

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION
NUMBER

Interview with
George W. McDaniel
December 4, 1973

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Terms of Use: Open

Approved: *George W. McDaniel*

(Signature)

Date: 12-4-73

Oral History Collection

George McDaniel

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Date: December 4, 1973

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Mr. George McDaniel for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on December 4, 1973, in Dallas, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. McDaniel in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was employed by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930's.

Mr. McDaniel, you've already been through this before, but just in case somebody doesn't read your other interview, would you very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself? Again, would you tell me where you were born, when you were born, your education, things of this nature? Just be very brief.

Mr. McDaniel: I was born in Stigler, Oklahoma, on December 23, 1915. I attended grade school and high school in this town. I graduated from high school in 1933 or 1934. Times were pretty hard at that time of the depression. It was during a recession, and jobs were few, and they were

hard to find. I went to work for a road contractor building city streets in town. Then when that job was through, well, there was nothing else to do. About that time, they began organizing the CCC camps, and I enlisted.

Marcello: How did the depression affect you and your family?

McDaniel: Well, it affected them . . . it wouldn't have affected my family really that much if . . . it wouldn't have affected them as much if my father had been in good health. Through the doctor's advice, well, he had to semi-retire. Immediately after he retired, or beginning his retirement--he wasn't really all that old--but he thought he had enough money to do the rest of his life. But when the banks started going broke, well, that was the crowning blow. He had a large store in this particular town that was called the Haskell County Trading Company. It was more or less . . . you'd picture it as a . . . back in those times, people would picture it as a trading post. They had everything in the store. They had wagons. They had goods, dry goods. They had groceries and hardware. You name it. He had to have it all to survive, to stay in the business. Had a very large store. When I was only five years old, well, he started to retire, at that time started through the

retirement. That would have been about 1920. He reduced the size of his store. I had two brothers and a cousin who were helping him in the store. He got out of the store on the doctor's advice, and he began buying and selling cattle and cotton to be outside. They advised him to be outside more. He used to buy carloads of cattle and hogs and cotton and ship them to Kansas City. I guess through that . . . that was about his last big job. It was supposed to get him well, to get him on his feet and ready to retire. Then in 1933, the year of my graduation from high school, he passed away. Two years later my mother passed away.

Marcello: You mentioned that he apparently had lost a great deal of his money when the banks closed.

McDaniel: Yes, that's it. He wasn't wealthy, but he was comfortable. He would have had a comfortable living for the whole family for years to come, I'm sure. Of course, I don't know how much he lost in the depression.

Marcello: Was this a rather shattering blow to you and your family, when you learned that instead of being comfortable, as you thought you would be, all of a sudden a great deal of the family savings were gone?

McDaniel: Well, from a standpoint, yes. But the whole community

was in it together, so it really wasn't that much of a sting. He never talked business around us.

Marcello: I hate to use the saying that misery loves company, but the fact that everybody else was suffering kind of softened the blow for your family.

McDaniel: That's right.

Marcello: Had it just been your family, it might have been a little bit different, I suppose.

McDaniel: That's right. Even some of the really well-to-do families that were better to do than we were in the community, they were in the same boat with us.

Marcello: What sort of readjustments did you have to make in your standard of living after the banks failed?

McDaniel: Well, we had to . . . my father passed away. Of course, he was ill for about three or four months. But it was left up to an older brother and I to make a living for the family. My oldest brother was already married and gone, and this one other brother and I had to make a living for the family. I had a younger brother and a sister and a mother, and it was left up to us to take care of them.

Marcello: Do you think that the fact that the banks failed and part of the family savings had been lost had perhaps something

to do with the early death of your father? Do you think this may have affected him one way or another?

McDaniel: Well, it might have. I'm sure it had something to do with it. I really don't . . . his death really . . . he wasn't the type of person that would worry about. He was tough and he'd seen harder times than that because he came from Tennessee in a wagon to Oklahoma. He started out . . . his father passed away when he was only three years old. He was killed in the Civil War. He didn't even remember his father. Consequently, he'd had it tough before.

Marcello: He must have moved into Oklahoma around the time that it was still a territory, perhaps.

McDaniel: That's right, it was in the Indian territory. As a matter of fact, he was in the land rush. He was in the land rush and staked a claim. When he staked a claim to have . . . when he had it filed, it was on Indian territory. It was in Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma, and his land was taken from him because he was on a reservation. It was off limits.

Marcello: In 1932, Franklin Roosevelt was elected President. What were your feelings toward Franklin Roosevelt? Now you were a very young man at the time, of course, but what were your feelings toward him?

McDaniel: Well, you mean at that time, in 1932?

Marcello: Yes, at that time.

McDaniel: I thought he was a wonderful man, inasmuch as he sought . . . he really did something to try to bring the people out of recession, inasmuch as he was giving the people employment, which I think was better for their pride than giving them something. For myself, I'd rather work for something than . . . I've never had anyone to give me anything. I've never asked for anything. I never asked for any relief, and I don't think I would to this day.

Marcello: Would it be safe to say that he perhaps restored a certain amount of hope to the people in the country?

McDaniel: I'm sure he did.

Marcello: Keeping in mind that the depression actually started in 1929 when Herbert Hoover was President, this thing had been going on for some time.

McDaniel: That's right. That was when my father went broke, in '29.

Marcello: I'm sure. In other words, you started feeling the effects of the depression in 1929, and four years later, the depression was still going on.

McDaniel: That's right.

Marcello: Did you ever perchance listen to any of the Fireside Chats?

McDaniel: Yes, I have.

Marcello: What were your feelings toward those? Or can you remember what the atmosphere was like or what would happen when you would find out that Roosevelt was going to speak through one of these Fireside Chats?

McDaniel: I really don't remember very much of the substance, but I recognize that Fireside Chat.

Marcello: When did you enter the CCC?

McDaniel: I entered in August, 1935.

Marcello: What was the procedure by which you joined the CCC? Can you remember, for example, how you found out about the CCC's and what steps you had to take to join?

McDaniel: Well, yes, because I had an older brother that was an administrator at that time.

Marcello: He was a CCC administrator?

McDaniel: He was administrator for the county for the WPA and the CCC enlistment and all this. His office took care of the enlistments.

Marcello: Did you have to fill out any sort of forms or things of this nature in order to qualify? Were there certain things that you had to do in order to qualify?

McDaniel: Well, about the main thing was to pass a physical. That was about the only thing. You had to pass a physical examination.

Marcello: You also had to prove need, did you not?

McDaniel: Oh, yes, yes.

Marcello: Who administered this physical examination?

McDaniel: Doctors. First, we'd go to a base, the nearest base close to us, and, of course, they had a physician. I think it was probably your county physician--I think is what it was--for your initial examination. Then you were taken to a camp or your recruiting station, and they'd give you another physical at the recruiting station. The requirements weren't too strenuous.

Marcello: Like you mentioned, this first examination was given by a civilian doctor, and then the second examination was given by an Army doctor, isn't that correct?

McDaniel: That's right. That's right. It was all Army. Your administrative part in the CCC's were handled by the Army. The rest of it, your working assignments, was handled by the Department of the Interior. Whether it was the Department of Agriculture or the Department of Grazing or whatever, it came under the Department of Interior. The Department of the Interior wasn't responsible for you other than assigning you work and see that . . . we were on projects with the Department of the Interior. They weren't responsible for you after

working hours or before. Everything was . . . administrative duties were assigned by Army personnel, Reserve.

Marcello: How long did it take you to get into the CCC after you had originally signed up? In other words, was there a certain waiting period, or did you go right away or very shortly after you took your examination?

McDaniel: Right after you take your physical, you're in.

Marcello: I see. Were you sent then to an Army base?

McDaniel: No. We were sent to a . . . in this particular town, the small town where I enlisted, they had a small CCC camp just out of town. There we went on August 28, 1935, and took our final physical. Then we started to our . . . or took over . . . took assignment or transferred to another camp. We left and entered another camp. We were sent from Stigler, Oklahoma. We got on trains, and we were sent to Duncan, Arizona. We arrived there for permanent camp September 3, so it was only a matter of about five or six days before we were assigned to a different camp.

Marcello: Do you remember any of the activities that took place when you were at the CCC camp in Oklahoma? Or was this simply a matter of waiting until enough people were gathered together in order to send you to Arizona?

McDaniel: That's right. We were just waiting assignments. They had a permanent camp there in Oklahoma. I don't know what they did there, whether it was a Department of Agriculture or Grazing or whatever it was, or whether it was just a recruiting camp. All I know is we just waited there until we were given assignments to go some other place.

Marcello: What sort of clothing were you issued?

McDaniel: It was Army issue. I guess it was probably old Army uniforms that had been in use or remodeled, retailored. Of course, we weren't given any arms. All the clothing was Army issue, shoes and all the clothing. Of course, the jackets were probably tailored or had been retailored so they wouldn't look too much like Army. All the Army insignias had been taken off. The buttons were different.

Marcello: As I recall, you did have a dress uniform, and then you also had a work uniform, did you not?

McDaniel: Oh, yes, just like you do in the Army. You had a fatigue uniform and a dress uniform. However, you weren't forced to wear your dress uniform, unless you wanted to, off base.

Marcello: How about for the evening meals? Did you have to wear the dress uniform for the evening meal?

McDaniel: Yes, yes.

Marcello: But in other words, if you went off the base, you could either wear your Army uniform, or you could wear civilian clothes.

McDaniel: Right. It was up to you entirely.

Marcello: What sort of an orientation program did you go through before being assigned to some specific work duties at this camp in Duncan, Arizona? In other words, did the CCC people tell you what to expect? Did you have to undergo any physical training under the supervision of the Army or anything of this nature?

McDaniel: No. No physical training, really. You just had to be physically fit. Of course, they had your qualifications as to what your background was as far as education and what you were capable of doing and what you had been doing before you got into the CCC. They were more or less picked as to what . . . you could almost get any--not right away--but you could almost get any unit that you wanted to. If you wanted to get on a truck driver's job or a mechanic or a clerk or whatever you wanted to, you could make applications for it and almost be assured that you got it if there was enough room, and they usually had room.

Marcello: What were your reactions or your thoughts when you found that you were going to be sent to Arizona?

McDaniel: Well, I had thoughts on it. I really wanted to stay home, inasmuch as my brother . . . since my father had passed away, I'd like to have stayed there with my mother and help take care of the family, be closer to them at the time. But since I did get shipped out, I was glad to get out. What I mean is, I was . . . I'm a kind of a wanderer anyhow. I always did like to travel. I guess it's one of the best things that's ever happened to me.

Marcello: In what way?

McDaniel: The getting away from home.

Marcello: Had you ever been that far away from home before?

McDaniel: No, that's the farthest I'd ever been.

Marcello: What sort of men were in the group that went with you to Arizona? Maybe I need to be a little more specific with that question. From what sort of a background did they come? Were they mainly from rural areas, or were they city boys?

McDaniel: They were from all walks of life. Some of them were schoolteachers' sons. Some of them were sons of people . . . their folks had worked as a . . . had had

businesses in town. Some of them were from rural areas. They were from all walks of life.

Marcello: Generally speaking, were most of these people in this camp at Duncan, Arizona, from Oklahoma?

McDaniel: No, there was a large part of them from Texas. I'd say they were about half and half.

Marcello: Did the Oklahomans and the Texans get along pretty well together?

McDaniel: Oh, yes, yes, yes. They had their ups and downs as all kids will, but they got along fine. But as time passed, all of them were from Oklahoma. The whole camp was from Oklahoma. Then we'd get recruits in. Every six months was a new . . . your time was up. You only had six months to serve. You signed up for only six months. When your six months was up, you could go home or reenlist. Consequently, all our replacements came in, and they were usually from East Texas or East Texas area. So that's the way that . . . consequently, before I left, nearly all the boys were from Oklahoma. Of course, they had an age limit. I don't think you could enlist after you were twenty-one. I think after you reached--I've forgotten--but I think after you reached the age of twenty-one or twenty-five--I think it was twenty-one . . .

Marcello: I believe it was twenty-five. I think it was a little bit older.

McDaniel: It might have been twenty-five. But the fellows that stayed on after twenty-five, they were usually given a job with the Department of the Interior as a foreman or in that capacity. They didn't come under the Army regulations from there on in.

Marcello: What was their reasoning in sending you so far from home? Was there a certain reason why they did that?

McDaniel: No. I think that I signed up with a bunch were at the same . . . the ones that I signed up with, they were needed in Arizona at that time. It was a new camp there, and we set up camp. As a matter of fact, I think that we were the first bunch to go into this camp and leave.

Marcello: When you say that you set up this camp here in Duncan, Arizona, do you mean that you built it from scratch, or were the barracks and so on already there?

McDaniel: Oh, the barracks were already there. No, the Army or . . . I think the barracks in all situations, they were all set up by . . . it was a contract job. What I mean is somebody moved in and set these . . . they were all bolted together. They were set up in panels. I think they had the Army engineers there to supervise the

assembling of the camp, the housing. They were shipped in in panels, and they were all bolted together.

Marcello: In other words, these were prefabricated barracks.

McDaniel: That's right. That's right.

Marcello: What did they look like? Describe them as best you can.

McDaniel: Well, they were just wooden barracks. They were just put up in . . . I think it looked to me about eight-foot panels, maybe ten, and they were bolted together. They had all the studs showing and the rafters and everything else. There was nothing built in. It was just a raw barracks. That was all it was. It had wooden floors, and the tops had made out of asphalt shingling. They weren't shingles; it was tar paper.

Marcello: Tar paper.

McDaniel: Tar paper. It had big pot-bellied stoves, three or four to a barracks. I think one barracks held either fifty or sixty men.

Marcello: These were single-story barracks, I presume.

McDaniel: That's right. That's right. I think they had two or three big pot-bellied stoves. They weren't wood-burning stoves. It was just one big room. No one had privacy. It was a single cot. They weren't beds. They were all cots where we were. I think a little later on they got steel beds. But we had all Army cots.

Marcello: Was there ever very much grumbling about the living conditions in these barracks on the part of the men?

McDaniel: No, not any more than . . . I think it was just a big ball, really. I don't think they'd have been satisfied if they'd have been separated.

Marcello: What other types of buildings were located in this camp, that is, other than the barracks?

McDaniel: Of course, they had shops for trucks. They had truck sheds. They had tool sheds. They had a mechanic's garage. And that was about it.

Marcello: Was there an administration building?

McDaniel: Oh, yes, they had a small office. They had an officer in charge, which would be the commanding officer. Then they had an assistant, assistant in command. This is on the Army's part. Then the Army furnished them a doctor. Of course, they had an infirmary which had about maybe eight or ten beds in it. The education advisor was an Army man. Then they had the project superintendent. He worked for the Department of the Interior, and he took care of all the work programs, assigned work programs. Then they had maybe five or six foremen that were in charge of different crews.

Marcello: Were these people usually connected with the Department of the Interior also, that is, these foremen?

McDaniel: They were. They were. They were directly in charge. They ate with us, but they had quarters. It was just like the Army setup. They were fed differently just like the officers. They didn't eat in the mess hall with us. They were given private rooms, and they could come and go as they pleased.

Marcello: In other words, these people, that is, the employees of the Department of the Interior, were in no way really connected with the CCC so far as enlisting or things of that nature.

McDaniel: That's right. That's right. All they were responsible for was their particular job.

Marcello: They were your supervisory personnel, in other words.

McDaniel: That's right.

Marcello: On the other hand, the Army actually constituted the administrative personnel.

McDaniel: That's right, and the discipline.

Marcello: What sort of relations existed between the personnel of the Department of the Interior and the Army personnel. In other words, was there a good deal of rapport between the two groups, or was there some sort of a rivalry? Again, just exactly what sort of relations existed between the two groups?

McDaniel: Well, they had to work together. What I mean is, the Army was responsible for your conduct. Of course, the Department of the Interior, or the people that were in charge of projects, they made a report to the Army part, the commanding officer, as to your qualifications and your well-being as far as on the job was concerned.

Marcello: We're talking now about the Department of the Interior. Is it possible to break that department down any further? In other words, what specific agency of the Department of the Interior was operating the projects in this camp? Was it the Bureau of Land Management, or was it the Soil and Reclamation Service? Do you recall offhand?

McDaniel: Yes, it was the Department of Grazing.

Marcello: Department of Grazing? That's what it was called?

McDaniel: That's right.

Marcello: What sort of projects did this particular camp engage in?

McDaniel: They built roads for cattle. They built small dams. They built erosion control fences. It was mostly erosion control more than anything else for the benefit of the cattle industry and for the people in that area who were grazing cattle.

Marcello: Prior to the establishment of that CCC Camp, what was the condition of the land in that area? In other words, was it in need of some sort of work?

McDaniel: Oh, yes. The cattle had cut trails and caused erosion.

Marcello: In other words, when it rained, the water would follow those trails that had been cut by the cattle and wash away the soil.

McDaniel: That's right. That's right. They also built . . . more or less made clearings, which is pretty hard to conceive in that part of the country. It was very rocky. But the cattle would usually take a route to water which had the easiest footing. Consequently, well, the soil would erode. That was one of their projects--to build new trails for the cattle to take to go to water. They also built ponds. I don't know. I didn't have too much to do with that part of it.

Marcello: What was your specific job with the CCC here at Duncan?

McDaniel: I was more or less with the Army more than anything else. I was the company clerk.

Marcello: How did you manage to get that particular job?

McDaniel: Well, I don't know. I knew how to type, and I did some clerical work. At that time, there was not too many men that knew how to use a typewriter.

Marcello: I'm sure you were probably the exception rather than the rule in that particular case.

McDaniel: Yes, yes.

Marcello: What sort of work did you do as a clerk?

McDaniel: Well, it was anything. It was just like a stenographer more than anything else.

Marcello: In other words, you did general office duties?

McDaniel: That's right.

Marcello: You probably did some typing and some filing and whatever other general office duties were necessary.

McDaniel: I took care of all the records and all the payroll and making up of discharges and rosters, daily reports, whatever.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that you made up the payroll. What sort of a monthly payroll are we talking about in this particular camp?

McDaniel: Well, they had a monthly payroll. Each man was allowed . . . I'm not for sure, but I think you were given . . . you started out at \$30 a month. It seems to me you had to send \$25 home, and you could keep \$5 of your own. Then as you were promoted, you could send more home. What I mean is, you were given a chance . . . top wages, I think, was \$45 a month for a leader. I think the assistant leader made \$35.

Marcello: Now what is an assistant leader or a leader? Is this somebody who perhaps might be in charge of a work crew under a foreman?

McDaniel: That's right. That's right.

Marcello: In other words, several of these foremen would probably have a couple of work crews. Usually the leader of the work crew would come from the CCC ranks.

McDaniel: That's right. That's right.

Marcello: How did you get promotion? Was this on the basis of longevity mainly?

McDaniel: No, no. It was on qualifications because you were only given six months. They were picked from the group after the . . . I think the Army could make recommendations.

Marcello: But I would assume that a man, let's say, who was into his second hitch would probably have had a better chance at promotion than somebody who was in his first hitch because he would have had more experience and more qualifications.

McDaniel: That's right. That's right. It was according to the need. Like a fellow would come in, and if he was a good automobile mechanic or a good truck mechanic, or if he was a truck mechanic, well, he could fall right in and be a truck mechanic in his first hitch.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that so much money had to be sent home a month by the CCC enrollees. Who took care of this? Was this part of your function to see that that money was sent home?

McDaniel: That's right.

Marcello: In other words, the CCC enrollee never saw that money that was to be sent home. That was automatically deducted from his wages and sent back to his family.

McDaniel: That's right. His name was put on a payroll, and he was given a serial number. Immediately underneath his name was the name and address, how much money he was to keep, and the name and address to whom the rest of the money, the balance, was supposed to be sent to.

Marcello: How many enrollees were in this camp altogether? Could you estimate that? Or maybe you even know, since you were a clerk.

McDaniel: I think about 300.

Marcello: So we're talking about a payroll of somewhere around \$3,000 or \$4,000 or \$5,000 a month.

McDaniel: That's right.

Marcello: In general terms we're speaking about that much money.

McDaniel: Yes, that's right. No, this . . . you mean the whole payroll?

Marcello: Of the camp. The monthly payroll of the camp.

McDaniel: You mean the enlisted personnel or the officers or what?

Marcello: Mainly the enrollees.

McDaniel: Well, let's see. There was 300.

Marcello: Thirty dollars a month. That would be what, \$9,000 or \$10,000?

McDaniel: Yes, but they wouldn't be . . . none of it'd be kept there. You know what I mean.

Marcello: Yes, well, like you mentioned awhile ago, they would only keep \$5 perhaps out of a \$30 pay check.

McDaniel: Of course, the big money was \$45 a month.

Marcello: That was the big money (chuckle)?

McDaniel: Yes. You got to keep \$15.

Marcello: Well, I would gather that the Department of the Interior personnel received better wages than the enrollees. But here again, you probably wouldn't know too much about that because you probably wouldn't have handled that.

McDaniel: Yes, I did. Well, I didn't handle it, but I knew what they were getting. I knew that they started them out at \$125 a month. But that was not the food and the clothing. It was just like the officers in the Army or in the services. You had to pay for your food and your clothing.

Marcello: We're speaking now of the Army officers and the Department of the Interior personnel.

McDaniel: That's right.

Marcello: On the other hand, everything was provided for the CCC enrollees.

McDaniel: That's right, just like you do in the . . . it works just like it does in the Army or the services.

Marcello: Incidentally, did this particular camp have a number or a designation? Each camp had a number. Do you recall if this particular camp did?

McDaniel: Yes, this was the Department of Grazing. The Army's designation was Company 2850, and the Department of Grazing was DG50A, DG50A meaning Department of Grazing. In other words, it was CCC Company 2850, Department of Grazing 50A, Duncan, Arizona. That was the mailing address.

Marcello: What sort of food was provided at this camp for the enrollees?

McDaniel: I imagine it was something like Army food. What I mean is, you were given a . . . it wasn't shipped in by the Army per se. They were given a budget as to how much they could operate on, and they contracted or bought food anywhere that they wanted to.

Marcello: Usually, I would assume they tried to buy it as close to the camp as possible.

McDaniel: That's right. They hauled all their own food and all their rationing. Clothing and everything was shipped in. I think it came from Fort Bliss in El Paso.

Marcello: How would you rate the food at this camp in Duncan, Arizona? In other words, I'm speaking now in terms of both quantity and quality.

McDaniel: Well, you usually got all you wanted. It might have not been . . . but when it was under those kind of conditions, I could understand that . . . the quality was good, and the quantity, you got all you wanted. Of course, there was no . . . food being cooked like that--they used coal as fuel--and in quantity, when it's cooked like that, you can't expect the best quality.

Marcello: Who did the cooking?

McDaniel: The Army had charge of that.

Marcello: In other words, these weren't necessarily CCC enrollees who did the cooking.

McDaniel: Yes, they did.

Marcello: Oh, I see. It was CCC enrollees did the cooking under the supervision of the Army.

McDaniel: Of the Army, that's right. They made the menu up.

Marcello: Was there very much griping about the food on the part of the enrollees?

McDaniel: Well, yes, at that time. But since I've been in other services, I've learned to live with it. That's just one of the . . .

Marcello: In other words, would it be safe to say that there probably was no more griping about CCC food than there would have been about . . . griping about Army food later on?

McDaniel: That's right. That's right. As a matter of fact, I was in the Marine Corps at a later date, and there was more griping in the Marine Corps than there was in the CCC camps over food.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that the Army was in charge of the CCC enrollees before and after working hours.

McDaniel: That's right.

Marcello: What was Army discipline like?

McDaniel: Well, it was not as tight. It was not as stringent as Army life or the service life. They weren't as strict. As a matter of fact, they were very lax.

Marcello: In what way were they very lax? Could you use an example to show how lax the Army discipline was?

McDaniel: Well, in the CCC's you didn't have to say "sir" unless you wanted to, unless it was the commanding officer or one of the officers. They just weren't as straight-laced. The discipline wasn't as . . . well, it just wasn't as bad. They were not as tight on you.

Marcello: On the other hand, the Army did establish certain rules and regulations. For example, you did have to be in bed

at a certain time. You had to be up at a certain time in the morning. You had to be back in camp at a certain time if you had gone into town or something of this nature.

McDaniel: That's right. That's right. In some camps. What I mean is, it was according to some nights and some camps. After you got off work at Friday, you didn't have to report back in until Monday morning, in time to go to work, unless you've had some kind of restrictions.

Marcello: In other words, you did put in a five-day workweek, and then you were free on the weekends.

McDaniel: That's right. That's right.

Marcello: How close was this CCC camp to town?

McDaniel: I'd say it was about fifteen miles.

Marcello: Was it relatively easy to get from the CCC camp into town when you had free time?

McDaniel: Well, none of us had cars, but we could hop a truck. The trucks would take us into town and then bring us back.

Marcello: Did you get into town very often?

McDaniel: Well, about once a week was about it.

Marcello: Usually on the weekends?

McDaniel: Yes, maybe Saturday. Saturday night, usually.

Marcello: What sort of a reception did you get from the townspeople in Duncan? In other words, were they happy to see a CCC camp located nearby, or did they kind of look upon this CCC camp with a certain amount of suspicion, as some civilians do upon an Army camp or a service camp?

McDaniel: Well, it was just about the same way, I imagine. They weren't as rough as the Army personnel because they were boys, a lot younger. They took it all in stride, really. They'd get in little hassles, but it'd blow over, and they'd be glad to see them come back in next week.

Marcello: For the most part, did you get the idea that you were more or less welcome in the town? In other words, did you detect any hostility?

McDaniel: No, not really. From time to time we'd have a hassle on Saturday night or something. It'd blow over and then . . .

Marcello: I'm sure the town welcomed the CCC payroll. Even though the CCC boys were only receiving \$5 a month, any money that was spent in the town of Duncan certainly stimulated the economy just a little bit.

McDaniel: That's right. I think they had four or five camps around there.

Marcello: I see. In other words, your camp was just one of several.

McDaniel: That's right. Of course, a lot of them, as far as their rations and their buying, if they had people there that could furnish them with these goods, this merchandise, it did them a lot of good, too. Like dairies. We bought a lot of milk, eggs, and what have you, beef.

Marcello: All of these things, of course, would have stimulated the local economy.

McDaniel: That's right. Absolutely. A town that small . . . the town was only, I'd say, 2,000 people at the most--and you take that many . . . I think there was three or four camps around it. As a matter of fact, there was one camp just outside of the city limits of the town.

Marcello: You mentioned that you only usually got to town about once a week. What did you do with your spare time during the other moments?

McDaniel: Well, we had a big recreation hall.

Marcello: What could you do at the recreation hall?

McDaniel: They had shows and they had moving pictures and pool tables. Of course, they had a library.

Marcello: What was the library like?

McDaniel: Oh, it wasn't too large. It was about fifteen-by-ten. But, of course, we could check books out from the school there in the town.

Marcello: Oh, you could?

McDaniel: Of course, they had an educational advisor. You could take courses at night. They weren't college classes or anything like that. You could take typing, bookkeeping, shorthand--business courses.

Marcello: Did very many of the enrollees take advantage of these courses?

McDaniel: I believe they would have if they had an educational program going. What I mean is, they did have an education advisor.

Marcello: I don't quite follow you. You say they would have if they had an educational program going. You mean that they had an educational advisor, but they didn't have an educational program?

McDaniel: Well, if we'd had an education advisor that really wanted to act in the capacity that I thought that he should have. In other words, I don't know whether he had the . . . I don't think he had the material.

Marcello: This was the problem, I think, in a lot of CCC camps.

McDaniel: He didn't have the material to really educate. I know I was assistant educational advisor for a while, and to get material . . . like I was trying to teach a shorthand course. Of course, the fellows there didn't want

to buy shorthand books, and it was extremely rough to try to teach somebody on the blackboard.

Marcello: So in other words, can we assume that more people would have taken advantage of the educational opportunities had the materials and the opportunities, for that matter, been present.

McDaniel: That's right. I believe it. If they'd had something like . . . if they'd taught them a trade or something like this, say in auto mechanics or anything like this, I think some of the older men that had intended to stay in longer than six months would have taken advantage of the opportunity. Of course, there were some of the fellows there that were only there for six months, and they knew it when they went in. But I think that it would have been a lot . . . if they'd have had a better educational program, they'd have had a lot better leaders. You'd have a lot more men there that were capable of going on and being, say, moving over to the Department of the Interior and been foremen or mechanics or engineers or what have you.

Marcello: Did the Army encourage the enrollees to take advantage of these educational opportunities, or did the Army just kind of ignore the whole process?

McDaniel: No, they had a man there that was . . . I think this education advisor was brought in. He wasn't there when we first got there. I think this was one of the things that was brought in at a later date maybe. I know this fellow was brought in at the time I went back home. My mother was ill. At the time, I was first sergeant at the time. I was with the Army as first sergeant. I stayed over my leave. In other words, I was AWOL maybe a day or two because my mother was so ill. I never did call back in. But we had an officer there. He was strictly Army. He'd served a lot of years in the Army, and he was semi-retired. He gave me a . . . in other words, he broke me down. He gave me a "depromotion" (chuckle).

Marcello: A demotion.

McDaniel: A demotion (chuckle). I went with the Department of the Interior. I went out on a job in the field for about a week, and then they brought me back in the office for the Department of the Interior as a clerk.

Marcello: Let me go back here again. You mentioned awhile ago that you were a first sergeant. But you actually were not in the Army.

McDaniel: Well, that's what they called us, first sergeant.

Marcello: But you were not actually in the Army.

McDaniel: No, no. In other words, I was the number one leader in the camp as long as they were in camp.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that you went AWOL, and as a result, you had to face certain disciplinary actions. Just how serious a problem was desertion or being AWOL?

McDaniel: It was up to the commanding officer, I'm sure.

Marcello: Well, what I'm saying is, how much of a problem was it? Was it a common occurrence for people to go AWOL or to desert?

McDaniel: Oh, yes, pretty common.

Marcello: It was really a common problem?

McDaniel: Yes. It wasn't a problem. It was nothing out of the ordinary for a fellow to be over leave for maybe a day or two or maybe go to town and not come back for two or three days. But they knew he'd be back.

Marcello: What sort of disciplinary action could that particular offender expect when he got back?

McDaniel: It was up to the commanding officer. He could fine him, say, \$5 or \$1 maybe, out of his money. Or the commander could make him work overtime or whatever.

Marcello: I guess it wasn't too bad if the person came back on his own.

McDaniel: Oh, that's right.

Marcello: But what would happen, suppose, if a person would desert, let's say, and the Army had to go get him?

McDaniel: Well, he would be given a dishonorable discharge. I think if he was gone over . . . there was a time limit. I don't recall now how long. I think maybe it was seven to ten days. They could fine him, and he would be given a dishonorable discharge. However, he wouldn't be brought back, or he wouldn't be given a jail sentence.

Marcello: How serious was it to get a dishonorable discharge?

McDaniel: Well, if you got a dishonorable discharge, that meant that if you had any intentions of going into the Army or enlisting into the Army or any of the services, you weren't . . . they wouldn't . . . this would count against you, I'm sure.

Marcello: I wonder how tough it would be to get either a civilian job or perhaps another job on a New Deal relief agency if you had a dishonorable discharge from the CCC.

McDaniel: Well, I imagine it could count against you. That'd be the first thing they'd reject you on, I'm sure of that.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that you were a clerk in this camp and that you handled quite a few administrative

duties. Do you know how the CCC or the Department of the Interior went about selecting the various work projects? In other words, how did they determine where a particular project should be started?

McDaniel: You mean the Department of the Interior?

Marcello: Probably. I would assume that it was the Department of the Interior who selected the projects.

McDaniel: Well, the headquarters was in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the project superintendent--he was in charge of the Department of Grazing, and I was a clerk over in the Department of the Interior, too--and he would submit . . . usually the people that were in charge of the Department of the Interior were familiar with that particular part of the country. He would contact ranchers and see their needs. He would take a priority and submit it to the Department of the Interior in Albuquerque and make an estimate and give them full particulars and an estimate as to what needed to be done and what should be done. They'd okay it and send it back to him. In other words, you would have to get approval first before you'd start on a project.

Marcello: But the man who actually recommended that a particular project be undertaken was the local Department of Grazing representative or employee on the spot.

McDaniel: Yes, yes. He was in charge of all the work projects.

Marcello: Now this brings up a very interesting question, and I've seen things written about this. How much political influence or politics was involved in determining which rancher got a particular project?

McDaniel: I'm sure that about 80 per cent of it was politics.

Marcello: Why do you say this? Do you have any particular evidence to cite for this statement?

McDaniel: I don't have any evidence. The only thing I have is the knowledge of these things because we were in this particular place. I don't know how this camp was ever given the okay to be built where it was because there was one fellow that had all the land in that particular area. I'd say the majority of the work was done on his land.

Marcello: So probably this individual received a rental or some sort of a leasing fee for having the camp built on his land? Is that the way it usually operated?

McDaniel: I don't know. I really don't know, unless . . . maybe it came about . . . I mean, I don't know the technicalities from that standpoint. As a matter of fact, I don't even know whether this land belonged to the state or the federal government. But I do know that this one particular fellow,

the ranch house wasn't over a quarter of a mile from where the camp was. I don't know whether he leased the land from the government or the land was his. But I think the land was . . . because they called it the Slick Rock Ranch.

Marcello: Slick Rock Ranch?

McDaniel: Right, and Slick Rock Canyon.

Marcello: It was Slick Rock Ranch located in Slick Rock Canyon?

McDaniel: Yes.

Marcello: But it did seem to you that this one particular rancher got more than his share of projects.

McDaniel: Yes, I would say that, yes. But he was done first. I know that.

Marcello: Now these ranchers did not have to pay anything for these projects, did they?

McDaniel: I'm sure they didn't.

Marcello: In other words, all that they had to do was give their permission to get a project started on their land.

McDaniel: I'm sure they did. As a matter of fact, I'm sure that maybe the ranchers requested it. I don't know whether they had to make official requests or whether it was verbal or not.

Marcello: In other words, the rancher might request that the CCC make a survey as to what needed to be done.

McDaniel: That's right. That's right. They put fences in for them and everything. They maintained the roads in and out of the camp.

Marcello: Now in a lot of these CCC camps, there were also special provisions made for veterans from World War I. Did you have any World War I veterans in your camp?

McDaniel: Yes, I believe we did. I believe we did, yes.

Marcello: As I recall, they were usually segregated from the younger men, were they not? Didn't they usually have quarters different or aside from the regular enrollees?

McDaniel: Yes, they were. Yes, we had some. They were foremen. The leaders, they called them. We had some in the quartermaster section. We had one as a mess sergeant.

Marcello: In other words, these individuals probably were more than twenty-five years of age, but special provisions had been made for them because they were veterans.

McDaniel: Oh, yes, yes. That's the first time I've thought about those since . . . as a matter of fact, I don't know what they called them. They were given a payroll, but I've forgot. Specialists or something is what they used to call them.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that there were people from all walks of life in these CCC camps. Did the city boys have any trouble adjusting to this rural life?

McDaniel: Yes, some of them did. Yes, they did. Now there wasn't too many of them from large cities that I knew. There were some of them, but they didn't seem to have too much trouble, I mean, really. As a matter of fact, they adjusted real well, a lot of them did. I mean, a majority of them.

Marcello: What sort of opportunity was there to engage in physical activities? In other words, I'm back to recreation again.

McDaniel: Oh, we had baseball, softball, anything you wanted.

Marcello: Were there ever any contests between the various CCC camps? You mentioned that there were several of them in this locality.

McDaniel: Yes, some of them had baseball teams, and some of them had basketball teams. That was about the extent of it.

Marcello: What was the rank of the Army officer who was in charge of this camp?

McDaniel: Captain, usually a captain.

Marcello: Was he from the Regular Army, or was he a Reserve officer?

McDaniel: Reserve officer. All of them were.

Marcello: All of the Army personnel in this camp were Reserve officers?

McDaniel: Yes, yes.

Marcello: I think this, to some extent, may explain the lax discipline, perhaps, as compared to what one might find

in the Regular Army. I would assume that these Reserve officers were kind of . . .

McDaniel: They came under the same War Department regulations, I mean, really.

Marcello: Yes. I would assume these Reserve officers were kind of glad to have a job, too.

McDaniel: They sure were. Yes, sir. Well, we had some of them . . . of course, usually the commanding officer was . . . he usually had time, several years, in the Reserves or been in active Army. But usually the second in command was maybe someone just out of the ROTC like Texas A&M or something. I know we had two or three officers that were just right out of Texas A&M.

Marcello: Was there a canteen or anything of this nature on the post?

McDaniel: Yes, you had a canteen. It was open certain hours. It had certain hours to be open.

Marcello: What sort of things could you buy there?

McDaniel: Well, cigarettes and candy and things . . .

Marcello: Toilet articles and things of that nature.

McDaniel: Yes, toilet articles. You could buy things at a discount through the canteen.

Marcello: As you look back on the projects and what have you that the CCC engaged in, do you think that it was a worthwhile organization? Do you think that it accomplished quite a bit?

McDaniel: I think they need to have more of them right now for that matter, if they ever went into a recession. As a matter of fact, I think it would help the country as a whole if they'd continued with the CCC.

Marcello: How much did that CCC money mean to your family?

McDaniel: What do you mean, how much did it mean?

Marcello: Well, in other words, was this money welcome? Did they need it? Could they have gotten along without it?

McDaniel: Yes, they could have gotten along without it, I'm sure.

Marcello: Would it have been quite a bit tougher though?

McDaniel: It'd have been tougher, yes. That's right. You never have too much. Of course, I'm sure it was very welcome.

Marcello: When you joined the service later on, how much of a help was that CCC training?

McDaniel: Well, it wasn't very difficult for me to get along in the service.

Marcello: I don't want to put words in your mouth, but would it be correct to say that your experience in the CCC kind of eased the transition from being a civilian to being a Marine, which is the branch of the service you eventually entered?

McDaniel: Well, it softened it. There was no question about it. I had no trouble adjusting to it--very easy transition.

Marcello: You apparently had a fairly enjoyable time in the CCC because you reenlisted several times, did you not?

McDaniel: That's right, I had a good time.

Marcello: Were each one of your enlistments for a six-month hitch?

McDaniel: Yes.

Marcello: How many hitches did you have altogether?

McDaniel: Four.

Marcello: You had four hitches.

McDaniel: Yes.

Marcello: Which again must be kind of indicative of the fact that you felt there was something to be gained by staying in the CCC.

McDaniel: Certainly I did, financially. And I enjoyed it, really.

Marcello: Incidentally, did you pick up any weight or anything of that nature from the three square meals a day and so on that you were getting in the CCC?

McDaniel: Oh, I wasn't . . . I didn't . . . I guess I weighed about 175 when I got out, something like that. I'm sure I was in good physical condition.

Marcello: Did you remain at Duncan, Arizona the whole time that you were in the CCC's?

McDaniel: Yes.

Marcello: How often did you manage to get home?

McDaniel: Well, we get a thirty-day leave a year.

Marcello: That was after every hitch, after every six-month hitch?

McDaniel: Every six months you were given . . . in six months you got thirty days.

Marcello: In other words, if you finished your six-month hitch and you reenlisted, you were given thirty days leave with pay.

McDaniel: That's right. That's right.

Marcello: Then, like you mentioned, you also got every weekend off.

McDaniel: Oh, that's right. You got every Saturday and Sunday off.

Marcello: But you couldn't do too much with that because you were so far from home.

McDaniel: Yes, yes.

Marcello: I would assume that they probably planned it that way. That's probably one of the reasons they sent you that far away--so that you couldn't go home every weekend.

McDaniel: I'm sure that that's right. I'm sure they did because the majority of the fellows that were at my camp were brought in from other towns. They probably had that practice as a form of discipline. Really, I didn't mind too much being away from home.

Marcello: How great a problem was homesickness on the part of the men?

McDaniel: I think they adjusted pretty well, really.

Marcello: But at the same time, there was a considerable number of cases of people going AWOL?

McDaniel: There weren't too many of them who deserted.

Marcello: Yes, well, desertion, that was a rather serious thing.

McDaniel: Yes.

Marcello: But there were cases of people going AWOL?

McDaniel: Oh, yes, maybe somebody left on a weekend, and maybe he'd be gone for an extra day or something like that. But it was really not too serious.