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Interview with Henry Scott Regarding CCC (FA 81)

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The following is an unrehearsed interview with Mr. Henry Scott on his work with the CCC at Mammoth Cave, Kentucky. The interview was conducted by Kelly Lally in Cave City, Kentucky on June 11, 1987.

Lally: When were you born Mr. Scott?

Scott: When and where?

Lally: When were you born? And where?

Scott: Murray, Kentucky. January 12, 1902. There was a nine-inch snow on the ground when I was born, but the doctor lived right across the street so my wife and I both...I mean, my mother and his wife and...I made it fine, so... [laughter] We lived on from there peacefully. No brothers, no sisters.

Lally: How long did you live in Murray?

Scott: Through high school days. I attended college...started going to college before Murray State was ever dreamed of. It was just a pipe dream in somebody's eyes, you know, probably. But it's a fine school and beautiful. Have you ever seen it?

Unidentified Male: Yes sir. I went to Tennessee Tech which is in the same conference.

Scott: Nice campus, very nice place. Certainly put Murray on the map. I never did attend there but I was in three colleges. Emory in Atlanta where I got my B.S. degree. I wanted to study medicine, but my mother talked me out of it; she thought it was too difficult a life. Maybe she was right. I probably wouldn't be sitting here, but I love medicine. I liked working on people, helping them, you know. But I went ahead and majored in chemistry which wasn't an easy subject. I taught chemistry awhile and then I took on my commission again and went back into the service. That was before World War II and well, let's see, I was assigned to a 3C company down in Benton, Kentucky. You know where Benton is? It's in Marshall County halfway between my home of Murray, Kentucky and Paducah. And it's on a railroad. So that's where I was for about six or eight months. Then they decided to begin opening these camps out here. I was just giving you a little rundown...

Lally: That's fine.

Scott: ...background, you see, on how I happened to get here. So the Army was entrusted with the business of setting up all the camps, but we didn't have many at first. But it was wonderful training for our armed forces, the Army in this case, because they had to deal with all the foodstuffs and clothing and everything...preparations and, finally, building barracks. The first place out here was Camp No. 1 on this side of the river. And it was a place which was

established by a bunch of Louisville businessmen as a place to come and get away from it all out there. I never saw it when it was in operation, but they made a camp out of that...Camp No. 1, it was called; and when I went there, I was one of the junior officers. There was a man from Louisville who was company commander, and he finally washed up and washed out and they made me company commander. [laughter] But when I first went there, we had Negroes in the camp and there was one barracks full of Negroes. And the rest of the boys were from the mountains of eastern Kentucky, and they just didn't like Negroes period, you know. And one night they ran them all out of the camp. This is the truth; I'm not exaggerating. And they went in every which direction. They were afraid to go to Brownsville...afraid they'd get killed over there. So we had a heck of a time, running them down, finding them. And they didn't want to come back to camp, but we finally got them all herded and back in camp with the exception of two. And they just vowed up and down that they wouldn't go back for fear they'd be killed. So we finally established peace in the camp, but I want to tell you it was no small battle. We were lucky nobody got seriously hurt. But those boys, they just chased them out... [laughing]

Unidentified Male: Was that Camp No. 1?

Scott: Camp No. 1. It was more or less of a semi, temporary set-up there then. First we had...when I went there, they were building the new barracks. As I said, I was down in Benton where we'd already built barracks and were living in them...officers, barracks, quarters and all the cadets; they had plenty of room. So we had the camp eventually...all the buildings just like the others. But it was a temporary affair. They had a clubhouse out there which they left standing, and they used that for the officers' quarters. And the cadets were all, as we called them, were living in tents while they were getting this camp built. They were lucky in throwing it up. It turned out to be as good as any of the camps. So when I was transferred there, we had gotten into part of the barracks and we had about 200 men altogether. Most of the companies out there was around...between 200 and 250; they fluctuated because some of the boys would go home. They wouldn't like it, you know. And they'd have to send part of their money to their dependent relatives, parents or what have you, so it wasn't much; but then a boy could build himself up to be even first sergeant. And that wasn't much either, \$45 a month. Now, first sergeant in the Army gets more than I ever got as a first lieutenant back then. [laughing] Boy, the

Army is a great place to be now. And, you know, esprit de corps and the morale is marvelous. I don't know whether you've ever had the opportunity to observe it or not, but I'd just like to add this little bit. I don't want to get started on it, but I think now that everybody's happy. For a while there things were pretty blue, you know. Everybody wanted to grow a beard [laughter] which [not clear] the status quo at that time. I just loathe them. [laughing]

Unidentified Male: I'm glad I don't have a beard.

Scott: ...mustache...you couldn't even see mine.

Unidentified Male: You can just barely see mine. [laughter]

Scott: ...looked pretty good. Are you married?

Unidentified Male: No sir. Single.

Scott: How have you managed to stay single for so long?

Unidentified Male: I can run fast.

Scott: What?

Unidentified Male: I can run fast.

Scott: Oh. [laughter] You don't know what you're running away from. God bless the ladies. [laughter] I was an only child.

Unidentified Male: I'm an only child.

Scott: Were you really? Your parents are still living?

Unidentified Male: Yes sir.

Scott: How marvelous. My mother lived to be 83; my father died of a heart attack when he was 57. They're both buried in Murray and we go back down there about once a year on Decoration Day just to drop by and leave some flowers, you know. A lot of my relatives are buried there. So, well, to make a long story short, I had an aunt living in Murray and I was in Bellarmine first, as I said; but I'd take my weekend leave and run up to Murray to see my Aunt Lottie. And she was as deaf as a post. I can hear a lot better than she could. She wouldn't use her hearing aid. She was too...they'd just been built. You know what I mean. The first ones weren't nearly as good as they are today. But she wouldn't have one. She had a trumpet. [laughter] Well, Aunt Lottie, God bless her, but when she got on to a joke she'd never stop laughing. She was a genuine good sport. She lived to be 94. But Dad was only 57, though, when he died. That was

before the day of cars; we didn't even have paved streets in Murray. He had to walk back and forth to his hardware and furniture store business. And then in those days they didn't have lunch places where you could drop in, and he didn't take his lunch. So he'd walk home at lunch and then go back to the store and be there until 5:30. So it was quite an ordeal. He had to be a gardener. He wanted to have a garden. He just overworked himself. You don't find anybody doing that today.

Lally: Not many people.

Scott: Not many.

Lally: What year did you enter the CCC?

Scott: What?

Lally: What year did you go into the CCC?

Scott: Oh, 1933.

Lally: You started in the beginning?

Scott: Right at its inception, yes. You know Roosevelt was responsible for that, and it was one of the best things he ever did. It made fine young men out of thousands of boys. At one time, we had over 350,000 in the 3Cs. Camps all over, you know, throughout the northwest and everywhere else. We used to send a lot of boys from this section of the country out to the camps in Washington and Oregon and some of the other western states. But I was in Camp 1, as I said, just a while until Camp 4 was established across the river; and they transsed me over there...transferred me, excuse me, made me company commander. So the Army in a very, very...in a way it was tough, but we managed to work it out...successful...might say preamble, whatever you want to call it, getting the job started. But we had wonderful cooperation from civilians. The civilian end of the 3Cs, they were the ones that got the work done, the boys. We had a rock quarry out there in the park. And one of our cadet groups worked in that exclusively. And they excavated and dug and crushed rock for roads...the first roads which were built around in the park to amount to anything. They weren't blacktopped like they are now [laughter--Lally]. They did a noble job in getting out dead trees and all those things which we had to [not clear] you know. I was over in Camp 4...I was telling you this...this is really on the QT, but you might as well add a little humor because it's the God's truth. I don't make up these stories.

Lally: That's fine.

Scott: The boys had some girlfriends over there at some of the cottages on the reservation that never had been forced to move out. And a lot of them would take some of the boys' laundry and do it for them. [laughter] They'd charge them maybe five or ten cents a shirt, something like that. Well, anyhow, one of the boy's clean laundry became infested with bedbugs. Did you ever see one?

Lally: No, I haven't seen one! [laughing]

Scott: Well, it was my first experience. [not clear] on since then but I'll tell you about that later. And so they got in all the barracks, and I've never seen anything multiply...a computer isn't anything compared to those bedbugs. You could pick up a steel cot, one end of it, and drop it on the floor of the barracks and just hundreds of them would drop off underneath the steel, you know...

Lally: Oh, yuck!

Scott: ...where they nested or...they don't nest really, but increased their families. And they have a terrible smell. If you'll pardon my reference to something about human excrement, they smelled just like human urine. I'm not kidding. I'm not saying that to be funny, but it was horrible. That was one of the characteristics they displayed that I never heard of any other insect having that characteristic. But they certainly did. So we had to take everything out of the barracks [coughing--Lally] because it already spread...they spread so rapidly. And air...we used sulfur candles by the box load, you know, trying to kill them in all the barracks. We finally got rid of them; but I want you to know that was one of the worst things I ever encountered. And we laid the law down. No more laundry work in the park. [laughter] I'll never forget...well, do you have another question?

Lally: How long did you stay in? Did you stay in all the time?

Scott: In the 3Cs?

Lally: Uh-huh.

Scott: A little over four years.

Lally: Uh-huh.

Scott: I was transferred...they finally decided, despite your good records, they wanted to move us

around just like they still do today in the armed forces. So they moved me down to my last assignment which was in Clinton, Kentucky. You've heard of Clinton, haven't you?

Unidentified Male: Yes sir.

Scott: It's down Reelfoot Lake.

Unidentified Male: Yes sir.

Scott: A nice little town but a hard place to find a home for your family. So, my daughter was born there in Mayfield...Mayfield, Kentucky. It's the county seat of Graves County about halfway between Murray and Clinton. And Marilyn was born in that hospital there, [not clear] Hospital, March 8, 1937. And a very exciting moment. [laughing] She got along beautifully. We lived there until my last daughter [not clear], and I went back into civilian life. I wanted to finish my education, so I went back to Emory. I decided I liked Georgia so well at that time that I wanted to stay in Georgia and practice law. So I practiced...I mean, I transferred from Emory Law School to Georgia. I had four quarters at Emory and I took five quarters...nine quarters is what it takes, three years. And, uh, I spent five quarters at Georgia then graduated in August 1938. And I'll tell you a little bit about that. President Roosevelt came down in that hot weather; it was about 102 out there on the athletic field. And they had the commissioner [meant to say 'commencement?'] down on the athletic field. You know he was crippled? So they drove his car right on to the football field, and he got out. And our graduating class was sitting out there with our caps and gowns on. We took all of our coats off; some even had their shirts off. Boy, it was hot at about 3...2 o'clock in the afternoon on that particular day. So, he was very gracious. Some news people wanted to get some pictures; and some didn't get a picture, so he went to the podium where they put the gown over his head bestowing the doctor's of law degree from Georgia. He went and did that *three* times out in that hot sun to help some photographers that hadn't gotten...for their publications. I thought that was pretty nice. He didn't have to do it.

Lally: Yeah. [admiringly]

Scott: But he did. He just laughed. So we sat there and sweltered and applauded. [applauding] But we got our own [not clear]. Oh, that was some experience. I finished at the end of summer school, as I said, in '38, August of '38. Well, so much for that episode. Then I had to come home and study for the state bar exam in Kentucky; and I spent from August until December

studying, reviewing, getting ready for that. And I took it in Frankfort, passed it, made third highest grade out of 110 boys, not boys, we were all young men. So that made me feel real good.

Lally: Oh, yeah.

Scott: So I wasn't a millionaire when I quit practicing law, but I had a good practice; and I was city judge...it paid about \$150 a month. Well, that would buy your bread and water. And...but I had my offices in Glasgow, and I loved my work over there. I didn't plan to run for office but...when I left there, I closed my law office and...going back to the service again and that was World War II coming up. And I left a sign on the door: "Gone to the Army." Well, the draft hadn't gotten started by that time; but when I came back Christmas, it had. The first few draftees had been called and fellows were reporting to the Army here and there and other places. So somebody wrote a sign and put it right under my sign, where I had: "Gone to the Army." And they put on there: "So what?" [laughter] I was quite a character, you know, at that time...myself and there'd been a doctor named Captain York. There's a Captain York, Jr. over there now, but it was his father. And we two were the first two...well, officers, reporting to duty...myself as a line officer and he was a doctor. Well, so much for that.

Lally: What were your...what were your duties as camp commander? What did you do?

Scott: As camp commander? Well, I had...of course, I had...you said you knew Joe Kulesza?

Unidentified Male: Yes sir.

Scott: I had the best company clerk that God ever put on...you might say job in the 3Cs or anywhere else. He was wonderful. And I had a little...all my boys in that company, in Camp No. 4, were from Indiana. I didn't tell you that but they were...very few exceptions...every one of them was just outstanding. Some of them were very brilliant. I had a good first sergeant, Jim Lampkins; I remember old Jim. And the first cook, Louie Dees. [laughing] Boy, he could really turn out a meal, and the boys knew it, too. They wanted all to be in my company. Well, I stayed there until I was transferred down to Clinton, Kentucky...I was on the way out...and somebody else succeeded me. I've forgotten...I don't know who it was in Camp No. 4. And I don't recall who the officers were...I do...the company commander in Camp No. 2, which was on this side of the river with No. 1, and he was from Louisville, Kentucky. I wouldn't mind telling you his name. His name was Kirkindahl. You'll find his name in the records somewhere. He was a fine

officer. Captain. I was just a first lieutenant in my company, and we were still wearing boots. Oh, I hated them. You know, they looked pretty nice but, boy, it was a job to dress and undress. But we had nice facilities and everything...good waterworks, good bathrooms, anything you ask. We had...all the boys were...had been trained somewhat, had a little training...not all Army training, but training somewhere along the line and they came to us partially equipped. Well... maybe at Ft. Knox. They took a bunch of boys up there and broke them in before they, [cleared throat] excuse me, before they assigned them to companies. But we'd get a whole trainload sometimes of new men for the four companies. And they would...this one went to company...Camp 1, some to Camp 2, some to Camp 3 and my company, Camp 4. They were replacements, you see, and some they went...let go because they were unhappy and dissatisfied. But, have you ever heard of the term "store bought bread"?

Lally: Yeah.

Scott: Well, a lot of these kids had never seen a bake shop. Things were so hard up. That's during the Depression. No, my dear, remember things weren't like they are today. Bread was ten cents a loaf, if you could find any. And so soon as these boys could go to town like Stearns or some other town, Hazard or Harlan, somewhere in eastern Kentucky, they wanted to buy some store bought bread. [laughter] Ten cents a loaf. And, of course, they got...privates got \$30, first sergeant got \$45 and there were lots of scales of pay in between. They had to send part of that money home to their dependents, so they got to keep a little bit of it every payday for minor expenditures. And, of course, everything was furnished them so they didn't have much to spend for except cigarettes, and they got them for ten cents a package then, you know. And not many of us smoked, I'm glad to say, but a few did. Not like it is today. So, now what?

Lally: So, what did you do as camp comm...

Scott: Pardon?

Lally: What did you do as camp commander? Did you, umm...as camp commander, did you get food?

Scott: What did I do at the camp? Well, yes...a little more detail. The company commander was financially responsible for preparation of the payroll each month, and they had to sign the payroll just like they did in the Army. In fact, we used Army forms for nearly everything. And it was

good...fairly good training for the boys because they got to be familiarized with different forms that were official then in the armed forces. But the company commander was the one who held the company moneybags. And we paid...had to keep account of all the little deductions we made...had to make during the month, take out for that at the pay table. Any loss or responsible...I had a 'mess officer,' we called them...you know what a mess officer is? [not clear] And we had to go up to Ft. Knox once a month to draw our supply of foods, and what we got was usually about \$2,000-\$2,500 worth of foodstuffs. We bought our perishables from over in Glasgow, produce...there was a St. John's...St. Charles place over there; and the Brown Ice Cream Company supplied us with all our dairy products: milk and ice cream and sherbet. And every time we gave a little informal dance, the Browns--Mr. and Mrs. Brown--who owned the ice cream place, came over and decorated the barracks and the club room and furnished all the refreshments free of charge. Now wasn't that nice? And they paid for part of the orchestra so that helped us out. The boys didn't have much money. They did that about once a month during the season when we had dances. And then on top of that, I had to check...take an inventory of the food every month, what I had left before we went to Ft. Knox. But we ordered our beef from an Armour and Company salesman who came by once a week over there, and we got our meat out of Louisville. So it was all choice...we didn't use good grain either. Used choice...you know there's a difference?

Unidentified Male: Yes sir.

Scott: If you bought a steak with all the good grains, you got something you can hardly chew maybe. But we had excellent meat...had pork and everything else. The boys had good food and if you had good cooks, it was wonderful. So then on top of that, naturally, the company commander was responsible for discipline. He couldn't see to it all by himself, but the first sergeant and the platoon sergeants and all cooperated; and we had very few problems that way. We had one...well, I won't call the man's name cause he's dead now, but he was one of our...

Unidentified Female: You all want some water?

Lally: No thank you.

Unidentified Male: I don't believe so. Thank you just the same.

Scott: He was a civilian, one of the foremen...see, each camp had seven or eight foremen and the

[not clear] camp superintendent. And I had a wonderful superintendent. He died here about two or three years ago. Prestonsburg, Kentucky...oversaw the barracks. They [not clear]...I mean you've seen it...

Unidentified Male: I've heard the name.

Scott: ...was great. We loved him. And he was there the whole time I was there. He knew what...he didn't have boys, he had two little girls. But he knew children and we just got along fine with the kids; and he turned out one of the best workers, I believe, in any of the camps around. So we had to work together. In some camps they couldn't do it. Some of the people in the Army...I don't think it was the civilians' fault, but some of the people were just a little bit obstinate. They wanted to be a whole hog or nothing at all, you know. But the superintendent had his share of responsibilities, too. So we had to work together and we did. In my camp...got along fine. And, well, from taps to reveille that's about the only time the company commander had any time to play a hand of bridge or listen to...and we didn't have television, mind you. Unheard of. It was just a...probably a dream in somebody's mind. We were lucky to have a radio. Well, briefly, that...we never did have any parades in town. On Fourth of July, they didn't require that of the boys. On Decoration Day, we celebrated out at camp, but they wouldn't come in town. On Saturday night, we had a movie or [not clear] good shows. And we sent two truckloads in every Saturday night. We had to cross the river down there, see, you know, on the ferry...

Unidentified Male: Yes sir.

Scott: I'll tell you something about that.

Unidentified Male: Okay.

Scott: Our doctor, he's dead now. He was from Indiana. God bless him. Name was Peffer. Doc wasn't married; he liked to drink. And my junior officer, Lieutenant Little, second lieutenant, he liked to drink, too. Well, they went off on the Fourth, different tangents. Each had a car. One went one way...well, they both happened to come back, land down there at the ferry early that evening on the Fourth; and it had been raining, and Peffer was trying to get on the ferry to get on back to camp. And the cadets were all on the other side waiting to come to town. But, anyway, Lieutenant Little drove up beside Peffer and hit his car, purposefully, I think.

Unidentified Male: Yes sir. [laughter--Lally]

Scott: And it was as muddy as you can't imagine. And they got out of both cars. And I happened to be out there and saw it and tried to break it up. They got out and fought in that mud. They soon got up, and went back to camp, and took about three showers, apologized, and were all right. It took quite a while for them to get that. Well, that was just one of the side episodes, you know...

Lally: That's right.

Scott: But it was fun. It wasn't too funny, but it turned out to be funny later. [laughter]

Lally: Did you ever have any...did you all have discipline problems at all?

Scott: Pardon?

Lally: Did you have discipline problems at all?

Scott: In camp? Just minor.

Lally: What kind?

Scott: Most of the boys were real good boys...families that had disciplined their children, and the boys were there not to make a farce out of it...98 percent of them were there to really try to help their parents. People were almost destitute, you know. No jobs, no money. So the government was able to put a little money into their pockets soon as these cadets were working. No, discipline in our manner was...well, I'd say it was just about 100 percent cooperation everywhere. Nobody came squealing on somebody, not that type of discipline. If we didn't see it, we didn't hear about it sometimes. And they had practically no fights except that Negro episode I mentioned. And I don't think they ever even laid hands on them; they ran so fast.

Lally: Aside from...aside from that one incident...

Scott: What?

Lally: Aside from that one incident, you said, with the Negro camp, uh, did you have any more problems between the races, any more racial tension?

Scott: Nah, we didn't have any serious problems. And as far as people over in Brownsville were concerned...I didn't go over there much, but they were real nice to the kids. We [not clear] once in a while because they didn't have a movie. There wasn't anything else to go to. The drugstore and that was about all. But the drugstore stayed open till 10:30 on Saturday night, so we could

go there after the movie. We didn't have all these fast food places. They weren't even thought of...Wendy's and what have you. [laughing] Oh, boy, well, they're getting a dose of it now.

Lally: What kind of things did...what kind of things did you all do for fun?

Scott: For fun? We had a ball team, yes. Athletics. We had two that were participated in. We inherited some good basketball players who had started off in high school, you know. But we had to play outdoors except when we went somewhere, and gyms was few and far between then. It's not like it is today. Every little side...crossroad school has a gym, you know, of some sort. And they'd play in those and practice, but we didn't have anything like that. But they were good...good shots. So we didn't win any championship tournaments, but it put them in a winning sense, you know. Something to think about and talk about. And they really rooted for their camp team. Then we had a good baseball team, too. And it turned out the same way. And we'd...see, we didn't work on Saturday--it was a five-day week, just like it is now--so they could go somewhere and play on Saturday and/or Sunday if the other town's team could play on Sunday. Or they'd meet them on Sunday if they'd rather or usually on a Saturday probably. Then they could not go too far away. We'd go to...well, towns within a two- or three-hour drive. Like Elizabethtown and Bardstown and Hodgenville and towns, you know...Scottsville, Kentucky and...well, I said Brownsville, yes, and a few others. And go there and meet their teams. So that was fun and, of course, I always had to go along. I enjoyed it. We couldn't take...we didn't have but two trucks...

Unidentified Female: You ever been to Bardstown, Kentucky?

Lally: Yes.

Unidentified Female: You ever been to New York City?

Unidentified Male: Never been to New York City.

Scott: ...didn't have school buses either.

Lally: So how did you all travel?

Scott: Trucks. Just plain old dump trucks. The tough part was keeping them dry on top. So we'd take it off during the week when...camp work, you know?

Unidentified Male: Uh-huh.

Scott: But [not clear] if it did rain, they were protected. And we had seats in the dump truck so

we could take care of...we'd haul about 30. A few had to sit on the floor, but we couldn't help that. We'd have a row of seats down each side and they enjoyed it. It was a change.

Unidentified Male: Well, the Army trucks are so big...

Scott: And the manager of the theater made a special price...well, his top price was only 25 cents, but he let the cadets in for a dime.

Lally: Oh, well, that's nice.

Scott: I thought that was nice.

Lally: Did a lot of them go?

Scott: Every time we came in town. He knew how much money and how little they had and he...well, he was my brother-in-law, to be. [laughter--Lally]

Unidentified Male: Did a lot of the boys participate in that? Did a lot of them go?

Scott: To the show?

Unidentified Male: Yes sir.

Scott: Yes, they did because there wasn't too much to do around camp at night and...

[End of Side 1]

Lally: Okay. This is the second side...

Scott: I wasn't looking for a job... [laughter--all]

Lally: This is the second side of the tape of my interview with Mr. Henry Scott.

Scott: ...want to do everything I can to help you.

Lally: Oh, you're doing just fine. Did you have much interaction with the people in the nearby towns?

Scott: Pardon?

Lally: Did you have much interaction with the people in the nearby towns and the local areas?

Scott: Oh, they accepted the boys with open arms.

Lally: Did they?

Scott: And we even let a few come in town to church. We had services, religious services, on Sunday morning. We had chaplains...but he couldn't...we didn't have enough chaplains to have one for every camp. There's just not that many of God's men around. We couldn't find them. But they were commissioned, you know. Most of them were first lieutenants. We had some nice

ones, too. Some of the older ones was ministers that had taken a job to help out with the 3Cs. They'd been in World War I, I think. At that time, World War I wasn't too far removed like it is today. Even when World War II finally came along, World War I was a number of years back, you know. Over 1918-19, you know. So, yes, we had...they welcomed them to church and we even had two or three liked to attend Sunday School. So we let them go through and then they'd stay for service. And we sent a vehicle of some kind in...we had a few pickup trucks, and we had a very good maintenance department. He could fix anything. And a little servicing, too, you know. Had about ten or 11 trucks, dump trucks, and other kinds, but no buses. So we were handicapped that way. But we got by, though, and didn't think anything about it. We didn't know how good it was going to be the next 30 years.

Unidentified Male: Yes sir. Yes sir.

Lally: How did the people feel about the park...?

Scott: What?

Lally: How did the people in the area feel about the park being developed? Were they upset...?

Scott: By which?

Lally: How did the people in the area feel about the park being developed? Were they upset about their homes being taken down...?

Scott: They thought it...since it was helping mankind, it was very acceptable. And nobody complained about anything to me or else we never had any problems that way at all.

Lally: Really?

Scott: We felt they were just as welcome here in Cave City as a day in June. We knew that.

Unidentified Male: What about...let me ask you about the people...

Scott: What?

Unidentified Male: Let me ask you about the people over in Edmonson County.

Scott: Well...

Unidentified Male: How did they feel about giving up their homes and things for the park? Did they...?

Scott: Well, as long as they didn't have Negroes, it was all right. Did you know that Edmonson County has never had a Negro resident? You didn't know that?

Lally: I didn't know that.

Scott: See, that's why they were so down on the Negroes. That's why none of them went to Brownsville when they left the camp...Camp 1. They went in other directions. They knew about the story behind Brownsville, that they just didn't like black people, period. Now it's changed, I guess. A few people...

Unidentified Male: Not much. [laughter--Unidentified Male and Lally]

Scott: Then they built that lovely school over there. I wondered how it...I haven't been over there to see it. It must be nice.

Unidentified Male: It's a pretty school.

Scott: [not clear], it was fine. The Job Corp, of course, you know [not clear] the old one.

Unidentified Male: Yes sir.

Scott: My sister-in-law worked out there. You may have known her, Mrs. Doyle. Mary?

Unidentified Male: Oh, yes sir.

Scott: She's retired from out there.

Unidentified Male: Yes sir. I didn't know she was your sister.

Scott: Yes, she's my wife's younger, junior sister.

Unidentified Male: Oh, your wife's...your sister-in-law then? Yes sir. I see.

Scott: Five years younger than my wife. She's 65, I believe. She doesn't look it. Don't tell her...anyhow, Mary's okay. She's fine. She was one of the best secretaries, I think, they felt like, any of them did, that they had on the job. She wouldn't quit until her job was finished for that day.

Unidentified Male: Right.

Scott: And she managed to get out there on the coldest day. She'd take the road from here down to Park City instead of going out on 70. She'd never have gotten out there, you know...halfway cleaned it off, but it wasn't safe. So she'd go down to Park City and take the road which was usually cleaned off out past Diamond [not clear], you know, and she could get out there that way. So she didn't miss many days. There was a man that lived next door to us who was one of the...I guess you might say he was a guide till he lost his limb. Well, he lives here...lives next door to her in Cave City. Well, I..anyhow, he helped her get out there a few times. He had a

Volkswagen and you've never seen...let anything stop him. So she didn't miss many days. But she liked the job.

Unidentified Male: Yes sir.

Scott: She had a little social security and other sources; and she had her civil service from out there, so she's not doing too badly.

Unidentified Male: Yes sir.

Scott: She said she didn't know what she was going to do though if taxes go up any higher. [laughter--Lally] Boy, I paid my first tax on a new car up here in Kentucky a year ago in May when we bought it. I can't understand the sales tax situation up here. Ever since Happy Chandler was governor...you know, they repealed it on everything except automobiles. You didn't know that, did you?

Lally: No.

Scott: Well, they had everything taxed. There was a man from a town over...Madisonville, Kentucky named Mr. Ruby Lafoon.

Unidentified Male: Lafoon. Yes sir.

Scott: You've heard of Ruby? Well, he was a pretty good governor, but his name just made him a subject for fun. Happy was his lieutenant governor, and they'd passed a sales tax law in Mr. Lafoon's administration. Happy ran on the next platform to be elected, and he won repeal of all sales tax...he repealed it on everything, my dear, but automobiles. It's easy to collect the big lump sums, you see.

Unidentified Male: Right.

Scott: And to this darn day, you pay sales tax on a car, which I think is the most inequitable thing--if you're putting a little jab in sidewise [laughing]--to have to pay sales tax on the tenth trade of a car. Even...that's exaggerating it somewhat, might not be but a \$5 sales tax but you'd have to pay it...either the borrower would have to pay it and this county, state would have to get their cut. They're still doing it. So, it's a very valuable source of income to the state now cause my sales tax on my car was nearly \$700.

Lally: Wow.

Scott: Imagine that.

Unidentified Male: Yes sir.

Scott: And I had a man...he bought one of these extra-special vans, these new-type vans?

Unidentified Male: Uh-huh.

Scott: And his sales tax was \$2,200! [not clear] I think he had everything on it. He's one of the policemen here.

Unidentified Male: You ought to be able to buy a car for that, shouldn't you? I say, you should be able to buy one for \$2,200.

Scott: Two Cadillacs! [laughing] I always wanted a Cadillac, but I never did buy one. The boys asked me at camp one time, they said, "Colonel, why don't you ever get a Cadillac?" I said,

"Listen, if I bought a Cadillac, they'd either fire me or figure they got to raise my salary. One or the other." And they were cheaper then than they are today.

Lally: Oh yeah.

Unidentified Male: Sure.

Scott: About \$25, 26, 27,000. Well, that's nice, but they get old just like other cars.

Lally: Um-hmm.

Scott: Would you mind handing me my little cup, please. Just...my throat's a little dry.

Lally: Yes.

Scott: Thank you. It's ice water. It was.

Unidentified Male: Take you a break if you want to. Kind of rest your throat.

[Short Pause]

Lally: How successful do you feel the CCC...?

Scott: What?

Lally: Was the CCC successful in...?

Scott: Successful?

Lally: ...in relieving the effects of the Depression?

Scott: Oh, do I think so?

Lally: Yes.

Scott: As a whole, yes indeed, I certainly do. I think it was one of the most effective things that this country had ever promulgated or put itself into. And there wasn't any graft to it either, my

dear. Not a bit. Everybody earned what they got. And we saw that the boys didn't have any complaints, and they had good medical attention. If a boy got the least bit sick with the flu, we'd take him right up to Ft. Knox to the hospital. And we had an ambulance out here, you see, an Army ambulance that we could...if they got sick...well, I contracted the flu out there in Camp No. 4, had a real honest-to-God, bona fide case. Nowadays the flu is nothing compared to the way it was then. And I almost went into pneumonia, so they rushed me up there. I was there for about ten days. I had wonderful care and the boys got the same if they had to go up there. But we never did have any great big flu epidemic like they did prior to this. So many people died, you know, in World War I from influenza attacks...didn't have the [not clear]...in fact, penicillin was even unheard of. They were working on it.

Lally: Do you think...do you think the CCC helped the local area, their economy in the local area around the caves?

Scott: What kind of area?

Lally: The economy, the, uh...

Scott: Oh, did I...well, it would have helped more in that respect. We would like to have bought a lot of local produce--corn and other vegetables, green beans, peas, anything they grew, you know, even down to radishes, things like that--but they didn't go into it on a large enough scale to even furnish one company. You take 250 boys, it takes a lot of food to satisfy them; and we might exhaust their supply for three weeks, just one camp buying them out. So we couldn't do much. There wasn't anything else that we...they didn't have meatstuffs and things. And to go into a local grocery store...they just weren't able to cope with it. And we had to buy through the quartermaster up there at Ft. Knox. And they always added up your order, and they'd get it ready before we got there. We'd call them or mail it in, the next month's supply. And they'd have everything stocked, counted, and checked and sitting there on the floor waiting for us to come up with our truck. And then we'd sit there and check it off and go over to the hospital to get a few medical supplies and then come on back. I'd take the supply sergeant with me, and we had a truck driver, too. So, uh, yes, we would like to have done more. I can't say that we helped them very much financially. The only thing we did was spend a little money in the stores here over the weekend and at night and the movies, which was trivial. They didn't have it to spend. And we

couldn't buy foodstuffs on the scale that we needed to get them, you know. So I think they understood. We tried to explain it clear to them why we weren't buying any more from them. In fact, we'd take a supply of bread maybe...well, the bread truck came out there every other day. It took a lot of bread for those boys. And they really ate it. [laughing] Why some of them would eat a half a loaf...at one time.

Unidentified Male: At one sitting.

Scott: They loved it. Never got tired of it. We had kids who came in there as thin as a rail, and it was a pleasure to see them building up and increasing in weight and muscle and everything. They got fed well. They had the very best of attention. Well, what else?

Lally: What do you think was the greatest contribution of the CCC?

Scott: The greatest contribution? Well, it varied from locality to locality. Out here in the park, it was very visible what they did. So much of their works remained to be seen by their successors, and I guess there are a few things out there still which they excelled in and did and helped out considerably...helped the park get its feet on the ground more. And it didn't cost the park one cent out of their budget either to do it because they [cough]...excuse me, they were paying for it out of their appropriation to run and operate the 3Cs. And the boys learned a lot. They got paid that way besides that little trivial pay.

Unidentified Male: Right.

Scott: And a lot of them ended up with good jobs. And then, of course, World War II had to come along and a lot of those boys had been so well trained discipline-wise in how to run a company as company clerk or assistant clerk or different jobs in and around the camp, that they just fell right into a slot in the armed forces and made some of the best soldiers that the country's ever seen. And a lot of them went in. A lot of them didn't come back either, you know. There's always that part. I loved my boys [with breaking voice] I still [not clear]...[pause] Pardon me.

Unidentified Male: That's okay.

Lally: Certainly.

Unidentified Male: I lost a cousin in the Battle of the Bulge.

Scott: I wasn't in that one, but I was in north Africa. Course, somebody said Rommel was some hero, really a soldier. Have to give him credit. I'll never forget it. We didn't [not clear]. Now

what?

Lally: Were there any problems with the CCC?

Scott: Any problems? Well, there were so few that they were trivial.

Lally: Uh-huh.

Scott: In fact, a few of the boys finally found wives when they got out of there. If they didn't marry some North Korean or South Korean. Like a few of them do, you know. But they...I guess, hope, they're happy but I think it may have resulted in a few matches like that but no problems. The boys, most of them, left sisters at home; and they had a great deal of respect for ladies and girls...the proper kind. You never heard of them going out on wild escapades like so many are prone to do. Of course, there wasn't anything like that around the camps or Brownsville for them play tally-ho with...[laughter]

Unidentified Male: Did you ever go to what they called the Whoopee House out there? Over on Flint Ridge?

Scott: No.

Unidentified Male: The recreation hall?

Scott: Yes. Right. That's right.

Unidentified Male: Some of them...a lot of the boys talk about...

Scott: I hardly ever...see, I was dating my wife-to-be and I couldn't come in town very often. And I usually made a bee-line for Cave City when it was my night off. And I'd get back by 11 or 11:30 to camp. I'd try to every night. But I, of course, left the company in good hands. The first sergeant was there. He didn't come in town much. And I had two junior officers and Lieutenant George Ingram. You don't know him, but he was from eastern Kentucky; and he'd been in the regular Army as an enlisted man over in Hawaii for several years. And he was one of the finest men I'd ever had. He had a company commission, and George was one of them. Anybody could've trusted him with a battalion and wouldn't have had any problem. So I had a good man in him. And I had him until I left there. He was still there and he took over the company, I think, after I left. But he was very deserving, and I used to correspond with him a little bit. And Mr. Salisbury from Prestonsburg, I used to correspond with him. He died just two or three years ago. Had a charming wife--she died--and two little girls. One married, husband died about a year

after they were married. They never did know what his trouble was. We run into her down in Vanderbilt. I was a patient down there at the hospital later on and she was doing work, social work, in the hospital at Vanderbilt. And it was such a pleasure to see her again. She was just about six or seven years of age, you know, and I hadn't seen her after she left here. So it made it nice for me, especially.

Lally: Did the boys ever play any pranks on each other?

Scott: Yes, they did. Nothing serious, though.

Lally: What kind?

Scott: [laughing] They'd put a lizard in somebody's bed. Harmless, you know. [laughter] How would you feel?

Unidentified Male: I'd get out of the bed, I believe.

Scott: Nothing serious. And sometimes they'd catch a bullfrog...you know, there were some out there up and down the river...and they'd bring them in and hide them in other boys' bunk between the sheets. [laughter]

Lally: Oh, yuck.

Scott: A bullfrog wouldn't hurt anything but a fly.

Unidentified Male: No, that's right.

Lally: Well, I don't like them though. Is there anything you'd like to ask, Bob?

Bob: No, we appreciate you giving us the time to talk to you this morning.

Scott: Well, I'm afraid I run it in the ground.

Lally: No.

Bob: No, you haven't. You've done exactly what we hoped you would and that's reminisce with us.

Scott: I gave you the facts and didn't exaggerate anything. Some of it was a little bit somber, but most of it was on the pleasant side; and I hope what I said will be well taken wherever it's used or publicized because I only had love for the 3Cs. And I might have been without a job, too...if I hadn't had a commission with fellows in the Army. They took us...you see, the regular Army just didn't have enough men to man all these companies. The First Cavalry really was a horse cavalry. The last horse cavalry to be disbanded. They called it the First Cavalry mechanized,

finally, out at Moreford, Texas. And all their officers came to Ft. Knox and gave up the horses out in Texas and went to semi-motorization. And before they had the tanks or anything like that...just trucks and various motor vehicles. And, uh, they all...they were company commanders and they took some of us to try to help us out at first...then they gradually pulled themselves out, went back to their assignments in the Army and left us running the 3Cs. So we had good help from the First Cavalry. They were exclusively in charge for the Army all over the country, mind you. And when they got to all those camps, I've forgotten the exact number, except that our [not clear] approximate total about 350,000 boys. Took a lot to feed them.

Lally: Oh, yeah.

Scott: Well, now, that helped the economy in many ways nationwide.

Lally: Um-hmm.

Scott: But you can see why we couldn't do much locally. In fact, we couldn't even buy milk enough. We had to have pasteurized milk, and nobody except Brown's and RK's then could supply it. They put it up in price for us and then bought it in bulk, in large cans for cooking. That was...so it was a lot of wonderful experiences; and, as I said, I still hear from a handful of the boys. And I've quit writing letters but once in a while somebody will call me. And I love to talk to them. I can't hear too well sometimes. This phone here is fairly good, but it's not as good as it could be. Especially for someone with a hearing problem.

Bob: Right.

Scott: Manage somehow. Pay \$20 a month for one. That's the truth. You know, I'm not kidding...including all the taxes. These lines, they charge you now...have you ever seen a telephone bill today?

Lally: Yes.

Bob: Right.

Scott: It's SouthCentral Rural. The Bell Telephone's better off now than before they split them up. They've got line charges for this and that. They've concocted everything so I guess they're still paying dividends on the old lady's stock as they used to call it.

Bob: Yes sir. That's right.

Scott: Helen? She's...she's been up...

Lally: That's okay. Well, I'm going to turn this off now.

Scott: ...didn't have time to come in.

[End of Interview]