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Tape Index Sheet

General Topic of Interview:

Date: 12/10/96  
 Place: phone interview - Spruce pine, NC to Asheboro, NC  
 Length: 1 hr 23 mins.

Personal Data:

Narrator  
 Name William Van Hoy  
 Address 1007 Mackie Ave  
Asheboro, NC 27203  
(910) 629-4793  
 Birthplace Coalinga, CA  
 Birthdate 01/21/16  
 Occupations(s) conscientious  
objector (1942-43) Middle  
School Social Studies teacher

Interviewer  
 Name Julie Mullis  
 Address 1489-1 Brown's  
Chapel Rd. Boone, NC 28607  
 Title: Interp. Ranger  
 What was the occasion of  
 the interview?  
Oral history project

Interview Data:

Side 1 Buck Creek Conscientious Objector Camp

Side 2

Estimated time  
 on tape:

Subjects covered, in approximate order (please  
 spell out names of persons & places mentioned)

1000  
1002  
1005  
  
1010  
1018  
1028  
 Side II 1030  
1039  
1041

bdy - 1/21/16 Coalinga, CA  
buck creek camp Pleasant Garden 8/28/41 opening 5/31/43  
religious affiliation at conscientious objector camps (CPS program)  
(Christadelphians, Mennonites Brethren) Detached service  
Parkway projects accomplished, Crabtree Meadows  
local excursions, churchgoers; Mary Ballou, Franklin Kelly, Earl Rhodes  
Daily life in the camp  
food, budgeting in camp - churches; other buildings  
Night Watchman duty; animals  
friendships; Annual reunion at Quaker Lake (41 yrs)

Use back of sheet if necessary

TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

JM: This is an interview with William Van Hoy. William, we're gonna start by asking you, when is your birthday. When were you born and where were you born?

WVH: I was born January 21st, 1916. At 309 Tyler Street. Coalinga, California.

JM: OK. How did you come to North Carolina?

WVH: Um, my parents, who were in California for half a dozen years or so, returned to North Carolina to, to settle again in North Carolina.

JM: OK, you were a member of the camp at Buck Creek Gap, the CPS camp there. Can you tell me a little bit about that camp? Just some general information before we get into your individual experience.

WVH: Uh, Buck Creek Camp was located off the NC Highway 80, between Pleasant Garden, and Buck Creek Gap, at the foot of the, near the foot of the mountain. I believe, about a mile, off on a little trail, I call it. I think it was on Sugar Cove Creek. It was an abandoned CCC Camp. Um, I'm not quite sure what information would be useful here.

JM: Well that is good. Do you know when the camp was established as a--

WVH: Yes. The official opening date was August the 28th, 1941. There was a small crew there getting it ready, getting the place ready for the official opening. A week or two before that. And August 28, 1941. And it was closed, I think the official date would probably be May 31, 1943.

JM: OK. Were you there the entire time that the camp was open?

WVH: No. I arrived, I was drafted to the Selective Service, and reported to duty at Buck Creek Camp, on June 17th, 1942. I was in the Camp until the end of the time that camp was operated. With the (laughs) exception that I was in a group, in late May, just a few days before the camp was going to be disbanded, the whole operation moved over to, to Smokey Mountains National Park, at, gee, what's the name of the headquarters over there? Um, uh. Hm. I can't get the name of it. But anyway.

JM: Was it ~~Hunting~~ <sup>Heintz</sup>, or ~~Kade~~ <sup>Kade</sup>'s Cove, or something like that?

WVH: No, I'm talkin' 'bout the, the headquarters for Smokey Mountains National Park.

JM: OK, I can't think of where that is either.

WVH: I need to interject here that, possibly a combination of age and a light stroke of September 19, '94, sometimes I want to call a name, a name I know very well, and I just can not call it.

JM: Oh, that's OK, we'll work around that.

WVH: The whole outfit was moving over the ~~pe~~ except thirty seven of us, left the very end of May, near the end, to transfer to the Civilian Public Service Camp at Coleville, California. Camp Number 37.

JM: OK. The majority of the people that were in the Buck Creek Camp were Quakers. Were all of them Quakers, or most of them?

WVH: Uh, in that particular camp, hm. (Pause) I doubt that most of us, I doubt if more than 50 percent were Quakers. I am not positive. I can tell you this: in the overall public service time, from Spring '41 to 1946 or the very earliest days of '47, there were twelve thousand total, fellows, drafted into the CPS. And the majority, the largest number, in any one religious group, was the ~~Mennonites~~ <sup>Mennonites</sup>. Quite a large number out of that twelve thousand, I think it's, I don't have the number at hand. And the Quakers were nine hundred and some, I think. I'm not sure that's exactly correct. So at least, in the overall Civilian Public Service nationwide,



WVH: (continued) Quakers were pretty well down to, I think it was fourth, in the denominational number, here. Fourth, I think. And there were a hundred and fifty or more religious groups. Now some of those groups were only "groups." Only one (laughs) one person. That's a name that he gave his religious, whatever.

JM: Can you give me an example of some of the other groups that were represented?

WVH: Yes I can. Um, Methodist. What is now called United Church of Christ, and then was Congregation of Christian, or Evangelical and Reformed, or some other of these three or four that went together, now called United Church of Christ. Um, quite a number of the Christadelphians, a few Catholics, a very few Jewish people, one or two Moslems. I don't know. Would that help?

JM: Yeah, that helps a whole lot. How many people--

WVH: OK. Oh, don't forget Presbyterians. Not a large number. They put those in the, under the two groups which would normally be called, let's just say, the Northern and Southern. Did I say, I think, several Baptists, in there.

JM: Right. OK. How many people were in the camp at Buck Creek?

WVH: Uh, the enrollment, the number of people there at any given time varied, quite a little bit. But mostly it held relatively steady. Around a hundred, 'round a hundred, or a little over, at most times. That was, uh, August '41 to May '43 time, I at one time made an attempt to try to come up with the names, and therefore then count off the total who were there at any one time. And I came up with three hundred and forty, approximately, I'm not sure if that's correct. This was the best that I could do using the directory, which was a total directory of the whole thing, which was published in 1947.

JM: OK. Were you one of the people who stayed there a longer period of time than most people?

WVH: Well, yes, I would say so.

JM: Why do you think that happened?

WVH: There came to be, after some several months, in the total history there, opportunities to, to-- well there were many opportunities that came along to transfer to other camps. Where the location might be more suitable to develop. Or the work that was done there, the project work, was more desirable. Uh, and then. Not so long into the history there, a lot of opportunities for what is known as "Detached Service." Individuals or small groups would be able to go to mental hospital work, or general hospital work, uh, training school type of work, in maybe delinquents, juvenile delinquents. Or dairy testing service, and several other types of work, that a lot of fellows felt they would like to do, more than the general forest service, park service, or that type of project.

JM: Right, what did you call it again? Detex service?

WVH: Detached Service, in other words, cut loose from the general basic camps.

JM: Uh, could you spell that?

WVH: --Specialized work. What did you say?

JM: Could you spell that?

WVH: D-E-T-A-C-H-E-D. Detached.

JM: OK, I see, detached, OK.

WVH: Loose from the general camp.

JM: OK, I understand that now, OK. Well, what were some of the things that you did, the people in this camp, did, while working on the Parkway? What were some of the projects?

WVH: Uh, the main project was to uh, to get it off the ground. Get it started,



WVH: (continued) get started, and develop as far as possible, the, what is now called Crabtree Meadows Wayside Park. I think that's the official name for it. And that involved, of course, doing some clearing, making roads and trails, campground places. I, for a while, was a member of a small crew, cutting, procuring the wood, dead chestnut, and yellow locust logs, from which we made picnic tables.

JM: How did y'all manage to move those, from out of the woods, to where to got them to? How did you all do that?

WVH: Uh, the usual way to be used by people who were cutting and transporting logs for a sawmill, you know, making lumber. I forget, what's the name, I'm gonna use a name that relates to the type of-- Well, main strength and awkwardness would be-- (laughs) Pick 'em up and carry them. We had, not such a large crew, but we'd use, and the only word that will come to mind is cant hook. That may not be the--

JM: That will work. So you hooked chains to them and you dragged them back?

WVH: Dragged them. Or, one a these, I'm not sure that cant hook is the right name, but it's in the ball park. It has a handle on one side and one on the other. And the grabber was, the log held by the two, and maybe another couple a guys at the other end of the log, and they'd just carry 'em along.

JM: OK, I see. Were most of the men that were in the camp used to such work?

WVH: Most? Well, pretty good share, probably most, were used to farm work, or outdoor work. Probably most of them had some experience with that, at least. Now several were students. Had been in college, and some people were doing office work, or indoor work, not so experienced. And some of the fellows would say, if you asked 'em, would tell you that they had not been used to-- Lotta guys were from the cities, towns and cities. And a few from quite large cities, like New York City for example, or Chicago, and Philadelphia. These places. And some of these people were not used to this kind of work at all. And some of them would tell you that that was one of the interesting things, experiences that they had, was learning to work with their hands. I know one of them wrote to me one time, said, one of the most interesting things to him was to learn how to fell a tree. Chop up, with a big axe, and chop it down, and drop it where you want it. And he thought that was, one of the things, to him, he was a city boy.

JM: Huh. Do you remember anything that was funny, or interesting that happened, just because of people maybe not knowing, doing, this work before?

WVH: Right now, I'm sorry, I can't call to mind-- Perhaps some of the other fellows you'll interview. Right now I can't call anything to mind. I'll try to work on it as we tape, maybe in the back of my mind.

JM: OK, that's fine. Did you all, were y'all aware of the beautiful waterfall on the Crabtree Meadows trail?

WVH: Oh yes. I think in general we enjoyed the nature situation, that natural beauty. And, in general, our group, in fact I don't know of anybody that wasn't quite impressed by the beauty of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Parkway areas-- yes we were quite aware of the waterfall, and other things there. And sometimes some of the fellows would take hikes over towards Mount Mitchell. Maybe not all that far sometimes, but quite distant, sometimes, on Sundays.

JM: Hm. What else did y'all do on your free time, besides hike?

WVH: Oh, we had volleyball games. Had opportunities to listen to music, recordings. We had a, a library. And we had opportunities for some classes that some of the fellows-- For the most part, the fellows in the camp provided the teachers. Some of the people there, we had fellows who were quite well-



WVH: (continued) educated. We had a few PhDs. I don't know, maybe one or two or three in our particular camp there. And we got up classes as the interest came along. From a number of things, one was First Aid. And, one was of course, studies in religion. The major religions in the world. One was language, Spanish, for example. I studied in that for a short time. Let's see. Right now I can't recall any more.

JM: Right. I read in another book that they also taught Hygiene.

WVH: I, right now I don't recall. But it could have been at that camp, I don't know.

JM: OK. That's interesting. What was the general age of the people in the camp?

WVH: Well, the age range was eighteen to forty five. Um, most of us were, you know, the older ones sometimes would have, registrats under the draft would have deferment, because of certain conditions, certain situations, that had come along over the years. So most of us were in the twenties and thirties. Twenties and earlier thirties.

JM: OK. Did you ever go down into the town in Marion?

WVH: I personally did not. But some other fellows did. Some of them attended church, Methodist or other, churches, very likely Baptist, in Marion. There was a church down the road there, fairly short distance. I can't recall its name. A Baptist church down the way there, small one, local people there, that some people attended, and some of them took a very active part, occasionally giving a sermon, occasionally teaching in Sunday school, and were active members in, not necessarily meaning official members, but participants in the life of that church. Uh, yeah. I didn't-- but some of the people did, and some of them developed friendships. Maybe he had a girlfriend or so, some of them, from the town of Marion.

JM: I find it very touching, and interesting, that Mary Ballou, who was only five years old--

WVH: Five or six.

JM: Was so touched by the help of some of the men in the camp. Can you get into a little bit more detail about that kind of relationship? That can touch somebody so deeply, as that.

WVH: Uh, the Ballou family lived in a small old house, not in very good repair, at the corner, where the trail went off from Highway NC80. And the father there was not very able, I cannot recall whether he'd had a stroke, I can't remember. But there was some physical impairment. So he was not able to work very much. And there were several children. And they did not have much income. And several of the fellows at the Buck Creek Camp got acquainted with the Ballou family, and took a great deal of interest in the welfare, the well-being, of these people. And they did things like helped work up wood for the heat in the house there. And, just show friendship, do things, whatever was nec-- I was not personally active in this, so this has to be, you might say, hearsay. And they also took an interest in the food supply. And managed to find ways of giving food to these people. And in just a number of whatever ways they could find to improve the life of the Ballou family. Which included quite young children, as was just said. I think Mary was prob'ly five. They do recall seeing another fellow and I, Earl Rhodes and I, along with other campers, wading in the creek, on Sunday. And, I forgot about it, but Earl reminded me some years later. That we were talking with, and relating to Mary, as we were wading in the creek. But in 1991, we had the only reunion that has been had, of the BUck Creek Camp people. We had approximately thirty of us. That reunion, which was held at a campground that is operated by John and Mary Ballou Gowan, that is called-- what is it? The Triple C



WVH: (continued) ground. And we had it there, at their campground. And during the time of that reunion, on a Monday afternoon, I think it was, probably July 31 or so, in 1991. That might not be the exact date, but that's about it. Uh, Mary asked, I think, for the opportunity to talk, to speak to the group, or she was invited to do it. And she gave a very emotional talk, telling how much some of the fellows and the relationship there, and what the group had done to help that family, that it was an important part of their life. She remembered what she herself knew and what family members had told her over the years, and was very, very happy, to talk with us and to tell about the relationship. I'm gonna name Franklin Kelly, was a prime mover in the movement to help, the assistance to the Ballou family. There was a few others, I'm sure, but that's the only name that sticks out in my mind, and Mary spoke particularly of the work and of the relationship with Franklin, and had wished over the years that she could be in touch with him, and write, and experience, you know, relate. Unfortunately, Franklin died, 'bout 1984, '85, out in California, where he'd been living for a while. In the Bay area.

JM: I see. Do you think that this was a very isolated case? You know, just one family being helped? Or did that happen to other families too?

WVH: That happens to be the only family of which I'm aware. I don't know of others. It was a sparsely settled area. I think sparsely, that'd be appropriate. I don't know. It's possible that some of the fellows, at least as individuals, might have helped with some of the people from the church. Sunnyvale, or something. I'm not sure of the exact name of that Baptist church down the highway there on NC80. But that's all I know about that.

JM: Do you think it was just the nature, the kind nature of the people in this camp that allowed somethin' like that to happen?

WVH: Yes.

JM: I think that's somethin' that's real powerful about that camp, and the whole idea of conscientious objector camps.

WVH: Yes. I would be greatly surprised if I should learn that I'm wrong in suggesting that in the other camps, and there were, oh, hundred and forty or more, thereabouts, of camps throughout the country. I would be greatly surprised if there were not several instances of help to people in the surrounding area.

JM: Hm. Can you tell me a little bit about the living situation on the Camp? Where you slept, and what the quarters were like.

WVH: The, it was an abandoned, or laid down, as they say, CCC Camp, and it was essentially very similar to a small military installation. The, what the military would've called barracks, probably, we called 'em dormitories. Were just long buildings, with spaces, no partitions. Hang on just a second. (Coughs) Prob'ly my throat's dry. Anyway, just a bunk space, down the line, on both sides, (coughs) on both sides of a passageway. And one had a bunk, and a set of a few shelves, on the wall at the head of the bunk, and that's just about it, on that part. And there were, I don't remember, half a dozen or so, of these barracks. I supposed it probably was built for about a hundred and twenty five to a hundred and fifty. Probably a hundred and fifty thereabouts. And there was a building for the, where the staff people of the CCC, and this we used for the, that building was used for the Camp Director and his wife. And it had some space for a few other people, in the leadership, I guess you'd say. Mostly that extra space was used for guests, on occasion. And we did have a good number of guests from time to time.



JM: What type of guests would come?

WVH: I remember one in particular, I guess we could classify him as a guest, we can do that. We had, one of the assignees, who was the education leader, director. Director's the word. We had classes at night. And had some oversight for the small library we had. And this fellow, usually, much of his work was the general project work. And this was on the side, certain days, or hours, could be used in connection with the education and library work, that sort of thing. I remember his wife was there for a while, one or more times. And I'm sure there were others whose wives on occasion, one or two or three, could be housed in that.

JM: Hm. Did families ever come to visit?

WVH: Yes, from time to time some of the families came. But usually that would just be a day thing. Maybe other family members other than their wives might be guests. This was a small part of the operation there. There was a, there were quarters for the, I mean, place for the, health. Nurse's office. And whatever she would carry on to help the people. Some instruction. But mostly it was like First Aid type of work, with fellows that had gotten hurt, or had come down with some cold, or flu, or what have you. Some illness.

JM: Right. I'm gonna turn the tape over now. (END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE)

TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

JM: What was the food like there?

WVH: Uh, quite uh, I don't know what word. Spartan? (Laughs)

JM: Spartan? (Laughs) Just meat and potatoes? Or meat and rice?

WVH: Sufficient supply. And it was basically quite nutritious. And some of the fellows met up with foods that they were not accustomed to eating. I can't give an example right off. Because different people have different ideas about food, you know. The dietician had to attempt to use as much good, nutritious food as possible, on a very low budget. You have to remember that the operation of the Camp was done by the church group, the Church sponsor. In this case, the American Friends Service Committee. Quaker group. And they had to raise the money, for the food. And it tried to feed as cheaply as possible.

JM: How did they go about raising the money.

WVH: All right. Very good. Um, the, this is a little unusual plan. Each assignee was expected, if at all possible, to provide his own expense money. Thirty dollars a month. A few of the fellows maybe had their own funds from which they could draw, and provide the money. If not, the families, the parents, the families, were expected to provide the money. Or in addition, the local church, a Friends Meeting, or a church of whatever denomination. The Church group, the local people, were expected to provide money, or asked to provide money, if at all possible. Other than that, denominational headquarters, for example in my case, a committee was set up, in North Carolina, yearly meeting of Friends. I'm referring to the--

JM: Quaker Friends.

WVH: --what was now called Friends United Meeting Branch, or part, of the Quakers in this country. And there was a committee appointed, to raise money. Just wherever they could get, call on people who had that kind of, had enough funds, to make contributions, if possible, on a regular monthly basis. To raise a fund in the yearly meeting Treasury, to fill in, to provide the money that the individual assignee, the families,



WVH: (continued) the local church, local Meeting, or whatever source, could be.

JM: Was there any Government support?

WVH: Not for the operation of the camp. Not in my understanding of it, no. And you can understand why it had to be that the food costs would be kept down as low as possible.

JM: Right. Could this have been some of the reason that people did not stay there very long?

WVH: It could be. Some of the Detached Service places, there were prob'ly better opportunities at food. But I'm not sure if that played a large role in a person deciding to go from the basic camp. I don't know of it anyway. And the uh, the building, that was, had, one part was for the cooking, and then the food serving, the tables. Cooking and eating building. OK? I think we called it Kitchen in general. And uh, the assignees, other than the dietitian herself, we did the work. I was in the kitchen crew for several weeks, one or two times, or so. So I know by experience what I'm talking about on that.

JM: Did the Church group run the entire camp? Or were there any type of government appointees?

WVH: No. We, the agreement between the Church Groups and Selective Service, the government, Selective Service, was that the operation of the camp would be under the control of and the expenses provided by the church group. For the most part it was Quaker Friends, Mennonites, and Brethren. Yeah. That's enough on that.

JM: OK. Were there any local people that did not stay in the camp, but lived nearby, and participated in the camps?

WVH: No, not at all. The-- the-- no. I need to make it clear that it might be by inference here, but anyway, the work hours, and the work activities were strictly under control of the government agency, in the case of the Buck Creek Camp, the National Park Service. They provided the direction, the head people, the foreman, and the, what was done from day to day, they got their orders that way. It was a division, here, of the work and the carrying on and so forth, was strictly under the control of the government agency, the Park Service as I said, and in this case, the operation of the camp, under the Church Group. This is a type of arrangement that has never been had before in history. And not been had since, in Public Service.

JM: Right. I find it to be unusual, but an interesting combination.

WVH: Yes it is. I need, surely, not to leave out the two other buildings. One, obviously, the, I think we called it the, we prob'ly called it the wash-house (laughs) or something, I don't remember what we called it. Anyway, for the toilets and showers and so on. And that was a very small building where the generator was. There was not electric power or supply coming in there. The generator had to run to provide electricity for the camp operation. Uh, there was also closeby, quite close by, a, what's called a Sign Shop. And they, the workers there made the signs for the Park Service. That's the type of work. And too, I did refer to a library, education activities, that was a separate small building. And then, several hundred feet, yards, maybe, up the slope, there was the maintenance area, where the trucks, and other equipment and stuff were located. For a short period of time I was a night watchman up at that part of the facility.

JM: As night watchman, what were you watchin' for?



WVH: Uhh, whatever might happen. Like, you know, on occasion, somethin' might, a fire might come or some, some way they might have been able-- Or, or somebody prowling around, or whatever might come up. Or maybe one of the animals, maybe-- The sort of thing that you ought to know about. And this did not happen-- if a bear, or pack of wolves or somethin'. Just to give you the idea, we weren't watchin' out for those animals, of course.

JM: Right. Did you see very many animals while you were there?

WVH: Well, there were, basically the small animals, you know, rabbits and squirrels, and possums, and things like that. Anywhere around the whole area there. Quite a few birds, and chipmunks.

JM: I guess the same ones as we see today, I guess.

WVH: Yes. Yes, same things that you see today.

JM: Did you, as night watchman, did you walk around, or did you have a certain place that you had to stand?

WVH: We had a little shack, you could get in, from the weather. The cold, and wet, the rain, and what have you. And from time to time we were supposed to go out and check around and see what was goin' on.

JM: Um, in a few minutes I want to get into your own personal experience. But before we go into that, is there anything else that you want to add, about the Camp, in general?

WVH: Probably not that comes to mind at this time. I can say that, maybe this is not exactly what you had in mind, but, we made a lot of very close, lifelong friends, in the Camp. The relationship, being with these fellows in many instances, carry those friendships on, all the rest of our lives, was a major part-- certainly speaking for myself and I'm sure for many if not most, or all, of the others, -- a major part of our life experience.

JM: Can you give me some specifics of some of the friends that you made?

WVH: Uh, hard to know how to take hold of that.

JM: (laughs) Maybe give me an example of someone that you met at the camp that you are still very good friends with now.

WVH: Well, several, for the most part, people from around Piedmont North Carolina here, there's a group of us who have an annual reunion over at Quaker Lake, which is twenty miles or so from my house, about ten twelve miles Southeast of Greensboro. A yearly meeting, a North Carolina yearly meeting Camp Conference Center. We are an annual gathering of, reunion, there, or Friends, and friends of Friends, that sort of thing, you know. Some of the people I didn't know on our mailing list, I have it from other people whom I didn't know, in the beginning. People who moved around to other camps, and made friendships there. We've been having this for forty one years already. This annual gathering. And of course, in the mailing list, in the attendance list, that group would probably be, well for the most part, the main people with whom I became quite-- I'm the one that sends out the notices, about the meeting.

JM: Yeah. Well I think that's extremely powerful.

WVH: And, although it's been small, people have come in here from Maine, and certainly Massachusetts, to Florida, to Iowa, and possibly on one or two occasions from California, who were, you know, on a trip to visit friends, relatives and so forth and included the reunion group at that time. Three or four, two or three in particular have come a number of times from Iowa. And we, those of us who take part in it look forward every year to the opportunity to see some of the old buddies again. Maybe, to let you know, the high water mark (?) the year, whenever it was, some time ago, when we were younger and more active, we had a reunion at that time. And this is, it would be a larger group perhaps, or would have been, in the



WVH: (continued) earlier years, when we were more able. But it's only in the afternoon, a Sunday afternoon reunion.

JM: What time of the year do you usually--

WVH: Uh, last weekend, last Sunday in July. But the largest number was forty three of the fellows together. And that's plus, in addition to that there were wives and other family members. There were forty three of the people who had been assignees. The smallest I think is, I think we had seventeen last year, this year, actually. And the preceding year there were sixteen of the fellows. And that, I think, is the smallest. I don't know how many we had the first, say, five years or so of this series of reunions. Can't remember. But sixteen last year, and possibly, sixteen or seventeen this year.

JM: Mm. What do y'all talk about?

WVH: Uh, the old days, and whatever other things come up. 'Course we relate some to the current situations that are on our minds, that we want to-- And by the way, one of the most important things, parts of this reunion is the individual, or groups of two, three, small number. So we can relate more closely. And then everytime we have a general meeting, which sometimes drags out longer than some of us would like, where we go from person to person around the group. And the fellows, and sometimes one or more of the, some of the wives, the women would speak, whatever was on their mind. But mostly talking about where one was, and what work he was doing then, and what he's been doing since that time, since the time of the war, you know. I didn't do very well, I didn't call a name, even, but--

JM: Well that's OK, I think that--

WVH: Charles Henry, James Matthox, Edward Burrs, and, several others could be named.

JM: I'm just sitting here thinking how important having this meeting is. Your interview is one of the best ones I've had so far, and maybe it's because y'all have been able to keep alive the whole experience that you're talkin' about right now.

WVH: I think that you're correct, yes. To keep it, what we would feel, alive. Yes. Now, I've told you the number of people attending. Since I can't quite know how many people might, that particular year, find that <sup>they</sup> could come, I have been sending cards to 120, 40, 160, I'm not sure I quite got that high, number of cards, a good many of the years. And I put on that a note, "Let us hear from you." And we get from that source. In that way I get many notes and letters and cards, and so on. Telling greetings and a little bit about what the men are up to in the last while. I try to share that with the reunion group. I take the mailings along. But not a great deal of use is made because it's a small, a short time in the afternoon, and when people get involved in quite, quite logically, visiting with the people who are at hand, that are there, and you can talk with them then. And I don't know a good way of getting a word from the other twenty, or whatever number it might be, who sent notes.

JM: Right. Well, how many people came to the big reunion that you had back up at the Triple-C Campground?

WVH: Uh, I think the number was thirty. Might maybe thirty one.

JM: What was the date of that again?

WVH: I believe it was either the thirtieth or the thirty first of July, in 1991. What we did was, we had it on the next day following the annual fourth Sunday last, I'm sorry. Last Sunday in July meeting. So that some of the people who were coming primarily because of the Buck Creek Camp reunion, near Marion, there, at the Triple-C Campground, could have opportunity to go to Quaker



WVH: (continued) Lake, to the reunion, and then go for the next day, for the other, just that one camp reunion. Because some of the, several of the people who would normally go to the Quaker Lake Reunion were not in the Buck Creek Camp, you see. Buck Creek was laid down before they came along. The first camp they were ever in was maybe Gatlinburg. By the way, that's the name of the headquarters, in Smokey Mountain National Park.

JM: OK. Well I'm ready to find out a little bit about your personal story. How did you find out about the camp? You said you signed up for selective service? But give me a little more detail on that.

WVH: Well one had, was under orders, legal responsibility, to register, on October 16th, 1940. This was the beginning to implement the draft law which had been passed some months before. And they wanted to train some people, just in case some need for a large number of military personnel should come up. And, naturally, the church group, what is known as the Historic Peace Churches, Mennonites, Bretheren, Quakers, uh, set about tryin' to find some way to meet the needs of people who were conscientious objectors, to military service, trainin' in the service. And in my particular case, this would be fairly typical, I think, quite typical, I believe. My pastor got word through North Carolina yearly meeting leadership, I would assume, either that or directly from American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia, information on what was going on about trying to set up some way that conscientious objectors could have it better (laughs) than they had in World War One, for example, where the fellows were sent into military camps, and had-- I can't go very, time would not, I should not go into this, except to say that some of the fellows there had, they would not take the oath, put on their uniform, pick up the rifle. Had some horrendous service experiences then wanted to have a different situation. And so they started negotiating with, and I think that is a proper word, negotiating, with Selective Service. These Church, these Historic Peace Church leaders. In my case, I knew some things were going along, and my pastor got word through-- well he gave me a book, leaflet, sometime later, a few months later here. Mmm, not a lot of months, about the plan that had been set up. And when my ordener number was called in before the county draft board, as one's number came up, I forget the registration number. There was a plan for how the number would come. Mine was 339, which is fairly low. And when my number came up and I was before the draft board, I had already studied in these matierials from the American Friends Service Committee, and was able to tell them what had been developed, what had been arranged, and made my request for being classified, instead of 1A, which would be eligible, interesting use of word there, eligible, for military service, and I made my request to be classified in 4E, which was conscientious objector. Previously, I need to say, that there was a form 150, which answered certain questions, provided certain information to the Draft Board, and on that one had an opportunity to make a request to be classified as conscientious objector. And I'd filled that properly, with that request for 4E classification. And then in personal appearance I talked to the Draft Board. When I heard the result it was being classified 1A to be sent to training. And I made an appeal, and when they dealt with that-- (clears throat) I guess, by the way, that was when I had the personal appearance with the Draft Board. When I got the report for what they were going to do about that, it was for, it was 1A. And therefore, I had to take an appeal to, well first to the Draft Board, and they stayed with that, they held that. The Draft Board was composed of five, I think it's five, veterans of World War One. And one of the fellows in the hearing that I had with him, stated, said, "You know a little fellow came in to my place of business to talk," he wanted to talk with him about classifi-



WVH: (continued) cation, and he said, "He said he wanted to be a conscientious objector. <sup>but he can't do that, said</sup> ~~But actually he's a Baptist.~~" Well the law did not have any-- it did not specify any denominational group. It just said Registrant. And I was able to inform the Board on that. That if you're a Methodist, Baptist, or whatever, Presbyterian, etcetera, that was not in the arrangement. By the way, in World War One, the members of those three historic Peace Churches were, in general, ~~looked at~~ <sup>dealt with</sup> a little more favorably than other members of other church groups were. And I think that's one of the reasons why they-- there was no specification about religious groups in the World War Two law. That law by the way said that registrants who by, because of their, this is almost a quote, Because of religious training and belief, can not participate in military, shall -- notice the operative word is shall-- be assigned to work of importance under civilian direction. And that is the background of Civilian Public Service. Named for that service. And, so, to pick up this story. I had to appeal to the State Board, and in doing that, following that out, I had to be investigated by the FBI, who went around to various people to get information and ideas about the the, how consistent, how strongly held they believed my feelings were, and how strongly I was holding to those. If I had a history of that type of behavior. And, I don't know, I never saw the dossier, I think that's about the right, it's a French word anyhow, I never saw the report print of the FBI. I could have, if I had requested it at a certain time. But in due course, I had a hearing with the Federal Hearing Officer. It was held in Winston-Salem. The guy who was a hearing officer. I think his last name was Pan, I'm not positive.

JM: Is that P-A-N?

WVH: He was from around Reidsville. And he attempted to ask me, you know, to suggest to me that maybe I could be in the military, but in a non combat situation, like a medical chaplain, something of that sort. And I told him no, that that did not meet my ideas. And he didn't make any-- He, I know he had to do that you know, that was in the plan. He had to do that. <sup>Appeals</sup> And I told him no. Anyway, in due course, the reply came from the State Board, and I was classified as 4E, conscientious objector.

JM: I see. And you were twenty four years old at the time, I guess.

WVH: Uh, yes. That was uh, let's see. Well, twenty five--by the time all this procedure, by the way, I got to teach another year (laughs) because, before I was called up, because 339-- (END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE)

JM: OK, we're rollin'.

WVH: OK.

JM: So, were you in High Point, um, when all of this happened?

WVH: Was I where?

JM: Where were you at when you applied for Selective Service. Was that in High Point, North Carolina?

WVH: Uh, give me the question again.

JM: Were you in High Point, North Carolina when--

WVH: No. I have not lived in High Point myself.

JM: I'm sorry, you're from Ashboro, I'm sorry.

WVH: No, Ashboro is my home now, since 1949, when I started teaching here. But my home, my parents, was in Yadkinville. It was in a small, rural county, Yadkin County. Just a county West from Forsythe County, has Winston-Salem in it. Um, uh, the year, at the time when I was having that hearing, <sup>however</sup> I



WVH: (continued) was teaching in Forsythe County--

JM: Were you teaching--

WVH: --living at, I had a room, at the YMCA, in Winston-Salem.

JM: Ok. Were you teaching Social Studies even back then.

WVH: Social Studies. I taught two years in my own county, West Yadkin High School, before the third year of my teaching. I graduated from college at Guilford, in '39. That third year was in Forsythe County.

JM: OK, well tell me how you managed to get onto the Blue Ridge Parkway.

WVH: Uh, the natural normal place to which people from my area would be assigned would be, uh, would be Buck Creek Camp. Unit Number 19, if I want to give the official designation of it by Selective Service, Civilian Public Service Unit Number 19. Uh, it was about a hundred thirty miles or so from my home, that's about right. That would've been the normal assignment place for people from my area. However, I think there was one fellow, in our county, who was assigned to begin with, to a place, a unit in Maryland, probably. But that was not a usual thing, that was the procedure. And I was provided with a, from the Selective Service Draft Board Office in Yadkinville, with a bus ticket, to go to Marion, to be inducted (laughs) to be taken into that camp, and it was June 17th, 1942. Not so long after the end of the school year, you see.

JM: Right. Well what was your first impression of the area?

WVH: Well, one thing was, that it was a nice mountain area. I was not, I knew the Blue Ridge Mountains, to some extent. So it was the kind of place I was expecting, in appearances, the general area. And of course, the CCC Camp place was kinda primitive, I guess you'd call it. But it was comfortable, as that sort of thing might go. We weren't on a vacation, or recreational project, anyway. So, you know. I was picked up by somebody from the camp, along with another fellow who entered at the same time. And we were taken up there and assigned to our respective bunks. And the next day, someone from the office of the camp took us down to the private physician, a doctor's office there, to give us the physical examination. Parenthetically, I might say the physical examination given there, evidently it was not required that there be a very thorough, detailed exam. So some of the fellows, some of the fellows were accepted physically, and kept at camp for many months, or even weeks if not months, or longer, who, in my opinion, if it had been a military installation, and being checked out to enter the army, would have flunked, they would not have been taken in. Fellow with a double hernia, for example. Fellow with uh, a heart difficulty. We think that they were pretty lax. And I'm not faulting the doctor, I think, evidently, as far as I can tell, it was kind of a relatively perfunctory, they seemed to be, breathing and moving around. That is a little bit of an exaggeration. He did find that I had high blood pressure. 145 over 90, I think it was. And this was, I'm sure, I've never been checked with high blood pressure but about two other times in my life, of which I'm aware. My most recent examination showed 130 over 74, I believe it was. And anyhow, it was, I was nervous. Next time I was tested with high blood pressure was the time when I was on leave, and they sent the papers in, in Berkeley, California, and I went to a doctor whom arrangements had been made. They checked me about being released, discharged. And they had almost identical, the same (laughs) blood pressure. And I was nervous. I wanted to be sure I was gonna pass that so I could get out, you know. That's forty four months and eighteen days in the, in the experience, that was in February probably, in 1946. So. But anyhow, he did find that, and he said I could be accepted but I should be assigned to light work. I supposed I shouldn't be too upset about that part.



JM: No, uh give me some detail on some of the work you did besides Night Watchman.

WVH: In the kitchen crew, as I said, for several weeks, once or twice. (Clears throat.) And other than that, I was in the general work of the, at the project at Crabtree Meadows Wayside Park. Uh, you know, pick, shovel, cross-cut saw, axe, wheelbarrow. This type of work. I didn't know anything about driving a truck, or operating heavy equipment, or anything. So it was just routine work. Most of which I was quite familiar with, because I had grown up from age five, when we were back in California, to age 24, well I left the farm at that age, so I was quite familiar with the usual work that a farmer boy would do. I was small, prob'ly weighed about 120, 25, at that time. And I couldn't do heavy work like some of the fellows, who were maybe football players, from high school or college. But that type of work. One particular crew was the crew, and for several months I was in that, that we went along the Parkway right of way, we could get the materials, the wood, only from the right of way, for the Parkway. And we would cut logs from the dead chestnut, that were plentiful, on the Blue Ridge. And were pretty, many of them were quite sound, yet, in there 1940, let's say 1943. And yellow locust, the chestnut was for the table, three, we split em right down the middle. Three half logs, that would make the top, we had a way of fixing them together, and the bench on either end of the side. And the log, the posts, for the table, and the posts were yellow locust. Very durable wood. And that was pretty good work. It was kinda specialized. We took 'em in the sawmill. We did the sawing. I, being under light work, I carried the sawdust away in a wheelbarrow, and put it on a pile, a sawdust pile, a little distance, a short distance away from where the sawdust came from, when the saw was right-- and helped some with the other things, about shapin' 'em up a little bit better, smoothing them down, these materials, Then making them, and putting the uh, uh, wax, linseed oil, and other material put together into a mixture, to put on the table and the logs, the benches, for preserving 'em, protecting them from weather. OK?

JM: OK, that's a good answer, real good answer. Did you yourself have any interaction with local community people.

WVH: Not really. I vaguely remember when I was reminded about (laughs) about what was it, the little girl, Mary. But no, I really didn't.

JM: Do you remember any--

WVH: Uh, some of the people had a lot more experience than I, particularly the ones who worked with the Ballou family. But some of those that went down to the little church, and went into the town, Marion, and so on, you know, did have some relationships with the area people.

JM: Hm. Do you remember any particular big event that happened to you while you were on the Parkway?

WVH: To be honest with you, at this particular time, I can't.

JM: No? Just everything was pretty much day to day?

WVH: I'm sure some others who seem to be, who have a nature that lends itself to people making, events and persons making impressions and then hold them in mind and can tell you about it year after year after year... To quite a large extent, in general, it's sort of a blur.

JM: Right. Do you remember anything like any fires, or search-and-rescues?

WVH: You know, I was in, let's see. I did not personally-- You know, some of these other fellows can tell you more, if you can possibly talk with them. I was not, possibly, I might have been at the time when I was Night Watchman, or the Kitchen or something, work, and I can not recall even taking part in Fire Training. If I did, it was a very little bit. And I was never on a fire. Now I was in the West, when I transfered from the Buck Creek



- WVH: (continued) Camp as it was being laid down, to the Camp Unit Number 37 in California. And I did have some training, and some work, several times, in fire suppression, in California, in National Forest, and even other forests, North of Reno, and up and down US 395, which was the main area where we were. But not in the Buck Creek, our Unit 19 experience that I have.
- JM: All right. Do you have a particular favorite story--
- WVH: S'cuse me. They had some very hot fires, some very big ones. And I've heard some fellows refer to such and such fire, and such and such fires, and they were pretty big, but I do not know from experience.
- JM: OK. Well, do you have a particular favorite story during your stay there?
- WVH: I'm going to disappoint you Julie.
- JM: (Laughs) Well that's OK.
- WVH: Well, at the same time, it's just the way I'm natured, I guess. On the other hand, when some of the fellows, when we have reunion, at Quaker Lake, or the one reunion up there near Marion, the Unit 19 people, um, most of the things that they can remember and talk about in the time that I was there, I can remember quite a bit, and in detail. But I just have a problem with relating properly to questions such as you just asked.
- JM: Well that's perfectly OK, some people are exactly the opposite way, I've found. They can't remember anything about day-to-day, but they can remember specific things that happened.
- WVH: I should be able to come up with one or two-- I can remember that I, I uh, and this is quite personal. We were doing some work, trying to find some logs, down at the right of way one time. And we were looking along at this and that, and we reached a point where it was time to go from a part of the right of way which was at a higher elevation than the Parkway, than the roadbed there. And I just made the mistake of turning myself loose a little bit, running down the ~~track~~<sup>cut</sup> there, and I stumbled, and fell on a small bush of locust.
- JM: Ouch.
- WVH: And one of those thorns went into my leg, right near the knee. And I still remember, I still remember. 'Cause that hurt. And I don't know what it is about the locust thorn. But it swelled some, it gave me considerable pain. I could hardly get to sleep that night. Eventually I got to sleep, and uh, uh, but I was whimpering (laughs) I guess that's as good a word as any. And a bunk mate went to the kitchen, and got some hot water. He may have talked with the nurse, it was in the night. And brought it to me, a hot water bottle, to put on to relieve the pain. And for several months, and maybe even years after that, I could locate the spot where the thorn-- Evidently it may have broken off in there and eventually worked its way out. That is a major memory, quite personal though.
- JM: Well that's fine, that's what I like. Do you remember any of the people on the National Park Service Staff that you worked with?
- WVH: Ohh, um. Youknow, I told you my problem with names. It's just not coming to me as well as it should. Well a couple of foremen, one of them is Davney Lee. He was a foreman. He was not a long-term, I'm not sure whether he was full time, for long, anyway. Even if he had been at that time. And there was another one, and I can just about see him in my mind's eye. One reason I remember-- oh I was about to call the wrong name. Uh, anyway. The names are gettin' away from me, but the one name I do remember.
- JM: Do you remember any details about them? Not necessarily their name, but just somethin' that stands out about them?
- WVH: No, I really can't. I did not have close connection with the ParkService Personnel. I kind of got my instructions a little lower down, you know?



WVH: (continued) We had some appointed uh, I've even forgotten the title. They'd appoint one of the guys to be kind of a sub-foreman, you know, under the rest of us fellows. Paul Jernigan was the one over in charge, when we were trying to find the pieces of the logs and so on that I was telling you about. And I just didn't have that-- I can call a name, but I know, from having been looking into materials, and Stanley Abbott, I remember-- Would you give me the title that he had?

JM: He was the head landscape architect.

WVH: OK, I knew you could do that, because we've talked. But I couldn't get the words together. And I remember, he came and talked to the group one time. And he gave a talk which appeared in our-- We had a camp paper, by the way. Which was really quite good. Because we had the people with the ability to do this. But the title on the front of the paper one day was, "Painting From a Small Palette. By Stanley Abbott." And that is the talk written up, reflecting the talk that he gave, in our camp paper.

JM: Huh. That's an interesting title, because the title of Harley Jolley's book, "Painting with a Comet's Tail" was another quote of Stanley Abbott, that implied that he had a very very long canvas of the whole Parkway. And I guess he saw your duty as just one little tiny part of it, or one small palette. That's interesting.

WVH: Yes. Um, I heard, probably, and read, and can not recall detail, but I might interject that I remember Stanley Abbott, not so well, but I've talked regarding, with Harley Jolley, regarding Stanley Abbott, a little bit. And apparently he was quite an outstanding fellow. (TAPE CUT OFF)