Four Men of Peace

Oral Histories of Conscientious Objectors
Who Served in Civilian Public Service Camps in World War II

by

Dorothy Nichols

A Senior Colloquium Project of
the World Arts and Culture Department
The University of California at Los Angeles

June 11, 1992

Dedicated to my Uncle Malcolm, a man of peace.

Acknowledgements

The following project has been a labor of love. The research I did yielded some surprises that cast a different view on the world and the American government during World War II, but the real joy of this experience has come from the personal interviews with men who chose to serve mankind and their country by doing public service instead of military service. It is hard to describe how much their stories touched me. When Jim Dyer told me he became a conscientious objector the moment he saw a vision of the head of Christ on a mountainside, it was hard to continue the interview.

I want to thank my uncle and the other the men who let me set up my camera and talk to them. It could not have been easy to be so open in the presence of a video camera and in some cases a person they had never met. I also want to thank the men who spoke freely with me over the telephone about their experiences.

Additionally, I want to thank Beverly Robinson for helping me decide this was the project for me. She was right.

Finally, I want to thank my advisor Michael Jones, who met with me on a weekly basis. He was enthusiastic and more helpful than I could have ever imagined. His encouragement and direction was invaluable to my research and the interview process.

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"The pioneers of a warless world are the young men (and women) who refuse military service."

Albert Einstein

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Introduction

The First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States guarantees, among other things, freedom of religion, but complying with this amendment has not been an easy task for the American government, particularly during war when it has encountered a number of people whose religion does not allow them to participate in the government's main objective. This paper primarily deals with one war, World War II, one experiment in dealing with the problem, Civilian Public Service and the oral histories of four men whose consciences did not allow them to support the taking of human life.

What I wanted to do was to conduct oral histories to discover not only the missing historical details but the feelings of the men involved in the experiment called Civilian Public Service. My historical research yielded some surprising inequities in the treatment of these men and I wanted to understand these inequities from the viewpoint of the participants. My group of subjects had some similarities that are important to note. All four men were Methodist, a church not historically known for its position on peace. They were not surrounded by supportive communities urging them or requiring them to make the decision they made. Also, all four men came from the same geographic area, Southern California, and all four knew each other from belonging to an organization called "Friendly Fellowship" located in Whittier. Additionally, all

four men were unmarried when they made their decision. They had no dependents. Three of them had college degrees not common among the Amish or the Brethren. Their experiences can not be identified as typical if there is such a thing.

In my Appendix of Methodology and Organization you will find the list of questions with which I began each interview. These questions were varied depending on the responses and questions regarding areas of specific interest were added.

What I discovered from my questions was that these men's lives were irrevocably changed by this experience; yet, they had somewhat different feelings about the success of the CPS experience in general. Two of them were frustrated with the fact that they felt CPS was the government's way of punishing people who would not play war. They felt that much of the work given the men was "made work," while the other two had stronger feelings of having actually done work of "National Importance."

To understand these comments and the rest of the proceeding interviews it is necessary to preface this report with some historical background and to first define a few terms.

Conscription is a governments' "compulsory enrollment of persons." It is most often used to require citizens to participate in military service (Websters p. 241). In the United States, conscription has almost always been connected with a war. Unlike many countries, the United States has rarely required military service from its citizens except in war or in threat of war. In this country, it requires an act of Congress to permit

the government to begin the conscription process. Prior to World War II, these congressional edicts requiring military service from its citizens failed to adequately provide for those who could not go to war for religious reasons.

The Historic Peace Churches or HPCs, are a group of religious bodies who have existed throughout most of our Euro-American history and whose teachings prohibit participation in killing humans even under the guise of war. In varying degrees their position to war is reflected in this statement made in 1660 by George Fox who founded the Society of Friends, also known as the Quakers.

> We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatever; this is our testimony of the whole world. The Spirit of Christ by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil, and again to move us unto it; and we certainly know, and testify to the world, that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us unto all truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ, or for the kingdoms of this world . . . Therefore we cannot learn war any more.

The Historic Peace Churches include the Mennonites, the Amish, the Hutterites, the Quakers and the Brethren. They were the catalysts for the formation of Civilian Public Service, as will be explored later.

A conscientious objector to war is a person whose conscience for religious or philosophical reasons does not allow him or her to participate in war. The key word in this definition is

"participate." For some people and for their churches, participation in war means the act of personally killing another human being. For other groups it means the act of doing any work that might aid another in performing the act of killing another human being. For groups like the Jehovah's Witnesses, participation means sanctifying the act of war by even allowing themselves to be conscripted for any reasons or services whatsoever by a government.

The problem with these various definitions of participation, is that the American government designed the machinery of its bureaucracy to deal with only those conscientious objectors who it could assign to non-combatant service and not to deal fairly with the men who, for religious reasons, could not participate in any military endeavor.

The Birth of Civilian Public Service

It was because of the cruelty of the treatment of their boys during World War I* that the Historic Peace Churches banded together to find an alternative for religious conscientious objectors in the future. Their answer was to see to it that subsequent conscription laws legally defined an alternative to prison for those who would not support the war effort for religious reasons.

In the United States, in between World War I and World War II, there was a metamorphosis of opinion about war. Anti-war groups not necessarily connected with a religious body sprang up everywhere. Even after Hitler's invasion of Poland and Japan's expansion into areas of the Pacific and China, Americans, remembering the horrors of "The War to End All Wars," - World War I - strongly resisted entering this one. Despite this, Roosevelt began building up the nation's bedraggled navy and air force to be fit to fight and requested that Congress draft a conscription law that would allow him to build up personnel in all the armed forces.

The first draft of the law was almost exactly like that of World War I. No provision was made for conscientious objectors who for religious reasons could not assist the military.

*See the Historical Appendix for history of conscientious objection in the United States prior to World War II.

Because of this, the Historic Peace Churches formed a strong political force and screamed bloody murder. Though their efforts were mostly thwarted, they were able to add a rider to the conscription law that, in essence, allowed those who were proved religious objectors to be able to do "work of national importance" instead of military service. This work was to be under civilian direction.

According to Albert N. Keim's book The CPS Story, out of the 34,506,923 men who registered for the draft there were 72,354 registered as conscientious objectors. A number of these men accepted non-combatant service, a number failed the basic physical exam, over 6,000 were imprisoned and 12,000 qualified and were chosen for Civilian Public Service.

The government eventually liked the idea of Civilian Public Service for a number of reasons. First of all, it was fully financed by the peace churches. The HPC's were to pay for all the men's food and clothing and anything else they needed. They were to suggest where the camps could be located and they were to run them. General Lewis Hershey, who took over as director of the Selective Service called the CPS an "experiment in democracy to find out whether our democracy is big enough to preserve minority rights in a time of national emergency." He also said "The CO, by my theory, is best handled if no one hears of him," (Keim pp. 31-32).

No sooner had the Selective Service accepted the idea of assigning those who qualified to the camps than it decided it had

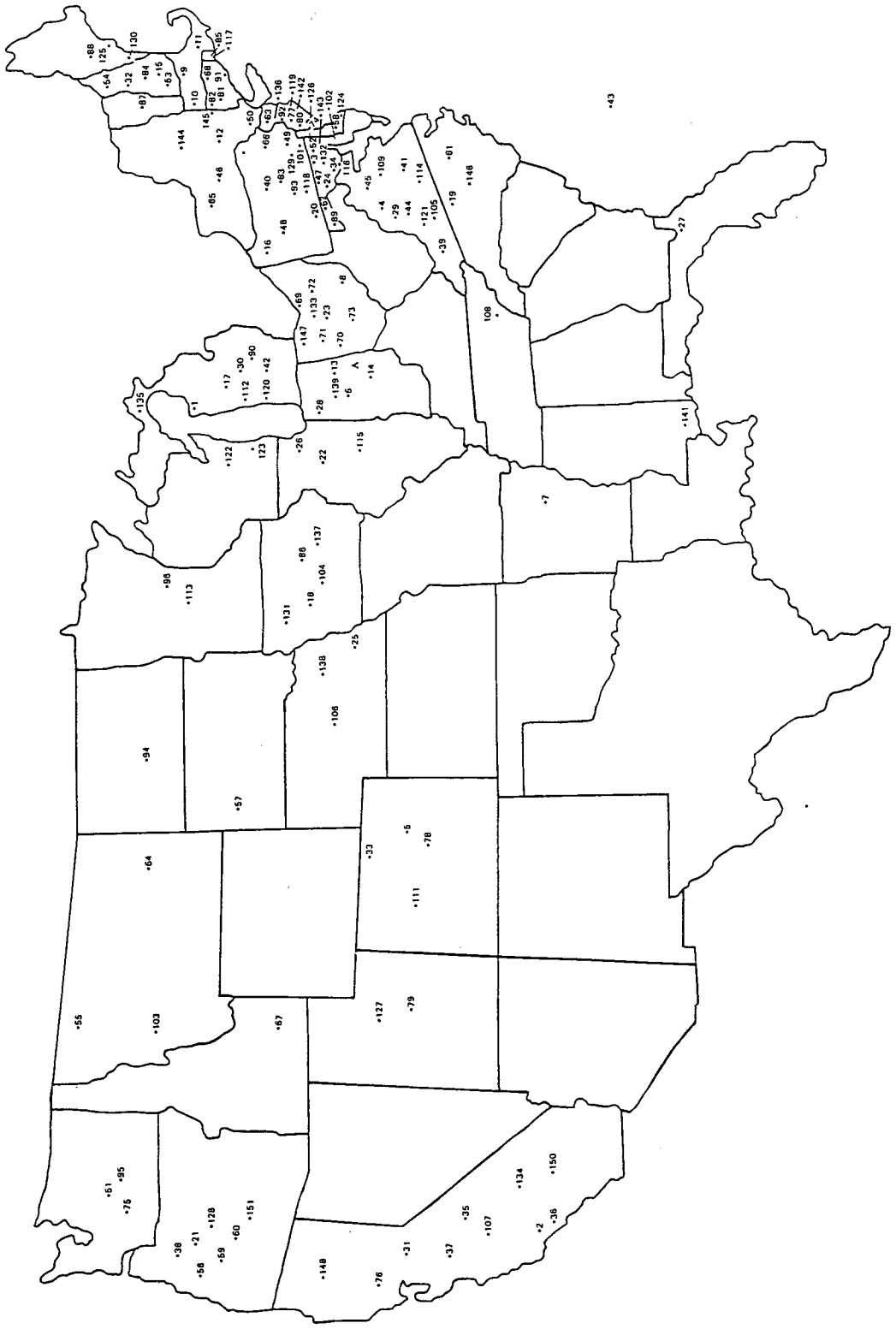
jurisdiction over the camps and the men's lives just as if they were in the military. Refusal to do a particular project was treated as seriously as a military refusal and many men went to prison. Between the Selective Service and the men, however, was an organization called the National Board for Religious Objectors. This organization handled what complaints it could and handled all CPS concerns in Washington.

On the following page you will find a map of all the 151 of the CPS main camp sites copied from Albert Keim's book. You will notice that most of the camps were heavily in the East, on the West coast and sparingly across the Midwest. Only three camps were located in the deep South.

Most of the camps were run by the HPCs; the American Friends Service Committee, the Mennonite Central Commission and the Brethren. There were, however, camps run by other churches. The Methodists' Commission on World Peace had three camps. The Catholics had one short-lived camp called Camp Simon. Mostly, however, the churches outside of the Historic Peace Churches did not support their members' decisions to be conscientious objectors and here is where the HPCs made a heroic decision.

Despite the fact that these churches are not rich churches and, in fact, boast populations largely from poor rural areas, the churches decided to support any of the men who qualified through Selective Service for the camps. Amish families who had never been to college were supporting Methodists, Presbyterians,

Map of CPS Camp Sites



Hindus, Moslems and others. It is true they did not make up the majority of the men, but they were welcomed with support.

Finding communities who would accept a camp was not an easy task. Prejudice against CPSers was high. However, there existed a number of Conservation Corps Camps that were closed due to the outbreak of WWII. These provided out of the way places to put CPSers and work that would have been discontinued otherwise.

The majority of work given CPSers was viewed as "made work," and many of the men became frustrated with their contributions. These men wanted to serve their country, only in terms of peaceful work. The government, however, did not care about getting any particular jobs done or using the men in the most efficient way. Doctors were given jobs as firefighters. Social workers were peeling potatoes. It was frustrating for the men to feel they were marking time endlessly.

As the CPS experience continued, however, some of the churches and men found ways to be more productive. A team of smoke jumpers, who were CPSers, was formed to parachute into forested areas to fight fires. This was dangerous and exciting work. Men were transferred to work in the understaffed mental hospitals. Men were loaned to farmers who needed extra hands. Some men volunteered to be part of "guinea pig" projects. Others worked on ridding areas of hookworm by building new toilet facilities. Some did work in a Puerto Rico project. A large group trained to do relief work in war-torn countries and even as they were traveling by boat to their destinations the Congress

passed a law forbidding conscientious objectors to leave the country and the boats turned back home.

Two of the men I interviewed spent time working in the mental hospitals. This was a rewarding experience to them. The hospitals were not only understaffed but usually staffed with attendants who were uneducated. Those of the CPSers who were educated began immediately working for mental hospital reforms. There is a good deal of evidence that the work they did changed the direction of mental health policies in this country.

The other group of men who may have felt more productive were those participating in guinea pig projects. Bob McCullagh outlines his feelings about being a guinea pig for the Semi-Starvation project that hoped to find the best way to rehabilitate survivors of the war in the low-lands of Europe. But, his project was only one of a number of projects. One group of men ate grass for a period of six months to see its nutritional value. One group voluntarily contracted malaria, another typhus, another infectious hepatitis. Experiments were done testing vitamins, pneumonia, lice killers and the common cold. One group allowed themselves to bitten by bacteria-carrying mosquitoes.

So, there were meaningful projects and meaningful work for some who were lucky and there was grueling "made work" for those who were not.

Also, like any isolated group there was lore and there was prejudice and there were inequities.

Inequities

In my research I found a number of inequities concerning the COs in Civilian Public Service.

1. To begin with, they were not paid. Although prisoners of war were paid, COs received only the $2.50 monthly stipend awarded them by the HPCs to buy stamps.

2. The money that was earned by the COs for doing farming and mental hospital work was given to the government and not used to support them or their families. Additionally, although it was requested that this money not be used to fund the war effort, no accounting of the money was ever made. In fact, no one seems to know where it went.

3. The government promised a system that was to be overseen by civilian directors but almost immediately reneged on this promise and made it a government directed (though not financed) series of projects. This compromised the religious integrity of a number of conscientious objectors and caused more than one to be put in jail for disobeying orders.

4. No compensation was given the families of the men who died in Civilian Public Service for any reason, whether it was heroic or not. Additionally, although the men were required to serve for whatever length of time the government arbitrarily decided, they were not eligible for veteran benefits or the G.I. bill. Nor did they have health insurance.

5. Because of the intense dislike of conscientious objectors, government policy allowed states to pass laws that

forbade them from becoming teachers and in some cases from getting their licenses as doctors and social workers.

6. Some men were sent to camps without ever being officially classified as consciencious objectors (4E). It seems that certain draft boards disliked having too many COs reported in their geographic area. Further, some men were sent into the camps even though they were classified 4F, that is, physically unfit for military service. These were men who would never have been asked to serve in the military, but were sent to camps, often isolated from the public, simply because they had declared themselves as conscientious objectors.

7. CPSers were released from the camps based on a dubious points system. Some conscientious objectors were held in the camps for nearly two years after the war had ended. This caused strikes in Glendora, California and other places and caused a number of men to be put in jail even after they had served years in the system.

Now, instead of talking about history, let's hear from the men who lived it.

Preface to Video Tape Interview Section

The following interviews are presented in the chronological order in which they were taped. The first three transcriptions are primarily indexes to the video tapes and can not be considered as reliable sources of information on their own. They do not state complete answers to questions or reflect the men's personalities. Sometimes they only show where the answers can be found on the tapes. To assist in this, time coding will be found at the left hand margin throughout the interview texts, which can be matched to the coding in the upper right corner of the video tapes.

Only Jim Griffith's interview, the last interview, has been transcribed in its entirety. However, whether the text found here is in index form or full transcription, I urge you to watch the video tapes. In this way, you will be able to experience the passion and the sense of humor of these men, which simply can not be captured in the written word alone.

Introduction to the Interview of Malcolm Nichols

Malcolm Irwin Nichols was born in 1913 in Watsonville, California. He was born with a congenital hearing problem which made it extremely difficult for him to hear anything until the 1960s when more sophisticated hearing devices became available. Not long after his brother's birth in 1917, his family moved to Fresno and then down to Whittier into the little house on Rose Drive he stills occupies.

As a little boy, he was fond of looking at the encyclopedia. He couldn't read it, but he found the pictures of war disturbing. By the time Congress had initiated the conscription law prior to World War II, he had studied the works of Mahatma Ghandi and had become a conscientious objector to war.

When Malcolm went in to register as a conscientious objector, he was sent to the second floor of a bank where he was told to strip down and wait for a doctor. The doctor never showed up and he and a group of other men were sent home. The next thing he knew he was sent a classification of 4F. Had he been given a physical that would have been his classification anyway.

Malcolm worked as a window washer prior to Pearl Harbor. One day a friend of his by the name of Loren Zook came in and told him that he was being sent to Civilian Public Service Camp. This surprised Malcolm because Robert Zook had a metal plate in

his head and was also classified 4F. From that moment on, he knew that he would be called. His mother went down to the draft board to plead his case. His boss went down to the draft board to explain that Malcolm was not fit to serve because of his hearing difficulties. It didn't matter. In December of 1942 he received his papers to report to Elkton, Oregon to do work of national importance.

Elkton was a Quaker-run camp. Malcolm was a Methodist. His church did not support him during his stay. Since he hadn't any dependents the little money he made working on an occasional day off was given to the Quakers to pay for the dependents of other men.

Malcolm served in three CPS camps, #59, #37, and #76. He served from January of 1943 to May of 1946. He worked as a carpenter, a firefighter, a tree planter, a road builder. He often was forced to work with explosives. He closed a number of the camps he worked in, being forced to remain in CPS even after the war ended.

Over the years, Malcolm Nichols kept meticulous records of his time in CPS. He was the major source of the material I collected. He introduced me to all the men I interviewed except Bob McCullagh. He even has a list of the names of all 12,000 men who served in CPS.

Malcolm is politically oriented. The CPS experience changed him irrevocably. His video interview is filled with stories. He

complains about the government's take-over of the CPS program. He has no good words for the military.

Malcolm is a man who has lived his convictions of peace supporting institutions of peace and helping the American Indian. Upon returning from the war, he joined his father in the carpentry business. Ten years ago he began collecting newspapers to be recycled. One recycling plant said it would have to close down if it wasn't for Malcolm's contributions. The money he earned doing that originally helped put a neighbor's child through college. Now in semi-retirement it is his major income.

Malcolm never went to college, but he considers his time in Civilian Public Service as his college education.

I'd like to end the introduction to Malcolm's interview with a letter he wrote in September of 1945. The document is presented here in its unedited form.

DEAR BOB

I HAVE DECIDED TO BRAKE "THAT LONG SILENCE". THANKS FOR YOUR LETTER AWAY BACK IN JAN. FROM THE LOOKS OF IT YOU HAVE SEEN QUITE A BIT OF THIS WORLD.

FOR THE LAST YEAR I HAVE BEEN WORKING IN THE NURSERY SPIKE CAMP OF THE O&C. LOCATED NEARLY A HUNDRED MILES SOUTH WEST OF THE MAIN CAMP ELKTON. PUT UP TWO PORTABLE BUILDINGS 20'x 50'. JUST FINISHED THE FIVE ROOM HOUSE FOR THE FOREMAN ON THE INSIDE. AM WAITING FOR THE BRASS HATS TO MAKE UP THEIR MINDS WHETHER THEY WANT THE OUTSIDE SHINGLED OR THE SIDEING PAINTED. IT HAS BEEN TWO MONTHS SINCE I GOT THE INSIDE FINISHED. LOOKS LIKE I WILL WAIT FOREVER!

WHILE I AM NOT DOING CARPENTER WORK I AM HELPING IN THE NURSERY WEEDING, TRANSPLANTING AND GATHERING CONES. WE RAISE PORT ORFORD CEDAR, DOUGLAS FIR, SOME CYPRESS AND SPRUCE. IN ABOUT ANOTHER MONTH OR TWO WE WILL BE IN ONE OF THREE, CAMPS AS I HAVE BEEN IN THREE SINCE COMING HERE. ONE OF THE FIRES WE HAD THIS SUMMER BURNED OUT ONE OF THE AREAS WE PLANTED LAST YEAR AND THE YEAR BEFORE.

I WAS ON THE TILLAMOOK FIRE THREE WEEKS AGO, WORKING ON THE FIREBRAKE, WHICH SERVED AS A ROAD. BOY! I WAS GLAD WHEN THEY TOOK ME OFF THE POWDER CARRYING CREW, AND PUT ME ON THE WIRING UP OF THE CHARGES. WE WERE IN ROUGH COUNTRY. I DON'T THINK WE WILL BE CALLED OUT AGAIN THIS SEASON:; AS THERE ARE ONLY FIVE OF US AT THIS CAMP. ONE NEVER KNOWS! WE HAVE OUR BED ROLLS READY TO LEAVE ON A MOMENTS NOTICE.

I AM REALIZING MORE AND MORE THAT IT IS NOT PRIMARILY LAW WHICH UPHOLDS MORAL STANDARDS, BUT LAWS ARE MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSCIENCE OF PEOPLE. WHEN THAT CONSCIENCE DETERIORATES, NO LAW CAN TAKE ITS PLACE.

THUS IT SEEMS TO BE THAT THE FINAL ENDING OF WAR RESTS LESS IN POLITICAL BLUE PRINTS THAN IN THE CONSCIENCE OF MANKIND. ONLY WHEN THIS CONSCIENCE IS ROUSED TO THE POINT WHERE THE METHODS OF WAR ARE RECOGNIZED AS WRONG WILL BETTER METHODS OF OVERCOMING EVIL BE LOOKED FOR AND PUT INTO PRACTICE THROUGH POLITICAL AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE WORLD.

WHEN I WAS HOME ON MY LAST FURLOUGH I HARDLY NEW ANY OF THE FOLKS AT THE CHURCH. THERE WERE SO MANY NEW PEOPLE THAT I HAD NOT MET BEFORE. DR. KALER IS OUR PASTER. MERLE P. SMITH IS OUR NEW ASSISTANT TO THE PASTOR. HE SEEMS TO BE DOING A GOOD JOB.

HOPE THIS LETTER FINDS YOU IN GOOD HEALTH AND ON THE LIST TO RETURN TO THE USA. HOW ARE YOUR FOLKS?

YOUR FRIEND

MALCOLM

This letter was viewed as too political by those who censored the mail to GIs and was returned to Malcolm unread by his friend, Robert Hollman, who was stationed in Europe.

Oral History Interview
of
Malcolm Nichols
by
Dorothy Nichols

May 5, 1992

Overview only - for use with video tape

2:55

Intro

3:20

False Start

3:46

Q: How did you become a conscientious objector?

A: Talks about looking at encyclopedia as a boy and influence of Mahatma Ghandi.

5:06

Q: So you became a conscientious objector from reading about the world . . .

A: Elaboration on looking at encyclopedia.

6:02

Q: What church did you belong to?

A: Answer.

6:07

Q: Were there lots of conscientious objectors in that group?

A: Answer.

6:36

Q: How many draftable men were in the church?

A: More than 65. One CO went into the army.

7:26

Q: How were you classified?

A: Classified as 4F but sent to Civilian Public Service.

8:07

Q: So you registered as a conscientious objector?

A: Answer.

8:19

Q: Did you have a physical?

A: No.

Q: How did you get a 4F classification?

A: Answer.

8:39

Q: How did they know you were 4F?

A: Answer.

Q: Why were you classified as 4F?

A: Answer.

9:04

Q: So instead of getting CO status they gave you a 4F?

A: Talks about how if he knew better he would have gotten an attorney.

9:42

Q: How were you treated by your draft board?

A: Just got the notice.

10:03

Q: To do you have any stories about how other draft boards treated conscientious objectors?

A: None at that time but since that time he has heard of many. Talks about his understanding of the boards today.

11:18

Q: How did it feel to make such an unpopular decision?

A: Never paid attention to what others thought. When his brother visited the boys did say "Didn't know you had a killer in the family."

13:15

Q: What was the public reaction to conscientious objectors during WWII?

A: Talks about the many conscientious objectors all over the world. Quotes Einstein and discusses a scientist by the name of Pallon.

16:3

Q: Did people do anything to show you they were unhappy you were a CO?

A: Talks about lady who approached him while he was washing windows.

Q: What did she think of that?

A: Talks about Adolph Hitler's solution for COs.

18:50

Q: How did your parents feel?

A: Said they left it up to him. Discussed parents occupations and democracy.

20:36

Q: Do you think you lost friends because of your position?

A: Talks about reaction of people.

21:39

Q: Were you treated differently by the community?

A: Essentially no, with some reservations.

Q: Was there much about COs in the newspapers?

A: Answer.

Q: How were CPS camps opened?

A: Talks of how army changed the original vision of the camps.

23:06

Q: Where were you sent?

A: Answer.

23:15

Q: How many camps were you in?

A: Talks about the camps he closed. Sent to Coleville. Closed camp.

24:05

Q: What did you do in Elkton?

A: Was at Big Creek Camp building a road. Talks about tree planting, Tillamook burn, fighting fires, working with dynamite, dynamite caps going off when pounding rocks during construction and the fact nobody tells the COs anything.

Says that the Brethren camp had a chainsaw. Tells of a couple of boys there being killed by a tree falling. When an 18 year old took his place in felling trees, he talked to him about the dangers.

29:36

Q: Did he do what you said?

A: He was OK, but he was worried for him.

Talked of "kick back" on burned trees and one guy being pushed down a hill into berry bushes by one falling tree.

Q: So your first camp was Elkton?

A: Answer.

31:55

Q: Elkton was a former CCC Camp?

A: Answer.

32:16

Q: So they discontinued CCC?

A: Discussion of merits of CCC.

32:50

Q: So they closed CCC but brought you in?

A: Talked about the types of work done in camp like fighting the blister rust.

34:15

Q: What did you do at Coleville?

A: Tells story of taking beans to Presbyterian Conference grounds and of moving a piano.

36:10

Q: Did you think this work was of national importance?

A: Talks about the fact he felt it was mostly made work. Some COs wanted to go help rebuild in the devastated countries but Congress passed a law that they could not leave this country. Talks about mental hospitals, smoke jumping, dairy testing, starvation guinea pig unit. Says they wanted to get out where there were people to help them.

38:59

Q: Did you fight a lot of forest fires?

A: Talks about how fires were fought and when the men slept.

40:05

Q: How many fires did you fight?

A: Talks about the fires.

40:32

Q: You planted trees?

A: Answer.

40:49

Q: Coleville is a main camp?

A: Talks about spike camps.

41:16

Q: What do you think those trees look like now?

A: Talks about planting in the pouring rain, deer chopping off tops of trees right after they planted them, deer being killed out of season (no connection).

Q: Where did you go after Coleville?

A: Talks about being sent to the spike camp at Glendora. Talks about carpentry problems.

46:22

Q: What were your hours?

A: Answer.

46:38

Q: So you worked six days a week or seven?

A: Answer.

46:59

Q: What did you do on Sundays?

A: Answer.

47:13

Q: Did they have any religious service?

A: Wrote letters home.

47:39

Q: Did you get homesick?

A: Answer (no).

Q: Did some of the other boys?

A: Talks of boy who had never been 15 miles from his home in New York.

Q: How close were you to other communities?

A: Talks of General Hershey and change in program from church to military run project.

Q: You were saying . . . when the camps were started, they weren't under direction of the military?

A: Answer.

49:46

Q: So when the military took over . . .

A: Talks about it being a federal offense to disobey.

50:24

Q: What happened to guys who didn't go to camp?

A: Went to prison.

Q: How did they choose who stayed a long time and who didn't?

A: Talks about Congress trying to pass law that no CPS man could be discharged until the last military man was home.

51:42

Q: Who paid for the camp's operation?

A: The churches paid for normal operation, but when they fought forest fires the government paid.

52:22

Q: Were you ever paid?

A: No. Received a $2.50 stipend a month.

52:47

Q: Farmers paid for the men's work, where did the money go?

A: Fund put away for peaceful purposes.

53:37

Q: So nobody can find where the money went?

A: Joke.

54:00

Q: How did you feel about the government involvement in the camps?

A: If they didn't work, they got in trouble. Talks about how Pop Riley picked on him.

Q: What kind of things did he want done?

A: Talks of visiting camp years after and they cut down all these trees to use for telephone poles.

57:27

Q: Did you know POWs were paid?

A: Answer.

57:49

Q: How did that make you feel?

A: Answer.

57:57

Q: Then it was better to be the enemy?

A: Answer.

58:40

Q: Some men joined the army from CPS camp

A: Some believed churches had no right to back military.

Beginning of second High 8 tape recorded on same VHS tape. Numbering begins again.

1:35

Q: You were talking about "Kit" Carson?

A: Tells story of Negro boy who committed suicide. Tells of one boy getting a letter from his girlfriend dumping him.

Q: What did "Kit" have to do with this boy?

A: Talks about racial prejudice.

6:00

Q: Some men who went into CPA later joined the army. Why?

A: Talks about the army.

6:35

Q: Non-combatant service?

A: No straight into the army.

6:59

Q: What happened to the families of men who were in CPS?

A: Talks of how the Historic Peace Churches tried to help the families. Tells a story of how he washed windows on one of his furloughs and gave the money to help support the families.

8:19

Q: What happened?

A: Answer.

Q: Did the government give the families money?

A: Answer.

8:51

Q: Did you think the work was hard?

A: Talks about the work. Talks about how a doctor wanted him to walk out. The doctor walked out committing a federal offense . . .

10:25

Q: Wasn't there one who wasn't allowed to practice medicine after walking out?

A: Story about man who walked out and wasn't allowed to practice social work afterwards.

Q: Were you ever a guinea pig?

A: "I was a political guinea pig."

Q: Did you know anyone who volunteered for that?

12:30

Q: What did you think of men who volunteered for the guinea pig project?

A: Answer.

13:01

Q: Why did you think they volunteered?

A: Talks about Starvation Project.

13:47

Q: What did you think of these guys?

A: Answer.

14:42

Q: What are you strongest memories?

A: "If I had to do it over, I don't know if I would."

Q: Why?

A: Because it was made work. Talks about sending home for tools.

16:00

Q: What do you think was fair about how COs were treated.

A: That they let the military take over.

17:04

A: Tells story about friend who worked in violent ward at the mental hospital. Talks about atomic bomb waste.

Q: What was your reaction to the revelation about the concentration camps in Nazi Germany?

A: Talks about it being a normal military action.

20:40

Q: Once you knew they were murdering people, how did you propose to stop them without going to war?

A: Answer.

21:18

Q: How would you have stopped them without the military?

A: Discusses "trickle-down" theory and how injustice causes explosions. Talks about the duty of the Church and about the recent riots.

22:45

Q: Going back to WWII, you are in camp, you find out about this, did it make men want to join the army?

A: Answer.

23:30

Q: You never felt you needed to rejustify your position?

A: Comments on the Gulf War.

24:19

Q: Two more questions. One, did you have any favorite characters? What kind of people were in CPS? What were they like?

A: Talks about the Quaker camp, guys who smoked who weren't Quakers.

26:07

Q: It's been more than 40 years, how do you view the experience now when you look back?

A: Talks about not trusting the military and the politicians and what he saw in the papers.

Q: I just want a final statement.

A: Tells story about baby hooked on nicotine.

Q: I need a final statement on CPS.

A: Says his experience was his college education. Complains about being 4F and being required to serve.

Q: Did anyone refuse to go to camp?

A: Did he go to prison?

33:03

Q: You could be excommunicated if you went into CPS?

A: Answer.

Q: What kind of work did you do?

34:20

A: Reforested forests, planted, fought forest fires, building roads, working in a nursery camp.

END

Introduction to Interview of James Dyer

James Dyer was born in 1909. He became a conscientious objector in 1935 after seeing a vision of the head of Christ. From then on his view was unshakable.

James Dyer was one of the first conscientious objectors to enter the Civilian Public Service. He was assigned to the camp at Coleville prior to Pearl Harbor. While serving there and at various other camps he worked at building a coral, a cattle road, cut Pinion Pine poles, drove a truck, was a camp clerk, a night watchman, worked on a fire suppression crew, worked as a radio operator and surveyor.

His analysis of the government's dilemma and the reactions of the public to conscientious objectors is the best articulation of the four men on the subjects.

James Dyer spent his career working in social services being a social worker and a parole officer. He has also always held positions with the Methodist church and currently serves as its local historian.

Oral History Interview
of
James Dyer
Re: Civilian Public Service
by
Dorothy Nichols

May 9, 1992

Overview only - for use with video tape

Interview attended by Malcolm Nichols

:06

Intro

2:00

Q: How did you become a conscientious objector?

A: Tells story of seeing vision of the head of Christ. Tells about his youth group's peace activities, about the peace campaign. Talks about registering.

6:10

Q: When you registered, you registered as a conscientious objector?

A: Answer.

Q: Did anyone try to talk you out of it?

A: Explains registration in 1940 before Pearl Harbor. Tells story of manager of church seeing his registration card after Pearl Harbor and trying to fire him. Chairman of the board for one job refused to hire him. Became boys group supervisor at a school in Whittier and was drafted from there to Camp Coleville in Antelope Valley.

9:26

Q: You feel you were treated fairly by the draft board, it was other people . . .

A: Says first secretary of the draft board was good to him but the second secretary caused some COs to do time in prison. Talks of climate changing after Pearl Harbor.

11:20

Q: How did you feel making such an unpopular decision?

A: Says he had no doubts after the 1935 vision but was worried about his folks who were getting on in age. Tells story about mother who came to America so that her brother could avoid the draft in Bohemia. Felt the Church had hard things to say to his parents about his position.

13:24

Q: So public reaction to COs was not good.

A: Answer.

Q: How many jobs did you have?

A: Answer includes working at Juvenile Hall.

15:35

Q: You don't feel you lost any friends because of your position?

A: Discusses "Friendly Fellowship" group.

16:54

Q: So you went to Coleville. What kind of work did you do there?

A: Answer includes building a coral, cattle road, sent to spike camp in eastern Nevada, cut Pinion Pine poles, drove truck, camp clerk, night watchman, fire suppression crew, radio operator.

20:55

Q: You said you did surveying?

A: Discusses doing survey of two sections and being transferred to forest service. Finds old survey marks from 1800s.

24:07

Q: Did you have a regular work schedule?

A: Talks of working 8 to 5.

24:45

Q: Did you think the work was hard?

A: Says some was and some wasn't. Tells story of doing barbed wire fencing.

25:26

Q: Did you think this work was of national importance?

A: "Very seldom." Talks of fire fighting.

26:00

Q: Who ran your camp?

A: Tells of camp being run by American Friends Service Committee. Director was John Wise and then a New York CO.

26:54

Q: Why was camp taken over by the Selective Service?

A: Says it was after the war was over so Committee felt it was time. Discusses the fact some men were held over until 1947.

27:49

Q: So you felt some of the work was busy work.

A: "Very much so." He explains.

28:45

Q: Did they pay the camp?

A: Answer.

28:57

Q: Was Coleville originally a CCC camp?

A: Answer.

29:13

Q: Was there an attempt to keep COs from mingling with the community?

A: Answer.

29:42

Q: How were you treated? Did they know who you were?

A: Tells story of how a Methodist church did not invite back the men it found out were conscientious objectors.

30:17

Q: Would you say the Methodist Church was not a leader in the peace movement?

A: Replies no. Says that they actually ran a couple of the camps. The Methodist Church did not contribute to the men's support in the camps but individuals in the church did.

31:36

Q: Did you know any CO who refused to go?

A: Can't recall. Tells story of Congress passing a bill that kept COs from leaving the country.

35:50

Q: Who paid for the camp's operation?

A: Says forest service paid for fire suppression crews but that support was paid by supporting group who ran the camp.

34:35

Q: You were never paid?

A: $2.50 a month. Talks about what you could buy for $2.50 a month including stamps.

35:18

Q: Did you have a day off?

A: Only Sundays.

35:52

Q: How did you feel about the government involvement in the camps?

A: Thought they were missing a bet. Discusses made work.

36:13

Q: What kind of people did you meet in CPS?

A: Talks about all kinds: Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphians, one Mormon, Catholics, Hindus . . .

37:00

Q: What about occupationally?

A: Everything. Discusses a telescope operator, a pianist. Complains about one Presbyterian whose church did not support his wife and child.

38:47

Q: They didn't support his claim?

A: Discusses their not helping.

39:11

Q: What about the wives and families?

A: "They had to get jobs." Discusses it.

Q: What about when people died?

A: Talks about them receiving no compensation whatsoever.

Q: How did you feel at the time about this?

A: Answer.

40:50

Q: I read that there were strikes at Glendora (after the war ended)?

A: Answer.

41:07

Q: What did they do but refuse to work?

A: Discusses ones that went to jail.

41:33

Q: Convicted of what?

A: Discusses Selective Service.

42:08

Q: Some men who had dependents went into the service.

A: Talks about one man he knew.

44:55

Q: How did people in the camps react about people who went into the military?

A: Discusses Menco in Southwestern Colorado where there was a lot of trouble.

45:46

Q: Who were your favorite characters?

A: One was Walking Jerusalem. Discusses the man. Talks about Camp Antelope reunion in 1980 in Wichita, Kansas.

48:26

Q: Did you know anyone who worked on a guinea pig project?

A: Talks about one guy who built outhouses and was then sent to Puerto Rico.

49:29

Q: What did you think about these guinea pigs?

A: Talks about COs believing in helping people. Talks of Philadelphia project hospital which he feels changed mental health. Talks of relationship with men who were in the military.

Tape two - Numbering begins again at "0" - Malcolm Nichols who attended interview talks on beginning of this tape.

:12

Malcolm talks about not getting cork boots to fight fires and that some men went on strike. Then he talks about being 4F but being sent to CPS.

5:39

Jim talks about getting physical in an old electrical center.

Q: Tell me what you feel were the inequities concerning COs.

A: Discusses that as long as the government drafted them, the government should have paid for their support. Discusses internment of Japanese.

11:35

Q: What was your reaction to hearing about the internment of Jews in Nazi Germany?

A: Talks about not hearing about this until the last.

13:25

A: Talks about men hired by Hietz on their days off. In Reno he made a dollar an hour cooking fried chicken. Talks about sympathetic people who hired them on their days off.

16:02

Q: Somebody was paid for your work. What happened to the money?

A: Answer. Went into war fund.

16:59

Q: How did the men feel about that?

A: Says they resented it.

17:15

Q: Looking back, would you make the same decision now that you made then?

A: "Yes. Even as a married man."

18:30

Q: How do you view your experience from the world now?

A: He said he would do the same thing. Talks about military making you give up yourself entirely. The men's defense at the Nuremberg trials was that they were following orders. Says it is a tough world and there are an awful lot of people who want it to stay tough. Talks about race relations and riot in L.A. Makes a final statement on understanding the other guy. Ends with "That's my speech."

Introduction to the Interview of Robert McCullagh

Robert McCullagh is a retired Methodist minister living in Morro Bay, California. He became a conscientious objector through working with the Methodist Youth Conference before the war. His draft board did not want to classify him 4E, saying that they felt no ministers would support his claim. He won his claim and was sent to the Mennonite Camp at Three Rivers. He fought fires, built retaining walls, swept roads and worked on road maintenance until he was transferred to a mental hospital in Lima, Ohio where he worked as a printer. He spent eight months there and was then "volunteered" by his Mennonite camp leaders to participate in the experiment in semi-starvation at the University of Minnesota. In this experiment he went from 149 to 102 pounds.

Robert McCullagh is an articulate man with a great sense of humor. Two stories that he told me do not appear on the video tape.

The first story involves two men who had to be taken off the semi-starvation diet experiment. It seems they had asked whether it would be permitted for them to chew gum. The scientists saw no danger to upsetting their diet with the small number of calories present in a few sticks of gum. What the researchers had not counted on, was that these men started to eat cartons of gum a day completely upsetting their regimen.

The second story involves George Ebling, a CO on the experiment who was an actor. Since there was a shortage of men because of the war, George Ebling enlisted some of his fellow COs to be extras with him in the professional opera that came to town. They were so good at it that several months later they were used again. This time the costumers were stymied. They couldn't figure out why the costumes were so big. Mr. McCullagh thought it must have been pretty funny to see these skinny conscientious objectors carrying spears across the stage of the opera company.

Robert McCullagh is a UCLA graduate and worked for years in the campus ministry of the United Methodist Church.

Oral History Interview
of
Robert McCullagh
Re: Civilian Public Service
by
Dorothy Nichols

May 17, 1992

Overview only - for use with video tape

Intro

:43

Q: How did you make a living before and after the war?

A: He was a printer from 1932 to 1939. Went to UCLA from 1939 to 1943. Served in Civilian Public Service from 1943 to 1946. Received his Bachelor in Divinity at Yale from 1946 to 1949. He served the UCLA campus ministry from 1949 to 1951. He then transferred to the University of South Dakota and served in campus ministry until his subsequent transferral to the University of Hawaii at Manoa from 1957 to 1969. He worked in campus ministry at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo from 1969 to 1972, was the associate minister at the San Luis Obispo United Methodist Church from 1972 to 1976 and was the minister at the Morro Bay United Methodist Church from 1976 through 1980.

2:55

Q: How did you become a conscientious objector?

A: Youth program of the Methodist church.

4:30

Q: Isn't that unusual? The Methodist Church is not known as a peace church?

A: Talks about the Methodist Youth Conference passing out anti-conscription material before conscription began.

6:18

Q: Were there a lot of your friends . . .

A: Talks about there being eight or ten but most enlisted.

7:04

Q: How were you treated by your draft board?

A: How secretary treated him. How board did not want to classify him 4E.

9:22

Q: What would you have done if they had classified you as 4F?

A: Answer.

11:53

Q; How did you feel about taking such an unpopular position? Was it scary?

A: No. He was with friends. Some did go into the service but he felt supported.

12:58

Q: Did anyone raise questions about your patriotism? Was there a whiplash from the public? Was he treated differently?

A: Answer. During the war, yes. Story of state mental institution attendant who wouldn't speak to COs. Talked about surprising reaction of those in the seminary.

15:57

Q: You received your 4E and then your induction notice. Where were you sent?

A: Los Angeles. Story of his files and being careful not to enter the wrong room. Sent to Sequoia with a bus ticket. Went to the Camp at Three Rivers.

17:44

Q: Who ran the camp?

A: The Mennonite Central Committee.

17:55

Q: Were all the people Mennonites?

A: Discusses how this camp came to be.

18:35

Q: What happened when you first got there?

A: Talks about different camps. Tells story of Amish man introducing himself.

20:00

Q: What was your assignment?

A: Clearing forest trails. Talks about Wolverton Meadows. Tells story of lumber interest figuring wrong.

Q: You were doing firefighting?

A: That was the one thing they didn't want to do but did. They lined trails, built retaining walls, swept road and worked at road maintenance.

22:56

Q: To your knowledge how were these camps picked or started?

A: Answer. Tells history and talks about HPC's willingness to pay for other religious conscientious objectors. Tells of being sent to a Mennonite Camp which was not his preference.

25:50

Q: Your were sent to more than one camp?

A: Talks of being at Three Rivers about eight months. Tells story of a rock project.

26:16

A: Talks of transfer to the state hospital for the criminally insane in Lima, Ohio because he was a printer. He ran the print shop and worked off the ward of the most violent patients. Spent eight months there.

29:26

Q: When did you go into CPS service?

A: July 1943, transferred in March of 1944. Transferred again after eight months in Lima. Talks of shop having been run by a former patient. Was going to transfer into non-combatant service but letter was received committing him to Starvation Project in Minnesota.

Talks about the competition for the project and how the Mennonites just volunteered him and another Methodist for it.

34:24

Q: There was competition to starve?

A: Talks about how many men wanted to do something significant. Talks about it and other projects.

35:58

Q: Why did they want to do this project?

A: Talks about reasons of the Laboratory for Physiological Hygiene, various disciplines represented and design of experiment.

36:52

Q: Why was this important in WWII?

A: Answer.

Q: How many months long was the test?

A: Talks about test designed for 48 weeks, 12 weeks standardization. Talks about getting rid of learning factors, the mazes, the treadmills, being fattened up, the number of calories given.

Q: Were you hungry?

A: Talks of calories given out in semi-starvation. Explains how people were kept on a curve. Talks of getting edema and going down to 102 pounds.

44:34

Q: What were the living conditions?

A: Discusses the life in the barracks, not like the low countries where people were starving.

35:30

Q: Where did you sleep?

A: Talks about barracks underneath the stadium at the University of Minnesota.

46:46

Q: If you could walk, wasn't there a temptation to get food?

A: Answer. Ways to conserve energy.

48:04

Q: How old were you when you started this experiment?

A: 28-29.

Q: What was the schedule?

A: Explained rehabilitation method.

Q: How did it feel. . . Describe progression of starvation and progression out of it.

A: Talks about energy loss, loss of confidence, etc. Explains buddy system.

53:42

Q: At your lowest time, how did you feel?

A: Answer. Noted that he kept a journal.

Q: So now you are breaking fast, starting to eat regularly again. Did you respond the way they figured you would?

A: No. Explains the groups divisions.

57:25

Q: How long did it take before you were back to where you started, or did you get to where you started?

A: Explains that at end of 48 weeks not back. Stayed eight weeks longer.

Q: How long did it take until you felt better?

A: Eight or ten weeks. Explains vitamin experiment. Tells story of loss of sense of humor. Talks about man who almost got violent because someone bumped into his gingerbread.

Q: Were any of the guinea pigs paid?

A: No. They were all volunteers.

Q: Were you paid anytime for any work as a CO?

A: All money came from the HPCs. Weren't paid but expenses were covered.

1:02:29

Q: Do you remember any interesting people?

A: Talks about Max Kampelman who was the arms negotiator in Geneva with the Russians.

1:04:33

Q: Asks about picture in Life Magazine.

A: Talks about how word about the project leaked out to Wisconsin newspapers.

Q: Why was this interesting?

A: Talks about how accomplishments of COs were down-played. Tells several stories of saving lives etc. and never getting credit.

1:11:25

Q: Did you think on the whole that the work given COs was of national importance?

A: Most work needed to be done. Discusses receiving a certificate for helping the war effort. Discusses the different work done by COs. Discusses change in mental institutions because of them.

1:16:07

Q: What kind of change in mental institutions?

A: Discusses how many attendants only knew how to sit and maintain order. Lack of education among attendants.

1:18:00

A: Discusses pictures in his scrap book. Mentions George Ebling, an actor. Gives names of individuals on project. Talks about ridiculous parts of the experiment, not being able to walk.

1:27:30

His wife comments about starvation in underdeveloped nations and talks about L.A. riots.

1:29:54

Q: Was the semi-starvation experiment of national importance?

A: Answer.

1:31:59

Q: Would you do it again?

A: Answer.

1:32:20

Q: What other guinea pig projects did you know about?

A: Answer.

Q: Men would voluntarily take malaria?

A: Answer.
Talks about men wanting to do relief work but were not allowed to leave country by Congress. Talks of Heifers for Relief.

1:35:15

Tells that COs were not released when hostilities ended. They were released on a point system.

1:38:28

Q: So you worked 35 months without pay?

A: Yes, and without the GI bill and without any veteran benefits. Discusses they were not part of the system. Talks about being allowed to do what they ought to do. Parents, sisters, brother, college friends in army all sent money to support him in his decision.

1:40:25

Q: How did you feel about the government involvement?

A: Felt it was the best that could be worked out and discusses why. Talks about being antsy to get out.

1:42:40

Talks about being careful not to refuse to do what the government wanted them to do. Some felt like it was a punishment, being kept in so long. More trouble in Quaker camps.

1:46:58

Q: What was the date you got out?

A: Talks about June of 1946.

1:47:29

Q: What are your strongest memories?

A: Memories of associations with men of peace, feelings about mental hospitals, the Starvation Project.

1:49:30

Q: What were the specific inequities concerning COs during WWII?

A: Answer.

1:51:30

Q: What were your reactions to revelations about their cruelty in Nazi Germany?

A: Talks about friend who wrote about liberating camp. Struggles to understand the staggering awfulness. Talks of it being difficult to look at it in terms of where we were then.

1:58:12

Q: Knowing what you know now, would you make the same decision?

A: Answer.

1:59:30

Q: Its been over forty years now, how do you view your experience?

A: Talks about making contribution that made government realize they had a valid position, helped future COs.

End

Introduction to the Interview of Jim Griffith

Jim Griffith's interview has been transcribed in full. Because of this I feel he needs little additional introduction. What has not been transcribed is a short section of interview with his wife Francis who moved from Chicago to Connecticut to work in the mental hospital with Jim prior to their wedding. She talks about their brief honeymoon and the reasons behind the fact that for 30 years she never mentioned to anyone that they had been conscientious objectors.

Oral History Interview
of
Jim Griffith
by
Dorothy Nichols

May 30, 1992

Transcribed in full.

00:24

Q: What's your name?

A: My name is James E. Griffith. I'm commonly known as "Jim."

00:28

Q: When were you born?

A: I was born in August of 1915. I was born in Los Angeles and there aren't many people my age who were born in Los Angeles and most of my life has been in the Southern California area. We retired in Big Bear after doing many years of work as a social worker which was my primary activity. The last 18 years I was in the schools. I was a social worker for the Los Angeles City Schools and before that I had worked for many years with the State Department of Mental Hygiene as a social worker. Much of my background before the social work is with the mental hospital and came from my experiences in CPS, when I worked as a ward attendant in the mental hospital, the State Mental Hospital in Connecticut.

1:40

Q: What were you doing before the war?

A: Well, mostly I was in school and working for the State Relief Administration. After I got out of college, I got my first social work job as a case worker for the state unemployment relief program of that day. I graduated from high school in '33 and from Chapman College in 1937. Then I worked for a couple of years or so in the welfare program of that day. Remember, that's the thirties. This is the time of the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal and so on, and at that time there was massive unemployment and the state had the Welfare Unemployment Relief Program which was a maintenance program for families who were totally out of other sources of support. Then I went to the University of Chicago to get my Master's in

social work and it was very shortly after I graduated from Chicago that I was drafted and went into CPS.

03:03

Q: How did you become a conscientious objector? You're not a Quaker, right?

A: No, I'm not a Quaker, but there was a very active peace movement through the thirties. I've always been a life time Methodist and in the Methodist youth program in those days, the leadership was very strongly pro-peace and supporting the peace movements of that day and from the religious aspect, and my experiences, both as a participant and in some leadership in the youth program of the Methodist Church at that time, I came to feel, at that time, that the answer to the threats of war which were coming up, would be for a stand against war. That war would not be a solution, it would only add another problem, that it would create great devastation, harm many people, and that there were other and better solutions to the international problems of that day. And of course, in the thirties this view was widely held by many people until and even after Germany invaded and started active war, many people felt, and I was one of them, that the United States had no business in it, that the United States could do better as a peacemaker, but . . .

As a religious objector, I felt that this was the stand that I should take, to say "this is not for me." It was not that I was unwilling to serve my country, but that I did not feel that I could in conscience serve by joining the armed forces that focused upon the devastation that was involved and this position was legally recognized at the time and this was the reason that the Civilian Public Service camps were established. It was a recognized program although it was not popular in the minds of many, many, people. And the support was primarily from churches and religious groups, not only the Quakers, but may other religious groups. There were many Methodists who came out of the youth program of the day who felt the same way. I still know a lot of friends, of my era, who took the same positions and we've known each other for many, many years.

06:09

Q: So for you, you had a lot of support then?

A: There was a lot of support through the church and religious groups with which I have long-time association. In the camps, of course, there was a lot of mutual support among the fellows and when I was transferred I applied for the transfer to the mental hospital. We had a whole unit there.

I think, at one time, there were as many as 80 fellows who were working at the hospital as a part of our public service and so we had some support. Some people in town had no use for us. Other people in town said that, "well they're here, so they're here."

07:00

Q: How were you treated by the draft board? Were they happy that you were a conscientious objector?

A: They weren't particularly happy, but the head of the draft board had also been the boys vice-principal at the high school that I had attended and he knew me personally and my statement was accepted. I was one of the early draftees. I was drafted about five months or four months before Pearl Harbor.

07:39

Q: So do you think after Pearl Harbor it got harder?

A: Well, certainly the Pearl Harbor incident changed public opinion from a divided opinion whether the U.S. should be involved or whether it should not be involved, from a widely divided public opinion. In 24 hours, the public opinion changed to 99.9 for entering into the war in full participation in the war.

08:10

Q: And you were the .1?

A: Yeah.

08:18

Q: So do you think that it was easier for men who were applying for conscientious status before Pearl Harbor?

A: I'm not sure whether it was or not, but I think that there were many motivations among the many different people in CPS. Those who presented themselves on a very strong religious basis and where they had recorded backing from their denomination, I think, had an easier time than those who did not have such a strong religious background. Course, there were many besides those who came from either a historic peace church or a church that had maintained a strong stand. There were many of mixed motivations. Some were more or less political, and some were ideological but not necessarily religious.

09:20

Q: Were they able to go to Civilian Public Service?

A: Mostly, yes. There were incidents where the stand was not taken. We had one boy who was in our camp who the draft board had turned him down and, since he refused to accept the draft call, he was arrested and jailed for a while and then paroled. Finally he was pardoned, but he actually served some days in jail. I did not know of many such cases, of course, out of the whole several thousands who were in CPS, there were many different instances where people did have a very rough time. It depends a large extent on how the applicant presented himself and how the draft board felt about it. I think also it depended on how many they wanted. They didn't want Jim Griffith. They wanted so many bodies. I feel now, I felt then, that I was doing the best, the thing that I should, at that time. But I do know that they didn't miss me, they just got another body instead of me. And the truth is whoever filled my slot, I don't know who it was, or whatever happened to that guy, but it didn't really affect the armed services, they were just looking for numbers. And, they figured it was easier to go along with the objectors and take the easy ones.

11:13

Q: So, was it difficult to take such an unpopular position? Now the bombing of Pearl Harbor, now were you in CPS camp then?

A: I was already in camp.

11:22

Q: So when did you leave to go to camp?

A: About the end of August before Pearl Harbor. Pearl Harbor was in December and I went to camp in August in 1941.

11:34

Q: Which camp did you go to?

A: I went to Glendora, which, living in the Los Angeles area, was relatively close to home and I was able to come home quite often on weekends because I had a home. Where as, there were many who were from far distant places also in the camp, but they did not have the base that I did.

11:58

Q: Now I have read that they were trying to put men a certain number of miles away from where they were because they didn't want them to come home on the weekend.

A: I think this later on happened, but at first, before Pearl Harbor, the draft was to be for one year. And anybody who was drafted was drafted for one year and the days were counted and theoretically they were supposed to be dismissed in one year. And at that time, they were not making such an effort to place people at a distance from home. But after Pearl Harbor, the CPS policy of the Selective Service was then to place people at a distance from their home.

12:49

Q: Why?

A: Well, as you said, they don't want them hanging around home and keep their focus at home rather than what they were doing. I think also just to teach them a lesson. If you're going to go somewhere, you go and do it the hard way.

13:10

Q: Were you scared to take this position of conscientious objector now that Pearl Harbor's happened? Was it scary? Or how did you feel?

A: Of course, then the question of "Where do you really stand?", but I had already made my decision of what my stand was, so that was it. Even after Pearl Harbor there were some who either politically or otherwise felt that the Pearl Harbor incident was a provoked incident, to force the country into war because the Roosevelt administration was eager to get into the war, but there was massive public opinion against becoming involved in the war until Pearl Harbor. And many people felt, at that time, and I guess there are some in history who still question, that it was almost a provoked incident to push public opinion over the hump, to get the country fully and massively involved in the war.

14:27

Q: Do you have any idea how that could be provoked? How they could have provoked that?

A: Well, if you know your history, you know that not only the conflict in Europe, but the conflicts in the Pacific were very massive and there was, between the United States and Japan, and even years back, in the thirties, pretty much of a massive checker game of who was going to control the

Pacific, who was going to control the Asian coast. And the Japanese were making massive inroads into China and into the Philippines, into the South Pacific Islands, trying to, and actually attaining, military and political control of some of the South Pacific Islands. In China and Shanghai, they were making attacks and taking over control of parts of the coast of China and of Korea and there was no doubt that Japan was an expansionist administration and were trying to gain major control of the Asian mainland, or at least the coast of the mainland. They had their own economic problems which were massive and there was no doubt that they were very active and successful in gaining control. And, the administration, of course, was trying to countermand and checkmate many of these things long before Pearl Harbor. That's why the Pearl Harbor attack came, because Japan saw the military strength that was massed in Hawaii and felt that this blow would inactivate or at least - what's the word - make it very difficult for the United States, or anyone else to oppose the expansion policy of that day. Now, it all depends on your view of history. I can hardly believe that it was a Machiavellian scheme of Franklin Roosevelt to provoke Japan, but certainly, the public opinion was very much divided and not fully supportive of active military intervention until this incident happened. I think probably Japan would have been better off if they hadn't - this is my opinion for free - I think Japan might have been more successful in their expansion if they hadn't attacked Pearl Harbor because this triggered massive support against them.

18:05

Q: So you were at Glendora then when Pearl Harbor happened? Now what were you doing at Glendora?

A: At that time, there was a variety of forest service projects going on. At Glendora the Forest Service had started with the CCC camp - a lot of experiments in how to improve the forests, what kind of species could be best used for reforestation, what kind of species could be encouraged for chaparral development that were more fire resistant. And some of these were, oh, you might say, low-grade scientific in nature, but a lot of the work was just plain old work. These experimental forests needed a lot of work and attention and this is what was done.

19:09

Q: How long were you at Glendora?

A: I was there almost two years.

19:14

Q: Two years? You thought you were going in and it would just be a year, right?

A: Yeah, at the time, those who went into the Army, and everybody else, they were told this would be one year. Period.

19:29

Q: But then when Pearl Harbor came they had you until - as long as they wanted.

A: All bets were off. Yeah. For the duration. And, of course, the same was true with those who had been drafted in the Army up to that time. There were many who had been drafted, although a relatively small percentage of the total number of draftees for the whole military effort.

19:50

Q: Well, tell me about when you first arrived at Glendora. You first get there, what did you see? What was it like? How did you live?

A: Well, it was an old CCC camp. At that time, the fellows from Southern California were going there and I already knew quite a few of the guys who were there, a number of them, quite a number of them. They were not all Methodist, but they were from the area and the people who I knew. I'm not the physical type. I'm not clever with anything I can't do. I can't make things, or do things - or that kind of thing - and I ended up doing, mostly doing, clerical work. I'm a book and paper man and they had me out in the field and pretty soon they would just as soon let me do work in the office and let somebody who had some skills do the physical work.

20:57

Q: So did you guys have cots?

A: Yeah, we had cots. It was an old CCC camp building that had been used during the CCCs.

21:09

Q: What are the CCCs?

A: The Civilian Conservation Corps, which was one of FDR's major accomplishments, in my view. There were hundreds of

CCC camps across the country where young men could find a job; they would be employed. They got $30 a month, but they were required to send $22 home and this $22 was then subtracted from the welfare grant to their family. But remember, $22 in the thirties would be like about $400 now. It would buy about what $300 or $400 would buy now. And so the boys who went to the CCC camps, they did various public service and public work in parks and the national forests in the construction work, soil conservation, and flood control. It was a labor camp. But a great many things that we have today came from the CCC and from the WPA (Works Progress Administration) which employed men from welfare families as a job to earn their welfare. And a lot of what we have today in the forests and the national parks, in flood control, you can thank FDR and the CCC and the WPA for it. Even though many people then and now do not regard FDR highly, many other people regard him as something of a saint. And, politically, in those days, he was one or the other, there was nobody neutral.

23:18

Q: They loved him or they hated him?

A: Yeah.

23:25

Q: So now, how did your parents feel about your conscientious objector position?

A: They felt that I was - I don't think my parents would have taken the same stand - but they felt I was sincere and based on my religious convictions and they were totally supportive. My family was totally supportive even though they may not have had exactly the same view.

Q: Did you lose any friends?

A: Pardon?

Q: Were there friends of yours that didn't like your position?

A: Well, there were some. Because I lived close to home I was able even to come back to my church youth group on Sunday nights and my stand was well known. But, these were people who had known me for a long time and just mostly took me for what I was. Of course, in our church youth groups, many people had come up under the same guidance. There were several of the other boys who had agreed with me and took a similar stand but most did not. Most of them went into the Army when they were called, feeling they were doing their

duty. But, my situation was such that I did not feel the great weight of discrimination that many others would have. Of course, also remember I was older. I was - let's see - when I was drafted then I was already 25 years old.

24:52

Q: So you're in Glendora and you're doing paper work because you're not so hot out in the fields. And you're there two years. And then at the end of two years, what happened?

A: Well then I applied...well, let me go back just to correct. At Glendora I was there for a while and then they had what they called a spike camp, a small unit out at another sight in the forest, a place called "Chilao," maybe 30 air miles from the Glendora camp and probably 50 or 60 to drive. But also, in the hills in the mountains above Pasadena, at this smaller camp we did other kinds of work, working in that other section of the forest. But it was basically the same concept and the supplies and the management was ordered through the main camp and then sent out to us. All of these supplies came through church contributions, the Quakers and other peace churches and then other individuals who contributed to keep the camps going.

26:27

Q: Did the Methodist Church contribute?

A: The Methodist Church gave a lot of moral support but this was not in contributions by the Methodist Church. It was contributions by Methodists.

26:49

Q: Other Methodists supported you, but the Church did not officially? Not like the Quakers?

A: It was not by funds that were set up by the Bishop and apportioned to the churches.

26:56

Q: What about . . . I know people who were Quakers or Brethren, or from historic peace churches, they supported the families; they sent them a certain amount of money for the families. Did the Methodist Church do that? Or people within them?

A: I think people within often did. Now, of course, we were all young. Some of the guys were married, mostly not, at first. Fran and I were married during CPS days, but we were

young. Most of the gals had their own jobs and supported themselves with their own homes. There were families who had a lot of pressure and through individual gifts and gifts through the Historic Peace Churches there was a considerable backing.

27:50

Q: So you went from Glendora out to the spike camps in Chilao? Were you still doing paperwork out there?

A: Yes, I was doing paperwork out there.

Q: They just weren't going to let you do . . . (laugh)

A: Well, I didn't mind, that was OK with me. But I was interested in what I felt would be more meaningful service and when we were given an opportunity to volunteer to serve in mental hospitals, I felt that this would be something that I could do better. After all, I already had my Master's in social work. Not that ward attendant is social work. But I felt that this would be something that'd be more useful service and I applied for transfer to the mental hospital and was accepted for that. And the mental hospital paid our transportation and gave us room and board and $15 a month.

28:53

Q: Why did the mental hospitals ask for attendants?

A: It was a lot cheaper. They had a manpower shortage. They paid low wages. A lot of their people had been drafted and it was hard to get enough help, and they had a shortage, and it costs them a lot less to pay for the COs who came and worked there than it did for their own employees. So, it was a good break for them. But now wait, to be fair, there was a computation of the value of the labor that was given and that money was put into a separate fund which eventually, after the war was over, there was a resolution that this money would be given to some program, that I forget now, that the government maintained of a welfare and health nature for destitute people.

30:05

Q: What was the name of the hospital again?

A: I was at the Connecticut State Hospital in Middletown, Connecticut.

30:13

Q: So you went to this hospital, what did they ask you to do?

A: We were ward attendants. Now they didn't give us very much training. They just said "Here's your keys. Sign for the keys. You go into that ward down there and watch out. That's a violent ward."

Q: Conscientious objectors in the violent ward? That's kind of a paradox, isn't it?

A: Actually our group, at one time, was up to about 80 people and this provided the hospital help that they couldn't get otherwise at that time. And, of course, you have to remember that this is a whole different world than we know today about psychiatric care. It was really almost back to the snake pit days. They were just starting to use insulin shock. That was the newest thing...

32:01

Q: So we're at Glendora?

A: Well, no. We're at the hospital.

Q: We've gone from Glendora to the spike camp and now you're in Connecticut.

A: Yeah.

Q: And the name of the hospital again was?

A: Was Connecticut Mental Hospital, Connecticut State Hospital, that was the correct word.

Q: You were talking about how mental hospitals were very different then than they are now.

A: Then there were no medications, psychotropic medications. They were only beginning to experiment with insulin therapy or electric shock therapy. It was mostly a custodial program. Many were, of course, chronic schizophrenics who simply could not function in the world. They lived with their delusions and their mental confusion and there was very little real treatment that went on. Those who were physically sick got some medical care. But some who were rather recently and acutely ill had some psychotherapy, but most of the people committed to mental hospital were already having major psychosis, and were not really good candidates for psychotherapy and since there was no medication or anything else, it simply became a custodial and borderline treatment center. What else could a community do with the people who were so mentally ill? Some were discharged when the families had another way to take care of them, but this

is not just true of Connecticut. This was true of every state at that time. That was the world of psychosis and community response to the psychotic individual. What else could you do. Put them in a place where they won't bother other people.

33:57

Q: So what is the difference between that and now?

A: Well, of course, we've gone from tic to toc. There are very limited custodial places for the long-time chronically mentally ill patient. Of course, for one thing its a matter of funding. Now there is Social Security, disability support and other programs that would provide support, when in those days no state had any programs for support of a chronic schizophrenic who couldn't function in society except in the mental hospitals. But now, every solution brings a new problem. Now, because there are these fundings and so on, there is no really long-term care for the chronic schizophrenic who can't function in society. He or she will get their Social Security disability and if they're lucky, somebody will find a board and care home which will keep them as long as they don't give any trouble. And, many a very large percentage of the homeless out on skid row you see today, are really mentally ill people, and they are less well served than they were when they had an active care program in the state - a mental hospital.

35:28

Q: So what was the hospital like when you got there?

A: Well, they were in need of help. Each ward had to have enough people to take whatever care was needed. Some were able to work on the farm and would just live almost like a boarding house. Others were in need of much more care. Most of the time I was on the medical ward where the patients were in need of medical care as well.

They were just starting at that time to use the malaria treatment for the chronic syphilis. There was no antibiotics for the syphilis and gonorrhea and the other sexually transmitted diseases and syphilis in particular in its last stages is a pretty horrid thing. In the last stages they become very, very delusional and terribly physically sick and would give lots of material for a street corner evangelist telling about the horrors of the ultimate death as a result of the third stage of syphilis. They were starting at that time . . . This was the most modern treatment available of malaria. They would inject a patient with the blood of a patient who was suffering from malaria.

Malaria comes in a cycle. There's a peak of high fever and then it recedes. Then in about two days there'll be another peak of high fever. They would take the blood of another patient at the time of his most intense fever and inject it into the patient who would then contract malaria and go through the periods of high fever and we would clock 100 hours of fever over 103, which to a very large measure did succeed in killing off or at least slowing down the spirochetes to a point that a patient would be able again to physically function. And, that was the best cure they had for syphilis at that time. Prior to that, syphilis had been treated with a mercurial substance which had plenty of danger and complications of its own and had a very mediocre cure rate. We had many patients who were not really terribly psychotic, but they were in the bad stages of syphilis and if they got treated early enough, it could be slowed down and treated. Typically the syphilitic patient in the third stage.

This is medical history. I mean it is not the world of today, but this was the world of that time. They would develop very grandiose delusions. Oh, I've met kings and queens. I've only met Jesus a few times, but I've met a lot of his special representatives. The best thing isn't Jesus. It was to be J. Edgar Hoover or his secret assistant. J. Edgar Hoover rated much higher than Jesus.

Q: There were lots of J. Edgar Hoovers?

A: Yeah. I guess since then I've had a little trouble in believing about the Second Coming.

39:48

Q: So, if you introduced yourself "Hi, I'm Jim." and they said "Hi, I'm J. Edgar Hoover.", how did you react to that?

A: Well, "How are you today?" It's the same thing when they tell me how unkind it is to put microphones in their mattress. That's very popular, that was. Medically, this is a whole different world. This is way back. The time that "they put a microphone in my mattress" I'd say, "They're pretty bad fellows aren't they?"

Q: So, I've read a lot about conscientious objectors who served in Civilian Public Service mental hospitals and they actually contributed, didn't they, to changing?

A: Yes. There was a great deal . . . Because you have a group who were generally well-educated and who had roots, had strong motivations of public service, there was a lot of material gathered about the problems in mental hospitals.

What is good. What has happened. What the dangers are. What mental hospitals really needed to update. Because, in depression days, mental hospitals were pretty far down the line of what the public wanted to support and there was a group that for many years developed a lot of educational materials and developed mental health education and developed mental health services in their home communities. And, this was the Friends; helped organize the unit and there were a number of people who were given permission to work under the general sponsorship of the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia in developing educational material to promote mental health services. And they served in many ways and produced a lot of stuff which made a significant contribution to the development of better mental health services than we have today. Myself, I had already graduated from the school of social work, I had my Master's Degree, and after the war I worked for a while with a child welfare agency and then I was able to get a position with the California State Mental Health Program and the social service unit and the program of that time. Even after I quit full-time with the health to go to the school system, I worked part-time (I had two jobs a good deal of the time). I worked part-time at night three nights a week in the mental health program and in the summer in the social service program, as more out-patient services and more treatment services became available through the communities. So I was actually with the state mental health service either full-time or part-time for better than 30 years.

43:11

Q: Do you think your life would have taken that turn had you not been part of this mental health thing?

A: Before the war, I had already focused my goal on social service. Now whether it would have been in mental health or child welfare - I mean on social service - whether I would have stayed in child welfare agencies or public welfare agencies or psychiatric agencies, I don't know. But out of that background, I did focus more on psychiatric services and with the out-patient follow-up services to the chronically mentally ill - the chronic schizophrenic.

43:53

Q: Where did you live when you were in Connecticut?

A: They had a men's dormitory and a women's dormitory. Then they had a unit for couples.

I had met Francis while I was going to school in Chicago and we had a pretty hot romance by correspondence while I was in

camp. When I was headed east, I stopped in Iowa and visited with her and her family and we became engaged and after a few months she came to Connecticut and got a room in a rooming house and got a job at the hospital as an attendant in the women's ward.

We had to wait to get married. She had gotten a college loan and one of the conditions was that it had to be paid off before she could be married. That was part of the agreement that she had made, so we worked a long time to save up the $300 that she still owed and then we were married in Middletown.

Most of the guests were people from the CPS unit. However, there were a number of people in town who were very active in support. They were mostly related to the Quaker fellowship, but there were others in town who were very warm to us. By and large, there were enough of us so the town just..."Well, that's the way it is, so that's the way it is.

45:27

Q: I heard that many towns did not accept you.

A: I am sure that there were many towns that didn't.

45:37

Q: This town didn't really have a problem with it?

A: Well, not a major problem, because it was there, it was there and people were too busy to fight the battle very long, as long as we didn't ruffle things.

45:54

Q: They weren't completely happy?

A: No, no, but on the other hand a lot of people in town had worked for the hospital and they were just as glad that somebody else was doing it.

46:05

Q: Weren't there people that were upset you were taking their jobs?

A: No, because these were people who quit the job because they could get something better. The hospital was a major employer at the town, but it was also the employer of last choice.

46:20

Q: So, being in the public service, you were allowed to be married while you were in it and then could you live together?

A: Yes, and then we were permitted to move into the married couples' quarters. Of course, we had to eat our meals at the dining room where we were assigned. It was a very big campus. She went to her ward and I went to my ward. On our days off we could do whatever we wanted to. There was a little kitchen in the basement of the married couples' unit. But at that time almost all the rooms in the married couples' quarters were occupied by CPSers. So we did have a community of support among ourselves.

47:10

Q: Now, you were not paid for this work, is that correct?

A: My wife got full regular salary, $100 a month less $28 for room and board. That was the regular salary. But we were given our work uniform, our whites, and our room and board and $15 a month.

47:43

Q: So, you were paid then, and that money went to you?

A: The money that was saved, that was contracted to a regular employee, went to the frozen fund that was eventually used for some international service. I forget now what it was. But that was from the hospital. From the camp, we got $5 a month and our food was supplied through church donations. And that was another reason I wanted to get into the mental hospital. I felt that it was an unfair burden on the churches to be paying for us.

48:27

Q: It was the Methodist Church that was paying for it, not the Quakers?

A: Methodist people paid into the fund. Although, our camp was administered by The American Friends Service Committee - who raised the money through their own denomination or through donations.

48:48

Q: Now, do you know anybody who was a member of a guinea pig project?

A: Of the what?

Q: One of the guinea pig projects that CPS men did?

A: Well, Bob McCullagh was in the Starvation Project.

Q: Right, I interviewed him and got a great interview about the Starvation Project. Did you know anyone else?

A: Who was in it?

Q: Who was in another project?

A: Well, I knew some of the fellows that were in the Mental Health Educational Project. I knew some of them. And then there were a few people - who were - these were older people who had strong roots - who worked for the National Council of Churches in New York. They were authorized to have a small service unit with the National Council of Churches in New York and the people who went to those were generally older guys (I was one of the older guys already) who already had had a background in this - and a professional background - and they were permitted to provide services to a few agencies such as that. And, some of the CPS men actually worked in the offices of the American Friends Service Committee and their administrative and fundraising work.

50:26

Q: Do you have any stories while you were there? Things that you thought were interesting stories or funny stories about working at the mental hospital?

A: The first time I saw somebody getting electric shock, I nearly passed out. But, I also saw people who were hopelessly psychotic who did make remarkable recoveries.

This was still an experimental stage. The only ones they would try the electric shock, at that time, were ones that they felt were hopelessly incurable, almost saying, well, if they don't make it maybe it's better off. And, those were the only candidates. But, some of them did respond. Now electric shock is rarely used today. Yet, it still is used sometimes for some things. Like a lot of other medical things, first they use it very gingerly, they get some good results and then they go crazy. And then they were electric shocking people for this or that. They would get old seniles and try to give it, and on them, of course, they said this is not all that hot. It has a place, but it is no magic cure.

The same thing with penicillin. In the latter part of the war, penicillin had just been developed and was used almost exclusively for the armed forces. But, finally, they did release some for civilian use and they tried penicillin on some of the syphilitics and it worked. It made some remarkable help.

When the penicillin was first released, the doctor who handled it . . . It was such a ginger thing that the doctor himself (they were to give it every four hours), the doctor himself would personally come in the middle of the night to give a shot. See, this was so rare and so precious and the amounts that they gave at that time, they give a baby ten times that much for a routine infection today. But it was still very expensive, very rare, very experimental and, of course, penicillin, we now know - it's done wonders for the world - but also it's got its problems. And it's good for them that it's good for and there are a whole variety of antibiotics today that have their roots in the first development of penicillin. But, we've come a long way since. When I tell these stories, this is a whole different world. But, this is true of all of medicine.

53:48

Q: Did you have any other stories about . . . I think it's interesting, and I wonder if you have a story about the fact that conscientious objectors normally, generally, don't want to use a violent technique in a violent ward? So what did you do?

A: I didn't have much problem although I wish I had a nickel for every time... we had some patients who had to wear a camisole, which was like a canvas jacket. The arms would be tied in front of them and the garment tied in the back. Of course, it had to be put on or taken off when they took a bath or something. Some of them were kind of glad to use them because they knew they would blow off once in a while.

Generally, in the so-called violent wards, nobody is on a toot all the time. And, the other patients, when one got out of line, they would help the attendant and help calm down the guy who was on a toot, because they all - many of them - really knew that they had times they couldn't handle their own selves. And if it weren't for the protection of the other patients, we would have had a hard time. But, after a while, there's a certain amount of camaraderie that develops and these are people who knew they had a hard time.

55:34

Q: Do you think they treated you differently because you were non-violent?

A: No, some of them resented us because they knew who we were. We had two doctors, medical doctors, who were in our unit who were there and were assigned as medical doctors in the medical units, even though - because they were granted conscientious status. But they were already qualified medical doctors, so they did their own thing. Of course, we had a wide variety of people with a wide variety of ideological and political and religious views and I've lost contact with most of the fellows I knew in those days. We still are in contact with some. That's where we're going to the golden wedding two weeks from now with some of these people. We're all getting up to the golden wedding years now. We've got two more years to go. But, out of my experience, it led me into a certain area of professional service.

The social service program that existed in the forties when I first started with state mental health and the program today is two or three worlds different, but at that time that was where our society was at and I have always felt that my life in those professions and as a social worker for the schools, I have felt a rewarding life.

57:31

Q: So do you feel that this work that you did in Civilian Public Service was work of national importance then?

A: Yes, it was because the manpower shortage was such that we were very much needed. When my wife applied for a job, of course, they took the girls too. They were real eager to take the girls, because there was a very serious shortage of help.

58:00

Q: What was a typical day?

A: We worked a nine hour shift. We had a six day work week, nine hours a day, but it would be so scheduled that you would go off at the end of the morning shift. Then you would have the day off and then not come on until the afternoon shift the next day. So, we would get actually about a day and a half by changing the shifts. We did basically the same work as the civilian employees. That was the work schedule for them too.

58:43

Q: How long were you at this camp?

A: At the hospital, about two years and I was discharged on... VE day was I think in September...VJ day was in September and then I was discharged in December. They had a pattern. Those who had been in the longest were being released first and so my release came up around December. When we came home, it was to Los Angeles, because her parents, who had been living in Iowa, meanwhile, had also moved to California.

59:24

Q: So you were discharged very soon after the war ended, but there were a lot of men that weren't?

A: They stayed on because they had not been in as long. You see, I was one of the early ones before Pearl Harbor. And, there were some that didn't even come in until a year or two after Pearl Harbor. So, they stayed longer. They were released in groups pretty much according to seniority.

59:55

Q: OK. Well, some of the reading I have done has men that were kept in almost two years after the war ended, why do you suppose that was?

A: I don't know. I don't know. I know some were in quite a lot longer before the whole thing was settled. Of course, largely through the Quaker leadership, but through the other peace churches they had organized this National Service Board for Religious Objectors, which still functions, and they were really the liaison between the peace churches and the government and they provided an administrative leadership. Even through all the war, while the war was widely supported by the general public, there was a certain body of support from the religious groups which gave a support system to it. Because this was based on conscience. And even the selective service felt, well pragmatically, that it was a lot easier to go along with the conscience program than to have the problems that might raise otherwise.

1:01:16

Q: So you did get paid, but a lot of people in Civilian Public Service did not get paid?

A: In the camps we got paid $5 a month which was from the Church.

1:01:25

Q: Now I think some of the people I interviewed said they got $2.50 a month.

A: Or maybe...yes. You're right. It was $2.50. Yeah, it was $2.50.

1:01:37

Q: But yet, men that were in prisoner-of-war camps, who were Germans, they were being paid?

A: Yes.

1:01:45

Q: And did you know that at the time, that they were being paid?

A: I guess we did.

Q: Was there resentment?

A: We knew that we were the low people on the totem pole and that we were even recognized was a major step over what happened in World War I.

1:02:07

Q: What happened in World War I?

A: Generally, they were arrested, put in the Army and put in the stockade and when they were finally released given a dishonorable discharge.

1:02:25

Q: How did that affect their lives?

A: A dishonorable discharge affects your economic status in many ways. Of course, when they were in the stockade they were not very well... very badly treated. And because of the activities of the peace churches and the pragmatism of the military, they said, "We'll settle for this." It was a half measure. It was a half measure that compromised on how they would do it.

Of course, there was another group of conscientious objectors who accepted military enrollment, but limited to non-combatant service of the medical unit. And, there were many who said "Yes, I will join the army, but I will not be

a combatant," and they had regular army status, except that some of them, of course, I don't know many who were in that position, some were given quite a hassle because they refused to do rifle drill and things of this sort. But a lot of the others, they used them in the medical ward, the medical service and that was that. I don't know many who were in that role. I know one or two.

1:4:00

Q: So, when you left the camp - I mean the hospital, can you think back to that time? What did you feel about your experience?

A: Well, I felt that I had done, in my conscience, the right thing for what I believed in. I was awful glad to leave and to begin to sort out a life of our own. I was glad that the war was over and I was awful glad to get home. I was pretty eager to get back home. After all, Southern California has been my base, my friends, my roots; and, of course, I learned in Connecticut, too, that West begins at the Hudson. In my psyche, East begins at Denver.

1:05:01

Q: So your son told me a story on the phone about your mom.

A: Yes, she had told that story. I had not heard it. She told him one time. I don't remember my mother ever mentioning it to me. There were people in the neighborhood who were very critical, but people in the church were... by and large, they knew who I was and because I had long going roots...

1:05:35

Q: Could you repeat the story?

A: Well, here he is. Tom you tell the story.

A: (HIS SON ENTERS TO TELL STORY) Hi, I'm Jim's son Tom. I'm just telling a story that I remember my grandmother told me. I must have been in high school as this was probably 30 years ago. She died when I was 23. She was talking about the time when Dad was a CO during the Second World War and that there was a lot of community pressure against those who were conscientious objectors.

My grandfather was a letter carrier. Although he had retired on disability in 1939, he still knew a number of people who were in the mail, that were letter carriers and working for the post office.

She said it was either VE Day or VJ Day, the day after. The doorbell rang and it was the letter carrier who came and told her that now that the war was over, her son was going to be coming home to appreciate the benefits his son had gone and fought and many boys had died for. And, then spit in her face.

It was a sad story. There were a lot of people who were very opposed to the conscientious objectors and very insulted that they had been able to escape the risks of death. And, I guess, that was part of what had happened within that. I know that has been a problem recently within the Vietnam War situation for those of us, like myself, who got student deferments and were able to do that. Someone said there was a major class difference in many ways between those who were able to avoid going to Vietnam and those who didn't. I don't know whether there was a class difference back in the Second World War. I don't know if that was involved in the CO issue, but I know there was in Vietnam.

Q: Thank you.

A: (BACK TO MR. GRIFFITH): I had gotten a job in the Child Welfare Agency after the war, immediately after the war. Of course, there was a shortage of people and I had the academics, I had the degree, etc. I liked the Child Welfare Agency, but I had friends in the Department of Mental Health, who were also social workers, so when they gave an examination, I applied for it and when I joined the program, the people, both the managers and some of the staff, knew my background. But, also, while they were kind of interested, they also knew that I had an experience in Lawford, so it did not become an issue.

And life gets very busy with just the routine of living and I have never made a great campaign of "I am, or was, a conscientious objector." I moved on to what was important in the day to day life. I have always been active in the Church. The Church has been the basis of my focus and concern. My family. Raising a family - you get kind of busy with paying bills, buying a house, taking care of the kids, music lessons, PTA, and Sunday school, Girl Scouts and all these things. But, that was a phase in my life. I did, at the time, what I thought was right.

I think that overall what the COs did was of value to the community. I don't think it changed the militaristic political climate, but we did what we needed to do.

1:09:36

Q: So, if you had to do it over again, would that be your same decision, knowing everything that you know about what went on in the war?

A: Well, of course, we have different wars, we have a different social climate, we have a different medical climate. I probably would go pretty much in the same direction. But we did, at the time, what seemed to be the most conscientious decision available, at that time, in those circumstances. That war, most people had no questions. The wars we have now are much more debated...

Oh, the people I was with did not feel too badly treated. We just did what we did, we were doing what we could do.

1:0:40

Q: Could you repeat what you just said, though, that there were some boys that were...?

A: Who were actually arrested and went to prison for refusal to report to the draft or for refusal to accept assignment when they were ordered to the Army.

Q: Because their community . . . ?

A: Yeah. Because their community would not support them or the draft board would not give them a CO status. But, generally, these were not the kind of people the prisons was really designed for and they were usually, after a few months, paroled to CPS. Because this was not the kind of a case the prisons are prepared to handle, some of them got a pretty rough time in prison. But, overall, I think the government figured that it was easier to work with this program than to cope with the objections that would come up otherwise.

1:12:03

Q: Were there any people that you met that stand out in your mind?

A: Pardon?

Q: During your time in Civilian Public Service, were there any people that you met, that particularly, stand out in your mind? That were interesting?

A: We had a variety of people. Some of them were militant political objectors even though the draft board decided that this was supposed to be a religious program, but they had philosophical objections. There were a few that were

militant, that were militant political orientation. The left wing, the extreme left wing in those days, was against the war, and I'm talking about the basic hardcore Communist in that time. Remember we're talking about the thirties. Because Germany was also attacking Russia and most of them had a flip flop when Russia attacked Germany. First Germany and Russia had a neutrality pact, but the Germans were really enemies of the Russian regime of the day and the active Communists of the day were supportive of Russia and against Germany on general principles, but when Germany actually attacked Russia, then they immediately said the U.S. should get into the war to get rid of Germany. Germany then became the real villain. There weren't many people like that, but there were some.

Q: What I'm really thinking more about is just more ordinary people that you might have met that were interesting, like who was your best friend?

A: Well, we just recently went to the 50th wedding anniversary of my friend who was our best man, Fred Mathes, who lives now up in the San Jouquin Valley. He came up through the Wesley foundation at UCLA. He met his wife and they were married before the draft. He was very much interested in the cooperative movement, the rural co-ops at that time and the Roosevelt cooperative movement. We keep in touch with him, and we keep in touch with a few others. But, over time, we have drifted apart in different ways. Most of the ones I know in CPS have continued in some kind of useful public service. Bill Gossin [Bob Gossin] for years was either a YMCA executive or for years he was also an executive in the Peace Corps coming out of the YMCA experience. Bob McCullagh is a retired Methodist minister. I've been in social work. The ones who came in from human service ideology have continued. Many of them have been teachers or public servants in one way or another who tried to make their life a life of service. That's why they went in.

1:16:20

Q: Do you think that this experiment of the historic peace churches was successful?

A: I think so, because many kinds of public service were done. You could have a lot of philosophical questions about should the church compromise to this extent and having this kind of a program. Should the churches...part of the compromise was that the churches had agreed to pay for it. It was later when we went to serve the public in the state hospitals that the employer then paid for it. Those were compromises that were made. You could legitimately debate the validity or

justification for some of the decisions that were made, but many many kinds of public service were done and most of the people who were in it went on to live a life of useful service of some kind of focus on human service. And I think that given the times, given the circumstances of the times, that this was something that has proved to have long-term value.

I have to explain, before we end, our wedding. Neither of our families could afford to come. Well, we really shot the works on her. She didn't have a wedding gown. She just had a new dress we bought... $12. You're, of course, talking about a $100 dress. I mean in today's world. But, we had a small wedding and the chaplain of the Wesleyan university, which is the university in Middletown, was, if not a dedicated pacifist, a very strong supporter of the peace movement. He had known some of the people in Pasadena in the Friends church. He was not a Quaker, but he did know a lot of people in the Friends Church and he extended a great deal of friendship and support to the group. And, there was a professor at the college who was a Quaker and those families put on the reception for us at our wedding. And we stayed at the house of the professor for our honeymoon. They were going on vacation and we always feel very grateful to them for how they helped and supported us when we couldn't afford much of anything else. There were a lot of good things, a lot of good support.

At least I got Fran out of the Midwest. I met her in Chicago, so I always say that I rescued her.

How we met. There was a National Council of Methodist Youth being held in Indiana. There was a big deal. There was a couple of thousand people. This was in 1941. No it wasn't. It was in 1940, and at that time the National Methodist Youth League was very active in the pro peace. This was in 1940, before Pearl Harbor. I was going to graduate school at the University of Chicago and a friend of mine, was a pastor, had taken a job at the Methodist headquarters promoting the development of this conference. And, being there, I was asked to be on the committee as California Representative. So, I met a number of the people who went to some meetings. I met some of the local people. When we got to the Winona Lake Conference grounds after the big meeting, they had people divided into small groups by their badge number or something. So, I went in and here was this very young girl sitting there. I knew her name, because I had seen her in some meeting. Very young girl from Chicago. And I sat down, I knew who she was, I knew her name, knew who her family was. I sat down beside her, behind her. She had a dress, a sash with a great big bow on the back. So, naturally, I untied the bow and tied it behind her chair.

Well, she said, "You better untie it." "Untie it yourself." "Well, you tied it. You untie it." I said, "Nope. You untie it." I don't think either one of us paid any attention to the meeting. But we hassled through the whole time. And, then they said everybody stand for a closing prayer, so she had to untie it. And, I laughed at her. That made her mad. She was really mad - "I'm going to get even with you. I'm going to get even with you if it takes the rest of my life." So, she married me. That's how we met.

Q: She married you. She went to camp, she went to the hospital, and worked at it while you were there. You both moved out to Los Angeles. And, how many kids did you end up having?

A: We have three children. Tom, the one you met, is the oldest, he's 45. Pat, our daughter is 42, and our youngest son is 37, the one that lives in Maine.

1:22:50

Q: And did both of your sons register as conscientious objectors?

A: No, Fred went into the Army, the youngest one. By that time, the draft and everything was off for Fred, but, he went into the Army as a choice. That was what he thought he wanted to do, what he believed in. When Tom was in school at the time of registration, it was in the early Vietnam days, in the early days of Vietnam, and he registered as a non-combatant, but he was never called. So, he did not have to make a final decision.

1:23:45

Q: So how does your family feel about the decision you made in World War II? Have they ever talked about it?

A: Well, they recognized it as a personal decision based on conscience and respected it. Not everyone agreed, but I felt I was well supported and respected. And my family helped out some financially, because $2.50 a month is not quite riches. But, for extra, my family gave me some extra funds. When I came home, they gave me whatever I needed and bought things for me. So that I felt that my family was very supportive and my church was basically. I mean my local church.

1:24:45

Q: But your children now, I mean after the event, when you tell the stories to your children about what your decision was. Do they argue with you about it?

A: If we tell it at all, it's ancient history. It's like, as far as the kids are concerned, this is like talking about Washington crossing the Delaware. It's something that is so old it's not relevant to their lives. I think the youngest veteran of World War II would be in his sixties. Yeah, he'd be well into his sixties by now. Your project is ancient history.

Q: Not for me. Thank you very much.

A: Well, I appreciate . . . you've kind of brought up a lot of stuff that I haven't really thought about for many years. I've been too busy with what I'm doing. I think it's nice that you're doing this. Did you find much interest on the part of your advisors and other people in your class?

Q: Yes. It's interesting. People don't know about this. My advisor did know; in fact, thought it was a very interesting story, and was very eager for me to do it. But the students younger than me had no idea. And it's fascinating.

A: The students had never even heard of it I imagine, I mean many of your fellow students.

Q: No. Had never heard of it. Had no idea it existed.

A: Were they really interested in it?

Q: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

A: Well, I talked too much, too long. I hope it will be of some use.

Q: No, not at all. Thank you. Thank you.

Evaluation and Conclusion

No one can tell a story as well as the people who lived it. Nothing prepared me for the passion, the information and the humor discovered in this project. To many, the Civilian Public Service was a failure because of the interference of the American government. But, despite that, it touched each of these men. Each man turned to a career in social service or found another way to continue to help others in his community. These men's experiences also planted a seed of peace that helped to form a more productive government policy concerning COs in later wars. There is a long way to go, but these men's brave steps forward in a hostile world can be viewed as a different type of heroism; heroism of daring to live and letting others live for the sake of peace.

I know that there exists in all of us the question: "But how did they intend to stop Hitler with pacifism?" Perhaps, to understand these men's stand it is helpful to consider the reflection found in Albert Keim's The CPS Story that ". . . stopping Hitler and stopping future Hitlers are two different things."

I'd like to end with three quotes. Jim Dyer said he saw a bumper sticker he liked that said, "It will be a wonderful world when the schools have all the money they need and the Air Force has to hold a bake sale to buy a bomber."

My Uncle Malcolm Nichols likes to use the expression "Giant oaks come from little nuts that hold their ground."

And, last but not least, let me offer a quote of Stephen Vincent Benet.

> Our earth is but a small star in the great universe, yet of it we can make, if we choose, a planet unvexed by war, untroubled by hunger or fear, undivided by senseless distinctions of race, color, or theory. Grant us that courage and foreseeing to begin this task today that our children's children may be proud of the name of man.

Historical Appendix

A Brief History of Religious Conscientious Objection In the United States Up to WWII

Despite what our first grade teachers might have made us believe, intolerance of a religion whose belief is not that of the mainstream has existed in this country since the beginning. Dutch Calvinists may have come to this country in part to escape religious persecution in their own, but they did not hesitate in persecuting the Quakers who followed them. The Quakers, who preached their religion of peace and who spoke out adamantly against the evils of slavery years before the Revolutionary War, often had their tongues cut out, were tortured, were tarred and feathered, and if they survived, frequently were unceremoniously escorted out of town. Fear of this violent intolerance to different religious beliefs was a major reason for the insistence of the states in requiring an amendment to the Constitution that guaranteed their rights to worship as they so chose.

But, even prior to the writing of the Constitution and before the Revolutionary War, immigrants who objected to war, such as the Mennonites, migrated to America, at least in part, to avoid conscription in their native countries.

By the Revolutionary War, there already existed a number of religious bodies opposed to military service and war. These included the Quakers, the Mennonites, the Amish, the Dunkers (or

Church of the German Baptist Brethren), the Schwenkfelders and a group of about twelve Shakers.

On the whole, these groups were small enough, and the new burgeoning government disorganized enough, to leave little record of their treatment. It is known that the largest group, the Quakers, however, "were not united in their peace testimony." It is estimated that those who would not fight in the revolutionary war had over $68,000 levied in military fines. Some had their properties seized. Some were exiled to different states. On the other hand, those who chose to participate, even in watching a rally, were frequently expelled from their churches, (Wright p. 11).

During the years that followed, while federal legislation was passed that exempted certain religious groups from participation in the military in time of war, other like-minded religious groups also migrated to this country. Among these were Christadelphians, and Rogerenes.

By the Civil War, the Unitas Fratrum or Moravian Church, previously a peace church, found members of its body fighting on both sides. More mainstream churches such as the American Baptist Missionary Union issued statements declaring the war "as a most righteous and holy one, sanctioned alike by God and all right-thinking men" (Wright p. 36). Sentiment was strong and exemptions for religious groups from military service were largely repealed.

However, in the North, a man could defer his conscription into the Army by finding a substitute to fight for him or by paying commutation fees. Of course, that did not prohibit his community from abusing him or ousting him for his decision. It also was not a viable solution for religious objectors who did not wish to support the war by sending someone else or sending money. Many were forced into service and refused to fall into line or wear their uniforms. Although some were confined to their barracks, accounts by the men show a liberalness and humanity afforded them not known by men of later wars. President Lincoln was supportive of their right to their stand on war and on either side only a few deaths can be attributed to maltreatment of conscientious objectors, although records of treatment varied from real leniency to great severity.

World War I was a different story. The conscription law passed by Congress made provisions only for those who were willing to do non-combatant work such as medical or secretarial for the military. Those who would not drill, who would not work, who would not put on their uniforms because they opposed the military were separated into different barracks, they were court-martialed, often mercilessly tortured, placed in federal prisons, starved, and many died painful deaths for living their opposition to war.

An example of such cruelty is the story of the three Hofer brothers who were Huttrians. Transferred to Alcatraz, they were beaten by the guards and the chaplain for refusing to wear their

military uniforms and placed in a dungeon with only their underwear for protection against the rats and the cold. They were manacled to the wall and given almost no food, no toilet facilities and very little water. Two of them died of pneumonia, one of whoem was sent home wearing the uniform he had sacrificed his life resisting.

Appendix
of
Methodology and Organization

Conscientious Objectors in Civilian Public Service During World War II

General Topic List

Treatment of conscientious objectors during WWII.

History of the development of the Civilian Public Service camps

Induction Process
- Types of classification
  - Men classified 4F who were sent to CPS camps

Assignment to camps
- Where and for how long

Types of work
- Mental Hospitals
- Firefighting
  - Smoke jumping
- Farming/Dairy
- Guinea pig experiments
  - Motivation for taking part
- Other type of assignments

Payment, or lack of, for services

Insurance, or lack of, for medical and for death

Public reaction to conscientious objectors during WWII
- Parents
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Congress
- Newspapers
- Draft boards

Men who enlisted out of camp and were classified 4F and returned

COs feelings about:
- Government interaction
- Treatment
- Outcome of the war
- About their personal experience

Constitutionality of treatment of COs during WWII

Things I Would Like to Photograph

Peace church minister

Conscientious objectors to WWII sharing their experiences
- A firefighter
- Worker in a mental institution
- Farm worker
- Guinea pig for the Starvation Project

Veteran talking about conscientious objectors during WWII

Member of a WWII draft board talking about processing COs

Memorabilia from CPS
- Pictures
  - camps
  - smoke jumpers
  - subject COs as young men
  - mental hospital
  - farm
- Artwork
- Induction Notice
- Poetry

Cover of Life Magazine with picture of Starvation Project

History professor discussing COs

At least one church
- Outside
- Sanctuary
- Alter

Subject COs working in their gardens or around their house

Mountain scenery

A farmer doing farm work

An old mental hospital ward

Civil rights lawyer discussing constitutional legality of treatment of COs during WWII

Organization of a More Complete Video Project

Video of Gulf War protests

Video of Vietnam protestors being beaten

Brief history of conscientious objectors in the United States

Introduction of title and idea over World War II music of peace

Description of peace churches' stand against World War II by a minister who was a conscientious objector during WWII

The following information will be relayed through the COs who who are being interviewed over pictures of the camps, etc.:

The development of Civilian Public Service Camps

The classification process

Those men who resisted CPS

The types of work assigned conscriptees
- Firefighting
  - Smoke jumping
- Tree planting
- Mental hospitals
- Farming
- Guinea pig experiments
  - Motivation
- Other assignments - Were these men cowards?

Lack of support
- Lack of pay
  - How did it effect families
  - Payment of POWs in contrast
- Lack of insurance or death benefits
  - What happened to families of men who died?

What happened to men who decided to join the army but were then classified 4F?

Interview with lawyer discussing these issues of inequity. Were they constitutional?

Back to interviews of COs relaying information about
Public reaction
- Parents
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Congress

Newspapers

Interview of historian

CO's reaction to news of Jewish death camps

Interview of veteran - reaction to COs

Interviews of COs evaluating the experience as a whole
Forty years later world view

Follow up statement with quotes from Einstein, Eisenhower, George Bernard Shaw, etc., and the judgment at the Nuremberg trials

Poignant quote of the subjects - End

Specific Questions

How did you become a conscientious objector?

What was your classification process?

How were you treated by your draft board?

What stories did you hear of the way others were treated?

How did you feel about taking a position that was so unpopular at the time? Was it scary?

What was the public reaction to conscientious objectors during the war? Can you give me an example?

How did your parents feel about your position?

Did you lose friends because of your position?

Were you treated differently by the community?

How were you treated by the government?

To what extent were COs recognized in newspapers? Was it positive? Did it raise questions about patriotism?

To your knowledge, how was Civilian Public Service started and why?

What were you doing before you were sent to Civilian Public Service?

Where were you sent? Why were you sent there?

What would have happened if you refused to go?

Did you know anyone who refused to go?

What happened to them?

Who paid for the camps operation?

Who ran the camps?

How did you feel about the government involvement with the camps?

What kind of people did you meet through Civilian Public Service?
Religious groups?
Occupational groups?

What did you think, on the whole of the people you met?

Tell me about your favorite characters and why?

What type of work was done through Civilian Public Service?

Did you think, at the time, that this work was of national importance?

When you look back on it what do you think?

What kind of work did you do?

What was a typical work schedule?

Which camps or camps were you in?

How was your camp picked?

Was the work hard?

What were the conditions like?

Were you ever paid for the work you did?

Was anyone you worked with ever paid?

If CPS workers were not paid, where did the money for their labors go?

Were POWs paid?

How did that make you feel?

Some men from CPS camps later joined the army. Why?

What happened if a man died in CPS?

Were you ever a guinea pig for a medical project?

Did you know any one who was?

What kind of project?

Why do you think these men volunteered?

What are your strongest memories of Civilian Public Service?

What were the inequities concerning COs during WWII?

What was your reaction to the revelations about the concentration camps in Nazi Germany and the attempted extermination of the Jews?

Did you feel you had to rejustify your position in light of that?

Would you still make the same decision, if you could do it over?

Its been over 40 years now. How do you view your experience from the perspective of the world now?

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