

NA 2627
CCC Oral History Project
Tape Indexes C 1910
Anú Dudley

Index of Interview with Merrill Morang - 8/22/00

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22 August 2000

[Begin Tape 1910, Side A. Begin Session I.]

Anu Dudley: This is CCC tape number four. This is the interview with Mr. Merrill Morang at his home in Rockport on Tuesday, August 22. This is Anu Dudley. All right, now I have explained to you how the tapes will be used and that they'll go to the university, and you understand that and you have signed the release. Is that right?

Merrill Morang: That is correct.

Dudley: Good. OK. Well, let's get started, then, on these questions. First off, we'd like to get a little bit of background information on you. So if you could just say your name.

Morang: Merrill Morang.

Dudley: OK. And your date of birth.

Morang: September 14, 1918.

Dudley: OK. And tell me your parents' names.

Morang: William E. Morang and Maggie M. Boomer.

Dudley: All right. Can you tell me a little bit about your parents' occupations?

Morang: Well they worked in a sardine factory.

Dudley: All right. And where was that?

Morang: Eastport.

Dudley: OK. So they both worked in the sardine factory.

Morang: My father was a seaman. Him and his father used to go on them full mast schooners.

Dudley: And what did he do in the sardine factory?

Morang: He drove a bus that go around, picked people up.

Dudley: OK. And what.

Morang: And I'm talking, I'm talking about 50, 60 years ago.

Dudley: I know. I know. We just like to get a little idea of what your family was like.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: And what did your mother do in the sardine factory? Do you remember?

Morang: No.

Dudley: OK. You, did you spend all of your growing up years in Eastport or did you live somewhere else?

Morang: No, I was born in Lubec.

Dudley: OK.

Morang: Then we lived in Eastport till 1933, and then I came to Rockland. 1933.

Dudley: OK. And what level of education did you reach before you joined?

Morang: The CCs?

Dudley: Yes.

Morang: Ninth grade.

Dudley: OK. Had you had any jobs before joining the CCC?

Morang: I worked for a local coal company.

Dudley: And that was in Rockland?

Morang: In Rockland. Yes.

Dudley: And how long did you work for them before you joined the CCC?

Morang: Oh, a couple of years.

Dudley: OK. OK. Now, we'd like to know a little bit about the effect of the Depression on your household. Did either of your parents lose their job because of the Depression?

Morang: They both, they both, my parents died. One died in 1932 and the other one died in 1933. And I was brought up by an aunt.

Dudley: OK. So, and how did, how was your aunt affected by the Depression? Did she have a job? Did she lose a job?

Morang: Yes. No. She worked in one of the local laundry.

Dudley: OK. All right. Do you have, do you remember how your family fared in the Depression compared to other people in your community? Were you better off, worse off, about the same?

Morang: We were just like everybody else. We lost everything when the crash come. In '29. We sold everything.

Dudley: And, now, now, if you recall, applicants to the CCC had to demonstrate need in order to apply. Do you remember how you demonstrated the need to have that job?

Morang: Well, I was 17 years old and I was eligible. I was an orphan, I had two younger, three younger brothers, two younger brothers and a younger sister. So that made me eligible.

Dudley: Good. I'd like to talk a little bit about the application process when you applied to the CCC and what your term of service was like. Did you want to join the CCC or did feel like there just wasn't any choice and you had to join it?

Morang: No, well, it was an opportunity. An opportunity to make money to supply the needs of the family. So that's why I went off to join the CCC. Went to Portland. It's in there I was inducted in to them and then I was assigned to the 158th company down in Southwest Harbor.

Dudley: So you went, so, the other men I talked to went to Bangor to get inducted. But you went to Portland.

Morang: I went to Portland.

Dudley: All right.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: Do you remember, OK, so, when did you apply then? Do you remember the date that you applied? You know, like the month and the year?

Morang: No

Dudley: Do you remember the year?

Morang: Yes, 1937.

Dudley: '37.

Morang: I was in there '37 until '38.

Dudley: OK. Can you describe the application process? Did you, how did you get to Portland and then what did they do to you once you went there to apply? What was that like? Do you remember?

Morang: Well, they gave me a ticket to go to Portland from Rockland. On a Pullman train.

Dudley: A train ticket.

Morang: Yes, a train ticket.

Dudley: OK

Morang: And I went to Fort Williams. That's where they, and they had a vehicle there at the Union Station to pick us up. I don't know how many there was at that time but there was quite a bunch of us. They picked up the train station. I don't know how many would get on the train here at Rockland. I don't know how many there was.

Dudley: And so they picked you up at the train station and took you to Fort Williams.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: And then, and then what

Morang: And then they give us a physical examination and then they issued us, after we were accepted, they issued us uniforms and personal items. And then we stayed there for maybe a week and then they processed us and sent us off to individual things. I could have come to Camden because the fellow that processed me was, I knew him, and we, he was a Rockland boy. And he processed me and wanted to know where I wanted to go and I says 'I don't want to go to Camden.' I says, 'send me somewhere else.'

Dudley: Why didn't you want to go to Camden?

Morang: Because, I means, Camden was next door. I mean, that's eight miles from home. And I just wanted to be away.

Dudley: You wanted an adventure.

Morang: Well, it could be. Could be. So he sent me down to Southwest Harbor.

Dudley: Did you apply by yourself or did any, with some friends? Did you know anyone that you were going down to Portland with?

Morang: No. No. I just applied myself.

Dudley: OK. And, now you said that you stayed at Fort Williams for a week.

Morang: Well, it might have been a week or it might have been a little longer. But we know, as I say, first we had to have a physical. And then they processed it. And then they give us shots. And then they gave us uniforms. And then in the process they assigned us to different companies. And I ended up, as I say, at Southwest Harbor.

Dudley: So, so that's interesting. So you were actually given a choice of where to go.

Morang: Yes. Yes. I was given a choice because I knew the man from Rockland that was processing us.

Dudley: OK. And, did you, now, other than the fact that Southwest Harbor, then was not close to home, was there any other reason why you wanted to go there? Did you know something else about it?

Morang: No. No.

Dudley: Had you ever been there?

Morang: No. No. I'd never been there.

Dudley: OK. You said that you, you served two years?

Morang: No, one year.

Dudley: Oh, just one year.

Morang: Yes. '37 and '38.

Dudley: That's right. And were you only at Southwest Harbor?

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: All right. OK. Now let's talk a little bit about your first impressions of, of when you arrived. You said that you'd never been there before. Did you have any, what did you expect the place to be like? Did you have any understanding of what it would be like?

Morang: I just thought it would be like the one in Portland. Just like the army and you done this, you get up, you did this, and

Dudley: And was it what you expected when you got there?

Morang: Well I didn't know what to expect when I got there.

Dudley: But you expected it to be like the army, like Fort Williams.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: Was it, was it like that, or was it different?

Morang: No, it was very similar. Very similar to the regular army.

Dudley: Similar in terms of what it looked like or what was expected of you? How, how was it similar?

Morang: The reason I knew so much about it, and different things, was I was a National Guardsman. I belonged to the local National Guards over in Thomaston.

Dudley: Oh, when did you join them?

Morang: 1936

Dudley: OK. So you joined them a year before you joined the CCCs.

Morang: Anything to make a dollar.

Dudley: OK

Morang: Yes. I mean, times were hard, and every time you got a chance to make a dollar, you took it.

Dudley: So you already had some military experience then, before you went into the CCC.

Morang: Yes, in a certain way I had a little.

Dudley: Did you get any training in National Guard?

Morang: Just one night a week. Every Wednesday night we went over for two hours, from seven to nine.

Dudley: OK. Tell me how you, how did they transport you from Fort Williams to Southwest Harbor?

Morang: I went by train to Ellsworth. And in Ellsworth their trucks picked us up and took us down to Southwest Harbor.

Dudley: OK. And how many people, then, went with you on the train and were in the truck? Do you remember?

Morang: No.

Dudley: Was the truck full? Do you remember?

Morang: Well, yes, the truck was full because they had three camps down there. They had Bar Harbor, Southwest Harbor, and Ellsworth. Now the Ellsworth camp was over on Route 3, down near the Bar Harbor turn, and eventually they disbanded that camp and we tore it down. In fact, I worked on tearing the buildings all down, salvaging all the wood and everything.

Dudley: OK. Now getting back to your first impressions of camp, did you know anyone else when you finally got there?

Morang: No.

Dudley: All right. And tell me, tell me something about what the biggest adjustment was you had to make once you arrived at camp.

Morang: Well I didn't have any, really, because, as I said I was a National Guardsman before, so I had some experience living with other men and being with them and training, like I said, in the National Guard, we trained. And that got me accustomed to being with other men.

Dudley: OK. Do you remember, did the location of the camp present any problems or benefits to you? And they note distance from family, or, you know, it must have been pretty remote. Or was it so beautiful that you just loved being there? Do you remember what, did you feel like there were inconveniences there.

Morang: Well, yes, just like being in the army. There were certainly individual things that you had to perform. And living with other people, you had to abide by certain rules or suffer the consequences. One or the other.

Dudley: Now, you had lived in Eastport and then in Rockland. So you'd sort of lived in towns or cities.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: And then suddenly to be put out in the middle of the woods like this, in the camp, did that, how did that feel?

Morang: It didn't bother me.

Dudley: Did you like it?

Morang: Yes. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it.

Dudley: Now, did you go home? Did you get home for visits?

Morang: Oh, yes.

Dudley: Or did you receive visits from your family?

Morang: Oh, yes.

Dudley: How often?

Morang: No, I, no, they didn't come to visit me because they weren't able to. They had no transportation or anything.

Dudley: So how often did you get back to, well, let's see, to Eastport?

Morang: No, it was to Rockland.

Dudley: To Rockland. Your family moved, your whole family moved to Rockland.

Morang: Yes. Yes.

Dudley: Including your aunt?

Morang: No, she was already here.

Dudley: Oh, OK. I misunderstood.

Morang: After my mother died, they, father picked us up and brought us to, to Rockland to stay with my aunt.

Dudley: All right. To Rockland. So, so, what

Morang: Then he died and that left us poor kids homeless.

Dudley: And you all lived with your aunt.

Morang: We all lived with my aunt.

Dudley: And what was her name?

Morang: Charlotte Carter.

Dudley: OK. So how often did you get home to visit Aunt Charlotte and your three younger siblings?

Morang: Oh, probably, at least once a month. Sometimes more.

Dudley: And did you, then, take the train back?

Morang: No, I had a, one of the foremen, Bert Higgins was his name, he lived here in Rockland. And he used to come home and see his daughter.

Dudley: And he had a car?

Morang: He had a car. Yes.

Dudley: OK.

Morang: And I used to ride home with him weekends. And I used to hitchhike back. Back in those days, everybody picked everybody up because let's face it, it was no crime like it is today. Back in those days, everybody depended on everybody else. And there was none of this hoodlumism like there is now.

Dudley: Now, your three younger siblings, you had, what, were they brothers or sisters?

Morang: I had two brothers and a sister.

Dudley: And what were their names?

Morang: Kenneth, Donald and Alice.

Dudley: OK. Now, so you felt that you didn't have any difficulty in adjusting to the camp.

Morang: No, I didn't have any.

Dudley: Work, or living or anything like that. Do you recall, were the people that joined, that were in the camp from you, were they all from Maine, or were there some people from out of state?

Morang: No, there were some, some people, some, some of the fellows was from Massachusetts.

Dudley: OK, do you remember, were they from Boston? Were they from the city or were they from the country in Massachusetts?

Morang: I really don't know.

Dudley: You don't remember. OK.

Morang: I don't remember. It's been so long.

Dudley: Yes. Were there a lot of people from Massachusetts?

Morang: Oh, I don't think it's a lot but there was, well I'd probably say a half a dozen that I knew. Of course, you'd take, there's about 200 guys to a camp. So you didn't get to know all of them. You, you, you only knew probably the ones in your barrack. Probably was 30, 35 in your barrack. And you was more or less familiar with them because you lived with them, you bunked with them, you went to eat with them and you worked with them. And then, as I say, the

other barracks, they did the same thing. Only they, they worked in their section and you worked in yours.

Dudley: I see. So, so you didn't, if they weren't in your barracks, you didn't really, didn't necessarily know where they were from.

Morang: No.

Dudley: Then, let's see, I spoke with Ron Dougherty the, last week, and he was telling me that there were a number of people from, but most of the people were from the area around the camp or, you know, in the region. But a lot of them were from the county.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: Did you, and from French extraction. Do you know if there were people from other regions of the state?

Morang: Oh, yes. Yes. We had people from Augusta and oh, a couple, we went up there one time. The boy's name was Sawyer. _____(?)_____. We went up there one time in the dead of winter in a Model A Ford Roadster. Fellow named Webb from Augusta had the car and we went up there to his people for a weekend. He took us home to see his parents. Man, was it cold.

Dudley: Let's talk a little bit about the accommodations, the, the camp itself. Now, were they completely, were the buildings completely constructed when you got there or did you have to build?

Morang: No, they were completely constructed when I got there.

Dudley: OK. So, tell me something about the barracks. What, what do you remember? What did they look like?

Morang: Well they were just a long building, probably had 20 or 25 men in it. And he had a, you had one of those supervisors. We, I had Bert Higgins in my barrack. He was one of the foremen and if we needed anything we went to them, asked them about it and then they sent us to somebody that knew what we wanted and we'd go there and get it.

Dudley: Now in terms of the building, you said it's a long building. Do you remember what the dimensions were?

Morang: No. We had either two or three stoves in them. Coal stoves.

Dudley: Coal stoves. OK.

Morang: They were round bellied. Pot-bellied stoves, we called them. And they burnt coal.

Dudley: How were the bunks arranged in these barracks?

Morang: We had those metal steel bunks. And they were alternated head to foot, head to foot.

Dudley: Really?

Dudley: Yes. Through the length of the barracks. Probably I'd say we had 20 to a side. That may be a little bit more than, probably, as I say, I can't quite remember.

Dudley: And, so were there just bunks on the, on the sides?

Morang: On the sides, yes.

Dudley: In the middle?

Morang: And in the middle there was those three pot-bellied stoves.

Dudley: Why, do you remember why the bunks were arranged head to, head to foot, alternating like that?

Morang: No. It was just the way they did it. I don't know whether it was done for any reason or not. I don't know.

Dudley: Now, did you have a way of, did you have any personal space? How did you store your clothes and, you know, other belongings?

Morang: We had foot lockers.

Dudley: Foot lockers.

Morang: We had foot lockers. Each man had a foot locker.

Dudley: And where was that stored?

Morang: Right there under the bunk. Right out on that, on the aisle. As I say, these buildings were probably, oh, 35 feet wide. Probably 60 feet long. And, I mean, roughly. I mean, the dimensions, I mean, I'm really not accurate. But it was in that thing, and then the bunks were, as I say, run down the length of the aisle. Probably 20 of them in a row. And down the middle of the, they left a, middle they had three stoves. These pot-bellied stoves.

Dudley: Was anything done to personalize the barracks? In other words, were you able to like hang pictures on the wall at your bunk or, or, any other. . .

Morang: No, I don't think so. You were allowed to have them in your foot locker but I don't think you was allowed to have anything on the walls at all.

Dudley: Did you have any shelves by your bunk?

Morang: That, I don't think so. That, what's that, an ant?

Dudley: It's an ant.

Morang: Where'd he come from?

Dudley: I don't know.

Morang: Well, let's get rid of him.

Dudley: That's the end of that ant.

Morang: Get rid of him.

Dudley: What did you think about how well the barracks were built? Did they have any problems like being drafty or cold or damp or anything? What did you think about the buildings themselves?

Morang: Well, I thought they were pretty good for the conditions of the, of the things that the day. They were well built. Just like things were built in those days. I mean, they didn't have the stuff that we have now. They don't have the insulation and stuff like that. But we survived.

Dudley: Were you ever cold in the buildings?

Morang: No, not when you was in bed, no. It was cold during the day sometimes. Sometimes the nights was cold.

Dudley: Did you, now, what routines were followed for keeping the place clean and in good repair? Did the men have cleaning responsibilities.

Morang: Yes

Dudley: For the barracks and bunks

Morang: Oh, yes. You had to keep your own place clean.

Dudley: And how bout repairs?

Morang: Oh, that was, had maintenance men that did all of that.

Dudley: OK

Morang: I mean, if you was assigned to that crew, then that's what you did. I mean, every day you went somewhere and did something you'd be assigned to on a work detail. And some would go and we'd gather brush, we cleaned all the woods of brush around from the woods. And as I say, we tore that camp down at Ellsworth.

Dudley: Yes, I remember you said that. Well, this gets into the next section about daily routine. You tore the camp down. What else? What would you say that your major job was while you were there for that year? Was it tearing the camp down or did you have another job as well? Was it clearing brush? Was that, was that your main job?

Morang: We had no main job. I mean, these things had to be done and they were assigned to us and we accomplished each, well, each section of work, whatever it was. Just like today, you have something to do, you'd like you was going to build something, you'd build it and when it was completed that, you went on to something else.

Dudley: Right.

Morang: And that's the same way that we did there.

Dudley: OK. Can you describe a typical work day? In other words, you know, when did you get up and eat meals? And when was lights out? And when did work start? And, you know, to like start at the beginning of your day and just describe what it was like?

Morang: You'd get up about six every morning. And you went to breakfast, probably breakfast was at seven. And you formed your work detail at eight. Usually eight o'clock. And they'd assign you to some group. And then they'd put you on trucks and take you to wherever you were assigned to work, whatever you was going to do. Whether it was construction, or bug killing. We killed a lot of those brown-tailed moths and we cleaned outdoors.

Dudley: How did you do that?

Morang: Just squeezed them by the hand.

Dudley: So that was your job, to go out in the woods and squeeze moths?

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: Really?

Morang: I mean, that would be a, you know, you was assigned to it, that's what you get for that day. You never knew what day you was going to do what. And we built roads. We built that 1200 camp site down there, to, oh, it's still there. Shit, I can't think of it now.

Dudley: It will come. It will come while we're talking.

Morang: I hope so.

Dudley: Yes.

Morang: We built that. And laid a 1500 foot shoreline out into the ocean. For this campsite. The navy used it during World War II. And it was closed. They didn't allow anybody down there.

Dudley: Now, in terms of, so, when you were out working in the field, then, did you come back for meals? Or did they bring food to you for lunch?

Morang: Sometimes they brought it out. Sometimes we had cold lunch. Then other times we had hot lunch. We had typical army, army mess kits and things of that nature.

Dudley: Oh, I see.

Morang: And canteens on your belt, you'd carry them on your belt, carry your mess kit on your belt.

Dudley: Did you take any breaks? Were there any standards kind of breaks during your work day?

Morang: Yes, every hour. Ten minutes on every hour.

Dudley: Oh.

Morang: Was allowed smoke break.

Dudley: And, and then you came back to camp at the end of the day, and . .

Morang: Four o'clock.

Dudley: Four o'clock. OK. How did you spend your evenings?

Morang: Well, we'd go out into the rec hall. Play pool. Found some guys who played the piano, some played the guitars. And we entertained ourselves. Or we went to the movies.

Dudley: In Southwest Harbor?

Morang: In Southwest Harbor, yes. The theater there, we used to go down there at night.

Dudley: And how did you get there?

Morang: Walked. It was only about, oh, quarter of a mile, I guess, to town. What little of town there is.

Dudley: OK. So you either went into town or you stayed in the rec hall and amused yourselves.

Morang: You stayed in the rec hall. Or you stayed in your bunk and read.

Dudley: OK. Did the, did your routine change any according to the seasons? Or did you always get up at six and always eat breakfast at seven? Was there any seasonal change in that routine?

Morang: Not that I can remember.

Dudley: OK. And tell me something about what meals were like in the mess hall. What, you know, how, how was the mess hall laid out? Do you remember? And how were meals served?

Morang: Well you had family style.

Dudley: OK, so the food was brought to the table and you served yourselves.

Morang: Brought to you and you served yourselves, yes.

Dudley: Now, describe, describe the mess hall. What was the building shaped like and where were the tables?

Morang: It was just exactly the same as the living one.

Dudley: The barracks. Same size?

Morang: There was no, same size. I think it was about the same size. I think the buildings were all about the same size. One plan and they built everything according to that plan. I don't think there was any difference in any of the camps. I think they were about all the same.

Dudley: So you'd go in the front door and then how, what did it look like?

Morang: The mess hall?

Dudley: Yes.

Morang: Oh, just tables set up, that's all.

Dudley: Were these tables, did they have individual chairs set at them? Or were they benches that you sat on?

Morang: Benches you sat on. Yes.

Dudley: The benches could move in and out. It wasn't like picnic tables where the benches

Morang: Just like picnic tables.

Dudley: Oh, they were picnic tables.

Morang: Yes

Dudley: So the benches were attached to the table.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: OK. And then the kitchen was part of the mess hall?

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: Do you remember what that looked like? Was it just along the side or at the end?

Morang: It was at the end.

Dudley: OK.

Morang: That was at the end of the building.

Dudley: Now was that at the opposite end of the entrance?

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: OK.

Morang: Yes. It was partitioned off. So much of it was for the eating section, then the rest of it was a partition, then you went out into the kitchen part.

Dudley: Did you remember, was there any special section for the officers to eat, or did everybody eat together?

Morang: No, I think the officers ate separate.

Dudley: And where was that? Do you remember?

Morang: I don't remember.

Dudley: OK.

Morang: Because we only had one or two officers. We had army officers. One or two of them to a company. And then the rest of the ones were supervisors.

Dudley: Did they eat with you? The supervisors?

Morang: They, they ate with us.

Dudley: Were there any particular rules that had to be followed at meals? This was a military establishment, were there

Morang: Oh, yes.

Dudley: Like what?

Morang: Well, there was no smoking and no loud talking. No rowdiness. And you went there and you ate a meal and then you got up and went out.

Dudley: Did you leave your, all your dishes and everything on the table? Or did you have to take them to the kitchen?

Morang: Oh, I can't remember. See, my problem is, I was in the National Guards. Then I was in the CC camp. Then I was five years in the army. So I . . . , to separate one thing from another, you know, is quite, quite difficult.

Dudley: I appreciate that. And that's fine, you know. I just want to know what you remembered. So talk about, you probably remember how well the food was prepared. Did you like the food at the, at the CCC camp?

Morang: Oh, yes.

Dudley: Was that good food?

Morang: It was good food. Yes. It was basic.

Dudley: Basic. And do you remember, like, what are some of the things that you got served and what were your favorites and was there something you didn't like?

Morang: Well, it was like anything. There were certain things that you ate, certain things you didn't like.

Dudley: What was your favorite food at the CCC camp?

Morang: I don't know if we ever had any. We just, whatever they served.

Dudley: You didn't have any particular favorite yourself?

Morang: No. No. I ate about anything.

Dudley: OK. All right. Did you have uniforms?

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: And could you tell me something about the uniform that you wore at the camp?

Morang: It was typical army, army green.

Dudley: Army green.

Morang: Well, khaki, you know.

Dudley: OK

Morang: Shirt and pants and a tie. Shoes. Regular, regular army stuff. The same uniforms that the army had in a sense. They, they were bell-bottomed pants, because we used to have, (?) turn them into the tailor. You had to do it yourself. You had to pay for it yourself. But they had a woman down there in Southwest Harbor that did that, tailor. And she made bell bottoms, pants.

Dudley: And why did you want bell bottoms?

Morang: They're easier to take care of.

Dudley: In what way? Why?

Morang: Well, they don't wrinkle.

Dudley: Bell bottoms don't wrinkle?

Morang: Bell bottoms don't wrinkle.

Dudley: Really?

Morang: You know? I don't know why. But they don't, they don't wrinkle like straight legs do.

Dudley: So you could take your uniforms to this woman, this seamstress in Southwest Harbor, and she would expand them into bell bottoms for you.

Morang: Yes. Yes. Yes.

Dudley: Now, did you wear this army uniform, plus the tie, when you were working in the woods?

Morang: No, no. We wore denims in the woods working.

Dudley: Now, OK. So you had like a denim uniform for working in the woods.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: Was that denim pants and a denim shirt?

Morang: And a denim hat.

Dudley: And a denim hat! So you were blue. You had a blue outfit for working in the woods.

Morang: Well, some were blue, and some were green.

Dudley: Oh, OK. All right, what was your hat like?

Morang: It was just, well, let's see. It was like a sailor hat only the brim hung down and stood at, being upright. It was like a woman's bonnet. Similar. Just sort of a round hat with a sloppy visor on it all the way around.

Dudley: Oh, all right. So it was a soft brim all the way around.

Morang: Yes. Yes.

Dudley: All right.

Morang: It was like a felt hat but it wasn't a felt hat.

Dudley: OK.

Morang: It was made out of denim.

Dudley: All right. So it was a soft hat made of denim and it had a brim all the way around.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: All right. Good. Good. Now were you required to show any kind of, to show respect for officers? If this was a military establishment, how did you relate to your officers? Did you salute or were there other . . .

Morang: There was no saluting, no. But you said 'sir.' You treated them with respect. I mean, there was no saluting because you weren't in the army, this was all volunteer.

Dudley: OK. Now let's move on to the section about camp structure. Who, do you remember, who were the camp officials during your time there? Remember their names? What their, what their position was?

Morang: No, I don't. They had captains, had army captain.

Dudley: Do you remember what his name was?

Morang: No. I can't remember. And we had a couple of lieutenants.

Dudley: And you don't remember their names?

Morang: No. We had an army doctor.

Dudley: Remember his name? No.

Morang: No. I mean, 60 years is a long time.

Dudley: Oh, sure. Sure. Well, do you remember anything about their personalities and what they were like to work for?

Morang: Well we had good ones as far as that went. I never heard any discrepancies or anything about the ones that we had. Of course I suppose there were ones that were disagreeable but we didn't have them.

Dudley: So you liked your commanding officers.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: OK.

Morang: They treated us with respect and we did the same to them.

Dudley: We're interested in learning something about the influence that people like George Dorr and John Rockefeller, John D. Rockefeller had. Did you ever meet George Dorr?

Morang: Not that I recall.

Dudley: Do you, do you recall what sort of influence they had on the operations at the camp? Did you, I mean, well, in the first place, did you hear, did you ever hear of George Dorr? You, you said you never met him.

Morang: No, I don't remember him but I remember Rockefeller.

Dudley: And what kind of influence did he have?

Morang: Well, we did a lot of work down around the Rockefeller estate. Cleaned up brush, and in fact that's one of the things that saved them in the fire of '47.

Dudley: Oh, really?

Morang: The Bar Harbor fire. And that's one of the things that saved the Rockefellers' estate was the fire roads that we'd cut all over the island and the brush that we'd cleaned out. And the things that we did there. And we put in those, that ladder that's in the, in the ledge there, at Echo Lake. I worked on that. We put those, well, iron ladder, to the end of the side of the walls. The granite wall that goes up there.

Dudley: Let me turn the tape over and we'll continue. This is the end of side one of the interview with Mr. Morang.

[End Tape 1910, Side A. Begin Tape 1910, Side B]

Dudley: This is side two of the interview with Mr. Morang. Who are your, then, you are your immediate supervisors? You mentioned a Mr. Higgins.

Morang: That's about the only one I can remember. Because I used to ride back and forth with him sometimes.

Dudley: And what was he like to work with? What was his personality like?

Morang: All right as far as I was concerned.

Dudley: So you enjoyed working with him.

Morang: Yes. Yes. He was a good supervisor.

Dudley: OK. Tell me something about how work crews were chosen. Did you, did you join work crew A and then always stay with that work crew? How did, you know, how did, how did you get chosen for different jobs?

Morang: I really can't recall. We did different things and when you got down with one set of work, then if another crew needed a man and you was available, then they sent you to do that work. It just was to keep everybody, keep everybody busy.

Dudley: So, did you, you didn't necessarily then work with the same group of people all the time?

Morang: No. No. You, you, it all depended on what they needed and what they did.

Dudley: Did you have any particular skills or training that made, made people want to choose you for certain jobs? Or were you a jack of all trades?

Morang: No, I run a caterpillar tractor for, we went out to Cranberry Island and built a alarm out there for the light house. That was an endless job because we'd do it one day and the next day a storm would come and that would be the end of that. And then we'd start all over again. I was out there a month, I think.

Dudley: Did you ever finish the job?

Morang: Yes, we finished it. But it never, when we left, so did that.

Dudley: Really! How discouraging.

Morang: Well, the storms come and wash it right out.

Dudley: So, now, there's a series of questions here about the different configurations of the crews. Now you said that, that if they needed someone in some particular job and you were through with your job, that you could be reassigned to another crew.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: And so, was that, was that true of everyone? So, so, like, people, this is the way I'm understanding it and tell me if this is right. People would, would get assigned to a job. When that job was done, then all of those people then would get reassigned to other jobs.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: Was that how it worked?

Morang: Yes. That's how it worked.

Dudley: So you were always, so you were moving from job to job, and your work mates changed according to the job that you were doing.

Morang: Yes. To a certain extent. You work with the same people, but sometimes there was, take, for instance, they might be three of us that worked on another job be assigned to another job. Or that might be six or 8 of you, it all depend on the size of the job, and how many men was available at that time for that period of time.

Dudley: Now, so that would mean that with each job you had a different supervisor.

Morang: Yes. Yes. We had several supervisors there.

Dudley: So sometimes Mr. Higgins would be your supervisors and then other times . . .

Morang: Other times we'd be assigned to somebody else.

Dudley: OK. Was there any competition between the work crews?

Morang: Oh yes.

Dudley: Like what? Talk about that a little bit.

Morang: Well, they'd be, to get things done, they'd see who could perform the work the fastest. We'd clear brush or build a road, fire breaks, and we'd try to pit one, one barrack against the other barrack. And there'd be prizes.

Dudley: Oh, really? What kind of prizes?

Morang: Well, sometimes you'd get canteen books.

Dudley: And what are they?

Morang: Well, they were in a coupon book. And some were worth a dollar. You'd go to the movies with them. They were ten cent tickets in them. In these little booklets. And you'd, you know, you'd work for those. It would be an incentive just to get something accomplished. It wouldn't be...

Dudley: And so you could get canteen books. What other prizes were available?

Morang: That was about it.

Dudley: That was it.

Morang: That was about it. You'd get canteen books and you could buy cigarettes and movie stubs and soda and stuff like that.

Dudley: So did you win a lot of canteen books?

Morang: Oh, I don't know. I won some, I suppose. But I don't know if I won any great deal.

Dudley: OK. Did you, when you were working, did you work under the direction of non-CC contractors or crew leaders? Or did you work with non-CC workers? Or were you always working with CCC people?

Morang: No, we was always working with, as far as I can remember, our own group. I don't think that was any contractors involved in any way with it. But I'm not sure. But as far as I know, half a dozen of us CC guys, we'd go and do what we were supposed to be doing, and it would be all CCC guys.

Dudley: OK. All right. Let's talk a little bit about, about work. What would you say was the project that occupied most of your time?

Morang: Cleaning brush and making fire breaks down on Mount Desert Island.

Dudley: All right. And so the, and the purpose of that work was, was it mostly to beautify the park or mostly for safety reasons?

Morang: Most of it was to, safety reasons.

Dudley: OK.

Morang: And the sea, down to sea walls where we built that big, well, picnic area, if you want to call it a picnic area or a camp site. It must be two or three hundred campsites down there that we built. As I say, we, we laid a 1200 foot sewer line into the ocean. It's probably still there.

Dudley: Now, how were the areas selected for clearing? Do you remember what made your team leaders choose one area over another for clearing?

Morang: Well, it was just, the island was assigned to, to, to the two camps that was there. That was left, the Bar Harbor and the Southwest. So in order to make work for everybody they, they divided the island.

Dudley: And what were the, how did you know how much to clear? And what were the guidelines for what to cut and what to leave? How was that made clear to you? Do you remember?

Morang: We didn't cut anything. We just cleared what was already cut.

Dudley: OK. Oh, I see

Morang: The brush. We didn't go in and cur except we made fire roads. When we did that, we cut, to make a fire road. But there was already a road there and we just improved it and cleared it. Graveled it. And made it, you know, truck passable.

Dudley: OK. Oh, let's see now , well there are questions here about, about identifying certain trees to clear and so forth. But you, you weren't really involved with that. It sounds like you weren't, you weren't involved with any kind of landscaping like filling in or draining wet areas or ditching or raising embankments. You didn't, you weren't, were you involved in anything like that?

Morang: Oh, yes. We built, as I say, we built roads.

Dudley: You built the, yes

Morang: And cleared the, built that dam there in Somesville. That was built with the CCCs.

Dudley: Were you given any instruction in terms of conservation or fire prevention?

Morang: It was just fire prevention, I guess.

Dudley: Did you do any firefighting?

Morang: Yes. We, we was involved, we was involved in one fire down there in '37. That's when Rockefeller gave us all cigarettes for stoping a fire that was, was threatening his place. We went in and, and got it out. Worked on that.

Dudley: How did you do that? What tools did you use? How did you fight that fire?

Morang: Just with shovels and axes. And that was about it. And Indian pumps. Carried Indian pumps on our backs. And, we didn't have the stuff that they have today to fight these fires.

Dudley: So did Rockefeller personally hand you cigarettes, then?

Morang: No, he didn't personally give to me, but he made it possible so that I got them same as, he brought in a truck load of them and said these are for the boys and pass them around. So that's what they did.

Dudley: Oh, OK.

Morang: But, I mean, they came from him originally. We didn't see him personally.

Dudley: OK. Let's talk a little bit about education and training. You recall what, what parts of these work were considered skilled labor? You mentioned that you drove a Caterpillar. Was that considered skilled labor?

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: What other sorts of things were considered skilled?

Morang: Well, running a jack hammer. Truck driving. Those were skilled back in those days. Now everybody does it. Back in those days there weren't too many that could do a lot of those different things.

Dudley: So any kind of equipment. Running any kind of equipment. So there were trucks and Caterpillars and jack hammers. Anything else, do you remember?

Morang: No, that was it. I don't, we didn't have those excavators and stuff that they got today.

Dudley: You had to do it by shovels.

Morang: Well, we shoveled about everything – Arm strong.

Dudley: Yes. Right. Right. And were you given any training to run this Caterpillar or anything else? Once you got there, were you given any kind of training?

Morang: No. No. There wasn't any kind of training. I mean, they showed you how to operate it and then you picked it up from there.

Dudley: OK. So you sort of had to learn on the job.

Morang: You learned on the job. That's right.

Dudley: And, and, who, who showed you how to operate it? Other CC workers or your one of your supervisors?

Morang: Whoever had the job before you get it. Because a lot of that stuff was passed on from the fellows leaving.

Dudley: OK. Right. So when they were about to leave they would just train somebody else, show somebody else how to do it.

Morang: Yes. How to do it. Yes.

Dudley: And, and how were you chosen to learn how to do that? Why did they choose you to do that rather than somebody else?

Morang: Probably because I was available at that time.

Dudley: So you didn't have to, like, put in and say I want to learn how to do that.

Morang: No. No. You just was, the luck of the draw. And you was there and they needed somebody to do something, they told you, give you a chance to do it. And if you could do it, you had the job. You couldn't do it, somebody else would get it.

Dudley: OK. Sounds pretty fair then.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: Everybody had a chance.

Morang: Oh, yes. Everybody had a chance.

Dudley: Yes. OK. Well that, were there any, there's questions here about getting trained for, for, for various things at camp. It sounds like what you're saying is that basically you just got shown how to do something and then you took over the job. Were there any other things at camp that you might not have participated in where there was a certain kind of training involved that people actually had to spend some time learning something?

Morang: Oh, I really, I really don't know.

Dudley: OK.

Morang: Because like I say, it's been such a long time ago.

Dudley: Sure.

Morang: A lot of these things you can't remember.

Dudley: Sure. That's, that's fine. You know, I just have to ask.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: All right. Did you receive any kind of certification? Like, did you get certified to run this Caterpillar? Was there any sort of formal recognition?

Morang: No.

Dudley: No. They just said, 'Morang, on the Caterpillar!'

Morang: Yes. I mean, you got a chance to do it. And if they wanted it done, they'd say, well, Morang is doing it. Let him do it.

Dudley: OK. How, how relevant was your CCC training to your future career? Did stuff you learned at the CCC camp then benefit you in your future career? Or not?

Morang: Yes! Yes. Because it taught you how to live with other people. How to get along with other people. Which is a big help in your future endeavors.

Dudley: Did it, did it help you, let's see, you said, from the CCC then, you went into, what did you say, the Army?

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: And you were in it for five years?

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: And, so, you feel that being in the CCC then helped you in your Army career?

Morang: Oh, yes!

Dudley: In what way? Getting along? Or other ways?

Morang: Well, getting along and the, you overlook some of the things that some people did that you didn't agree with. But it was their doing and you just went along with the way things were.

Dudley: OK. Were there any doors, career doors that were opened as a result of your experience in the CCC?

Morang: Well, I suppose there was. If you come home and applied for other jobs you used that experience. They asked you whether you had experience doing this or that, why, you had some experience with working with other people, which was helpful.

Dudley: What did you go on to do after you left the Army?

Morang: I drove railway express till the train stopped running. Then I was kiln burner over to the cement plant till I got so I couldn't stand it, stand up on a cement floor for eight hours so I give it up. And I went to work for a local manufacturer.

Dudley: So you came back here to Rockland.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: When you got out of the army.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: OK. Let's talk a little bit about how, going back to camp now. How did you spend your leisure time? We're talking about recreational activities now. How did you spend your leisure time?

Morang: Well, we used to go to pool hall, recreation hall, rather, and play, play cribbage or checkers or listen to music. Read.

Dudley: Did you play an instrument?

Morang: No. No.

Dudley: OK. So you played board games or pool. You were a pool player.

Morang: Yes. Yes.

Dudley: And you read books.

Morang: And I read books.

Dudley: Were there any sports opportunities at camp?

Morang: Yes. We used to play softball.

Dudley: Were you on the softball team?

Morang: Yes, I used to play.

Dudley: Did you, now, was there, was this an organized team, and like, did you play a team somewhere else?

Morang: No.

Dudley: You just played . . .

Morang: No

Dudley: In the camp.

Morang: No, in amongst ourselves we'd start up a ball game and get six or eight fellows and go out and play. Choose sides and get five or six guys to go out and play softball.

Dudley: And, so, there was softball. Was there any other sport that was played? Like basketball or volleyball?

Morang: They had volleyball.

Dudley: But that wasn't really important.

Morang: And softball. That was about it.

Dudley: OK. Did you attend games off the camp? Did you go some other places to attend

Morang: No.

Dudley: I mean to be a spectator, basically.

Morang: Yes. I didn't care. I didn't go off the camp like. Except I'd come home weekends if I got a pass I'd come home.

Dudley: What sorts of crafts or hobbies were available, and did you partake of any of them? Was there any craft or hobby instructor or any opportunities to make things?

Morang: Oh, I don't remember. I know I didn't do any. I wasn't interested.

Dudley: OK. And you don't remember if other people did?

Morang: No.

Dudley: What about music or theater? You said that somebody played the piano and somebody played a guitar.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: Was this just like organized music?

Morang: No. It was just spontaneous. That was all. You'd get somebody that could play the piano. He'd play the piano for an hour or so. And other guys would join in with their guitars. And once in a while you had somebody with a banjo. Occasionally you'd get an accordion player.

Dudley: That must have been nice. Now, you said that you did reading. Did you do a lot of reading? Was that one of your . . .

Morang: Yes, I like to read. I read, I read a lot.

Dudley: Was there a library at the camp? Or how did you get your books?

Morang: Yes, there was a library.

Dudley: So is that where you got your books, from that library?

Morang: That's where you got your books.

Dudley: OK. And what kind of books were available?

Morang: Well, usually, whatever the people would give you. They'd give you books.

Dudley: The people being who?

Morang: The townspeople.

Dudley: Oh, the townspeople would donate books to your library.

Morang: Would donate books.

Dudley: Oh.

Morang: And . . .

Dudley: OK. Were there newspapers and magazines available?

Morang: I, I can't remember. I think probably they were, a local paper.

Dudley: So, now, in some, at some camp or at some time there were camp newspapers. Did you have a camp newspaper?

Morang: We had one, yes. The Sou'wester.

Dudley: You did. OK.

Morang: Was the name of it.

Dudley: Sou'wester was the camp newspaper.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: And who, who did the newspaper?

Morang: The fellows in the camp.

Dudley: OK. That was volunteer. Did you ever, did you ever work on the newspaper?

Morang: No. No, I never did.

Dudley: How often did that come out?

Morang: Once a week, I think.

Dudley: So what kind of stuff got into the newspaper?

Morang: Whatever they found out about you or somebody else they would write up about it.

Dudley: So it was a gossip paper.

Morang: Yes. More or less. More or less.

Dudley: So did you enjoy reading that newspaper?

Morang: Yes. And I had some up until a few years ago. When I gave them, somewhere, somebody wrote me and said they had a museum. CCC museum. And I sent them six or eight of them that I happened to have.

Dudley: OK. Well we'll probably see them sooner or later then. Now, about the, the camp and town connections. There's been some reports about conflicts between the people who lived in the camp and then the townspeople. So I'd just, you know, like you to talk a little bit about what your relationship was with the people in Southwest Harbor. Did you, you went in there to go to the movies.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: And you said you went into town, what, once a week?

Morang: Well, no, you'd go in every night as far as that went. As I say, we only lived a quarter of a mile from town.

Dudley: So you went into town quite frequently, then.

Morang: You could go in quite frequently, yes.

Dudley: And, so you went to the movies. Was there anyplace else that you usually went when you went into town?

Morang: No. That was about all you went to was the movie hall.

Dudley: And, so, did you feel welcome in town? Was there any problem, any conflict with the people in town?

Morang: No, not that I can recall. It was a very small town and, of course, now, it's bigger now because they got the Coast Guard in there. But back there in my day in 1937 there wasn't much down there.

Dudley: Did you get to know any of the local people?

Morang: Well, yes, I went around with a girl down there for a while. Like everybody else. Used to take her to movies.

Dudley: How did you meet her?

Morang: Through, they used to put on dance up there at camp.

Dudley: Oh, at the camp itself.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: In the rec hall.

Morang: In the rec hall.

Dudley: And then people from town were invited to come to it?

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: And how often did they happen?

Morang: Probably once a month.

Dudley: So you met a girl from Southwest Harbor and she, and then you started taking her to the movies.

Morang: Yes. Yes.

Dudley: OK. And was that fairly common? Did lots of men date women from the town?

Morang: Yes. It was quite common. At least in my section. I don't know how other camps was treated.

Dudley: So it sounds like there were fairly friendly relationships, then, between the town

Morang: There were in Southwest Harbor, as far as I can recall.

Dudley: Yes. OK. And, so you didn't, you didn't witness any kind of conflict between anyone else and the townspeople, then.

Morang: No, but in other towns down there on, on the desert island, Mount Desert Island, we weren't too welcome.

Dudley: Oh, really? Like where else weren't you welcome?

Morang: Oh, Hull's Cove was another place. They used to throw rocks at us.

Dudley: Really? Why?

Morang: Huh?

Dudley: Why?

Morang: Well, I don't know. Kids will be kids, I guess.

Dudley: So, you probably didn't go to Hull's Cove very often then.

Morang: No we didn't.

Dudley: Now there were the people that lived there year round. And then there were the summer people that would come into the area. And did you ever have much to do with the, with the summer residents? The people who came in?

Morang: No. We didn't have much to do with them. No. Not in my section. I don't know about the Bar Harbor. That was a different element all together.

Dudley: Sure. All right. So, let's see, we talked, and then the last section here, after you left the camp. Now from the CCC, did you apply directly to the army and go into the army? Or did you do something else after you left the CCC?

Morang: No. I came home here. And I worked.

Dudley: And what were you working at when you came home?

Morang: Fuel company.

Dudley: Driving a truck?

Morang: No, working on the truck. As a helper. I did that and then I worked in the laundry.

Dudley: OK. And then you joined the army?

Morang: I didn't join the army, the army asked me. The army took me.

Dudley: OK.

Morang: I didn't join. I was a National Guardsmen.

Dudley: OK.

Morang: And I got called up in 1940.

Dudley: All right. Right. But you had those two jobs before you got called up then.

Morang: Yes. Yes.

Dudley: And you were there for five years. And what did you do when you were in the Army?

Morang: A little of this and a little of that.

Dudley: But where did you go? Where were you assigned?

Morang: I was in Europe. I was a paratrooper in Europe.

Dudley: A paratrooper. What part of Europe were you? France? Italy?

Morang: Oh, I was France, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany.

Dudley: OK. So it was a little bit of this and a little bit of that, wasn't it.

Morang: Yes. Here, there and everywhere. I went where they sent me and done what they told me.

Dudley: Why sure. OK. Yes. OK. You already talked about how you felt the CCC experience influenced you. Now have you kept contact with people that you met at the CCC camp? Have they remain friends of yours or acquaintances throughout your life? Or did you lose touch with them after you left?

Morang: I kept in touch with some of them but they're all dead except one. Just one.

Dudley: Is that someone in Maine?

Morang: He lives right down to Owl's Head.

Dudley: And who is that?

Morang: John Harlow.

Dudley: I wonder if we have him on our list. OK. John Harlow. In Owl's Head.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: OK. Do you have an address and phone number for him?

Morang: No.

Dudley: OK. But I, I could easily find him in the phone book.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: Yes. OK. Good. Good. OK. We'll get in touch with him. So, so, he's the person that you've kept in touch with

Morang: Well . . .

Dudley: And the other ones, before they passed away.

Morang: With John, it's if I see him, I see him. Same as a lot of army buddies here. When I see him I talk with him and we go over old times. But we don't socialize. I got several of those here.

Dudley: OK. Now they want you to talk a little bit about, well, I guess you've already answered that question about values or approach to work that you acquired through the CCC. You said that it helped you get along with people.

Morang: Yes.

Dudley: Was there anything else that that experience did for you?

Morang: No, that's about all that I got out of it.

Dudley: OK. OK. Well. That, that's the end of the questions, then. You, you zipped right along and answered them all. Is there anything else that you'd like to say about your experience with the CCC before I turn the tape off?

Morang: No, that's it. That was a long time ago so I can't remember too much about it, you know.

Dudley: But you've done, you've remembered quite a lot. So I appreciate the information. OK. This is the end of the interview with Mr. Morang.

[End Tape 1910, Side B. End Session I]