

**U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
Region Five History Project**

**Interview with:** Jim McCoy  
**Interviewed by:** Bob Harris  
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[CD 1.]

BOB HARRIS: Today is Friday, March 26, and we'll be doing an oral interview with Jim McCoy. I'm getting feedback here, and I don't know why, Jim. That did something. All right, Jim, let me go ahead and start with an introduction of yourself in terms of where your family came from, and so forth.

JIM MCCOY: Okay. I'll say I'm Jim McCoy. I was born in 1928 on a ranch or homestead place that my grandfather and grandmother homesteaded back in 1918 or some time like that. And I went to school in a little town in Kansas and left that little town and went into the Navy in World War II and served on an aircraft carrier. I got out of the Navy in 1946, in August, and came back and went to school. I went to study mechanical engineering and I was doing that and going to school in Kansas City.

And one day I was getting – I was on the G.I. Bill, and I think I got \$62.00 a month, and the government paid for my books and drafting instruments and that sort of stuff, and \$62.00 didn't go very far, so I was working part time in a grocery store, carrying out groceries and pushing buggies around out in the parking lot, and I was putting in – anyway, I went to school, classes, around 7:00 in the morning and I got off the job at 10:00 at night. And that was kind of getting to me, and one day we were doing some class work down in a bar, and we'd been

drinking beer, and somebody says, "Let's go back in the service." This is just before the Korean War – they were talking about the Korean War. So a buddy and I said, "Hey, yeah, that sounds good. We're getting tired of school anyway."

So we went down and recruited ourselves to the army and before we knew it, we were on a train headed to [inaudible], Arkansas, and I signed up for three years in the Army and wound up going to various places. I was serving in Alaska, on the Sur [?] Peninsula, and put into what they call the Dew [?] line, and I would spend four or five days on a hill with a [inaudible] light, trying to get to where the weather was clear so we could sight into the other peaks around us for triangulation, so I spent several months in Alaska, and I didn't have a bath or a shave for six months out there, because you were out on these mountains. They would bring you down off of one and put you on another one. I did one time get to jump into a stream in Alaska and wash off. It was so cold that my pores closed up and the dirt didn't come out of my pores. So that was the last time I tried that.

Well, eventually in November of 1951, I think it was, or 1950, yeah, because the Korean War had just started and we were on a boat and we had our rifles and we had our mosquito nets, and we figured, well, we're headed toward Korea [inaudible.] Well, fortunately we didn't go to Korea. We went down to California to Scott [?] right at the end of the Golden Gate bridge, and spent a nice two months there. All I was did was eat and sleep and play baseball, for two months, and had a beautiful barracks. Come down in the morning and I would have the cook say, "Well, how do you like your eggs this morning?" and I would say, "Sunny-side up," and I'd get my eggs. Now this is a different army than I'd been used to, so I was in for a surprise. It was nice after being in Alaska where we ate cold rations and all that stuff, and couldn't take a bath or

brush your teeth or anything. So get down to this plush living, we figured we deserved it, anyway.

Anyway, I met my wife, Lillian, there in San Francisco. And I started going with her for a while and we would meet all the good places in San Francisco. And I proposed to her in San Francisco. But I thought I was going to get to stay there all that time, but the next thing the Army said was, no, you're going back to Fort [inaudible] and go to school.

[Phone rings.]

Now, let's see, I left off with proposing to my wife, Lillian. The Army sent me back to Fort [inaudible] to go to school, and I took some courses in photogrammetry [?], courses in advanced mathematics, courses in surveying – these were all three-month courses, eight hours a day, and I made arrangements – I told my wife, I went out and bought rings there in Washington, D.C., sent my wife, sent my bride-to-be the ring, and we planned on getting married then in a few months. After I finished my school I got a furlough of thirty days to go back and get married, and a buddy and I – he was going to be my best man – he'd just bought a brand-new Hudson Hornet, which is supposed to be a hundred miles an hour. So we drove non-stop from Washington, D.C. to San Francisco. One would drive and one would sleep in the back seat. And we made in non-stop from D.C. to San Francisco in about what seemed to be two days and two nights. [Laughs.] And that car would do one hundred miles an hour, because we were coming through Texas and Oklahoma, and we were doing a hundred miles an hour. [Laughs.]

But anyway, we got to San Francisco and my wife and I got married in Mission Dolores in San Francisco, and again the Army jumped into our life. We were figuring I'd go back to Washington, D.C. I'd been assigned to a unit, a topographical unit, and so I thought I'd spend the rest of my [inaudible] in Washington, D.C., and have my wife back there. But no, they came

after me again and said, “You’re going to go to Europe. You’ve been cleared for top secret. You’re going to work in Europe.”

So that – I had to leave my wife in San Francisco, and I headed for Europe and was stationed in Heidelberg, Germany, for quite a while. I was with Supreme Headquarters under Eisenhower, so the next thing they said was, “Well, you can bring your wife over to Germany with you and live in Heidelberg.” So they got me a nice apartment. We had a maid and a gardener and a guy that kept the fireplace going, so we were pretty much in hog heaven. My wife says, “You’re spoiling me.” She couldn’t get used to this maid that was going to get in her way of doing things. So finally we got – the fire man thing, that became a deal where the Army couldn’t afford that anymore, so they had a guy that came by and took care of that every so often, and they couldn’t afford that. The only thing left was a maid, and we had to start paying half of that salary. We kept the maid and we spent about a year and a half, two years in Heidelberg, and in the meantime my wife became pregnant, and we were going back to the States.

I was going to get discharged and I was headed for Camp Stillman [?] and of course my poor wife is sea-sick and pregnant all the way back across the Atlantic, and I keep telling her, “It will go away.” And it never did. But anyway, when we hit land in New York City, and then we had to ride a train from New York City to San Francisco. Anyway, we got to San Francisco and I got discharged out of Camp Stillman[?] and so the next thing I do is get a job. So I went looking around in the paper, and saw where the California Division of Highways is looking for junior civil engineers, and I said, “Well, that’s all right. I think I can do all that stuff they’ve got on there.” So I went down to their main office on Oak Street in San Francisco, and had an interview,

and the guy looked at my resume that they filled out, and they were just as happy as clams because they were having a hard time finding people.

So they hired me and I went to work over in Walnut Creek, surveying, and some of the freeways that are in there now – why, when I got over in Walnut Creek, there was no freeways. You'd drive right through Lafayette. That was the main drag going from San Francisco to Walnut Creek. And we rented a little apartment in Albany, and I commuted from Albany over to Walnut Creek every day. There were several other guys that worked there, and the state furnished me a car to drive back and forth in, and of course I had to pick up these other fellows that were working over there also. And so I worked there as a civil engineer for almost a year, I think it was.

But it was a boring job because you just did the same thing over and over. And there happened to be one guy on the crew that came to work, and he'd worked for the Forest Service, and I got talking with him, and he was telling me, "Well, the Forest Service – they aren't quite as precise as the state guys," because everything we were surveying we'd turn up angle six times and we'd [inaudible] everything four times, and had thermometers on the chains and stuff like that. So he says, "The Forest Service doesn't do things like that. And it's diversified; you get a lot of things. At least you won't get bored like on this job," because he was doing the same thing over and over. He said, "Oh, it's spicy." And I said, "Okay."

So I went over to San Francisco to the Regional Office. He told me where that was. Got an application, filled it out. And Vern Eaton was a roads and trails guy there at that time. I guess he'd taken over – I can't remember. Anyway, Vern Eaton interviewed me, and says, "Okay, you've got a job. You'll start at the GS7 and you're going to go up at the Redding Works Center and go to work there." And he said, "All our engineers work out of that Work Center, and they'll

detail you out to a place to where you'll work." And he said, "You'll get your GS7 salary, and we pay you \$6 a day per diem, every day of the month." And I thought, "Wow, that's pretty good." So that was the kind of thing that made me finally say I'd take the job, that \$6 a day per diem.

Well, I get up [to] the Redding Works Center. Another fellow came along with me that they'd hired, and he drove his car up and I rode with him, and I left our car with my wife. We'd already had the baby, but she had the baby to get to the doctor. And I went up the Redding Works and reported in to the fellow in charge there.

HARRIS: Do you remember who that was, Jim?

MCCOY: I don't remember his name, and I was looking in here trying to get his name, and I couldn't find his name.

HARRIS: Do you remember what your report date was?

MCCOY: Yeah, it was August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1953. So the guy says to me, well, he tells the other guy he was going to send him off to Susanville. Well, this guy didn't think too much of Sudenville. He says, "Man, that's way off over." Then he told me, "We're going to send you to Weaverville." And I said, "Where in the world – where's Weaverville?" They said, "It's just about fifty miles west of here." And I said, "Oh." That didn't really tell me anything, but I just nodded. He said, "There'll be a stage in here at about three [o'clock] this afternoon, and you can get on that stage and it'll take you in there. There's a little hotel in Weaverville where you can probably get a room for the night." And I said, "Well, all right." And I'm beginning to think, I don't like this at all. And so sure enough, here comes the stage, and I'm thinking, man, I'm going to take a stage to get out. And I'm thinking with stages with horses, but I was relieved, finally, here it comes, this little pickup truck with a cab on the back of it, and it said "mail" on the side of the door, and

this guy says, “Well, that there’s the stage, you catch a ride with that guy over to Weaverville.” And I thought, whew, there’s no horses. I figured on riding with horses.

Anyway, we headed for Weaverville and got in there about dark. He dropped me off about as far away from the hotel as you could get, and I hiked up [to] this hotel on a dirt road, on the side of the road, no sidewalk. Finally I get up to where the business are, and I’m thinking, there is no cement in this town, there is no concrete, because the sidewalk was made out of wood. It was like a western cow town. And I thought, wow. And I get to the hotel and I find it and I check in, and the lady there says, “How long will you be here?” And I said, “Well, I don’t know, but I’ll take it for a couple nights.” I don’t remember what it was, four bucks a night or something like that. And she gives me the key and I go up to the room, and I’m still shaking my head, I think I made a bad decision here, and I get up in my room, and I was pretty sure I had made a bad decision, because in the room there was no running water. There was a pitcher of water and a great big bowl to pour the water in, and that was to wash in. And I thought, now where is the bathroom? I didn’t see that. And so I went back down; I said, “Where is the bathroom?” “Oh, it’s down at the end of the hall. Everyone uses the same one. You’ll have to wait your turn.” And I’m thinking, boy. I was still shaking my head.

And the next morning I got up, thinking, I think I’m going to go back to San Francisco. [Laughs.] So I thought, well, I’ll mess around here. So I went down to a bar called the Rendezvous – it was, I think, the only bar in town. And I set down there and I bumped into a fellow, was just talking to him at the bar, and his name was Larry Knutson [?]. And I said, “Do you know anything about the Forest Service?” He said, “I work for them.” I said, “You do? I hired on in San Francisco but I’m not sure I want to work for these people.” And he says, “Oh? Where are you staying?” I said, “I’m staying at the hotel.” He said, “Well, if you’re signed up,

there's a barracks down there, why don't you come down there and sleep down there and save your hotel?" I said, "Well, okay." So I chatted with him; I thought, well, I'll stay another night here since I'm getting free bedding.

I went down and met another guy, a buddy of his called Russ William [?] and they looked like they were pretty happy with [inaudible.] So I thought, well, maybe it's not so bad. Still hadn't reported in to their head guy there. I said, "Who's the guy?" Then they gave me a name here, Don Turner, and I said, "I'm supposed to report to some guy the name of Don Turner." They said, "Oh, yeah, well you go in that main building there and ask for him." So I said, "All right," so next morning I went in and asked for Don Turner. And they said, "He's back there." And I went back there and I still wasn't sure I was going to take this job, and so I walk in and said, "Mr. Turner?"

"Yeah."

"I'm Jim McCoy. I'm supposed to come here to work for you, but I'm not sure I'm going to stay here. I don't think I want to work here."

He says, "Sit down there, let me tell you about the job."

So I sit down, and he starts telling me about the good things and everything. Well, anyway, to make a long story short, I would up taking the job, and Don Turner was my first boss. He was a forest engineer. At that time I was still assigned to the Redding Work Center, but detailed to the old [inaudible] I used to work under Don Turner. So he says, "Well, why don't you go out with Larry and Russ, these guys, and they'll show you kind of what to do out there on the job, and maybe that will help you make up your mind for sure."

So I said okay, and gave him my papers, and I go get in the carryall – they were driving, and the three of us headed out for a job. Seems to me it was at Big Bar [?] somewhere. And we



get out there on the ground and we started hiking. And I'm wondering, where's the [inaudible]? Where's the equipment and stuff? All they had was an [inaudible] and a rag tape and a bag of stakes, and I'm thinking, boy-oh-boy, these guys do need help! [Laughs.] So we get out there, and sure enough, Russ and Larry start dragging out this tape, and they're dropping rocks, and they'd say, "Oh, that's forty-five feet," and drop a rock. And I'm thinking, "No plumb balls here!" So they'd drop a rock and drive a stake in the ground and we went along like that. And I thought, and we're going to build roads from this? [Laughs.]

So anyway, I finally decided, yeah, this town looks like a good place to work; looks like it's going to be interesting, and it's going to be interesting helping these guys out with their problems [?]. [Laughs.] So anyway, I went to work on the old Trinity National Forest before it came Shasta-Trinity. And we did finally start using transits and some tapes, and we actually did start making designs on paper, whereas before it was just free location out on the hills and trial and error, and fit the curves to the ground. And it's amazing, but we built some pretty good roads that way. I look back on some of them and they weren't that bad, really.

HARRIS: What kind of experiences in the sense of working out in the woods – did you camp out at all, Jim, in those days?

MCCOY: Oh, yeah. We used to camp out, second year, I think. We went up to a place, Seven-up Cedars [?] it was called, and we'd live in a tent and it would snow on us, and we'd be out surveying in the snow and you were living in a tent, and the only way you kept warm was keeping close to that stove in the middle of a tent. It was the old tent – a wood platform and a wood frame, and then the tent dropped over the thing. So once you got that fire roaring in there, they were not too bad. And I had another experience – we were out on what's called the Old Brownlot [?] Road. We had a tent that was just put up on the ground, and we had no heat or

stove, so we had a piece of [inaudible] laying there, and we said, okay, maybe we can stick that [inaudible] into the tent, leave the other end to stick out, kind of like [inaudible] would build a fire down at the other end, that would get warm. Well, so we gathered wood and got a fire going inside the tent and closed up as much as we could without burning it on that stack. And sure, it worked great, until the weather shifted, and then it blew the smoke right back into the tent, running south. So then we're outside and we can't get back in the tent, and we can't get the fire out because it's going in there.

But anyway, that was some of the kinds of campouts we had. And we lived in trailers a lot of time, or we'd pull a trailer out. We took turns cooking on these crews. We'd have a crew of four or five guys, and you're out all week, and you took turns cooking, and then took turns washing dishes, and you took turns doing this or that, but every guy that had to cook – there were good cooks and bad cooks, and you always hated to see that bad cook's turn come up. He only had one specialty and you know what you were going to get, and it wasn't going to be good. But anyway, the – and finally we moved up a notch from that. We finally started hiring cooks, as I recall. And I'm still on the old trail doing that. And I started hiring a cook. And we went to Don Turner there, he's a forest engineer, and we said, "This is taking too much time, we're working on our own time to get up to get our eight hours on the job and to cook and wash dishes and all," and blah, blah, blah. So he took pity on us and hired a cook. We hired this cook that wasn't much better than the worst cook we had before, but at least we didn't have to wash dishes or do any of this other stuff, so we put up with it. He stayed with the Forest Service. His name was Phil – I forget his last name, but his first name was Phil. And he said he was – he'd cooked in restaurants and all that. We always doubted that he'd cooked anywhere, except he's learning with us.

Then we had another big camp out, when we were putting in what's called the Hertz Mountain Road [?] and this is when we went back and became the Shasta Trail [?]. I got transferred to Redding, and we had a big survey camp out by Shasta Lake. And we were surveying what they called the Hertz Mountain Road, which eventually was changed to the Gilman Road in memorial of Jack Gilman, who was a ranger on the Shasta who had been killed. We had this cook, this same guy, this Phil, he cooked for us out there too. But he would have pancakes in the morning that was about twelve inches high, and he'd stick them in an oven. By the time we got in there to eat them, they were like rubber, and he left the syrup set out. And one morning – and it was always dark when we were going to breakfast, because we would get an early start because it got so hot out there, working in there, so we'd go to work at 6:00 in the morning and get off eight hours later in the afternoon.

But like I say, it was dark in the morning and the lanterns wouldn't put out much light, and one morning we got up – and they left the syrup set out on the table – these little ants had gotten in it, and I think it was Bruce Pruitt [?] – and he was eating his pancakes. He'd come in early, he'd got in first, and he'd put syrup on his pancakes, and somebody'd come along with a flashlight, and he'd been eating the half of these pancakes, and he'd been eating these little red ants [laughs] and he didn't even know it. Finally that stopped; he didn't eat any more pancakes, and the cook finally went and found some syrup that I guess hadn't been opened. That was – I imagine Bruce Pruitt [?] still thinks about that.

HARRIS: Where was Lillian and your daughter during the time you ended up in Weaverville?

MCCOY: Okay, well, I'll back up a bit. I was in Weaverville for oh, probably, a month, before I could find anyplace to live and bring my wife and baby up. The Forest Service, they were on the old compound, they had an old barracks, and Don Turner, bless his soul, he talked the supervisor

into letting us convert part of that old barracks into two apartments, and so it was really just one big room with a stove, a sink and a refrigerator. So I went down and I brought my wife up. We had a baby boy; he was about – he had just started to walk, so he was probably nine months old or so. So we lived in this little apartment and a forester, Ted Robertson, lived on the other side of the apartment, and [inaudible] they had two kids at that time. So it was pretty cramped quarters, but I'll back up a minute from that apartment. Our first quarters was a little trailer about ten feet long, I think it was, and we lived in that for about two or three weeks while they were fixing this apartment up. [Laughs.] And so we lived there – I forget how long – several months, so we could find a place in town to rent.

Weaverville just didn't have any rentals or places for sale or anything. But we finally – my wife met a lady at church, and they were building a new house, and they'd been living in a smaller house but they were going to vacate it. So my wife came home, "Oh, I found us a house." Sure enough, we rented that, and we lived in that – two bedroom apartment, I believe it was – so that was not too bad.

But anyway, in 1955, when the Trinity and the Shasta were merged to become the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, we were transferred to Redding, and we bought a house in Redding. In fact, we bought a brand new house right next to Don and Doris Turner. Their house is right next to us, brand new house, because Don – they got transferred into Redding at the same time. And of course these houses were at that time – I think the down payment was \$300, and to come up with the down payment after I'd been on a fire [?] and I had \$300 back pay coming. And that was my down payment. I don't remember how Don made his. But anyway, back in those days, why, that \$6 day per diem, I have to tell you this – like I said, that was the thing that got me to take the job. Three months later, they cut the per diem out. [Laughs.] And they

transferred us all out of Redding Works there – whatever forest you were on at the time, you were assigned to that forest and your per diem was cut off. And so at that time I didn't have enough money to get out of town. [Laughs.]

HARRIS: The Work Center was functioning to serve –

MCCOY: – the whole northern California, yeah. And they'd sent surveyors out whenever a forester requested them. And then sometimes you'd finish a job when a forester comes back in, and then you'd go out to another forest. But it must have been a budget cut, or something. That \$6 day per diem – I don't remember how many people were out there on a per diem, that \$6 per day, but that was probably a pretty good chunk of change. Anyway, I'll stop there. I'm getting a little hoarse. I've gone to Shasta Trinity.

HARRIS: Yeah.

MCCOY: Well, I transferred to the Shasta Trinity. Don Turner brought me over there to be residents there on Hertz Mountain Road, which would be later called the Gilman Road. And that was 1955, and construction started, it seemed to me, in August or September. And in that same year in December, we had a flood come along and flooded everyplace, and I can remember Shasta Lake. You could stand up there and watch it rise. It was almost like filling a bathtub. And I remember watching some markings on the shore, and it was almost rising at about a foot an hour, as I recall. That may not be quite accurate, but... And culverts were washing out all over the forest, and the road that we were building, the Gilman Road – it's just lucky we hadn't gotten too far along, otherwise we'd have lost a lot of it, but it's turned out that very little of the road was damaged from the flood, because the contractor had done a pretty good job of winterizing it.

And I remained on the Shasta-Trinity. Don Turner put me in charge of the survey crews. I think Larry Knutson came over, and he took over, was in charge of the design of the roads. And

at that time, all of the engineers worked out of Redding, and it seems to me that we had about sixty or seventy engineers on the payroll at that time. Well, about that time they talked about putting engineers out on districts. Of course we all were saying, "Oh, that will never work. That will never work." But Paul Statton [sp?], for a supervisor, who I think was a great one, he told Don we're going to have district engineers. And Don [came] to us and said we're going to have district engineers. And we said, okay, we're going to have district engineers. And so everybody was put out – well, not everybody, but a lot of the engineers – were assigned to various districts, and myself – it was about 1958 or '59 when this was happening – and I, being a hard-headed engineer, said, "I don't want to go out on a district." And Don says, "Well, how would you like to go to Tahoe, then?" And I said, "That sounds just great."

So in 1959 I got transferred to Tahoe. I went to work for [inaudible] Shott [?]. And I was there – I enjoyed my time there – for a year. I worked on some projects that – [inaudible] there were some logging roads that were being put in, and Ralph Malone was kind of doing the surveying and engineering then, and he was a real sharp guy. However, as I recall, he was actually a graduate forester working as an engineer, and talking of a graduate foresters working as engineers, at one time, back in '56, '57, when there wasn't enough assignments for a forester, and we couldn't find engineers, some of the foresters had graduated from Berkeley and [inaudible] in Oregon, and so forth, they decided to become [inaudible] and they all had survey backgrounds because that was one of the courses they had in their forestry [inaudible.] And Ralph Malone was one of the – in fact, I think his degree was biology or botany or one of those; I don't remember exactly. Anyway, he was one of the guys that got sidetracked. But he did get back into forestry and wound up going to the Washington office as a specialist back there, and I've lost track of him. I don't know where he's at now.

HARRIS: Did you run across a fellow by the name of Jack Barnacle [?]?

MCCOY: I remember Jack.

HARRIS: I think Jack might have been in the same situation [inaudible] assistant ranger [?], yeah.

MCCOY: We had – I had a couple of guys like that that were working for me when I was on the Chaplin [?] at [inaudible] Trinity. And they were good workers. It was kind of a waste of their education, really, because they....

Okay, now we're...

HARRIS: You're on to Tahoe.

MCCOY: We're on to Tahoe now.

HARRIS: Are there any experiences there during that time?

MCCOY: I was only there a year, and I didn't really – I didn't feel like I really got in all the things that were going on there, because I just wasn't there that long. I know that one thing I had was over by – oh, the big thing that happened to me there was a Campeville [?] fire. We had fires in November and then we had the Campeville [?] fire. Probably that year I was on the Tahoe, I spent as much time fighting the fires as I did doing engineering, because the Campeville [?] fire almost got the whole town of Campeville [?], but I was service chief at that time, and we must have had over a thousand people working for us at that time, and fire crews from all over the state were there. But anyway, after the fire, we had some timber salesmen there, and I had kind of a little thing where I'd wanted to build a bridge across the – oh, shoot, what's the name? Let me stop a minute; I'll get the name of the river.

HARRIS: [Inaudible.]

MCCOY: Yeah. I wanted to connect the Tahoe above us and have a bridge built across the Yucca River, and that one year I think I got it into the program, but it never was funded, and as far as I know [to] this day, that bridge is never built. And so then in 1960, while we were on the Tahoe National Forest, my wife gave birth to a little daughter, and so when we transferred over to the Plumas in Quincy, the baby was about two weeks old. And here again about the Forest Service and transfers and wives and babies and so forth; I took off to look for a house over in Quincy. And Quincy and Nevada City and Weaverville and all these little towns, don't have places to rent or buy or anything. So I get over to Quincy and I look up a real estate agent. I'd gone down to the supervisor's office and talked to somebody there. I guess I talked to Madge, the receptionist, and she gave me this realtor's name and address. So I went out and got him. Well, the first place he showed me was so terrible that my wife probably would have left me that day if I'd ever tried to take her into that house. So I said, "No, I don't want this." He said, "Well, I'll tell you, I've got one old house here that you might be interested in."

It was a house that had been built back in the 1920s or '30s, maybe, and the guy that built it owned a lumber yard there in Quincy. And later I found that practically every piece of wood in the house was almost select. But anyway, this realtor takes me there to look at it, and as I say, it's an older house and it hasn't been cleaned too well. There was an old couple there, and they just left all the furniture there, so all their old furniture was in the house. But it was – the realtor said, "That's the only thing available. There's just nothing, and there probably won't be nothing." And then he says, "You can buy it for a good deal." I said, "Okay." I called my wife and I said, "It's not great. You really won't like it. But it's all we can find, and it's either that or you say where you're at I'd be over here." And she said, "I don't want to do that with the baby." So we went ahead and bought this house, and I think we paid \$16,000 for it, and I had to come up with, I



think, \$2000 down or something like that. The payments were \$60 a month or something like that. Anyway, I got the house, packed up our stuff and hauled it over. We hired – the government paid our moving costs, so we hired a guy to come in and move us from Nevada City over to Quincy. And my wife gets there and she walks into this house, and she goes over on the couch and she sits down and she starts crying. I thought, “Oh, boy, you’ve done it, James.” But anyway, she says, “Well, it’s better than being over there by myself.”

So here we are, and we had to get rid of all this furniture out of there first before we could move our stuff in, and finding somebody to come and get it. We got a hold of a thrift store someplace there in town or the church or something came and got the stuff. We got our stuff in. And we had to paint it and we had to do this and do that. Well, as it turns out, it became this nice old house. We finally got it fixed up to where it was livable. It was funny; when we moved in, they called it the old Brossard [?] house, which is the people that originally built it. And we were there then for five years in that house, and we repainted the outside and we’d done a lot of extra stuff, and so when I went back there after we had gotten transferred to the [inaudible], they were calling it the old McCoy house. [Laughs.] So anyway, we must have made some changes while we were there, and our kids go back and look at the places we’ve been; they look at that old place and say, “Gee, you should have kept that place. That’s a nice old place.”

But anyway, I had a lot of nice experiences on the Plumas.

HARRIS: What position did you transfer into? Who was your boss there, Jim?

MCCOY: [Inaudible] was the forest engineer there, and I was assistant forest engineer, in charge of all the surveys and design and reconnaissance and for a while I had the campgrounds and some of that water supply, but there wasn’t enough of that at the time, and then I went into the survey program – Plumas had about one of the largest cuts, I think, next to the Shasta Trinity,

of any, and so we were building three hundred miles of road to here, and I was actually personally walking every mile of it as we were building in, in reconnaissance. And then I walked over every mile of road with the district ranger, and they appoint – because when I got there, the rangers were bad-mouthing the engineers about not being cooperative and this and that, and I told Bill Peet [?], “Well, I’m going to change some things around here, and these people aren’t going to get happy about it.” There was sloppy construction. They weren’t building roads right, and were caving in, culverts were plugged. I said, “I’m going to [inaudible] these timber guys.” And a lot of them were his buddies. I don’t know if they were his buddies, but they were guys he’d known for a long time. And I said, “I’m going to make those guys build that road according to specifications, right down to what it says in the prospectus there.” And he says, “Have at her.” And I said, “Okay.”

So I changed the thing about all roads the ranger walking with me, and I’d walk every mile of road that we located and surveyed and so forth. And I’d sometimes walk it again with a plan in hand with the ranger. If he wanted changes made, we’d make those. And so actually, I made some points with the ranger, and I made some good friends, I think, with some of the rangers. I know Bill Turban [?] down in Brush Creek [?] and Bob Surmack [?] on the Challenge [?] District, and Jim – I can’t think of his name – well, [inaudible] on the [inaudible] district was another ranger that I really enjoyed working with. And the other rangers, too. I tried to see their point of view, too. And then I worked with two timber men I really enjoyed with was John Murray [sp?] and Byron [?] Nelson. In fact, I’d worked with Byron Nelson [?] on Old Trinity when he was a ranger on the Trinity district, and I had walked the roads with him back early on. And so I really enjoyed working with those men.

I had worked – talked about working with Byron Nelson [?]. There was a time when the forest supervisor back on the Trinity when I was there was going to have engineers learn how to scale timber, and how to mark timber for cutting, so Byron [?] helps and they took me and some other engineers out. They had set up a course that you went through. You had to figure out the height of the tree, and the diameter, and if you cut this one or left that one. Well, I was out there. I thought, “Man, I am going to make some money.” The bigger the tree, the quicker I learned to cut it. You don’t do that; you’re supposed to leave some for seed out here. Byron [?] says, “Do you still want to cut all the trees down?” “No,” I said, “You guys taught me a little bit. I kind of see the difference.” That was what they call select cutting in those days. And I still think it was the best way to go. Because then we come clear-cutting and that sort of thing. I really always frowned on that. I like the select cutting. I actually had participated in that kind of work, and then when I got on the Tahoe, talking about wanting engineers to be timber men, I was [inaudible] an engineer on the job on the Tahoe, and the forest supervisor there, they were cutting the timber for the [inaudible], and so I said I wanted to get a timber guy out there to scale this timber, so we’d know [inaudible.] The supervisor said, “Somebody go out there and teach that engineer how to scale.” So I said, “I haven’t got time to do that, even if I knew how.” So he said, “What do you do out here? Do you just stand there and look at them [inaudible.]?” [Laughs.] “Well,” I said, “Do you see those slopes and those stakes going up? I have to put those in to check out this. Do you see those down there? I have to run down there and do that. See that culvert down over there? I have to go stake those.” And he said, “Oh, you do a little bit of work out here, don’t you?” I forgot who the supervisor was. He was one of the old-timers.

HARRIS: Hank [inaudible]?

MCCOY: No, that was before Hank. Hank was a real reasonable guy. I liked him. He was a firefighter, Hank was. But no, this was one of the old-timers. In fact, he was a buddy of the supervisor over around on the El Dorado, the old-timer that was there before – oh, the guy's name [inaudible], but anyway, he was an old-timer. He figured I ought to be scaling that timber. But it turned out I didn't.

And getting back to the Shasta-Trinity, I mean to the Plumas, why, there again when I came on the Plumas like I say, it was pretty loose, but by the time I left, why, we were designing all – practically all the roads were designed on paper, and we were going into the computer business at that time, and we were using the computers down in [inaudible] when you filled out the cards and done all that stuff. And like I say, we were building about 300 miles of road a year on the Plumas.

HARRIS: [Inaudible.]

MCCOY: Yeah, it was. And we would hire summer employees, about 200 people, it seems to me like. We had one crew and I used to get out and inspect these roads and whatnot, and I'd stop in the survey camps to see if they were keeping them clean and whatnot, and this one group of kids, they were college kids that were summertime employees, and of course they were hard up for money and they were trying to save up all the money they can and go back to college. And so I come into their trailer that we'd put out there for them. They cooked and lived in their trailer. And so they decided that rice and beans would be pretty cheap stuff to eat. And these kids didn't know how rice would swell up, and they had a big kettle filled with water and boiling, and poured in a whole bag. They had rice coming out on the stove and over the top of the thing, and they had rice all over. They had thrown it out the door. But it was amazing what you'd see these young kids do just to try to save a buck.

We had one crew that almost got their tail in a run-in with the game warden – never could prove it – but they had apparently shot a deer, but they didn't know how to skin it or butcher it or anything, so they hid it out someplace, and the game warden found it. But they never could pin it on them, and they never would admit anything. But years later, I found out that they probably did shoot the deer. They were trying to save money, but they didn't know how to take care of it.

HARRIS: Where did you find all of these folks to hire, Jim?

MCCOY: We used to send – we'd get applications from all over. I'd get letters from senators, here's JoJo – senator of Arkansas, I'd get a letter from him. Here's a young man, I want you to get him a job. And I'd have representatives from Congress that would say hire these guys. Well, I needed them, so I hired them. But it was amazing – oh, and I got letters from Forest Service big wheels down at the R.O., they'd want their kids put to work, like Jim Bursch's [?] kids worked for me two summer. [Inaudible] Nelson started out that way. That's how I got him. His dad, Red Nelson [?] -- there were some more like that. Bruce Pruitt [?] came in that way, him and Doug from somebody – I forget who recommended them, but anyway, that's how I got their application. Well, you get the letter and you send an application. I'd go through stacks of applications, as many as two or three hundred applications, and then try to screen out the ones. I had a secretary send off letters to them.

And you'd have – safety was another thing that they were on you about. And on the Plumas one year, they had a big cement boot that they passed out for the unit that had the worst safety record. I think the second year I was there we got that boot. And every year the board of supervisors had a big party, and you had a Christmas party, and then of course all the people from the districts and everybody is at this party. And so you get ridiculed by the whole forest. We got that boot. I went up and got it – I guess Byron went up and got it. He had me come up.

And I thought, “We’re not going to get that boot again.” And we went buying safety gear: steel-toed shoes and helmets and training sessions and how to use an ax and all that sort of thing.

Well, I think the next year we didn’t come in first as the best safety record, but we were at kind of a disadvantage. We had 200 plus people, and the rest of the guys would only have fifteen or twenty, so our odds of having an accident were better. So we came in second or third. But we never got that boot again.

HARRIS: We can break for a second.

MCCOY: Let’s take a break.

[Pause in interview.]

HARRIS: Is it on?

MCCOY: Yeah, go ahead. I’m going to back up to the ’64 floods that practically washed out the National Forest. In 1964, at that time, I was on the Plumas and we had some big culverts that washed out. And at that time there was some new design [inaudible] that came in that we had put in that saved the culverts. Sort of like a snorkel on the top of the culvert, where if it plugged up at the inlet, it would overflow and there would be this top drain that would let the water come in and drop down and keep it from washing out the fill. And those that we’d put in seemed to save most of our fills and that ’64 flood. And those that we didn’t have them, we lost the fill, because the inlets would plug up from the trees and the debris from the logging and whatnot, and at that time, in 1965, I got transferred to the Regional Office into the construction group.

HARRIS: Was that a career interest for you?

MCCOY: I’d always liked construction.

HARRIS: And work as a regional position.

MCCOY: Yeah. So I came into the Regional Office and the construction group, and John West was my boss then. And I enjoyed working for him. In fact, I had worked for him back on the Shasta-Trinity when it was a consolidation of the Trinity and Shasta forests, and he was in charge of surveys under Don Turner, and Johnnie West was my boss there for a while. But anyway, getting back to the floods and the Regional Office: when I got into the Regional Office, the Six Rivers had taken a pounding from the '64 flood, and of course now it's 1965, and they had all kinds of damage up on the Six Rivers. About every road they had was damaged. But the big project was the Gaskey-Orleans Road,[?] and it was miles and miles of that road that had to be reconstructed.

And at that time Austin Thompson, who was a forest engineer there, had decided that instead of putting these roads on the side hill, to try and keep them on top of the ridges. And that seemed to be a pretty good idea, because the ridge-top roads, at least they didn't slide down the mountain; they just took some minor erosion on the road surface itself. But all the roads – the Gaskey-Orleans was on side hill – had slipped out, and so the Regional Office decided then – the Six River didn't have the people available to do the design, so they hired an engineering organization, and I don't remember the name of them now. But they were hired to do all the design and soil work and do the whole thing. In fact, they were even talking of them doing the resident engineer work on it. But it turned out the resident engineer work was done by the Forest Service, and Roland Kahn [?] was assigned as resident engineer. He'd done a great job with the help that Austin gave him. And this whole Gaskey-Orleans [?] – seems to me it was about fifteen miles of it, or somewhere in that neighborhood, and they would do portions of it, like five miles to make – probably about five miles.

And Austin Thompson is a go-getter, and he'd say, "Jim, get up here. We've got to do a plan in hand." So I'd get up there, and he'd want me to go do something else when I got there. And I have been with him at 1:00 in the morning in the moonlight out doing a plan in hand on a road. And I'd say, "Austin, are we going to eat breakfast, or are we going to go to bed?" "Well, he'd say, "I think we'd better eat breakfast and get started." It would be 8:00 and we'd be back on the clock again. But anyway, I loved working with the guy. And he was – I'd always [inaudible] Gaskey-Orleans, because it was a horrendous project, and I always called it Austin's Autobahn, because for a Forest Service road, compared to the rest of our roads, it was an autobahn. And anyway, to this day I still communicate with Austin. He's a great friend.

Jay Micah [?] was brought over to Six Rivers to do the residential work on a lot of the other flood projects they had. I don't remember all the names of the roads, but anyplace you went on the Six Rivers, they had flood damage, and so Jay Micah [?] headed up all that work, and I would go up there from time to time and go out with him on some jobs and do the plan in hand. And then from the Regional Office we started all the timber roads we had problems with our road inspectors not being able to do change orders – and this is all contract work not on timber sales, because we had a lot of contracts going into the region by then. I forget what the budget was – it was up in the billions – and seventy million dollars a year, as I recall, somewhere in that neighborhood. And we had contracts going from the Klamath clear down to the Cleveland. And we only ... Roland Kahn [?] so we couldn't send him to all these jobs, so we had to start doing the training jobs, to get some of our engineers trained to be able to understand contracts. We developed then an inspector certification program and started bringing some of these young engineers to being proficient in administering contracts. As it turned out, we eventually had about 200 engineers and technicians who were certified in various aspects of



construction, and then the Washington Office finally picked up the program and started using it within all the regions within the Forest Service, to this day. But I don't know where it's at today. Probably there's – well, I see where our timber quota's coming down, and our road construction's coming down, so we probably don't need as many inspectors anymore.

So anyway – in the Regional Office, it was a nice experience in there. The only thing that got to be a pain was the commute. I lived in Concord and the commute from there to San Francisco was kind of a drag. But of course there were experiences on the freeway. I remember one fella – traffic gets backed up and this guy gets out of his car and runs up to the guy ahead of him and shakes his fist at him, and this guy jumps out of the car and they're about ready to go at it right on the Bay Bridge. [Laughs.] Anyway, they both get back in their cars and traffic moves up another fifty feet. It's kind of a stressful thing, that commute. Well anyway, I finagled around and got myself transferred over to Pleasant Hill, and I was over there for a year or so, and that cut my commute down to where I just drove through town late at night.

HARRIS: What was the Pleasant Hill operation?

MCCOY: It was actually the lab, Leonard Stern's soils and materials lab, which used to be down in Arcadia, which was started by Charlie Young, who I feel done as much for road construction and so forth in the Forest Service. He was really an engineer's engineer, is my explanation. And then Leonard Stern – when Charlie Young retired, why, then Leonard Stern took over and pursued some of the thing. They got into seismic work and landslides and all that sort of thing. But Charlie Young's really the man that started the whole thing. And to me he was really the pioneer in materials and engineering in the Forest Service. [Inaudible] concrete work, and so forth. In the history of the Forest Service, Don Turner has an article in there, and he mentions Charlie Young and how the chief of roads and trails, Buck Lane [?] at that time, really

didn't think much of the soils lab people. He said, "We don't need to be pounding dirt [inaudible] camps." But anyway, I think Charlie Young did a great job on materials and making our roads better and getting the compaction we needed and so forth.

And also the Regional Office – I switched jobs there eventually and go out of construction, and I became – I forget the name of what they called me then – but anyway, I was in charge of recruitment and personnel and that sort of thing. I recruited probably around 200 engineers while I was in that position. There were a lot of forest engineers that were active in the '70s and '80s who were probably some of the people I recruited. And I don't know how many engineers there are now in the Forest Service, but I would imagine about the same. But at that time, I think we had, counting forest engineers and all their assistants and so forth, we had about 235 engineers in the Forest Service. Also at that time I was involved in training not only engineers, but also foresters and biologists and administrative assistants and so forth, and I worked with George Coombs [?], who was a timber management man down in the R.O. in the management section. And we put on orientation sessions down at [inaudible] and on the Angeles. And we done that for three or four years, I think. There were one-week sessions that we had, we'd be down there and put on two or three of them. But there were a lot of young people that came and I thought they worthwhile, and I guess they were.

Take a break.

Foresters and engineers – foresters didn't trust engineers. I remember in Weaverville –

HARRIS: This is where you first came on now, right?

MCCOY: When I first came on, the engineers were just being put out on the forest, and the foresters, they liked to take their compass and Jacob staff and their [inaudible] and lay out their little roads themselves, so they felt like they were being put out of a job when the engineers came

on. And one time they had a Christmas party when I was on the Trinity. And I think the engineers, all five of us, sat a table by ourselves, and all the foresters were over by themselves. And finally – and this is why I like Myron Nelson – he came over and said, “Can I join you guys?” And we said, “You betcha.” And so from that day on, and Norm Dole [?] I think came over and we finally started getting together and playing cards together. And the time I was on the Quincy District, or on the Plumas, why, we’d play bridge with the foresters and their wives had parties together, and it all changed.

But finally the engineers and the foresters pretty much became buddy-buddies. They were all together. And here now you’ve got these other professions coming in: the landscape architect, and the engineer didn’t trust him; and the biologist, you knew he was going to mess things up; and you had somebody else, and finally I think that’s changed, too, that it’s kind of now – we all needed to do this, and we need each one’s expertise to make the whole thing click. But making it come together and happen was kind of an experience to live through, really, because it was – like I say, when I first came on, well you kind of felt like the step-child, you know?

HARRIS: Did you think back to the year this was happening and it was like transitioning in the ’60s?

MCCOY: No, this was back in the ’50s.

HARRIS: Fifties.

MCCOY: Fifties and ’60s, when they were still...But once the foresters and engineers started trusting each other – but maybe trust isn’t a good word, but we started coming together and sharing and saying, hey, let’s do this, and we knew when they said this, that was that, and what engineers said, you know that was that. But I’ll say back in the ’50s and ’60s, the Forest Service

I felt was like one big family, finally becoming a family, and like say after there on the Old Trinity, once we [inaudible], it was like family. You take – you'd have picnics, and everybody'd take care of each others kids, and it was like a big family. But I noticed coming to the R.O. and when I left, I didn't see so much of that anymore. Everybody come 5:00 went their separate directions and it didn't seem they got together that much. I remember on the Plumas, after 5:00, some of you would meet down at a restaurant or a bar and grill, and have a glass of beer or whatever, and move on and go home, but you never saw much of that anymore, I don't think, and I never saw hardly anybody in the Regional Office. The 5:00 bell rang and you were gone.

HARRIS: Who was your – I want to go back a little bit and ask you about your role in certification. I think certification seemed to be developing at a real formal-like way when you were in the Regional Office, after you'd gotten in there. [Inaudible].

MCCOY: [Interrupts.] Yeah. Well, the certification thing didn't exist when I got there. I actually started the thing. And I started it, it started growing, because when I started putting papers and stuff together, and Jim Allen [?] was quite helpful; I took some stuff he had from the state highway survey and put it into a booklet, and I took stuff from concrete and other things, and I wrote some stuff. So I put together a book about two inches thing. And it was just a collection of various survey data, construction data, references, what books to go look to, to find out stuff, and also an explanation of contract work, things to look up, where to look for it.

And then I started the certification program with the idea not to see how much the guy knows, because I preached on the training sessions I put on, don't answer a question off the top of your head. Go get your specifications, open up the book and read it to the contractor. Don't try to say something off the top of your head. So I kind of geared the certification program that way, taking all this material that I'd gathered and saying, all right, I'm going to give you a test, but

you can take and use this book to find answers to it, because I want you to know where you're going to look to find the answers to these kinds of questions that a contractor's going to ask you. So I tried to develop questions that would be typical of a contractor on a, say, road construction job or a campground job or whatever. And so what happened – and then also I put in an oral thing, and we had a group, and we find out, how can this inspector deal with one of these belligerent contractors, so to speak. Because [inaudible] an inspector or resident engineer, contractors aren't all nice guys; they're a [inaudible] breed. Maybe they aren't nasty, but they become nasty just to try to make you back off. But anyway, the oral was to give them a little bit of experience on that.

So that went on like that for some time. And to get the Forest [Service] to either endorse it or reject it, I would call people to come in from the Forest [Service] to come in to sit on these oral panels and to help out with the program, thinking, well, if you see it and you like it, you'll support me, and if you don't like it, hopefully you'll come and tell me, why don't you do this or do that. So it turned out that seemed to work, and I did get pretty good support, and the forest engineers seemed to think that it was saving them money, because you don't have much of change orders, and you've got your men out there and they don't call on you to come help them out, so it seemed to be working out. So the Washington Office picked up on it, but then they kind of lost the – or I felt they did – lost the concept that I had. They started making it a multiple choice examination, and they got away from using the book to look up answers, and it got to be you had to rely on your memory, and they kind of turned the oral, I thought, into more of an interrogation than – I always thought it was to be a helpful thing. You'd talk to them and when you got them in there, not only did you ask them questions, [inaudible], you'd also give them

some advice. You didn't want to scare the guy to death. But I saw that change. I don't know if I – I kind of felt it was going downhill. Maybe it didn't. I don't know.

HARRIS: What year did you retire, Jim?

MCCOY: When did I retire? February 27, 1982. So I've been retired 22 years.

HARRIS: Wow. Time goes by.

MCCOY: It sure does, yeah.

HARRIS: It seems to me – I'm trying to reflect where I was in the Forest at that time. In 1982 I was on the Tahoe and you were involved with recruitment. I can remember that some of our recruitment goals were changing. We were beginning to look for minority representation and women in engineering. Were you involved when that was beginning to develop?

MCCOY: I just got started in it. It hadn't come to a "You must do it," but I could see that handwriting on the wall, so I would try to look for minorities or what not. But the colleges – it's amazing – I recruited in Berkeley, Chico, UOP [?], UCLA, San Diego State, San Jose State, Sac[ramento] State – I guess that's about it. But it was rare, and when I'd go to those colleges and set up my little table and I'd recruit, and I'd talk with the people – it was rare that I ever had a minority come around. Any minorities would be one or two Asian kids that would show up, and that would be about it. As far as African Americans or Hispanics, I don't think I ever had any of those show up for an interview. In fact, I never see them at hardly any of the other tables on these campuses.

You would have big corporations recruiting too, so you were in competition with [inaudible.] Of course our salaries were never comparable to one of these big corporations, you know. So I tried to sell home/family thing, and the camaraderie that was had, and some of that kind of stuff. Guys who had been in the service were generally receptive to that kind of thing,

whereas a young kid that just went from high school right to college – he was looking to conquer the world, so to speak. It was funny how these young people – and what they wanted to do. I had a list of questions you'd ask them, and a lot of them, I think, would never fit in the Forest Service; there's no point in me recruiting you, because you'd probably quit in two days. I like to say that, recruiting out in the Midwest, those flatlander boys. And that's the kind of guys you were looking at. All these universities that I just mentioned, you just didn't see these farm-type young men. Ex-servicemen were probably your best bet. And once in a while you would get a younger fellow that would say – well, take somebody that had worked for a summer for the Forest Service – some kid like that, who probably got a degree, and he would be interested. And a lot of times these young people we'd hire when I was on the Plumas, those young kids, I'd try to talk to them about getting their degree and then coming back and looking at it again. I'd say, "Well, you've seen what it is. Would you like to have Byron Marshall's job?" And they'd say, "Yeah, I'd like that." And I'd say, "Well, get your degree and then come back." So once in a while you'd get one of those kids back, but I can't recall very many because they move on to something else.

HARRIS: One year we had a co-op ed program. I don't remember if that was underway when you were there, the co-op education. You could sign on – the agency would make a commitment that they would work the summers and then we would pick up a couple from UOP on that.

MCCOY: Yeah. But we had that program that Vic [?] was in charge of, doing that, and they got Master's degrees at Stanford, some of them, so Conrad [inaudible] was one of them, and I think Sutton did.

HARRIS: Transportation.

MCCOY: Yeah.

HARRIS: So a question I have, Jim, is looking back over your start with the Forest Service and then when you retired, over those thirty years, what did you see as sort of large changes, things that you could see the shift in the outfit in your experiences from working from the beginning to when you retired?

MCCOY: Well, I felt that we'd become a lot more professional than we were back in the days when we started. I saw – you no longer had any family concept [like] back in the '50s or '40s. You go back and talk to the old-timers and they'd talk about on the ranger stations, particularly, about family. Of course I don't know – maybe it still exists out on the ranger station. I think the Forest Service has become more professional, and it certainly costs a lot more money to do the jobs we used to do, not just because of inflation but because of the extra effort we put into it. Let's just say it takes more man hours to do the work.

But I don't know that the end result is a heck of a lot better. You know, you look at a road, you drive a road that was built in the '50s by a guy out there with a tape and a flag line like Larry Knutson and I used to do back up around [inaudible] and some of those things. You get out there and drive the road. It might not be as wide as some of the roads today; it may not have – the culvert insulation may not be perfect – but the basic road itself is not a heck of a lot different. [Knock on door. Interruption.]

I think I pretty well wrapped that up, didn't I?

HARRIS: I think you were at the changes, more professional, but you were [inaudible] talking about the roads.

MCCOY: Yeah. About being [inaudible.]

HARRIS: About being better or not better.



MCCOY: I just – the one thing that I'd say that is – soil analysis and that sort of thing, but that's making them more professional. That's where I think we've come a long way in our professionalism in the Forest Service.

HARRIS: One more question for you, in kind of reflecting back. If you were able to go back and start your career over again, is there anything different about your career you thought of doing?

MCCOY: No, I would go to work for the Forest Service. I really enjoyed working the Forest. But other than my family, I'd say it – I was really happy with my work and my job, and I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the people. I think the people had as much to do with it as anything. You met a real great bunch of people that you worked with and that you associated with, and I think it was really a plus. I remember – and all the friendships that I had, great people in the Forest Service. I wouldn't change anything. If I knew what I do, I'd go right back to work. So I think it was great.

HARRIS: You lived in a ten-foot trailer in Weaverville and the old McCoy house.

MCCOY: Right. Well, those were experiences, and it's kind of like – I remember in Weaverville, and the pay wasn't that good, and they took my \$6 a day per diem away from me, why, I had to go charge my groceries down at the store, which is the only time in my life I ever did that. But I remember Don and Doris Turner and us – I was helping Don put a roof on the house – and a storm came, and I think we didn't have enough money in our pocket, not one of us, to buy any booze to celebrate, so we put together our money and bought a fifth of whiskey to celebrate putting the roof on the house. I think it was whiskey. Maybe it was a six-pack of beer. I think it was a six-pack of beer.

HARRIS: [Inaudible.]

MCCOY: Could not afford that. But it was a great job.

HARRIS: Okay.

MCCOY: There were times when Lill had to put up with the kids and I was gone, you know, broken an arm or something like that.

HARRIS: You did a lot of traveling in your days, you were camping out. Your Regional Office [inaudible.]

MCCOY: I used to go out all week with survey crews.

[LILLIAN: I remember that.]

MCCOY: So, I don't know anything else.

HARRIS: Thank you, Jim. That's great.

[End of interview.]