

## CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123 NEWSLETTER

3412 Pleasant Run Road, Irving, Texas 75062

June 2015

**Chartered:** Nov. 1, 1985. **Past Presidents:** \*Nelson Oats, \*Harold Ballard, \*W. O. Mullin, \*Verle Oringderff, \*Harold Trammell, \*William Oakley, Frank Polenta, \*S. L. Baker, \*George Payne, \*Harry Steinert, & \*Al Clement. \*deceased. **Current Officers:** President-Mike Pixler, phone contact: 817-929-1557, First Vice President-Jim Rau, phone contact: 817-307-0889, Second Vice president-Pat Mann, phone: [info later], Secretary/Treasurer- Steve Porter, phone contact: 817-244-6714, Sergeant at Arms-Troy Jones, Chaplain-Rev. James Pixler, Kitchen Committee, [Open], Historian-Ruby Pixler, Reporter at Large & Newsletter Editor-Bill Stallings, phone contact: 972-255-7237.

**Monthly Meeting** is held on the *second* Saturday of each month from 10:30 AM to 1:00 PM at the North Side Multipurpose Center, 1801 Harrington [North], Fort Worth, TX 76106. If you are using a GPS display, this address is the FRONT of the building; our meeting room is at the BACK off of Homan St. The door to the meeting room is on the right as you approach from the parking lot, and will have a CCC sign on it.

**Driving Directions:** Interstate Hwy 30 runs east & west, and accesses the downtown Fort Worth area from the south. Exit north on Henderson St. After a couple of miles it crosses a fork of the Trinity River and becomes State Hwy 199 which goes to Lake Worth, and the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge. When you reach the traffic light at the intersection of 18<sup>th</sup> St. NW, turn right [east] and go up the hill four blocks to Homan St. Turn left [north], and go a block to the Y. Stay right and continue into the Center's rear parking lot. If coming from Loop 820 North, go south on Hwy 199 and left on 18<sup>th</sup> St. Our meeting room door with the CCC sign is to the right as you approach the building. Our dues are \$10 a person annually, effective from Oct. to Oct. Bring a friend & enjoy fun, fellowship & food. Sign the register for you may win the \$10 door prize.

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:** Rick & Karen Shepherd, 6/21

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY:** Rick Shepherd, 6/8; Bob Crow, 6/11; Jack Bragg, 6/20, No. 83!; Kathy Mann, 6/20; Wes Culwell, 6/21.

MINUTES OF MEETING, CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123, June 13, 2015

Weather: Cloudy, Temp: 80°, Attendance: 17.

The meeting was called to order at 11:02 AM by President Pixler.

The Invocation was offered by Merle Timblin. The pledges to the flags were led by Sgt-at-Arms Troy Jones.

President Pixler reminded members of the purpose of CCC Legacy to educate and further the understanding of the Civilian Conservation Corps and its contribution to American life from 1933 to 1942.

The minutes of the May 2015 meeting were available to all members in the newsletter. Motion to accept the minutes as printed was made by Tony Rodriguez and seconded by Troy Jones. All in favor, motion passed.

The financial report was made available to members by Sec/Treasurer Porter. Motion to accept report as printed was made by Jim Rau and seconded by Tony Rodriguez. All in favor, motion passed.

Reference the Anniversaries and Birthdays printed above: Happy Birthday was sung to one of our newest members, Wes Culwell. It was announced during the meeting that our eldest member, Larkin Dilbeck fell and broke his hip and was to have surgery ASAP. Our prayers go out to Larkin and his family for successful surgery and a speedy recovery. (See below for a further update.)

President Pixler reminded members of CCC Legacy election of board members soon. Websites of CCC and related organizations was published.

Wes Culwell gave background of his book on CCC Post oak trees which are next to the new Lake Worth Memorial. New members Bob and Nelda Forston have unearthed many items they recovered from the site of the old CCC Camp 1816 at Lake Worth, and they brought them in two display cases for us to view. Bob also read some interesting excerpts from his grandfather's letters home to his wife while he was in the CCC. His grandfather had been a World War I veteran so being married was not an issue.

A slide show of the history of the Memorial was shown to attendees narrated by Jim Rau and Mike Pixler. The dedication ceremony on May 30, 2015, was well attended despite inclement weather. The City of Fort Worth proclaimed May 30, 2015, as Civilian Conservation Corps Day. CCC Legacy President Joan Sharpe presented the Chapter with a check for funds which have been donated for building the Memorial.

The Can was passed for donations and the door prize drawing went to Bob Forston. The blessing was offered by Merle Timblin. Motion to adjourn was made by Jim Rau and seconded by Troy Jones. President Pixler adjourned the meeting at 12:18 PM. Members and friends enjoyed the delicious meal served by the Kitchen Committee. Mark the next meeting as July 11, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Porter, Sec/Treasurer

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### **A SHORT TALK WITH JACK BRAGG**

We recently were able to talk with our own Jack Bragg by phone, and now living out in the country at his son's place in Erath County near the small community of Mingus, Texas. Luckily it was Jack's 83<sup>rd</sup> Birthday! His son is still in the process of finishing up his retirement from the Dallas Police Department and closing up his home in Dallas, so Jack is apparently alone for days at a time. Jack says that it has been an adjustment for him to move from his home in Farmers Branch to the very quiet countryside. He does have a daughter in law that lives nearby for some company. Jack tells us that the land there has very good soil and able to grow just about anything. His son planted a good sized garden that was looking very good until a big hail storm leveled much of it. A small pecan orchard was also started. We reminded Jack of how much we all had enjoyed his poems, and he appreciated that but says he has not written any for some time now. We wish Jack well in his new home.

## **ONE OF A NUMBER OF UNEXPECTED BENEFITS OF OUR RECENT MEMORIAL PROJECT AT THE SITE OF CCC COMPANY 1816 AT LAKE WORTH**

Bob and Nelda Forston are two of our recent new members as a result of that project. Bob and Nelda are members of a group of Fort Worth area people that do metal detecting of old parks and sites looking for artifacts that can tell a story. They came across the Camp 1816 site when researching an old map of the area around Lake Worth. In checking out the area they met and got to talking with some of the neighbors living around the site. They began finding a number of artifacts that proved to be from the CCC camp itself. This got them interested in the CCC and doing research on its work at the Lake. Bob knew that his grandfather had been a member of the CCC and was a World War I veteran. He also knew that his grandmother had a group of letters that her husband, Bob's grandfather, had written to her in that time period, and that he and Nelda now had those letters stored away but had never really examined them.

One of the days that our Mike Pixler, Jim Rau, and Nick Martinez were working on the memorial, Bob drove by and noticed the new activity and stopped and asked about it. This really got the ball rolling and Bob and Nelda wanted to be a part of the project and asked if they could come and set up a display of some of the artifacts they had found at the camp site at the memorial unveiling. "You bet," they were told. The Forston's now realized they had to dig into the grandfather's letters to see what he said about the CCC. It turned out to be a treasure trove. For his time, the grandfather proved to be well educated and a born writer and able to give vivid pictures of what was happening around him. His background proved to be very unique to most of the CCC Boys and veterans as well. We will now let Bob and Nelda give you a brief overview of the early life of Robert E. Carlton and his wife Allie C. (Stiffler) Carlton:

### **ROBERT E. CARLTON**

Born: Feb. 19, 1893, near Waxahachie, Ellis County, Texas

Died: June 19, 1969, in Dallas, Texas

Robert attended East Texas Normal College in Commerce and also Sam Houston Normal College in Huntsville. He received his teacher's certificate: 1912-1914, and taught in the Ellis County towns of Italy and Waxahachie between 1914 and 1916. While attending East Texas Normal, Robert met his future wife ALLIE C. STIFFLER, also a student there.

Allie was a pioneer school teacher in one-room schoolhouses both in Texas and in Oklahoma. She was said to be the first woman to register to vote in Oklahoma.

On October 17, 1916, Robert enlisted in the U.S. Navy. He was honorably discharged February 18, 1920. In that time period both before and after World War I, he served on the U.S.S. Bainbridge, the U.S.S. Topeka, a receiving ship, and the Naval Hospital at Chelsea, Massachusetts.

Robert and Allie married on June 30, 1920, in Chicotah, Oklahoma. In the early 1930s they had four young girls and were living in Dallas, Texas. In the depths of the Depression and out of work, Robert at about age 40, enrolled in the CCC when veterans were allowed to join.

We now pick up here with Robert writing to his family about his new experiences.

## LETTERS HOME; EXCERPTS

Post card marked: Canyon, Texas, April 16, 1934, CCC Veteran Co. 1821, saying he had arrived and was okay.

Letter dated April 22, 1934: "I made a trip to Amarillo yesterday, and last night, 35 miles to town, so you see I am a real westerner now. Amarillo is a very fine little town, but it doesn't compare with Dallas in any way, except the people are very home-like and make me think of the Dallas people. I promised to tell you something about the Canyon, but there is so much could be said, I hardly know where to begin. I just got back from a trip 12 miles down the Palo Duro Canyon. The vast plains of the Pan Handle (sic) just seem to drop off into space and here where we're located, the canyon walls are about one mile apart; and very rugged. There are creeks and ravines coming in along the canyon. Sometimes they are only a mile or so long and drop down 600 feet to the canyon bed. So you see they are very rugged. Rocks as large as houses are plentiful and many of them stand up like a skyscraper, hundreds of feet in the air; but on every little slope where a little soil can lay in the rocks, beautiful cedar trees are growing. The Red River meanders along this flat bed and there are a lot of pretty good sized cottonwoods on the edge of the stream.

Today on my trip into this dreamland I had the pleasure of standing in the dugout of Colonel Goodnight. I saw paintings on rocks put there by Indians many years ago. Also I gazed on the battleground where Old Chief Geronimo (?) gave battle to the U.S. Cavalry."

Letter dated April 29, 1934, Transfer to Troy, Texas

*Troy, Texas, is in Bell County about half way between Waco and Austin.*

"Last night as you lay sleeping, I was riding a fast Santa Fe train across the beautiful Texas plains into camp here at Troy. I did not get any closer to home on the trip than I am here, but I thought all the while how fine it was to be getting closer to my loved ones. Let me say now though that we sure have a nice camp here under construction. We landed here this A.M. about 8 o'clock. Had breakfast and went to work pitching tents, unloading equipment, bedding and etc. Worked all day today and now I am sitting on my bunk at home in an army tent for the first time in my life. (*Remember, Robert had been a Navy man, not Army*) I think our barracks will be ready in about a week and then down go the tents. It's lovely here. Troy is a little town about like Lancaster and the people are lovely. Seems like they want us boys to feel like we are among home folks."

Letter dated May 11, 1934, First Pay Check

"I was paid today. \$3.00 cash and I had used \$2.00 in canteen checks up to the first of May. That is a total of \$5.00 I was paid. Please let me know how much your first check is. You should be getting it right away now and remember you will get another about 6/1/34 for a whole month of \$22.50."

Letter dated June 1, 1934: Becomes a Cook, and the Big Blow Out

“I told you in a letter that I had quit my KP job for a cook’s position. I can now say I like my cook’s job better than the KP work, because my time off is arranged better and the cooking is more interesting work anyway. We have three very large army ranges and every kind of kitchen utensil that has ever been manufactured and have access to the best stacked storeroom I ever saw. So, you see cooking isn’t so bad under those conditions. I go on watch one day at noon and work 24 hrs, cook three meals and then have 24 hrs. off duty (skip three meals).”

“I had my blue serge trousers cleaned and pressed. I dressed up last night and went across the road to a big blow out they had in the park I told you about. They were celebrating the opening of the new highway from Waco to Temple and which goes right by our camp. There was a large crowd there (blackland people). They looked like home folks to me. Temple High School band played a fine program. A large part of the crowd came over to our recreation hall for a party after the show closed at the park.”

“P.S. I am sending this along as evidence to the fact that, speaking from a standpoint of eats, I am not doing so worse down here. This is the original menu made out by our mess steward for us cooks to go by.”

Sunday 6-10-1934, Menu:

Breakfast

Ham & Egg Omelet

Hot Biscuits

Bananas

Milk

Butter

Jam

Coffee

Dinner

Roast Chicken, Gravy

Dressing

Creamed Peas

Sliced Cucumbers

Radishes/Celery

Corn on the Cob

Butter

Ice Cream/Coconut Cake

Orange Punch

Supper

Assorted Cold Meats

Potato Salad

Fruit Salad

Lettuce

Radishes

Green Onions

Coffee

Letter dated June 8, 1934: Rumor of Promotion

“I am liking my new job fine and it begins to look like I will make the grade. The official through whom my promotion will be originated said, ‘Carlton, I have recommended you for a first cook’s job.’ If I make it, that means I will be in charge of the kitchen on my watch. The most important part; my pay will be \$45.00. You will have a bigger and better pay day if I get it.”

Letter dated July 9, 1934: Promotion

“To my dear wife and darling daughters this is a special announcement I am sending you. I would be delighted if you could visit our camp and carry you to the camp bulletin board and show you the announcement whereby your humble servant has had the honor of being appointed leader. Now this makes me feel very good and for several different reasons. First, because I can earn more money [which I am sure is badly needed] to my loved ones at home. Second, I will have more money for my own needs and pleasures. Third, I consider this one of the greatest honors I have ever had bestowed upon me; because there are only a very few leaders in a company and the job carries top honors and top pay for an enrollee in the U.S. C.C.C. service.”

Letter dated June 11, 1934: Chickens and Underwear

“I hoped you enjoyed your chicken dinners. Where did you get your chickens and what did they cost? We get our chickens and eggs from a Troy produce man and he buys them here in the community. So you see we are of some benefit to the people around us. I have just been over to the supply room to draw two pair of white trousers. So you see, I am progressing as a cook. I’ll have plenty of laundry work now. Have two white aprons already. I’ll be dressed up pretty soon until you would hardly know me. Speaking about the laundry; I don’t mind that a bit. I change all my clothes everyday and take a bath and do my laundry. So you can see that while there is some washing to do, it isn’t very hard to do. I can understand more easily now why you always wanted me to change underwear before it gets too soiled. I had rather wash three suits of slightly soiled underwear than I would of dirty underwear.”

Letter dated July 11, 1934: Biscuits

“Cooking a meal here is about like a meal there only we cook more of it. I cooked 50 lbs. of frankfurters last night for supper, they were every dog ate and we served some cold roast beef to finish out on. For dinner we cooked 96 lbs. of chicken fried steak and served cold loaf meat to finish out on. Do they eat? I make about 5 gallons of gravy at a time. I’ll bet your Bewley’s rolls were fine. I made biscuits for breakfast this A.M.; used Bewley’s Bird Brand flour. I made some mighty good biscuits. I’ll give you the recipe. This recipe makes about 450 good sized biscuits; takes me about an hour to make. Now of course I have help and while I am making biscuits the other cook goes on with other things.”

Letter dated July 13, 1934: Liver

“Allie, I wish you would write and tell me just how you cook liver. I am asking this favor of you as we have it once in a while, and I think you cook the best liver I ever tasted and that is something. There isn’t a cook in this camp who is so good. We will have ‘Liver a La Allie’ sometime in honor of you.”

Letter dated July 17, 1934: New Recruits

“We are getting a new contingent of tree soldiers today and tomorrow. The advance guard arrived and if times are as hard as they look – Then to be a tree soldier is about like being a millionaire used to be.

We are supposed to have sixty new boys. Now I have an idea they will think I am about the best cook in the world, not because I can cook but because I have something to cook.”

Letter dated July 25, 1934: Liver A La Allie

“How would you like to know how I came out with the ‘Liver a La Allie? Oh boy! Did it go over big? I’ll say it did, and here is how. After I got the recipe, I told the mess steward I wanted him to put liver on my shift the next time he had it and to let me cook it like I wanted to. He said ‘Okay - boy, if you can cook it so they will eat it, you can beat what we have been having.’ Yesterday evening for supper the menu read liver and onions. I had the shift and proceeded to cook 97 ½ lbs. of liver rolled in 8 lbs. flour, and smothered in 25 lbs. of onions. That was a little over ½ lb. per capita and there wasn’t very much liver left either, and all hands seemed to think that was the best supper we have had in a long time; and the mess steward said from here on out, when we have liver, Carlton will cook it. So you see if you could have been here last night, you would have been an honored guest. Thanks a lot for helping me in this way and any time you have a recipe which you think I would be interested in, send it along for it surely will be appreciated.”

Letter dated August 16, 1934: New Clothes

“You should have seen me strut my stuff night before last; did I? And how! Here is how it happened. After supper they issued the entire company some clothes. Of course they were just work clothes, but you know in hard times like these that is about all anyone cares about. I got one flannel shirt, two pairs khaki cotton pants, one pair leggings, one blue denim pants, one blue denim jumper, three suits summer underwear, three pairs light wool socks and last and most important, a brand new pair of shoes 8 ½ E, and that is exactly my size and I wish you could see how good they look on your sergeant’s feet. Now tell me truly isn’t that something to make a poor boy’s heart go pit a pat?”

Letter dated September 11, 1934: Signs of the Times

“I just watched a freight train going south. I’ll bet there were 100 men riding it; just scraps of human driftwood floating on the ocean of life. And that is what men become when they do not have a good woman to tie to. Thanks a lot old pal of mine for being so good and just keep on being that way.”

Letter Dated September 21, 1934: Last Pay Day

“Please tell the girls I have not answered their letter because I am short on stamps. When I signed the payroll this time, they cut off my credit at the company canteen. You see this is my final pay day and they cut me off from any more credit so my account will be square when they pay me off. I haven’t found out yet just the day I’ll be paid off, but I think it will be Sat. September 29<sup>th</sup>. So I’ll say please be looking for me about 11 PM on that joyful night.”

Letter dated September 23, 1934: Last Letter from Troy

“You have had a letter from me yesterday in which I told you I would probably be home about 11 P.M. Central Standard Time Friday, September 29, 1934. Wish you could be here to enjoy my last CCC Sunday dinner with me. I’m glad to say I have had a wonderful time in the CCC and I am not quitting because I don’t like it here. I am quitting simply because I like it better there.

Oh! Yes, Uncle Sammie has issued us boys some new bedsteads in lieu of our old army cots. They are here on the reservation and I expect to have one to sleep on tonight.

Re-enlisted in the C.C.C.: Lufkin Camp No. P-57-T January 1935 - ???

*Not much is known about his time in Lufkin. There were only a few letters in January and February. It is not known why he decided to return to the CCC other than maybe he couldn’t find a job in Dallas after the first enlistment with the CCC. He was still a cook. A letter dated Feb. 12, 1935, states that he made 1<sup>st</sup> cook.*

WE PLAN TO HAVE A COMPLETE REPORT NEXT TIME ON THE DEDICATION CEREMONY OF OUR CCC MEMORIAL OF MAY 30, 2015, AT THE CAMP 1816 SITE.

The Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy is a non-profit organization dedicated to research, preservation, and education to promote better understanding of the CCC and its continuing contribution to American life and culture. *“I propose to create a Civilian Conservation Corps to be used in simple work, more important, however, than the material gains will be the moral and spiritual value of such work.*

--FDR, 1933

The CCC Legacy Chapter 123 Newsletter, 3412 Pleasant Run Rd., Irving TX, 75062 972-255-7237

