

1 Charles Lord - Stowe - Interview

Interviewer
Mary Kasamatsu

MK Mr. Lord, lets start with some background. Actually, let's start with some background about you. Are you from Stowe originally?

CL I am what you call a native Vermonter. I was born in Stowe, I live in Vermont, educated in Vermont, worked in Vermont and have lived in Vermont all my life. That is the basis of this little talk.

MK What were you doing before you got ~~into ??? accounts?~~ ^{involved in the Civilian Conservation Corps?}

CL I worked for the Highway Department for six years then the depression came on and being single at that time, I was dismissed early in the depression. December 31, 1932 was my last work for the Highway Department. For about six months, I didn't have anything to do because you couldn't buy a job for a nickel or whatever. But, in June, 1933, I was designated as an employee of the (it was a combination of the U.S. Forest Service and Vermont Forest Service) of which was a workshop. I was assigned to the Waterbury Camp in Waterbury, Veront. Let me make this distinction. It was the Waterbury Forest Camp and later on it was Little River Dam which was also located in Waterbury, outside of the limits, but there was no connection between the two camps. We were assigned to work in the state forest nearby mostly Mansfield and Mt. Philo which is over in the Lake Champlain Valley. Mansfield being quite an extensive forest area required a lot of work to build up the recreation area, attending area and so forth, picnic area and also we built quite a few miles of ski trails in the Mansfield area. In the Mt. Philo area, which was a summer recreation area, we built recreation facilities, improved the road and built a recreation building. In succeeding years we did some more work down at Mt. Philo and also continued our work at Mansfield, our ski trail and our recreational development. Then we branched out and did some work in the Camels Hump area and it was about 1938 we started the Appalacian pass road which goes from Fayston over through Starksboro. But the war came on and the CCC's got the road to the top of the mountain and stopped.

MK Which mountain was that ^{at} ~~in~~ the Appalacian ~~at~~ pass ?

CL There was no particular mountain right there at that pass, because that was a little spot right there in the profile. Eventually, after the war, the Highway Department took over the Starksboro end of the road and finished it up.

So now, there is a complete paved highway all the way from Fayston over through to Starksboro and used considerably as a short cut to get to the Fayston and Sugarbush area. Also, the camp here in Waterbury, the last two years, I believe, was moved up to the Moscow, Vermont, which is a portion of Stowe as we continue to work on Mansfield. They also started a road down Little River Valley which eventually will tie in the Dam which is at the lower end of the Little River Valley and the Moscow edn. But there again, the war came on and the road was not finished during that period.

MK How old were the men who worked in the camps?

CL I was a member of the CCC movement from June, 1933 to September, 1940. Then I went to work for the Mt. Mansfield Company which is the operator of the ski area here in Stowe and I have been with them ever since until they kicked me out in 1975, I guess it was because I was getting to old, feeble. So that is that.

MK Was the Mt. Mansfield area the primary area where the CCC work involved cutting the ski trails.

CL In the beginning we cut, up to 1940, we cut all the ski trails on the mountain that were established at that time, which included the Bruce trail which goes into the Branch Valley from this toll road up until the nose dive and several other trails too. After 1940, the establishment of the single chair lift by a private corporation of which I became an employee... The trail cutting by the CCC's was limited only to maintenance after that. Of course, as the war came on and the CCC's all dissipated because of the war and the improved economic conditions. The CCC's were just like the army, they were handled by the army, they had to pass their physical examinations and the ones we got at the Waterbury and the Moscow camps were mostly all Vermonters. They first had to go to Fort Ethan Allen and pass the physical and then they were shipped to the various camps throughout the state and disbursed that way. But, we in the Waterbury and the Moscow camp were practically 90% Vermonters. The typical enrollee got \$3.00 a month with board and room. That doesn't seem like much money does it, but it was better than nothing. \$25.00 of that they never saw because that was sent to their spouses family back home. The enrollees got \$5.00 a month for their own personal leaves, but if they were progressive or sharp they were able to get forwarded a little bit to the point where they became an assistant leader and then they got \$36.00 a month,

which meant they got \$11.00 they got to spend on their own personal affair and if he became a leader which was equivalent to a sergeant in the army they got \$45.00 a month and they still got the \$15.00 extra for their own personal needs. After the CCC's became established there was considerable effort and emphasis put on educational portion of the work. Afterwards, they weren't just sent out to do a certain job blindfolded, you might say, they were told if it was only digging a ditch, they were told how to dig a ditch, how to shovel. A lot of the boys never had any work experience at all. In other words, they were educated to the job. As there was chance for advancement there were special classes in plumbing, carpentry, electricity, blacksmithing and I know personally of several boys or enrollees, that after they got out of the CCC's and pursue their training, became very efficient at their calling. They were exposed to learning. It was up to them to learn. Nobody forced them to. The majority of the boys wanted to learn something and prove ??? other things. So, as I say, when they got out, they were able to demand a little more than common labor jobs. There was bulldozer operators, truck drivers and heavy equipment operators, all picked up and learned in the CCC's.

MK You talked about them being inducted through the army camps and such, did they? (cut off)

CL I didn't have to.

MK No, were the men volunteers?

CL They were picked by the overseer of the poor of various towns. Every town at that time had bad economic conditions. Families with two or three younger boys could apply through the overseer of the poor for a position in the CCC. Practically all he did was forward their names into the headquarters there at Fort Ethan Allen. Basically, they were chosen and if they passed their physical examination, they were in the CCC's. They enlisted for six months, just like in the regular army. Also, the army took care of the camps. The food, the foot clothing, the shelter, in other words, they were under army control from the time of say 4 o'clock in the afternoon until 8 o'clock the next morning. Then they return at 8 o'clock, they were turned over to the forest service and the forest service had charge of the men during the day, except those few that were left at camp to do the ordinary resident chores of the camp, like the cooks and so forth. Speaking of cooking, there again, it was left to the boys. They had some good cooks, which were all self-trained, they

all came up through the ranks, but if they had a good supply officer, in charge of the food, and a good cooking class, they lived pretty high, believe it or not. Waterbury camp was one of the better feeders, in other words they had good cooks. Every camp has the same food. It was up to the cooks to prepare it. If it was a sloppy job, we got sloppy food, but on the other hand, we got some good food. So it was more or less up to the camp commander to see that they were properly fed and of course there was inspection of the barracks every day to see if clean. They had a uniform, it wasn't exactly a army uniform, but it was army clothing, but when they went to work, they could wear anything they felt like. If you had what they call inspection of the camp, then they had to put on their better clothes, their army clothes, ties and stand for inspection.

MK Did they have any kind of basic training they had to go through?

CL No, there was no military training whatsoever, outside of the fact that they in the ^{am}mornings and the evenings they would stand revelry ~~at~~ the retreat. Not every night, but pretty near every night. Especially at retreat unless it was on a special detail, they were supposedly in fairly good uniform at that time. There was no army drill or anything like that. No arms, nothing you would find in a military camp.

MK ^{Was} ~~Is~~ there any physical conditioning to get them ready?

CL No, there wasn't any calisthenics as such, because they figured that most of the guys got their exercise during the day. I don't recall any calisthenics, because at 8 o'clock in the morning, they were turned over, when I say turned over, formally given over to the Forest Service for the rest of the day, except those who stayed in camp which they had to have a minimum of cooks, supply sergeants and stuff like that. Roughly around 20 men had to stay in camp. If they stayed in camp, they were under army control, but if they were turned over to the Forst Service, then everything and orders came from the Forest Service. But they were supposedly a well run camp. The Forest Service and the army dovetailed their movements. They got along pretty good. Of course, there were various forms of backbiting in some camps which didn't add to the situation. The camps that I happened to be in were pretty well organized.

MK Did you live in the camps with the men?

CL We lived, the officers and the foresters had quarters of their own. I generally had a room with one other forester. In that sense we were separated from the enrollees and the regular workers unless we happened to be in a site camp. A so-called site camp might have been established for instance when we were working on Mt. Philo, due to the transportation. It is quite a lengthly little haul from Waterbury to Mt. Philo, because the trucks had a governor on them and went only 30 mph. Anyway, there we were more closely together in the site camps. But all the guys liked the site camps because, I don't know for some reason or another, they thought they had a little more freedom. Maybe they didn't, but we didn't have any trouble filling the site camp quarters whenever we asked for ^{asked}volunteers. If you had a special job, sometimes, they ~~actual~~^{asked} people who like that kind of work first, but if it was a regular job, we took anyone. Generally speaking, each foreman in the camp had a crew of about 20 men. This one particular foreman might be engaged in a certain type of work for a month and he would have the same bunch of men every day. It was semi-organized to the point where the leader of the men took his orders from the foreman, but it was informal. It wasn't yes sir, no sir and all that business. It was informal association. Generally speaking it was pretty good association with the men and the foreman. At least that was my experience.

MK How many men did you have in the Waterbury camp?

CL Each camp was organized as a company. Each company had about 200 - 225 men. There was only one company in each camp. But, down here in Little River, of course that was a special job. It was under the corps of engineers. There they had 13 companies there at one time. But that was altogether different project. They were confined to that one project of making that dam. They had nothing to do with the Forest Service. There were several different types of camps. There was a Forest Service camp, Park Service camp and all out west they had reservation camps, Indian camps. There were engineering camps. There were probably 6 or 7 different units. The Forest Service camps were under the Department of Agriculture, but some of the other camps were under the Department of the Interior and so forth. Basically, they were all the same, more or less.

MK They were all part of the Civilian Conservation Corps?

CL There was about roughly, at the peak, there was about 200,000 boys in the CCC's.

MK Nationally?

CL Yes, 1000 camps roughly all within the U.S., but generally speaking, the boys here in Vermont or New England, they stayed in New England. They might have gone over as far as maybe into New York once, they weren't to my knowledge, shipped to far away. Well for one reason, unless there was a definite shortage somewhere, or some special fire fighting detail, there was no particular reason to send guys from here way over to the west coast. It would just duplicate transportation. They stayed more or less in their home area.

MK Vermont ^{camps} did get some men coming up from the cities though didn't they?

CL There was quite a few camps in Vermont that the boys came from Boston. Mostly came from New England. There weren't too many. But there were quite a few from Boston and bigger cities like that. There again, whether they worked or didn't work was 90% good leadership in the Forest Service or incorporation between the Forest Service and the Army Department. They had some skuffles here and there. One place, I know, they practically stripped the whole camp and sent them home because they wouldn't work. They had a new bunch come in. If they wouldn't work, absolutely wouldn't work, they were sent home. Ocassionally, like this particular instance, there was a few ring leaders that tried to run the camp. The only way they could get rid of the whole bunch was to get rid of them all, they did. So a lot of the guys went home talking to themselves. They didn't work anyway. Nobody made them work on a real cold below 0 degrees, they stayed in camp. If there was a bad story, rained hard, they didn't go out in the rain, they stayed in camp. There was no Simon LaGree's in camp. They got treated well I thought.

MK The camps did run all year round though?

CL They ran all year round from June, 1933 - January, 1942. The war broke out in 1941. At that time anyway, as I say, they were getting ready, the country was getting ready for war, they had a lot of war orders, economic conditions were improving, it was harder to bring the camps up to full compliment and the minute war was declared, all the surplus, at least around here, all the equipment was sent up to the Alaskan Highway. There was a great thrust to get that road through so they could have inland communication with Alaska. You probably don't remember that. At one time the Japanese

would land in the Allucians and keep working through Alaska into Canada and come that way. So anyway, it was a great thrust of men and material to complete the Alaskan Highway. All the material and I expect a lot of the boys were put near that Alaskan Highway business for our Alaskan defense.

MK Let's talk a little bit about the kind of work that went on in the camps in the winter.

CL What kind of work?

MK I am curious about the winter. I know nowadays, a lot of the road construction projects and those kind of things shut down.

CL Well, for instance, we did some ski trail construction in the winter, but not much, but and also preliminary if we had some road project that was being activated. Also, for a long time the army, the camps were run, everything was heated by wood. We had to get out firewood for the camps. There might have been some buildings that were partly closed or enclosed enough so that you could work on the inside. For instance, on the Fayston-Starksboro road, there was a place where a portion we had to do quite a little drilling and it was all concentrated in a certain area and they were able to get by putting up covers, they didn't have plastic back then, they used canvas - tarps. They were able to drill there more or less all winter. That was just one little project of course. They did what you call Forest Standard improvement work. That was like for instance on the mountain here, it had been lumbered over different portion at different times. They call them wolf trees. They are big trees which shut out the light of the little tree, but in themselves, they weren't much good, they were hollow, partly dead or something. We went over some of the area and cut those out. They did some logging. So they kept busy during the winter on some project. Of course, it come summer time, ~~we~~^{we} could spread out a little more and do more things.

MK Did most of the trail work get done in the summer months?

CL Most of it was done in the summer, although, there was a little bit of the trail work done in the winter. For instance, we cut, well it was a combination fire break and ski trail that went all the way from Lake Mansfield

down to the Little River Dam. We did that more or less during the winter time. It probably didn't amount to anything, but it kept the boys busy anyway. The idea was excellent, it was wide enough so that if a forest fire ever started it had some kind of a fire break in that particular region. Some of the work that the CCC's did probably you couldn't even find it now. It has all grown up or else it didn't plan out the way it was suppose to. Some of the ski trails we cut are no longer used. Some ski areas never got off the ground. Some of the things didn't amount to anything. But that being the sum total of the whole work was worth it, because it kept them busy, kept the guys off the street and at the same time, if they were smart enough, they learned a little something. It depended upon the individual.

MK One thing that I am curious about it, what is involved in cutting a trail? To actually make a trail?

CL In the beginning, nobody knew too much about trail work. Except, these trails eventually were laid out by more or less by people who had skied some and knew roughly what they wanted for a ski trail. But, due to the fact, that we had only axes and saws, maybe a ??? a little bit of dynamite, we carefully avoided, insofar as possible any rocks or ledge portions or where it was really rough going. So we skirted around. Later on in the years afterwards with the bulldozers and the dynamite and when drilling became common, then they could put a trail down mostly any place they wanted to, that is within limits of course. But in the beginning people in the very beginning didn't ski the same as they do now. In fact, there were very few skiers anyway. So they skied a little more cautiously. Several reasons why were first they didn't have the techniques and second they didn't have the equipment. If the trail wasn't very wide, they didn't have much of a trail either. A couple of times, two or three of us fellows went; have you ever been on Camels Hump? That is quite a little climb up there. Well back 50 years ago, it was even more, even getting there to the base of the climb was something. Anyway, all we had was that trail, foot trail, fire trail whatever they call it now, I forget, up to the top of the mountain. We climbed up that trail and skied back down without breaking a leg or anything else, probably because we didn't ski very fast. We didn't have technique really. Dumb luck and bull strength and ignorance was our technique.

MK Were the skis different then?

CL Well yes, they were a little bit different. Basically, there was a ski, but the skis were made of ash and sometimes they had two grooves in them instead of one and the early early skis didn't have any edges on them either and the bindings were very elementary. There was a toe strap and sort of a heel strap, but it was made of leather with a through in it to tighten it up a little bit, but you could pick your heel right up off the toe plate. Not very difficult. Maybe that is what saved our necks more than once. Ski poles were big, much heavier than they are now. The rings were heavier. Everything was very crude compared to what is available now.

MK Some place I was reading in the history of the Long Trail that when people started skiing as a result of having seen skiers in Scandinavia and Europe that the skis that they were using were a sort of hybrid that you could do kind of cross country or downhill skiing with them.

CL It is a fact that cross country/downhill, I forgot what they call them, but they are wider than the ordinary cross country ski.

MK Mountaineering Skis.

CL Mountaineering skis. They are wider than a cross country ski, but they are not as wide as a down mountain ski. They are suitable more for up and down skiing that you would get in the woods on a cross country trails. Of course, whether you are familiar with this Stowe-Mansfield derby they have here every spring. Have you ever seen one of those?

MK No I haven't seen it, no.

CL There is somewhere between 900-1000 entries and they went by for days. They start up at the top of the mountain and they finish right down back of the church in the village. I watched where they crossed the road over the country road probably the middle 300-400 and it is all types of cross country. Some of them are real real gung-ho skiers, cross-country people, others are just paddling along the best they could. They started in groups of 4 every 30 seconds and it took them a long time to get all the entries off and running and the pile-ups were astronomical. Some of the better skiers were coming around the curves and there would be three or four piling up in a heap and the worst tangles you ever saw. But they all had fun. Nobody got hurt. The winning time was something like 40 minutes from the top of Mansfield down to the village, that is going right along.

MK That certainly is.

CL It was a beautiful day too. For once they had wonderful weather. Perfect for that kind of skiing. Of course, they have a sugar ????. They had that last week amongst the raindrops, fog and who knows what else. That is held on the nose dive, as you probably remember. There is a few people who like skiing.

MK You mentioned that when you were cutting the trails on Mansfield, there weren't so many skiers.

CL What?

MK You said that when you were cutting the trails, there weren't many skiers.

CL No, when we first used to ski on Mt. Mansfield, if we saw three or four skiers, we were doing pretty well. But every succeeding year there would be more and more on weekends. They all had to climb up the mountain up until 1940. There was a period of about six years where if you got to the top, you did it on your own steam. So that kind of ~~lessen~~ ^{lessen} the number of skiers that arrived at the top of the mountain. But the minute the chair lift was in, then the number of skiers of course increased dramatically. After the war, things really took off then. We were just getting going when the war came on in 1941. In other words, the beginning of the second season. You see, this lift here was powered by a gasoline motor and the WPA or whatever that was in charge of the rations allowed this lift to operate because they said it was a recreational facility for the armed services personnel. Any armed services personnel that ever showed up got free rides. We operated on a very sketchy basis, not more than four or five hours a day. Then we shut it down one day during the week. Everybody was happy. Nobody complained very much. As long as they got to ride once in awhile. Nowadays, if the lift is down, people are just like sheep without a leader. They don't know what to do. They mill around, mill around and think where can we go next. Where is the next lift? You can climb up if you want to! Gee, all the way up there. Of course, with the boots, those plastic boots they have nowadays, are killers as far as movement is concerned. They are fine for skiing but climbing, walking around, not so funny. That is the beauty of the old leather boots. You have a little more freedom of movement there.

- MK The old leather boots, ~~to~~ ^{did} they use snowshoes ~~to~~ to climb up the mountain and then ski down. ~~Do~~ ^{Did} they carry snow shoes?
- CL No they ~~were~~ ^{wore} their skis.
- MK They ~~could~~ ^{could} climb up in skis?
- CL Yes, because after a year or two, maybe a couple of years, three years, climbers which were;—there were two types of climbers, but they were attached to the bottom of the skis. One of them was a plush cloth arrangement which when attached to the bottom of the ski would allow the ski to go forward. But the minute you started backwards the little hairs or components of the plush caught backwards. They wouldn't allow the ski to go backwards. Then there was an improvement over that. They had what you called real seal skins. They were much better because you could go forward. The hair on the seal skins would lay back much nicer than they would on the plush, but they were also more expensive too. Anyway, most climbers used some kind of climbing device like plush or seal skins. The real skiers used seal skins because once you get to the top, you peel off the seal skins, roll them up, put them in a pack, smooth down and wax a little bit and away you go. All set for down hill.
- MK Just to go back. I think the last part was missed. You said with the climbers that the average skier would take about an hour to get up.
- CL That was an average that a good climber could make it in an hour easy. The funny part of it is, like in those times, we would make it quicker on the nose dive than you could on the toll road. Because it was easier to accomplish in one stride to go up the nose dive in elevation in rise than you would go up the toll road. It would take me an hour, at least a hour and a quarter to go up the toll road. I could make it in the nose dive in an hour easy, on decent climbing conditions.
- MK You got your exercise though.
- CL Exercise, of course at that stage of the game, you might say that I was in my prime physically. I was about 35, roughly in that area. The guys that worked in the CCC's, a lot of the boys actually put on weight, not because they got fat, because they developed their muscles. Most of them were pretty ravished when it came to lunch time too. Some of the boys were too far away from camp

to come back to camp to eat. Each one carried their own lunch. It consisted of four double sandwiches. I mean there would be eight slices of bread, plus a piece of cake or something like that for desert. If they were working in the same general area several days, they would quite often have the same place where they would eat their lunch. They used to have these five gallon cans. They put some water in it and tea and have their own tea and sugar to go with it. They weren't starved to death by any means. 90% of them ate the four sandwiches and their desert without any trouble. They had a whole hour to eat it. They weren't rushed. So that is the reason why they were able to live a healthy life and develop their bodies physically and even put on weight. It wasn't fat, it was muscle. I remember one guy, he was quite a eater and they would have inspection on camp early in the morning. The inspection officer was an outside officer. He came down and all the guys were lined up. He came down through the line and said to each one, are you getting plenty to eat. The guy would say yes sir. I am fine. He would come to one guy and said, No, I am not getting enough to eat and the inspection officer turned around to the camp commander and says, see that this man gets double rations and that he eats them. And he did, he ate them. Eight sandwiches. I don't know how he ever lasted, but anyway.

MK Sixteen slices of bread.

CL I never ate more than three at the most, so I would give my sandwich to someone else. All inquisitive people, pick your sandwiches apart to see what you got to eat. They always had peanut butter and jam. To this day, I like peanut butter and jam. You know that is a real substantial sandwich. I like peanut butter and jam.

MK Generations of children have been raised on peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

CL If it weren't for peanut butter and jam, I don't know what to heck we would do. We used to have another sandwich. I don't know if you have ever heard of it, but the filling was what you called head cheese. It is kinnd of a white suspicious looking substance. When they would find one of those sandwiches, they would say, well we have a grease trap sandwich today. Because that was one of the duties they had to do once in awhile was to clean up the grease trap. You know what that would be; a pretty greasy mess. But they ate them. Hunger does funny things to people. Work your fingers off and you eat a lot of things that you wouldn't eat ordinarily.

Are you familiar with the mill in Groton that used to be at the lower end of Groton Pond. The Miller Mill. When I was a kid; oh about that time, the mill was in full operation then. Anyway, I got some of the old timers' recollections of the various phases of operation. If you ever want to look it up, there is a copy of them in the Groton Public Library. One of the school districts in Groton, next to the ??? Ricker Mills, I can't think of the name of the district now, offhand, but I got some excerpts from different people that went to school there.

MK Did you get interested in doing that because you had your camp over there?

CL That was partially the reason. Then here in Stowe, I have quite a bit about rural schools here in Stowe. I got a little bit, not a complete history, but a little bit about the rural schools here in Stowe. One time there were 19 here. This is a fairly large town and so there are quite a few school districts. Did you ever do anything with rural schools?

MK In a previous series "Voices in the Hills", I did an interview with a couple of rural school teachers. One who had taught at Squabble Hollow School in Lyndonville for about 30 years.

CL That was a present day new outfit wasn't it. I lived in St. Johnsbury for about 10 years so I'm vaguely familiar with that area. But here in Stowe, I have taken it upon myself to dig into some of the history around here. Especially rural schools and some of the old settlements like up in Brownsville and up in Sturham. It was quite a farm area at one time, especially Brownsville and Sturham. Do you ever do any research on the old hill farms of yesterday.

MK How did you get interested in rural schools?

CL Oh, I guess, I don't know really except that it was a sort of an appealing proposition, so I got all the material together and even got pictures of most of the schools. Some pictures showing pupils that went to the school at that particular time.

MK You know, one of the things that we are also interested in in our project is doing one of the programs ~~_____~~ ~~_____~~ on rural schools. I may come back and talk to you some more about that. When we get a little closer to knowing for sure what we want to do with it.

CL I have got, for what it is worth anyway, I have got a fairly complete outline of the little schools here in Vermont and in Stowe.

MK That is great.

CL You can pick my brains for what it is worth.

MK Okay, good. Well, one other thing that I wanted to touch on, having to do with the CCC's camps: There were a lot of educational activities that went on after the work day was over, weren't there?

CL Yes, there were.

MK Could you talk about some of those?

CL Well every, I would say at least twice a week, in the evening, they had classes and they were conducted by the Educational Department, along with on the job training which enabled an enrollee to learn a skill like carpentry, electricity, plumbing, heavy equipment operation, truck driving, blacksmithing, things like that. As I said before, quite a few different ones pursued that subject after they got out of the CCC's. I know here in town, there were two or three different ones that really made a pretty good name for themselves. I mean that they were quite good at it. Carpentry, auto mechanics and things like that. In other words, a CCC enrollee had the opportunity presented to him to improve his educational background in case he wanted to. They weren't forced to do it. If they felt like it and were able eventually to accumulate that knowledge, there it was. These classes were voluntary. They weren't forced on them, because there were some guys that never would get above the pick and shovel. But they all had a chance to learn and improve themselves. My observation is that out of 100 people, 95% of them can improve their lot by their own application to the various subjects.

MK Did the camps have newspapers?

CL Some camps had little news sheets occasionally. But I think they were more periodic than regular. Every now and then they had a social gathering, dancing, maybe a light feed. They played baseball a lot of course in the summertime. Anybody that wanted to could take up winter sports too. If they could find equipment. They were encouraged to improve themselves both materialistically and recreationally, either way or both ways. There was

nothing forced about the issue. It was entirely up to them.

MK Do you remember whether any of the men in your camp were involved in musical activities?

CL Some of the guys, boys were musically inclined. In fact, they had little orchestras formed amongst themselves on occasion. I don't remember any stupendous, great musical involvement, but they were musically inclined. A few outfits even put on dramatic shows. They were generally busy doing something like that. If they wanted to spend their time for self-improvement, there it was in front of them. Nobody made them. It was up to them. A lot of them did it. We had the technical staff didn't tell them to do this or that, it was occasionally suggested maybe they would like to do this or that.

MK Were any of the activities organized to the point that somebody would get it started, and then let the men know if was available, and then it was up to them. Or did it all evolve out of their interests?

CL There were organized recreational groups. About once a week, if they were right in Waterbury, they could go to movies any night that they felt like it. But if they happened to be out in the woods somewhere, they were brought in at least once a week to go to the movies or take a shower or whatever they wanted to do. Then they were transported back to camp. When they were here in Moscow, they used to take off to Morrisville to a movie. I know other camps with the same idea. At least once a week they were given a recreational night, they call it. There again, they didn't have to go if they didn't want to. If they wanted, they would find a place for them to go.

MK What happened to the physical camps, the buildings and stuff?

CL Well, most of them eventually were torn down. In fact, I know they are all torn down. A few were bought by individuals and taken apart. The buildings themselves were destroyed one way or another. If they were left standing, they eventually became dangerous, occupationally. If anyone happened to be in them and they collapsed, they might come back on whoever owned the buildings at the time, which was the Forest Service. With very few exceptions, most of the buildings were taken apart and taken down. The one exception that I can think of is this site camp up in the notch which is now the state dorm. You probably heard of that. It is operated by the Forest Service for

people that don't have too much money, young students who can come ski or hike or whatever they want. Summer and winter operated.

MK What is the name of the camp?

CL I don't know what the official name of it is, but everybody refers to it as State Dorm. It is operated by the Forest & Parks Department in Montpelier. For a minimum charge, the individual may do some of the work, cleaning, beds and so forth. In other words, a very small fee has to be collected in order to cover the cost of food and so forth. They also have fairly strict rules. You can't be running in and out all night long. You know what I mean. Believe it or not, there are still people, still young people that do patronize that camp. It is almost like a youth hostel camp. The same idea.

MK Did you keep in touch with any of the people that have been in the camps?

CL Well, I have kept in touch with foremen. We have been in close contact for a long time. At one time or another, all three of us were stationed at the Waterbury Camp, Moscow Camp and the Notch. So we have maintained relationships all these years. In fact, one of the men, just lives up the street just about 1/4 mile. The other fellow is a deserter. He goes to Florida in the winter time. He is coming back this spring. If he doesn't he will be ostracized. Other than that, most of the so called enrollees disappeared, died off or moved off or something. There are not too many left in this area that I know of. Of course, over a period of over 7 or 8 years, there were quite a few men passed along. To keep track of them all is almost a hopeless task you might say.

MK At least when ^{war} ~~war~~ came along, did a lot of men go out of the camps and into the Army?

CL Practically all of them went into the Army that I know of. They were just about the right age. Unless they couldn't pass the physical exam, they were all candidates you might say. They were snapped up like nothing. As I say, especially the equipment, I don't know about the men, were transferred right up to the Alaskan Highway. That was pushed through and everything. As fast as they could.

That was a big thrust. You know that was quite a feat. Pushing that road through that long distance of heavy darkness going in places, weather, miles where nobody lived. But now, it is a pretty well travelled, maintained highway. So if you feel like it, you can drive from here up to Fairbanks, Alaska. A couple of miles, more or less. When I was a young fellow, I always thought I would like to go to Alaska. I still subscribe to a magazine called the "The Alaskan ????" or whatever they call it now.

MK One thing I wanted to ask you, if you can be ^{analytical} ??? about your experience. Obviously, the men who were the enrollees in the camp gained a lot of skills and had a chance to come away with a lot of things that maybe they hadn't had when they went in. What do you think you came away with? What do you think you learned from the experience or took away with you?

CL From the camp?

MK ^{From that} ~~part~~ part of your life ~~was~~.

CL One thing I found ^{was} that 95% of the boys or workmen that are in the work world are intelligent, able to accept instruction, and are willing to work. I was somewhat conscious of that before because of my work in the Highway Department. I was convinced that in my years with the CCC's, that if you explain things and sort of lead the people the best you could, they were willing to work for you. That has been the case ever since. In my experience here in the mountain, working for the Mt. Mansfield Company is the same idea. You have to show your people that you know what you are talking about and have to demand certain regulations from them, but not to the point of being dogmatic or a harsh or anything like that. You suggest things, rather than take them by the nose and make them do it. 99% of the people will do it. Because they like to do it. They like being able to form their own ideas about how to do things. If they need instruction and you are able to give it, you should be able to give it to them in a informal sort of way. In other words, do unto them, what you would have them do unto yourself. If you live by that rule, you won't be in any trouble. That's a fact.

MK You ^{clearly} ~~really~~ learned a lot about human nature through that experience, really.

Charles Lord

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CL Well, yes. The three job positions that I have held have always been in contact with a lot of people. It is always the same. I approached it with the same idea. Maybe I wasn't one who would set the world on fire, but at least I led the people away from the fire in a safe and ~~orderly~~^{orderly} manner. In that way, you get respect from the majority of the people.

MK Well thank you very much for taking the time to go through this.

CL Well it is perfectly alright. I could blow your ear off all day. In case, sometime in the future, I might be able to help you.

MK Thank you.

CL I must say that you are a pretty good quizer too!

MK Well thank you.

This is an excerpt of Charlie Lord reading from a paper he wrote about some of his early ski adventures.

CL: We all worked at the Highway Department in Montpelier and we soon learned that each of us was interested in skiing. Probably ??? which he attended and organized winter sports program which in those early days consisted entirely of jumping and cross-country. ??? who is head of McGill University in Montreal was also exposed to organize winter sports. I did some cross-country skiing around St. Johnsbury using one long pole and a pair of skis that had two grooves in the bottom and a loose toe strap and leather heel strap. So beginning in the winter, 1929 - 1930, we began to practice together on weekends in the hills around Berlin and Northfield. We practiced quite seriously and read everything about skiing. However, printed instructions were scarce, so what progress we made was mostly by both strength and ignorance. In spite of this, we slowly kept improving, so we thought. After Saturday afternoon skiing, we sometimes went to a place in Barre where we could get a quart bottle of real Canadian ale for \$1. We would sit at a table in the kitchen of this home and discuss in detail the results of the afternoons efforts. In March, 1931, ??? and I decided to tackle Camels Hump. The roads were not plowed very well at that time and from N. Duxbury to the place where we left our car was not plowed at all. It was in fairly good shape, however, as they were lumbering near the foot of Camels Hump and we didn't know any better. I ~~shudder to~~^{shudder to} think if we had ever met a log team coming down the road while we were going up. We never did. We figured we were lucky. After we left the car at the last farmers door yard, by the name of O'Neil, we had to climb about a half a mile to where Professor Monroe lived with his seven dogs. As we progressed up to the bottom of the foot trail, the snow got deeper and deeper and I was still using a single

long pole. I was soon pushing the ~~the~~ pole nearly all its length. So at a point about 2/3's the way up the mountain, we had to turn back. However, our return trip was uneventful and I did learn that two poles would work so much better.

MK Did you know Professor Monroe?

CL Anytime we ever went by his house, he always came out and talked to us. You know, just a matter of conversation. But he would have seven dogs, various sizes and shapes, ranging from big St. Bernards to little yapals (as I call them). He was the Italian professor from Princeton University. He built part of the Long Trail. At that time, they were clearing up there. He lived in one of the old farm houses. Callahans. Since he passed away, his dogs were deceased before him, he had a dog cemetery created where he buried all his dogs and each dog had a headstone and I have seen that cemetery in the last couple years. But it is all grown up there. I had a heck of a time finding it. Although there is a path to it. It has absolutely all changed. In 50 years, a pasture can grow up into a forest and make all the difference in the world. But we gave up Camels Hump because it was in the first place so hard to get there, second place the trail up the mountain backwards. Nothing to brag about. Mansfield was much nicer because they had the toll road and easier to get at, even though we had to leave our car down at the foot of Harlow Hill and walk all the way from there. It was much more productive. So we finally settled on Mansfield as the place. We did go up Burke Mountain a couple of times. Have you ever been up Burke?

MK No, I haven't.

CL It was an old carriage road up there too when we used to ski there which was skiable; but there again, it was harder to get at for us than coming up here to Mansfield. And besides it was here at Mansfield they were beginning to slowly awake to the possibilities of downhill skiing. Everything happened in about 50 years more or less from practically nothing to the present day level of skiing. If you go back 50 years from today, 1937, and we were just getting started then. So a little over 50 years. for what it is worth, I can say I saw the whole thing evolve.

MK When you started cutting the trails on the mountain, did any one realize at that point, did they have inclining of how popular skiing was going to be?

Charles Lord

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CL We actually cut those trails, the Bruce Trail and the Nose Dive, thinking only of ourselves. We didn't think, or imagine the vast hordes of skiers that now populate that area. We had no idea of the expansion of the sport. I remember during that period on the other side of the mountain, there was a retired mining engineer over there and he said something about putting a lift in. I really scoffed at the idea, because I didn't think there would be enough people to ride the thing, but I was wrong. Anyway, in the early days, we just built the trails for general amusement for the few skiers there were around. As I said, climbing the mountain sort of curtailed the vast crowds you get nowadays. There weren't too many skiers anyway. So even before the lift, if they got 50-60 skiers at any one time on the mountain, that was a big crowd. This proves that people aren't as ambitious as they might be. So I guess that is about it. Unless you have some other questions?

MK Thank you. No, not at the moment. What I would like to do after I have had a chance to listen back to the tape, get the transcript on it and stuff, I might have some other questions.

CL Anytime, that would be fine.