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Interview with
James H. Barclay
February 12, 1976

Place of Interview: Fort Worth, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved: J-H Barclay
(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

James Barclay

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Ft. Worth, Texas

Date: February 12, 1976

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing James Barclay for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on February 12, 1976, in Ft. Worth, Texas. I am interviewing Mr. Barclay in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was in the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression.

Mr. Barclay, even though this is the second time that you've participated in our project--the first time concerning your experiences at Pearl Harbor--would you again give me a very brief biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, tell me when you were born, where you were born--things of that nature. Again, just be very brief and general.

Mr. Barclay: Well, I was born on September 12, 1923, in St. Augustine, Texas.

Dr. Marcello: If you were born in 1923, that means that you would have been six, seven, eight years old, perhaps, when

the depression hit to its full extent. Can you remember exactly how the depression affected you and your family?

Barclay: Well, I really can. I don't remember how old I was, whether I was six or seven, but I was in the first grade, I know, in school. I think I might have started school when I was five. I don't remember. I think I did.

But my dad had a little money at the time, and he was going to make a killing. He went out and I remember he bought two or three cars or something. It might have been up to five. I don't remember exact. He got them practically for nothing. He was going to hold them until the depression was over with, and then he was going to sell them. I remember my mother was arguing about it. He says, "Oh, it's going to get over. It's going to get over." I believe he ended up giving the cars away.

Marcello: What did your father do for a living?

Barclay: At that time I believe he worked for the railroad.

Marcello: And how many people were there in your family altogether?

Barclay: You mean at that time?

Marcello: Yes, at the time of the depression.

Barclay: Well, say I was six, and I had one, two, three, four, five, six people older. There was seven of us at that time.

Marcello: How did the depression change your lifestyle? Do you remember? That is, in terms of the type of clothing you wore, the food you ate--things of that nature.

Barclay: Well, you know the difference between black and dark, don't you (chuckle)? I mean night and day?

Marcello: Yes.

Barclay: Well, as I said before, I believe we owned our own home. We wasn't rich or anything. We had enough money, you know, to live comfortably. We had cattle. We owned a bunch of land and whatnot. Then we moved from this place and sold all of our cattle and left half the furniture in the house. We moved to a great big farm and leased it. My dad leased it. We started raising cotton. I believe that's all we had, was cotton.

Marcello: Which wasn't bringing a very high price, was it?

Barclay: Well, at the time we started the farm that year, it was up to, I believe, eight cents. I was just a little kid, you know, but I remember how large it was and how long . . . I was the water boy. I used to carry water to them. But, anyway, I remember that by the end of the year it had dropped down to four cents a pound. My dad was so disappointed that we lost everything we had then. I mean, we just lost everything.

We moved from there, and we moved to a little old house. At that time there was probably a couple of more kids. We moved in a little old house. We moved in mule and wagon, too. My dad had even sold . . . he didn't even have a car. He was without a car or anything. We moved with wagon and mules into this little old house. I think we eat squirrel and planted a garden. . . cornbread and turnip greens. Just stuff that you raised yourself was about all we had to eat for at least a year after that.

- Marcello: What sort of work was your father doing at this time?
- Barclay: He was still . . . he was working for a lumber company then. He was working for a lumber company. He'd go out and bunch logs up, and they'd put them on these trucks and haul them into the mills, you know. He was only home on Saturdays and Sundays--Saturday evenings and Sundays. The rest of the time he was gone all during the week.
- Marcello: But he was working at least five days a week?
- Barclay: Yes, sir. Yes, he was working five days a week.
- Marcello: Well, in that sense I would assume he was kind of lucky, was he not?
- Barclay: Well, I imagine he was. But we still didn't have enough money to eat on. I mean, we didn't have any clothes. We didn't have any food to amount to anything. In fact, one time we went out and caught an armadillo and wanted my mother to cook it. She didn't know how to cook it, and it stunk up the house, so we had to open up all the windows and everything to air out the house. I never will forget that. It was a sickening taste.
- Marcello: How did the depression affect your father perhaps psychologically? In other words, here was a man who had a relatively good income at the beginning of the depression, and then, as you've mentioned, over a period of time his income continued to go down and down and down. Did he become more irritable? Did he become more depressed or anything of this nature? Do you remember?

Barclay: Well, he did for a couple of years. And then we moved from there and got a larger . . . at this particular place we had no land, just a house to live in. Then he leased a . . . it was kind of like a sharecropper deal. In other words, we moved into a larger place, and we had a lot of land. Us kids would go out, and he'd show us what to do in the daytime. We'd go out . . . we done the farming while he was working. That was about, I guess, three years after the bottom hit there, you know, whenever it really started, when Wall Street went broke or whatever it was.

Then from there on, we gradually built up. At least we had something to eat. We didn't have too much clothes to wear, but we had plenty of food. Then he started buying a cow and got another cow. We had a bunch of peach trees and apples. Now that's what we lived on the first year we were there. We'd take sheets and put underneath these trees and get the apples out of them. Then we'd sit and slice those apples and put them out on these sheets and let them dry. I know I ate apple tarts for lunch in school every day for . . . well, we had them even through the winter. I never got so tired of dried apples in my life. But they were still good, you know.

Marcello: Now were you still sharecropping at this time?

Barclay: Yes, sir. I guess we lived there, oh, I don't remember how long. We lived there for several years and sharecropped all that time we were living there.

Marcello: I would assume that since everybody else was experiencing a similar situation, this perhaps eased the pain somewhat of having these very, very low living standards and hard times.

Barclay: Oh, yes.

Marcello: In other words, misery likes company.

Barclay: That's right, yes. But I never will forget. My dad was a big, hardy person, you know. After he got on his feet and we had cattle, why, he'd butcher a cow. He'd take his wagon and mule and . . . no, I believe we had a car then. We had an old Model-A. We'd butcher that meat, and he'd take it around and give it to his neighbors, give it to . . . even colored people would come over there, and we'd give them meat and whatnot. Then we got a little better off after that. This is not money-wise. This is food-wise. We had cattle. We had a farm--peanuts, corn, everything like that.

He had a sister, which is my aunt, that . . . they moved from their farm and went to a little old town thirty miles away where they had a real good job. They was going to get rich down there. In about three months they came back and was broke. We fed them. There was about eight in their family. We fed them for a whole year. I never will forget. My aunt would come up there, and she'd get a can of canned peaches and a can of . . . we had canned

steak. One of my uncles, which was pretty well off, bought us a canner and gave it to us, and we canned that steak and made chili and canned that. My aunt would come up there, and she'd only take one can of peaches a day, you know, for their desert. My mother would try to get her to take more, and she wouldn't do it. She'd take one can of peaches and either one can of chili or one can of beef and gravy to feed all of her family on for a day.

Marcello: How was it that your father was able to gradually build up his standard of living over a period of time?

Barclay: Well, we had . . . it was, as I said before, six or seven of us. . . six of us, and I was working then just like my older brothers. We got out on the farm, and he made us work, or he showed us what to do and we worked. We raised our own food. Then what little money he had, he'd buy a cow or buy a horse or something like that, you know.

Marcello: In the meantime, he was working for the lumber company.

Barclay: He was . . . let's see, then he worked for the lumber company. Yes, he was still working for the lumber company then, yes. But he wasn't working as many hours. He was only working about two and three days a week then. Then the rest of the time we'd farm. I mean, we'd go to work as soon as it got light and work until it got dark. A lot of times we got up on a moonlight night and go out and work at night. I've poisoned cotton a lot of times--ride a horse

with a flour sack on each end. We'd get up at one o'clock in the morning after the moon would come up and go down the rows shaking that thing to keep the bugs off of our cotton. We worked from night until day. We got off on noon on Saturday.

Marcello: What did you do for entertainment or what did you do in your spare time as a young boy at this time?

Barclay: We'd get a bunch of kids together, maybe fifteen or twenty of us, and we'd go out in the woods. One of us would be a fox and the rest of us would be dogs. They'd chase him. If they was about to catch you, you was supposed to climb up a tree or . . . and then they'd cut the tree down with you. They were pretty big trees, too, you know. You're supposed to jump off and hit the ground before the tree fell and see how far you could get. We'd swing on grapevines and see who could swing the farthest. We'd take trees and crawl up in the top of them, small trees, and bend them over. A big guy would do it, or maybe two or three guys would bend over a big tree. Then they'd take a small guy, and he'd get a hold of it, and we'd swing him back up in the air. We had no toys or anything like that.

Marcello: In other words, you had to make your own fun.

Barclay: Oh, yes. And it was more fun then than I think anybody had ever had. I really had fun over the weekend or whenever you could go out and do something like that.

Marcello: How did the depression affect your schooling? In other words, as you mentioned, you were putting in quite a few hours working on this farm. Did this curtail your attendance in school or anything like that?

Barclay: Oh, yes, it definitely did. I'd go to school a certain length of time, and then we'd get behind in work, you know, like chopping cotton or picking cotton. You'd just quit and go home and go to work. But we all seemed to stay up pretty good. But, you know, it got . . . I don't know. There was something about it . . . you'd really lose interest in school, you know. In other words, you'd say, "Well, what do I have to have a schooling for to pick cotton or to chop cotton or pull corn or something like that," really.

Marcello: Did you like this farm work?

Barclay: Well, I probably liked it more than any of my brothers. I'm kind of a farmer. But I really didn't like it in certain ways, you know. But I was always ambitious. I liked to do something all the time. In fact, I would work when my brothers and sisters wouldn't want to do anything. I'd go out and work, you know.

Marcello: What sort of a role did your mother play during this depression situation?

Barclay: Well, she was pretty busy just cooking for all of us. See, it ended up that there were actually seven boys and four girls in my family. My oldest brother, which died right

after he was born. . . I don't think he was too old.

I've forgotten now. But it was pretty rough for her because she had to fix three meals a day and, you know, getting up at four o'clock in the morning to fix breakfast so we'd be ready to go to work by the time it got daylight. She kept pretty busy.

Marcello: I would assume there was virtually nothing that she could do to supplement the family income, considering that she had eleven children to take care of.

Barclay: No, she couldn't do anything. Once in a great while if she got caught up . . . I used to hate to see my dad do it. He'd ask her if she'd come out and work. She would. She'd go out . . . she couldn't . . . my mother was real small. She only weighed about eighty-two pounds then. She couldn't work very long, you know. But I've seen her go out and pick cotton for two or three hours in the evening after we'd eaten dinner. Whenever it'd get cool, why, she'd go out and pick cotton.

Marcello: Now did you mention that during this entire depression period while you were on the farm, or engaged in this farmwork, that you really didn't want for food? In other words, you at least had a belly full of food.

Barclay: Well, it was one year there that we didn't. The second year of the depression we didn't have enough food to eat. In other words, we went hungry, really. We'd eat cornbread

and turnip greens or collard greens or anything we could get. We'd go out and gather this poke salad and eat it. It was wild, you know. It'd grow. You'd have to cook it and drain the water off of it to keep from getting poisoned. I mean, we ate that every day for I don't remember how long, probably six or seven months, or as long as . . . we even got it and tried to keep it, you know, cook it and keep it for three or four days, which you really couldn't do. It was worse than spinach, you know. It'd get kind of slimey and bitter tasting. But if it hadn't been for poke salad and turnip greens and cornbread . . . my dad would buy corn by the bushel with the shuck on it. We'd shell it and take it to a mill down there and have it ground. Well, we didn't even have a cow then. But whenever we moved to this other place, then we got a cow. But now that same uncle that we fed after that, he gave us a lot of corn and stuff . . . where we got our cornbread from. I wouldn't eat a biscuit until after I got out of the Navy (chuckle). That's true. I didn't like them.

Marcello: I would assume, like you mentioned, that you would have to do a lot of living off the land, whether it was gathering these edible plants or whether it was hunting squirrels or whatever it might be.

Barclay: Well, we lived on squirrels. We used to kill a lot of squirrels. In fact, we'd go out and kill ten or fifteen

squirrels a day and cook them. My mother would set them on the fireplace. We had a fireplace. And she had a great big old . . . kind of like a wash pot but it was small. She'd set them on there and let those squirrels boil after we went to bed and cook . . . let the wood fire go out. We didn't even have electricity. Just coal oil lamps is all we had. I know a lot of times when we didn't even have coal oil. But I've eaten fried squirrel for breakfast a lot of times, and it's good. Rabbits, we ate rabbits and anything . . . take them and stew them. It was good food then.

Marcello: At that time were they calling rabbits "Hoover hogs?"

Barclay: You know, I never did hear that, really, until, oh, after it was all over with. I guess people just didn't talk about it then, you know. I don't know.

Marcello: Now when the depression first struck, Herbert Hoover was President. Then, of course, in 1932, Franklin Roosevelt was elected President.

Barclay: Yes.

Marcello: What'd your parents have to say about Franklin Roosevelt? Did you ever hear them talk about him very much?

Barclay: I vaguely remember them talking about him. My dad liked him. My dad said he was a good person. Then he started this WPA or something like that, and he made some speeches on what he was going to do and whatnot. Then, I guess,

he was the one that started that soil conservation deal there, too, I guess. But they all liked him. I mean, I never heard a bad word about him as far as I can remember.

Marcello: Did your family have a radio at this time? Well, probably not because you said you didn't have electricity.

Barclay: No, we didn't have a radio, no.

Marcello: I was going to ask you if you had ever heard any of the fireside chats. But evidently, if your parents didn't have a radio, you wouldn't have been able to hear them.

Barclay: No. I guess the only radios we had then was run off a battery. I remember we used to have a . . . I don't remember what year it was. We got a radio and had such a hard time getting it to play. I think it worked off of a battery. But that was quite a while after that. In fact, I don't remember what year that was. I was probably about . . . yes, I was about nine years old. We had a radio, but it didn't last very long or something. I don't know what we even did with it or anything.

Marcello: Money-wise, what would you estimate your father's weekly income to be? You would really have to take a guess at this, I guess.

Barclay: You know, really I wouldn't have any idea whatsoever. I imagine he was probably making about fifty cents an hour. No, he wasn't making that much.

Marcello: Probably not.

Barclay: No. I know he's worked for twenty-five cents an hour. I remember that.

Marcello: Was this at the lumber company?

Barclay: No, in the logging. But I think they paid him according to how many logs he drug in. If he drug in more logs, why, he got more pay. I think that's the way they worked. But I know he used to try to save up fifty dollars. He said if he could save up fifty dollars during the summer, then if anything happened we could live through the winter, you know.

Marcello: You could live through the entire winter with eleven children on fifty dollars?

Barclay: On fifty dollars, yes. That's what he always said he'd try to do, was save up fifty dollars. And I've heard him talk a million times about fifty dollars, fifty dollars. He had fifty dollars on his brain, I guess (chuckle).

Marcello: Did he ever attempt to obtain work on any of the New Deal agencies? You mentioned the WPA awhile ago.

Barclay: It seems like he did on some road work one time. Yes, he did. Yes, he worked on the WPA on building roads or grading roads or something. I forget now what it was. Yes, he worked on the WPA for . . . now that might have been what he was doing . . . gosh, I can't remember that really. Now I remember he went to work for the WPA. He didn't want

to, but finally he did. It kind of hurt his pride to have to go to work for them. But he did. He went to work for them.

Marcello: What do you mean that it kind of hurt his pride to have to work for the WPA?

Barclay: Well, he figured like they were giving you something, I guess. I don't know. I don't remember. I remember him saying he'd never go to work for them. He wasn't going to take any handouts or something. But then we went and got some food from them, too. You know, they gave away food. They gave you grits . . . or mush, I believe, is what we'd call it. Grits or mush is about all you ever got. And I think we used to get . . . they might have gave us some butter. I don't remember now. But I know he did work for them a couple of years.

Marcello: I assume this was a sporadic sort of thing. In other words, it was not steady work.

Barclay: No, it wasn't steady. I think he'd go up town, and they'd call you. Certain people got to work certain days. I think he only worked sometimes one day a week or something like that, if I remember right.

Marcello: Now were you still living around St. Augustine?

Barclay: No, we'd moved to Woodville, Texas, then. We moved from St. Augustine in the year after the depression started.

We moved to Lufkin. Then from Lufkin we moved to Woodville. That's when we moved in that little bitty house. And I think it was only about probably two bedrooms.

Marcello: Eleven kids in two bedrooms (chuckle). Eleven kids and a mother and father in a two bedroom house?

Barclay: Yes, but it wasn't eleven then. Let's see, then it was two younger than I am. It was about eight or nine of . . . there was three born after that, so it was eight of us that lived in the two bedroom house.

Marcello: I don't think three more would have made very much difference though, would it (chuckle)?

Barclay: No, not really (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, when did you go . . .

Barclay: I'll tell you something we used to do. Now this is kind of like the Japanese used to do on those boats. But one of us would sleep with our head at the foot and the other one at the head and vice versa to get in the bed. . . for all of us to get in the bed. And then some of us slept on a cot. We had a cot. I know I wanted to sleep on the cot, but they wouldn't let me. I had bigger brothers that'd take it away from me. I had to sleep in the bed. I forgot about that, but I remember doing that now.

Marcello: When did you join the Civilian Conservation Corps?

Barclay: I really don't know the year. I either joined it in the

last of . . . I joined it in '38 or '39.

Marcello: So you would have been fifteen or sixteen years old when you joined the CCC.

Barclay: I think I was fifteen whenever I joined it.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the CCC?

Barclay: To help my dad out so he could have some money to eat with because we were just . . . things was really still pretty rough for us then. I had a cousin that was a doctor, and he was a captain in there. He talked to my dad and said he would get me in there if I wanted to go in. I think I got eight dollars a month, and my dad got twenty-two dollars a month. I believe that's what it was. So I went in for that reason, really. My dad encouraged me to go in, too, you know.

Marcello: I was going to ask if this was a big family decision, that is, sending you off to the CCC. Had any of your other brothers joined the CCC?

Barclay: No, my oldest brother joined the Army then. All the others was still at home. I was just too ambitious. . . I wanted to do something, you know. My dad thought it'd be a good thing for me to go in there, you know. I was kind of wild, you know, really--restless.

Marcello: Now by this time had you quit school?

Barclay: I quit then, yes. I had already quit school, yes.

Marcello: Well, now you mentioned that you were only fifteen or sixteen when you entered the CCC. If I am correct, the minimum age for joining the CCC was eighteen. Now this sounds like an interesting story. How did you get in when you were under age?

Barclay: I said he was a captain, you know, and he was over this base down there. He was a doctor.

Marcello: Now was he a captain in a CCC camp?

Barclay: Yes. They had one in Woodville, and he was the captain there over that base. He was also the doctor.

Marcello: Was he in the Reserves? He must have been in the Army Reserve.

Barclay: I think he was, yes. But anyway, he's the one that got me on. He fixed all the papers up, and I just signed them.

Then they sent me to Monrovia, California. It's way back up in the mountains. I stayed there, oh, about four months, I guess. And we'd go up and build those fire trails up through the mountains, you know, paths. I think they're about ten feet wide. You'd cut all the grass. We'd walk up those mountains and maybe work thirty minutes and start back down to get back to the camp before it got dark. Each day we'd go up those mountains and cut a certain amount of fire trails and then come

back down. I kind of liked that, really. We'd walk all day long, you know.

Marcello: Okay, this is getting a little bit ahead of our story. So let's just back up a little bit. You mentioned that your cousin, who was a doctor, had gotten you into the CCC illegally. Now after your application was approved, what happened at that point? In other words, where did you go and what did you have to do? You mentioned that you went into Woodville.

Barclay: Well, let's see, I went into Woodville, and they . . . you know, I really don't remember. All I remember really . . . I think we took the train.

Marcello: Did you have any contact with the Army before you left Woodville?

Barclay: No, other than my brother was in the Army. I knew, you know, a little bit about him being in there. That's about all. But then they shipped us out there. I don't even remember why they shipped us back. But I came back and they put me in Waxahachie. I think I stayed in about sixteen or seventeen months. I think you're supposed to be in eighteen months, if I remember right.

I don't know if you want me to say this or not, but I was going to tell you. Whenever I got there, I saved up my money, and I bought a bicycle. It was a real steep hill going down into town. I used to take that bicycle

and go in and buy ice cream for three cents a cup and take it back and sell it to other guys for five cents because it was too far for them to walk into town.

Marcello: Now was this when you were in Waxahachie?

Barclay: Yes. But I was always trying to make money, you know. That's one thing. I was always trying to make some money (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, so you were put aboard train. As you mentioned, you were on your way to California.

Barclay: Yes.

Marcello: At this point yet, had you been through any sort of an indoctrination or any sort of processing? In other words, had you had a physical examination by this time?

Barclay: Oh, yes. They gave us a physical, yes. They gave us that in the CCC camp there in Woodville before we left. We stopped in Bastrop and ate with the Army there. We ate lunch with the Army in Bastrop. They fed us. Then they gave us a lunch. That's kind of vague, really. Things were so exciting, I guess. I don't remember too much about the train trip or anything. I do know this, that someone stole my lunch. I liked to starve to death before I got another meal. I remember that.

Marcello: How long did it take you to get from Bastrop to California?

Barclay: I don't remember, really. It seemed like a long time, though. I think it was quite a while before we got there.

We got in Bastrop . . . let's see . . . no, we stopped in Houston, also. We were in Houston . . . we must have went from . . . we went from Woodville to Beaumont, I believe, and from Beaumont to Houston, Houston to Bastrop, and Bastrop to someplace in New Mexico. It wasn't . . . it seems . . . Carlsbad. I remember those towns now that we stopped in. It probably took us a week, I'd say.

Marcello: How many of you were there on this train? You'll probably have to estimate this.

Barclay: Oh, I'd say it was probably fifty or more.

Marcello: Were you all going to the same place?

Barclay: Yes, we were all going to the same place. There was more than that, I imagine.

Marcello: Okay, so describe what happened when you got off the train in California.

Barclay: Well, they had these . . . whenever we got off, we had to line up, and they had the Army trucks there. The Army's the one that took us to the base. Now I remember we rode . . . I don't remember what town we hit, though. It must have been . . . probably Los Angeles or something. I know we rode and rode and rode on this truck before we got to this base. I remember it was up on a hill.

Marcello: It must have been in Northern California. Is this correct?

Barclay: Well, Monrovia. . . I ought to know where it's at. Let's

see. There was a big dam up there. One of the first big dams, I guess, they'd ever built in the state or anywhere was there, but I can't remember what the name of that dam was. But we'd go up there, and it was just amazing how they could build a dam like that, you know.

Marcello: Do you recall the camp number that you entered here?

Barclay: Here?

Marcello: No, the one in California.

Barclay: No, I sure can't.

Marcello: Okay, describe it. What did the camp look like?

Barclay: Well, it was pretty. It had a bunch of trees around there. As I said, it was up on this hill. Some of the cabins were up high. They had cabins there. I think there was six of us in each cabin. It was beautiful country. But I was on . . . off of the great big hill, I was the next cabin underneath there.

I never will forget that I had the mumps while we was there. A bunch of guys tied my feet up. They was going to keep the mumps, you know, from going down on me. They tied my feet up to the rafters. We had no ceiling like this. It was just rafters up there. They tied my feet up to these rafters. They walked out and about that time chow came along. They forgot they'd tied me up, see. I stayed tied up for about thirty minutes or longer. They were really just kidding because they were all

older. I was probably the only one that was that young in the outfit, you know.

Marcello: About how many people were there in this camp altogether?

Barclay: I'd say it was probably around . . . I'd say 150 roughly.

Marcello: What were some of the other buildings in the camp besides the barracks and, obviously, the mess hall?

Barclay: Well, you had your mess hall. Then we had a place where the captain stayed at. On the end of that was a supply house where they kept the uniforms. Then we had a recreation club where you could shoot pool and, I believe, play ping pong. Then they had a place where you could buy ice cream, tobacco--just a regular canteen in there. Then right in back of that was the chow hall where you'd go eat. The flag and everything where we lined up every morning for roll call was right out in front of the recreation barracks. I remember that. But we worked eight hours a day every day.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that you were issued uniforms. What were the uniforms like?

Barclay: They were kind of like an army uniform--same color. They were wool, you know. But I think we wore the same uniform year-round, you know, then. Where the Army, I think, changed theirs. But we wore just those old dirty green uniforms or whatever you want to call them.

Marcello: What time of the year was this when you got to California?

Barclay: I believe it was in . . . I believe I went in around . . . I'd say around March, somewhere along there. I really don't remember the month. I know it was cool there. It was real cold. We'd go out hiking, and one of the things that really amazed me is that the deer would come right up to our camp. You could walk up to within, oh, five feet of those deer. Some of them you could even pet them, you know. They'd just come right up to the camp. But I know it was pretty cold because you had to wear a coat.

Marcello: What sort of heat did you have in the cabins?

Barclay: I think we used some kind of oil then. I forget what they call that. It had a great big old heater, and it burnt some kind of oil. It was a kind of a black-looking . . . I forget what they call that though now. It wasn't kerosene. It was real thick kind of like diesel oil. It might have been diesel oil. I don't know.

Marcello: Did the cabins have electricity?

Barclay: You know, I don't remember. I believe they did, though. I know they did here at Waxahachie now. I don't remember out there whether they did or not.

Marcello: What sort of . . .

Barclay: I think they did, though, yes.

Marcello: What were your quarters like inside the cabin? In other words, I'm referring to the furniture and whatever else was in there.

Barclay: Well, you had a locker and you had a bunk. You'd hang your clothes in the locker on the top. It had a little bar going across it. You'd hang your clothes on this little bar on the top. Then underneath there you had a place where you could lay your underwear and whatnot. Then you still had your . . . well, kind of like a sea bag. You had a little ditty bag that you kept your toilet articles and whatnot in, you know. It was just about like the Army, really. They said it wasn't any difference really than the Army. We never did march. They never did . . . well, you'd stand inspection. You know, you had to stay clean, shaved, and wear the proper uniform, keep your shoes shined, and everything, you know.

Marcello: Well, this brings up another subject altogether, and this is probably a good place to discuss it. These camps were run by the Army. In other words, when you were in camp, you were under the jurisdiction of the Army. Isn't that correct? When you went on the projects, then you were working for the Forest Service or the Soil Conservation Service or somebody else. But from what I know, when you were in the camp, you were subject to Army discipline.

Barclay: Yes, I think an Army person would come around once in awhile, or he would give them instructions on what to do and what not to do. But like you say, whenever we went out

to work, you worked for a civilian or a guy over the highway department. We did a lot of highway work here in Texas. There was a guy by the name of McDonald that was . . . we'd go out and survey and plant grass along the highways, build fence posts. I've gone out and dug grass out of the ground with ice on it, with no gloves or anything else. And you'd load it on a truck, and we'd take it and plant it along the highways. You worked. That's one thing you did do, and no one sloughed off. Everybody worked.

Marcello: Let's continue talking about the camp in California. Did you have any trouble adjusting to Army life or Army discipline while you were in camp?

Barclay: No, I really didn't. I remember one time I got homesick or disgusted. I believe it was right after these guys had tied me up. I was mad and I got some wine. I'd never drank anything before, and I drank a bunch of this wine and I got sick. But I don't remember now . . . I remember I was mad, and I wouldn't have anything to do with anybody. A couple of guys came along and found me, and I don't guess I knew where I was at or something. I remember that. They were laughing about it and telling everybody about me drinking that wine. I believe that was the only trouble I ever had in there as far as discipline went.

But now I did . . . I ought not tell you this now, but I'll tell you whenever you get ready for me . . . let you know whenever I get out of it and I'll tell you what happened.

Marcello: Okay. Well, since you have been born and raised in the country, you probably had no trouble adjusting to the outdoor life, did you?

Barclay: Oh, no. No, I loved it, really. Just like hiking those mountains, those guys, most of them were complaining about it. Well, I loved it, really. I was right in there with them, you know. I could climb those mountains just as good as those eighteen and nineteen or however old they were, you know, guys. I was right in there.

Marcello: Did you have very many city boys in this camp?

Barclay: No, not really. It was practically all country boys.

Marcello: Where were most of them from?

Barclay: Well, we had them from Crockett, Woodville, Beaumont, Houston, and we had some from Oklahoma even.

Marcello: In other words, most of them were from Texas or at least from this particular section of the country.

Barclay: I'd say Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas.

Marcello: Did they ever . . .

Barclay: . . . and California. We had some from California.

Marcello: Did they ever explain to you why they took people from Texas and Arkansas and Oklahoma and moved them to California to work on CCC projects?

Barclay: Yes, so you wouldn't get homesick. They knew you couldn't go home. You'd be more apt to be contented there because you knew you couldn't go home. Otherwise, if they kept you there, there'd be a lot of guys getting disgusted and leave. So they said the farther away from home they can get you, the better off you are.

Marcello: I was wondering what the rationale was for sending you so far away from Texas.

Barclay: Well, that's what it was. They claimed that it . . . they found out that if they'd get you away from your home town, get you out in different parts of the country, you're more apt to be contented and stay because you wouldn't have to think about wanting to go home or anything like that, you know. That's what they explained to us. I mean, I used to wonder, too, why send a guy way out there whenever they've got bases right here. After they keep you out there awhile, I guess that's why they sent us back here again, see, because you got more used to being away from home and whatnot.

Marcello: Okay, describe what a typical day was like for you here at this camp in California, that is, from the time you got up in the morning until the time lights out were sounded at night.

Barclay: Well, we got up at . . .

Marcello: Was it six o'clock? Reveille was usually around six o'clock, wasn't it?

Barclay: I believe it was six o'clock. We got up. You made your bunk, you shaved, and you went and ate breakfast. Then at eight o'clock, I believe it was, they'd have roll call. You'd line up just like in the Army or Navy. You'd line up with your cap and everything on. They'd call out your name. You'd answer just like in the Army. In other words, you'd be present.

Then they'd have maybe three or four or six or eight civilians out there. We wore regular dungarees, see, then to work. They'd assign you to a certain truck. Then each one of these guys were over a certain amount of men.

We'd just get on this truck, and we'd drive to the foot of this mountain or wherever we'd go. We'd go to a different mountain . . . we didn't go to the same one every time. But we'd usually go till we couldn't work. And then we'd stop and go to another one and build another fire trail. We would work until . . . time didn't mean anything out there. We'd work until they'd estimate that we had time to get back before it got dark. In other words, we'd eat our lunch and everything. We might even eat on the way up. Sometimes if you didn't get up there, you know, we'd eat lunch and then work . . . I've worked a lot of times, I'd say, for thirty minutes and then turn right around. I used to think that was kind of stupid, you know. But after you see a few fires out there, I guess you understand, you know, why they have to do that.

Marcello: In other words, it took you, in some instances at least, a tremendously long time just to get to the job.

Barclay: Oh, yes, it'd take you three and half hours to get up there. Well, they estimated it took an hour off coming down. It'd take you an hour longer to get up there than it would to come down. So if it . . . say, it took you four hours to go up there. You'd work thirty minutes, and then you'd start back down, and you'd get back down before dark. But once in a great while they'd catch us. In other words, you'd kind of . . . it was just an estimated deal how long it'd take you to get back down.

That's all we did, is build fire trails out there. We didn't do any other type of work, where here we did. We did different types of work.

Marcello: What was the food like here in California?

Barclay: Oh, they had good food, yes. We had cereal every morning for breakfast and a half of a grapefruit and a quart of milk and usually a banana. They fed us a lot of bananas. I don't know why. They must have been plentiful. But usually you had a half a grapefruit, a bowl of cereal, and a banana, or you might have bacon and eggs with that. They fed us good really. A lot of people said that they really fed better than the Army. I don't know whether they did or not. But we had good food. You had good cooks.

Marcello: What sort of food did you get on the trail, that is, when you were on the job?

Barclay: We had sandwiches. We'd have usually pressed ham and cheese. I'd always . . . I never could stand mayonaise. I used to throw half of my bread away and rake the mayonaise off and eat it. Let's see, we had usually an apple and two sandwiches. It'd be maybe one of pressed ham and cheese and then one of some kind of jelly and bread. You know, we always had a sweet with it. Or maybe jelly and peanut butter. But they fed good, really. Or you thought it was good after eating cornbread and beans for years (chuckle).

Marcello: I've heard it said that actually most people who came out of the CCC usually weighed more and even grew some.

Barclay: Oh, yes, most of them did. Now I didn't, really. I never did grow. They claimed that eating at a certain-and-certain time every day would make you gain, but I didn't gain any weight at all in there. In fact, I was almost as large . . . well, I haven't gained weight until after I got out of the Navy. I didn't even gain any weight in the service. I did up in Alaska. I got up to 150-something pounds up there. But as soon as I got back here, well, I lost it right back again.

Marcello: What did you do in the evenings after you returned to camp and work was over?

Barclay: Oh, we'd go out and we'd play horseshoes, or you'd go shoot pool. We usually had boxing going on. You'd go

out and spar a round--box. Out there mostly we went hiking in the mountains. We'd go out sightseeing. We'd walk through these little old towns or go up to this dam and walk across it, like on weekends. But usually in the evenings, why, we'd just get some kind of game going, you know, and play it.

Marcello: Now you could go into town in the evenings if you wished, could you not, just as long as you were back by lights out?

Barclay: Yes, you could go in and you could leave as soon as . . . I guess as soon as chow was over. You had to be back . . . I think you had to be back by eleven o'clock.

Marcello: Were you strictly in a CCC uniform when you would go into town, or did you have civilian clothes?

Barclay: No, you had to wear your uniform.

Marcello: How close was the nearest town to this camp in California?

Barkley: Well, it was Monrovia.

Marcello: I see. How far away was Monrovia?

Barkley: Well, let's see. If we left . . . it would be dark by the time we got in. I'd say it was about five miles, I believe.

Marcello: Would you usually walk in?

Barkley: Yes, there was no other way to go.

Marcello: What did you do in town?

Barclay: Oh, just walk around, maybe go to a show, you know.

Marcello: Check out the local girls?

Barclay: Check out the local girls, you know.

Marcello: What sort of a reception did you receive from the towns-
people in Monrovia? Did they welcome the CCC? Or were
they kind of suspicious?

Barclay: Well, they didn't like us too much out there, really.

Marcello: Why was that?

Barclay: Well, I don't know. I guess because we had something on
that looked like an Army uniform, you know. During
those days they didn't care too much for the CCC. I
guess they figured you was poor or something, you know.
They didn't want nothing to do with you.

Marcello: But I bet they liked that money that the CCC boys spent in
town.

Barclay: Oh, yes, yes. They did, yes, especially those liquor stores.
You know, those guys would come in and buy that whiskey
and beer. They liked that. Of course, the businesses
didn't like us as much, really, as the ordinary civilian,
you know. I mean, you didn't have trouble meeting a
girl, you know, or anything like that.

Marcello: About how big a town was Monrovia?

Barclay: Well, I'd say it was probably about, oh, maybe 25,000.
It might not have been that big. It wasn't too large,
really.

Marcello: Did the camp here have any sort of an educational program in the evening?

Barclay: Yes, we did here, yes. I studied auto repair and carpentry. I had a course in carpentry, and also they had a woman who taught tap dance. I took tap dancing for quite awhile, too, you know, there. But mostly it was carpenter work, automotive . . . auto repair. I know I could take a transmission apart and tear it down, put it back together. They taught you all about what makes spark plugs, combustion, you know, ignitions, and whatnot on cars. I studied that while I was there.

Marcello: Now was this in California or in Waxahachie?

Barclay: No, this was here. They didn't have any in California at all--any kind of schooling. But you could take . . . here you could take practically any course you wanted, I think. But most of them just took carpenter work and auto mechanics. Some of them went on into schooling, you know--book learning like. They also had special privileges for anyone going to college. Now we had some guys in there that were going to college at night. They'd get a special pass to go to college. You could . . . if you wanted to go to school . . . in other words, I don't think they had anything for grade school out off the camp, but they did have college courses outside the camps. You could study history or agriculture--anything like that--at this place here.

Marcello: But there really was no educational program at the camp near Monrovia.

Barclay: No, there wasn't at all.

Marcello: I wonder why they didn't have any educational program there.

Barclay: I believe . . . as far as I remember, I think that was a kind of a lay away place where they'd keep you for awhile and then ship you out. Then they'd ship somebody else in there. Now I believe that's what that was. I think it was more or less a way-lay station. They called it a . . . relay station is what they called that. In other words, they'd send you there for a certain length of time and then send you somewhere else. That's what they called it--relay station.

Marcello: Were you putting in a five-day workweek here at Monrovia? Or did you work on Saturdays also?

Barclay: We worked on Saturdays here. But I believe out there . . . I believe five days out there because there was nothing to do. You couldn't work a half a day there building fire trails and whatnot. I guess they had them built . . . all of them they wanted built up so high. I believe we just had five days there. We had five and a half days . . . we got off noon Saturday here.

Marcello: How great a problem was desertion out in Monrovia?

Barclay: I don't believe we had any that I remember. In fact, I think I was in about sixteen or seventeen months, and I don't remember every anyone . . . now we used to have two twin . . . identical brothers that one of them would stay out there one week and then the other one would come and take his place and stay the other week, and nobody could tell them apart. Or if the guy wanted to stay two weeks, he'd stay two weeks. There was no way you could tell them. I know they used to rotate, and you'd never know which one of them you was talking to. As far as desertion, I don't believe we ever had any of that. I mean, most of the guys were happy. I guess they were kind of like me--glad to get three meals a day and a place to sleep and have eight dollars a month to spend (chuckle).

Marcello: What form would discipline take here at this camp in Monrovia? In other words, suppose a couple of the CCC boys got into a fight, or suppose somebody were caught stealing or something of this nature, what sort of discipline did the Army impose?

Barclay: Well, they'd put you on special work forces. They'd make you go out and work in your spare time. They did just like the Army. They'd put a guard on you and take you out and make you do special duty--maybe mop a floor or something like that. Expecially stealing, I mean, they

were pretty rough on stealing. Now fighting, they wasn't too bad on that. In other words, they kind of let you fight pretty well. If you wanted to . . . if you had a beef with somebody. . . well, they'd try to make you put the boxing gloves on, is what they'd do. If you got in a beef with a guy, well, the old captain or the old sergeant would say, "Come on. Put some gloves on." But once and a while, you know . . . I mean, they wouldn't stop you. I've seen them fight right in front of the mess hall. They'd just ignore them and walk on off and let them fight, you know.

Marcello: How many Army personnel were there in this camp at Monrovia?

Barclay: You mean running it?

Marcello: Yes.

Barclay: Well, no, I don't think it was . . . actually, I think it was all Reserves. Now like the captain, I think he was a Reserve out of the Army. I don't think he was really . . . now he might have been attached to the Army.

Marcello: Well, he may have been a Reserve, so therefore let me rephrase my question. How many Reserves were there at this camp at Monrovia?

Barclay: Not very many. I'd say three or four at the most.

Marcello: Who was running the projects here? Was this the Forest Service?

Barclay: Here you mean?

Marcello: The one in Monrovia.

Barclay: It was the Forest Service, yes. The forest rangers, I think, is what they called them. In other words, he'd be a civilian, but he'd tell you what to do and what . . . you know. We worked for the National Parks Service out there, is what it was.

Marcello: How long were you at Monrovia altogether?

Barclay: I believe it was about four months, if I remember right--not over four, I'm pretty sure.

Marcello: In other words, you were there during most of the summer.

Barclay: Yes.

Marcello: You said you got there about March.

Barclay: Yes, we were there most of the summer. Let's see, we came back here, I believe, in September or October--somewhere along there.

Marcello: And as you mentioned, you were sent to this camp near Waxahachie.

Barclay: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, describe what the camp was like at Waxahachie, keeping in mind what the camp was like in Monrovia.

Barclay: Well, the one in Waxahachie was better laid out--more like the Army, I would think.

Marcello: In other words, you had regular barracks here?

Barclay: No, we still had just little huts. In other words, it was still two, four, six men here the same way. But as

you go out toward Waxahachie, you go out towards Midlothian. It was way up on that highest hill just out of Waxahachie-- way up on top of this hill. It was level ground there. It was really . . . it was pretty landscape there. You'd go out and you'd turn left into . . . as you turned left then, you had your gate there. It was a little thing where the guard stayed at. On the left of that was the supply house, and the captain's quarters was right to the left as you go out. He stayed in the front there. Of course, the captain, I don't believe, stayed on base. I think he lived off base all the time. But, of course, he had his office there and everything. And as you go in right in front . . . it'd be just like a small Army fort or . . . as you drove in, the flag was right out in the middle. The flagpole and everything was right out in the middle of the grounds. Then you had your recreation. You'd go right up to the recreation building. Then on each end you had just little huts that ran all the way down as far as they . . . I forget how many huts there was. They they ran in the back and on the other side this same way. It was kind of like . . . well, it'd be just like it was a great big hotel, and there was rooms on each side of it really, you know, and then your mess hall and everything.

Of course, we had to keep the grounds. We had grass and everything. We had to keep it mowed and policed up. That's what a guy would do if he was on extra duty or he had done something. They'd make him pick up "snipes," you know, or mow the grass or whatever . . . hedges or whatever had to be done. We kept it beautiful, really. It was a beautiful landscape, really.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of coming back to Texas after being in California?

Barclay: I was glad to get back, really. That was a long way from home (chuckle). Everybody wanted to get back. Of course, some of the guys that were from California didn't want to come back, but they sent them back, too, you know.

Marcello: Were most of the people in this camp from Texas, however?

Barclay: I'd say 95 per cent were. I remember two guys were from Arkansas. I know two or three were from Oklahoma. I know we had a couple from California. But most of them were from, oh, just these little old towns around--Mexia, Crockett, Woodville, and Beaumont. There was a few guys from Houston and Austin. There were some guys there from Austin. I don't remember any . . . we had two guys from Dallas that I know of, probably some more. We had quite a few that lived there in Waxahachie that got shipped right back to their home town.

Marcello: Now how far was Waxahachie from your home?

Barclay: It was about 195 miles.

Marcello: Were you able to get home very often?

Barclay: No.

Marcello: How often did you get home?

Barclay: I think about twice in all of that time.

Marcello: And you were in approximately eighteen months altogether.

Barclay: Yes. I was in about sixteen or seventeen months. But I know one time I missed my bus or something, or I didn't have the money to catch the bus or something, and my uncle brought me to Crockett, and I caught the bus . . . we overtook the bus, I believe is what it was. I caught the bus in Crockett and came on in. Then another time he wanted to come up there and look at the base. He drove me all the way back. That's the only really two times I remember being home offhand.

Marcello: How large . . .

Barclay: I did. I went one other time. I hitchhiked there and back and got back there.

Marcello: How did this camp at Waxahachie compare in size to the one in California?

Barclay: Well, I believe this was bigger here. It was larger. I think it had more men in it than we did in the other camp.

Marcello: Was it considerably larger, or just a little bit larger?

Barclay: Quite a lot larger, I think.

Marcello: How many people would you estimate were in this camp at Waxahachie?

Barclay: Oh, I'd say around . . . I'd say over 200, maybe 250 altogether.

Marcello: Was the military discipline in this camp very similar to what it was in the camp at Monrovia?

Barclay: No, it was a little bit more stricter here. They were pretty strict here on you.

Marcello: In what way?

Barclay: Well, you had to . . . your uniforms had to be better, and your shoes had to be shined more. I think we even got up earlier here. Out there it was just more or less kind of like a play camp, really. I don't think they really enforced too much discipline out there, really.

Marcello: Also, I gather that you really didn't work too hard out there in Monrovia.

Barclay: No, we didn't. But we slaved here. I mean, you put in . . . you put in a hard day's work, every day.

Marcello: Well, describe what the work was like at the camp here at Waxahachie.

Barclay: Well, like I said, you'd get up and you'd get on the back end of that truck--winter, summer, hot. It didn't make any difference . . . rain. Nothing stopped you from

working. You worked in the rain or anything. You had a day's work to do, and you worked five and a half days a week regardless of what the weather was like.

We'd go out, as I said, and I guess people would sell that grass. I don't know who bought it--whether the city bought it or the government bought it or not. They'd go out and plow that grass up, you know. Then we'd go out and pick it up and stack it up on this truck. Then we'd take it and wherever . . . we'd go onto these little old dirt roads. It was all dirt roads--90 per cent of them were. We'd just sod along the side of the roads.

Then I got into a pretty easy job. This guy was going to train me to be a surveyor, you know. I would look through this . . . he taught me all of this . . . how many inches to drop the ground for drainage and whatnot. I thought I was a big shot, you know. I'd get to carry this thing down and motion for the guy to raise this flag or this deal on this pole and whatnot.

Then this other guy talked me into going into fence building. We'd go out and dig post holes and stretch wire fence around these farmers' farms for them, or ranches or whatever they had. I've stretched fence from Waxahachie to Midlothian, I mean, just straight. We'd build maybe, oh, four or five miles of fence in one day.

And, boy, it sure . . . you have these bars out there, you know, digging that limestone out of the bottom of them. Sometimes you'd stay on one hole all day, really. Or it might be fifty of us strung out building fence, you know, in one day. I think it was a good thing, you know, really, because you're helping people and keeping out of trouble. You're eating and you're working and you're accomplishing something. If they'd . . . I won't say that.

Marcello: Go ahead.

Barclay: I was going to say, if they'd take some of these people in jail down here and send them out and let them do that kind of work, the taxpayers wouldn't have to pay so much to . . . I'd definitely do that if I was running the city and had anything to do with it. Those people would go out and be building streets. Instead of taxpayers having to repair these streets, I'd have some of those people doing it. There would be less crime and more money circulating around, too, I think.

Marcello: In other words, what you're saying is the CCC gave you a certain sense of pride or accomplishment. In other words, you didn't really feel that you were getting something for nothing.

Barclay: That's right. You earned every penny you got, even if you'd have got the thirty dollars that you sent to your folks. But now I was glad to help my dad and my family out that well.

It didn't begrudge me to send it to them. I was glad they did it. But still in all, I felt I earned every penny I got. I was proud of myself. I mean, I didn't feel like they were giving me anything. I figured I was doing the country a great service by doing what I did, really.

Marcello: How much did the CCC check mean to your family?

Barclay: Well, it meant a lot. I've heard my dad and my mother say, "Well, I don't what we would have done if it hadn't been for that money he sent us," you know. But, of course, they'd have gotten by some way or another, you know.

Marcello: But this made things a little bit easier for them.

Barclay: That's right. Right today my mother says the same thing. She says, "I don't know what we'd have done without him." But none of my other brothers wanted any part of it, you know. But that didn't bother me as long as I was doing something.

Marcello: Now you did not see that twenty-two dollars at all. Is that correct?

Barclay: Oh, no. No, they mailed it right to them.

Marcello: How were you paid? By check or cash?

Barclay: We were paid with cash. They give us eight dollars cash.

Marcello: When was payday?

Barclay: Once a month, I believe. You could draw, though. In the meantime, you could have a . . . what they called "chits." And some guys, they'd overdraw, you know. At the end of the month, they didn't have any money coming at all, you know. You could draw to buy your cigarettes or candy or whatever you wanted, you know.

Marcello: Now who were you working for here at Waxahachie?

Barclay: Most of the people I worked for was a guy by the name of McDonald. He owned a big ranch between Waxahachie and Midlothian. He was a surveyor. I guess they must have paid him for doing it because he was the one that really got me into this land leveling and whatnot, you know, and I worked for the . . . what'd they call that? The Texas Forest Reserve or something . . . I forget now what they called it. They had a name for it. He worked for this Texas-something. I guess they paid him. I guess that's who paid him.

Marcello: In other words, this was a state agency of some sort that you were working for while you were at Waxahachie.

Barclay: Yes.

Marcello: I'm curious about something. You mentioned that you were building these fences and so on on private land. How did this work? In other words, did the rancher or the farmer have to provide anything such as the fence posts or so on?

Barclay: I think they probably charged him, I think, for all of the fence because he'd be down there and he'd be talking to them, you know, about doing it. I think he probably just had to pay for the materials.

Marcello: And then the government took care of the labor.

Barclay: Yes. We'd do the labor free. I'm pretty sure on that because sometimes they'd change their minds, you know. I know it wasn't the highway department because we'd build along the road, and then we'd cut and maybe go across sixty or eighty acres up to the corner of his house or something like that, you know. It wasn't just along the highways. That way the highway department, you'd assume, would be paying for it. But it wasn't. I mean, we'd go off the highway and just wherever he wanted his fence to go, you know.

Marcello: Did the townspeople in Waxahachie and vicinity seem to accept the CCC perhaps better than the people in Monrovia?

Barclay: I think they did a lot better, yes. We didn't have any problems with the people themselves other than men civilians. We'd get in a lot of fights with civilians, you know, what you'd call civilians. But as far as the older people . . . say, like you're going with a girl. They really treated you just perfect. Or even in the stores, you could go in there and do anything you wanted to. The only conflict we had was mostly with male civilians--the guys that wasn't in the service.

Marcello: In other words, competitors for the local women.

Barclay: Right. That's the only problem we ever had. You know, as far as business, you'd go in the skating rink, and they were glad to see you. You'd go into a cafe . . . in fact, they were over-anxious to see you because they knew if you ate you had the money to pay for it, you know, or you wouldn't eat.

Marcello: How close was the camp to Waxahachie?

Barclay: It was about two and half miles, I'd say.

Marcello: So it was a little bit easier for you to get into Waxahachie.

Barclay: Oh, yes. I would go into town, I'd say, almost every night after I was here for awhile. I don't ever . . . after I was here for awhile I don't ever remember staying on the base. I was in town every night.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you were in the CCC for, oh, sixteen months perhaps.

Barclay: Yes.

Marcello: That means that you must have re-enlisted. What made you decide to re-enlist?

Barclay: No, I didn't. I think we were in for that length of time.

Marcello: Oh, at that time was it a . . .

Barclay: I think it was supposed to be for eighteen months.

Marcello: Oh, I see.

Barclay: If I'm not mistaken, it was for eighteen months, is what you signed up for.

Marcello: I see. Well, that's true. This may have changed. I think in the beginning you signed up for six months. And then I believe this was extended to twelve months or eighteen months--something like that.

Barclay: I believe it was for eighteen months. It might have been for six months, but anyway, I stayed in. I still had a little bit of time to go whenever I . . . actually, I got kicked out.

Marcello: What happened? This sounds like an interesting story.

Barclay: Well, I don't know whether it's interesting or not. It didn't bother me at all to get kicked out of it. But what happened was this guy by the name of Bailey, he was from Crockett. You got a weeks' leave or a five-day leave or something. I believe it was a weeks' leave. You got off on a Saturday night. I forget how often, but not very often. But he had a leave coming up, and he was a night watchman. I might not ought to say what I'm going to say. I don't know. But anyway, they put me as a night watchman.

Marcello: In other words, you were taking his place while he was on leave.

Barclay: I was taking his place as night watchman, yes. In other words, you'd stay up in the office, and you'd patrol around

the camp and make sure, you know, everything was peaceful. While he was gone, someone robbed our office of about six hundred dollars. In other words, I couldn't stay there at the office all the time. I had a certain hour that I had to go make the rounds. So anyway, I never did know where the money was at . . . kept or anything else. I still don't know today. But while I was nightwatching, it came up that this money was stolen.

So they started investigating who stole this money. They checked on me, and they found out I wasn't old enough to be in. This captain really hated to let me go because him and I were real good . . . we got along real good together. But I remember he talked to me. He says, "If there was any way I could keep you in here, I would." But he says, "It's just regulations that you're not old enough, and we're going to have to let you go." I don't know whether I got a discharge. I don't remember that or what or . . . I think they separated me from the thing.

But they didn't right away. It was quite a while after that happened. This one particular guy--I won't call his name--but the next day he started buying me Cokes and everything. They really quizzed me. I mean, every so often they called me up there and asked me a bunch of questions. Well, this certain-and-certain guy that really had access to this money, I think, started buying

me Cokes, and he was sweating all the time. That guy really went through misery. I know that. I mean, you could just watch him. He was a guy that kind of had a little authority in this camp. I would have bet odds that he was the one that took this money because, man, he was so much . . . he was real strict up until this happened, and then he got real good to everyone. Man, if you wanted something, I mean, he'd just make sure that you got it, you know. Not only me, but especially. Then even this Bailey . . . after he came back, man, he'd buy him Cokes. Money was pretty hard to get. You didn't have money to buy people Cokes like that.

But anyway, they . . . that's why they let me go. They checked on me and found out I wasn't of age.

Marcello: How did your CCC experience prepare you for your later experiences in the military?

Barclay: Well, you learned . . . I say they didn't march us. You really knew how to keep in step, you know, and you knew how to stand in line and to salute, salute the flag. It taught you to get along with people. It taught you how to scramble in the chow line and whatnot, you know. I remember that when we sat down . . . they'd say, "You stand up until asked to be seated," and then you'd sit down and start eating. That's the same thing as in the service. Mainly, it was getting along with people, you

know. In other words, you know, when I first went in, I couldn't take a joke. I'd get mad at certain-and-certain things.

But me being younger, I didn't have any problem. Everybody was always looking after me. They used to call me "the kid," you know. Everybody was always looking after me, you know. I didn't have . . . if some big guy was going to jump on me, man, they'd have three or four guys on him, you know. But I could still . . . even then I could take care of myself pretty well, you know. But I had a lot of good friends in there. I could get anything I wanted. If I needed to borrow a buck, why, I could borrow it from anybody on the base, I guess.

Marcello: Suppose there would be another depression of the magnitude of the one in the 1930's. Would you recommend that something like the CCC be established again?

Barclay: You know, I'd recommend it right now. I think they should have one right now for people that's not working. It'd be the best thing in the world for this country if they'd start one right now because there's so much work that they could go out and do, and it'd benefit everyone, you know. It'd improve the food production. What would be wrong with taking some of these people that are drawing this money for nothing? They're not doing anything. Put them out here and help a farmer build a fence or plant a

crop! Now the cities claim they've got all these vacant lots here. Well, what would be wrong with having a CCC camp and having those people come in here and plant that food for their own food or give it to people that . . . or ship it overseas? We're giving so much away right now, and it's half the people in the United States that's not working for it. Wouldn't you say that? Maybe not half but it's . . . say they claim there's 8 per cent unemployment, which really if they'd check and put out the truth it's a lot more than that.

Marcello: How did the CCC help you so far as learning a vocation was concerned? You mentioned you had taken some courses or some classes here at Waxahachie in automotive mechanics and things of that nature. Was it good training that you received here?

Barclay: Oh, yes, it was good training. You had instructors there, and they gave you tools to work with. They had a teacher there to teach you this, you know. It was real good.

I even joined the Woodmen of the World while I was out there. That was supposed to be a minor branch of the Masons, so they claimed. They came out and they had meetings and sold you on this idea, you know. In order to be a Mason, you had to be a Woodman of the World. That was the small junior part of the Masons. I joined that, went to meetings. I think it only cost you about--I

don't remember--probably a quarter a month or something to belong to that. We had meetings in that, too, you know, where they got up and made speeches about manhood and citizenship and whatnot, you know.

Marcello: Was this a type of lodge?

Barclay: It was a type of lodge, yes. I don't know how old you had to be to even join that, but I joined it. Anyway, they'd get up and make business speeches, you know, about the economy and whatnot, you know.

But mainly on that school, you went . . . I believe they had it two nights a week. I believe I went on Wednesday night and Friday night. That's the only time usually that I didn't go into town. But I did go to that school quite . . . I wouldn't miss a class whenever I got it because it was interesting work.

Marcello: And they'd have these classes right on the base.

Barclay: Yes. We had a workshop. . . what you called a school-room and a workshop out there. There was this lady, and she was from Waxahachie. Her name was Karnes. She was over all of this. Of course, they had other teachers there, too, but she was over the whole deal.

Then we'd have a dance . . . oh, I believe they had a dance about once a month. Everybody would bring their wives. People could come in there, you know. Women would come in there, and everybody would dance and have

a good time, you know. I think they'd serve just refreshments--punch and whatnot. We used to have a captain there that . . . I can't remember his name. But he was a great dancer. Right at the end of the dance, why he'd put on a show. I guess it was his wife or some . . . it might have been a professional dancer. But they'd get out and dance, and, boy, I mean, he was the most beautiful dancer of anybody I've ever seen dance. I'll never forget that. Everybody would just stay there to watch him dance the last dance. He'd get out and dance, you know.

Marcello: You mentioned that in addition to automotive mechanics, you had also taken some lessons in tap dancing. Why did you decide to do that?

Barclay: Well, this teacher encouraged me to . . . in other words, to take tap dancing and dancing too. She gave dancing lessons. But she was mainly a tap dancer. She was a real good tap dancer. There was quite a few guys took tap dancing. Then she had a daughter, I think, about sixteen or seventeen. That might have been the reason. But whoever was the best tap dancer after a certain-and-certain length of time got to dance with her daughter (chuckle).

Marcello: Can you tap dance now?

Barclay: I doubt it.

Marcello: I was going to say, if you could cut a tune maybe we could get it on the tape recorder (chuckle).

Barclay: No, I haven't done that in so long. I used to be pretty good at it, though. I could kind of come out with those taps. But I haven't done that in so long that I doubt if I could even hit a tune with it (chuckle).

Marcello: Well, Mr. Barclay, I don't have any more questions. Again, I want to thank you very much for taking time to participate in our project.

Barclay: Well, the only thing I could say . . . I'd like to say this. If you have anything to do with it, if there's enough of the going for it, they ought to encourage the government to do something like that. It would help this country out so much. I think we're going to have another depression if they don't do something. After fighting all of these years for this country, I'd hate to see us go down the drain. But I think something has to be done because I think we're in bad shape right now as far as surviving goes, really. I think this country's in bad shape. Maybe you don't agree with me. I'm not too smart, but I can see things, you know, that's not right with this country today.