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GRCA 53334
Letter From Leon Sherrod
CCC Enrollee Camp 819

Stockton Calif
Jan 30, 1974

Dear Miss Hinchliffe:

Thanks for your nice letter. I will try to give you all the history that I can remember about my stay at Co. 819 in 1934.

My group of sixteen fellows came from abilene Texas and were inducted at Big Springs Texas.

We arrived at Grand Canyon about the fifth of april 1934.

Our camp was the new barracks that are standing yet. The old camp was wooden frames with tent tops and as well as I remember about 1½ miles from the new one. One of my friends was given the job of night watchman at the old Camp and I spent several week ends with him making his rounds.

Co. 819 had a base camp at Phantom Ranch where supplies were stored and men stayed while working on the new suspension bridge and the Phantom Ranch buildings.

The first time I saw Phantom Ranch the swimming pool was just completed I remember diving into the water and finding little chunks of ice floating there. The temperature down there was about 105 so you can imagine the shock I received.

My father was a carpenter & building contractor and I grew up with the trade, beginning at about the age of six years.

We lived on a ranch but times were very hard during the great depression. Our

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land literally blew away in the dust storms.

There was not any work to be had at any price, and I felt very fortunate to be able to enlist in the Civilian Conservation Corps, go ahead with my education and help support our family.

The men received thirty dollars per month. Twenty-five was sent home to the family and we had five whole dollars to spend any way we wished. ~~But~~ Believe it or not, my father, mother and three brothers were able to exist on that ~~amount~~ $25.

I guess you might say I had three loves in my life before I married.

The first one was the building trade. I loved to build beautiful strong buildings.

Second, I was happy when able to compete as a rodeo performer. I did best at bare-back broncs and Brahma Bull riding.

and third, I had always wanted to become a boxer. I got to enjoy all these things at Co. 819.

Ova Lee Bethel and I worked in the carpenter shop under the supervision of Mr. Charles Scott for several months.

We built cabinets, repaired the Rangers houses and did all sorts of construction work. Everyone fondly call Mr. Scott uncle Charlie. He was a swell boss. His wife was like a mother to us boys.

One of our biggest jobs was building the corrals, bucking chutes and holding pens for the first annual Rodeo at Grand Canyon held July 4th 1934. I had the pleasure of riding in

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that event, too. The horses were not trained Rodeo stock, but were wild horses, trapped by the Indians and being touched by man for the first time. The poor mares were scared half to death, but the stallions would turn on you and try to kill you if you were thrown off!

Since ~~cat~~ calves were not available for roping, young burros were used instead. As you can see in one of these snapshots they were about the size of large calves. They could run almost as fast as a horse and were hard to rope because they watched the roper and would dodge the rope!

I wanted to work outside, so I was transferred to one of the Dam building crews. I worked several weeks as a mule-skinner, building earthen dams to hold water during the summer for the wild horses, deer, etc.

The engineers would choose a narrow deep canyon and we would cut down the trees in the canyon and use the logs for holding the earthen fill. We blasted out the enormous stumps with dynamite sometimes using as many as fifty sticks on one stump. When the stump blew out or up, I might say, it still sometimes went fifty feet into the air and looked like a huge carrot with the roots hanging down.

We had a good chance to improve our education. I had just finished High School and earned credits equal to two years in Junior College today. Our teacher

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was a pleasant man about 45 years old.

He taught anything from typing to math and knew his material. We called him "Pops."

For pleasure we had a movie near the Canyon rim that we could attend for ten cents. Cigarettes were 10¢ a pack for off brands and 15¢ for Camels or Luckys.

The army had a good physical education program going at Co. 819.

Many professional boxers and wrestlers were enlisted in the CCC because there were no fights available at home.

We had a team of about twenty boxers and in every weight division. There was a sign at the entrance to our camp inviting any one wishing to challenge our fighters. We had a boxing and wrestling ring in the Company area and open air seating for about 500 people.

There were boxing matches every Saturday night, free to the public, our boys recieved $3.00 per fight, win, lose or draw. The attendance was good and at most of the shows the seats were all taken by Civilians.

I will try to remember as many of the fellow's names in the big picture as I can, but I remember nick names longer because we used them all the time.

I hope I have not been too long winded in my statements and that you can use some of this information

Yours Sincerely
Leon B. Sherrod

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after 40 years have passed I dedicate this picture to the officers and men of Co. 819 who made my enlistment a wonderful experience.

1st Lt. C. P. Kirkpatrick - a good commanding officer - he was respected & liked by his co.

"Doc" - our army surgeon - he even wired a few broken jaws!

Charles Scott (uncle charley) best building superintendent in Arizona.

The following men from abilene Texas

Ova Lee Bethel - my carpenter buddy.
Lester Haines - nightwatchman at the old camp
T Bone - Girl shy buddy - butt of all our practical jokes.
L. G. (Kid) Tucker - middle weight - left hook artist - my sparring partner
Otis Kilpatrick - my mule skinning buddy
Clyde Hendricks - anouther mule skinner
Elmer Hitt - the plumber
Bob McKinney - a good friend
Shorty Hambrick - a big man in a little package.

The following are friends

Big Swede - our dam building foreman
Dog faced Sanders - the practical joker
(Chihuahua Slim) Hickman - my rodeo buddy.
Larry - the heavyweight wrestler
Slats - skinny - big & strong - a swell guy
Otto (Jack hammer) mechanic

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J. C. Lynn } my hiking buddies
Ethel Wood }
Texas Barber Marshall
J. D. Coggins
Arkansas - slow, easy going, nice to know.
Pie The little spaniard + a switch blade
Couldn't match his two fists.
Snowflake - took 5 men to get him in
the shower
Last but not least - Pop's our night school
professor. (He tried to teach us). Wish
I could remember his name. He gave
more of his time and of himself than
anyone in Co. 519.