to bring anything to the camp?

Albert: There was no need to, everything was furnished.

DNR: How were you assigned housing?

Albert: Wooden barracks. With two coal stoves and a coal pile.

DNR: Did they give you bedding?

Albert: US issued.

DNR: How did they assign your quarters?

Albert: You were assigned a leader and he led you to the barracks.

DNR: Who was in charge of the stoves?

Albert: A CCC guy. We would pay him on the side to keep us warm.

DNR: Do you remember any of your bunkmates?

Albert: Elmer Keeton from Lovilia, Iowa. Tommy Hall from Pershing.

DNR: How did you guys get along?

Albert: Not a problem.

DNR: Why did you guys get along so well?

Albert: You would be discharged if you were a troublemaker.

DNR: How was the food?

Albert: Good cooking.

DNR: Are these cooks (looking at pictures)?

Albert: He lives in Marshalltown. Gerald Krizer. He's in the Marshalltown's Veteran's Home. They had a mess sergeant, Dick Coin, who was in charge of getting the food out. The CCC boys would get the food out.

DNR: Were you there for the holidays, for special meals?

Albert: Yes. Now this guy orders the food and dishes out the food. He gets \$45 a month.

DNR: When was payday?

Albert: End of the month. \$22 went home and you got to keep \$8.

DNR: How did you spend that money?

Albert: Canteen, haircut, town dances. The farmer boys paid the nickleodeon.

DNR: Did you have weekends off?

Albert: Yes. I went home.

DNR: How did you get home?

Albert: I took the train to Albia or I drove.

DNR: Was the Sabbath observed?

Albert: Yes. I would go to church. He would show movies in the kitchen. I went uptown to Catholic church. It was an easy walk.

DNR: Tell me about sporting activities, like boxing?

Albert: Oh yes. No baseball.

DNR: You were a boxer?

Albert: I've got some medals from 1940.

DNR: If there were conflicts among enlistees how was it settled?

Albert: KP. We had one truck driver, who was a smart rascal. We had a fire drill and they asked him what he would do if his truck caught on fire, and he said, 'Let it burn.' They took him off of that and he got to scrub the pit to the latrine. He had to scrub the walls and he finished at 4:00 a.m.

DNR: Were there any vocational or educational opportunities?

Albert: Yes. I took First Aid.

DNR: Do you remember any of the teacher's name?

Albert: William Page. Educational adviser is what he is called.

DNR: Where were the classes held?

Albert: At the camp before the morning work.

DNR: Did you benefit from the classes?

Albert: I got to use the First Aid. I worked as a physical therapist in Knoxville.

DNR: What were the projects that your camp was involved in?

Albert: Building ponds, hacking trees, rock quarry in the winter time, built a lake, Lake Keomah. Soil conservation work.

DNR: What were your duties?

Albert: I was in the garage. If a Caterpillar broke down, and the mechanic went away then I would watch the shop.

DNR: Did you learn anything taking care of those vehicles?

Albert: I had to take a driver's test to advance from a pickup to large trucks.

DNR: Who trained you to do that?

Albert: Fred Rasmussen was the mechanic. Darby from Williamson was the assistant who trained me.

DNR: Everyone got along at the work sight?

Albert: Yes.

DNR: Who gave you the assignments?

Albert: My main duty was to stay at the garage. Each truck carried two cans of water. I loaded the truck every day.

DNR: Have you kept in touch with the CCC enlistees?

Albert: Yes. Some showed up at the VA hospital as workers.

DNR: Were there country kids and city kids?

Albert: Yes.

DNR: Did they get along?

Albert: Yes.

DNR: Were there minorities in the camp?

Albert: Maybe. We once got 14 Arkansas boys into the camp. They got to go home at Christmas time. It was a six day leave.

DNR: Did you learn anything in camp?

Albert: I learned how to run a concrete truck.

DNR: So how did that benefit you after camp?

Albert: It taught you how to work safely.

DNR: Were there any injuries at work?

Albert: We had an excellent safety record.

DNR: If you got hurt out there how did you get taken care of?

Albert: We had a dispensary. But everything else went to Fort Des Moines.

DNR: Did you ever get hurt?

Albert: No.

DNR: Were there any rodent or insect problems?

Albert: No. Clean camp.

DNR: Did you do any work outside the camp?

Albert: No.

DNR: Did you have any contacts with the community?

Albert: Girls and dances.

DNR: Were there any Masonic organizations?

Albert: None.

DNR: Did you have contacts with girls?

Albert: The town did not frown upon any girl going out with a 3C boy. At the dance. The town liked the 3C boys. Our captain says, if you get in trouble, I'll get you out, but don't take this whole camp to settle it.

DNR: Were there any problems with the local boys and the CCC boys?

Albert: Oh, maybe a college boy would get upset.

DNR: How did the community get along with you guys?

Albert: Good.

DNR: Any memorable experiences?

Albert: I knew a guy who drowned at the waterworks. They dived until they brought him up.

DNR: Anything that was strange or odd?

Albert: In the Army I can tell you.

DNR: You were in 2 ½ years?

Albert: Yes. I got out in '41. I enjoyed it. I had it made.

DNR: What do you think was your biggest accomplishment?

Albert: Getting along with people. Greater maturity.

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

Albert: Learning to adjust to people. So you knew what to expect when you went into the service.

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

Albert: Farming. In, '46, I let the draft board know I was available. I went to South Korea. Due to the reduction I got out in '47. I went to the hospital and worked for 30 years. I did another ten years building houses. I retired in '87. I also worked in a strip mall feeding a crusher.

END OF TRANSCRIPT – SAM J. HAIM – SCRIBE

Updated by Larry Wilson after review by Albert Massick by letter, July 18, 2005.