

DO4 – Don Ouellette, “CCC and WWII Service”

Time-Line: Decade IV, Local and National Events, Points of National Interest, 1933, “The WPA starts”

Transcript: pp. 27-28

DO: I feel that three and one-half million boys between the 1933 and 1942 era are going unnoticed for the simple reason we worked for a dollar a day. Thirty dollars a month and when you look up the records from 1939 and 1942 when the C.C. stopped and what it had done in those nine and one-quarter years, the billions of trees are still there. A lot of our trees, with Reagan I believe, from the C.C.C's with the tree they use in Washington, we were so much responsible for the reverse of the worse recession we had in that period because President Roosevelt who came in and fourteen days later he said, "This is what we're going to do to help our youth of today." And that's what saved the country. Three and one-half million dollars a day went but that three and one-half million dollars a day went to the mothers and the fathers and the children. Went to the stores and went all the way around [unclear]. We worked our way up. And to think--. I have a list here I could show you that billions and billions of trees, roads, dams, recreation centers--. Matter of fact, Merritt Parker, right here started our project along with W.P.A. in those days. In 1942 is when we stopped it. We have been, also, the desert, the desert the sand dunes in Nevada. There was nothing but sand dunes. We made a garden out of it with our restoration of water conserving things. Plus the very important part

that people forget, a million and one-quarter of us went right into the service.

DO: I remember reading the book over and over again, Leaves of Grass by Walt Whitman. "I steal into the night and I,"--. It was so so long ago, but that helped me to visualize what I needed to know, to participate, to learn. Whatever job I ever get in my life, it might have begun here but it always ended up as far as it could go because that's the way I keep telling my boys. "You do the best you can, whether you get passed over or anything. Eventually you do good work, they have to get back to you." You hope to live to see the day sometimes. You know how difficult that is. I say that a few times that way.