

CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123 NEWSLETTER

3412 Pleasant Run Road, Irving, Texas 75062

July 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 18th 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 18th 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: Jack & Goldie Vaughan, and Michael & Jane Smith

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Janet Ketter, 07/01; Betty Gebhard, 07/06; Karen Shepherd, 07/08; Frank Borello, 07/09; Josh Tetens, 07/10; Pat Mann & Steve Wingo, 07/17; Ruby Pixler & Evelyn Timblin, 07/26; U.J. King, 07/28.

MINUTES OF MEETING, CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123, July 11, 2015

Weather: Sunny, Temp: 85°, Attendance: 15.

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

The Invocation was offered by Rev. James Pixler. The pledges to the flags were led by Sgt-at-Arms Troy Jones.

President Pixler reminded members of the purpose of the 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 June 2015 meeting were available in the newsletter. Correction to the minutes should read that Wes Culwell gave background of his book "The Trees of Lake Worth," not "CCC Post Oak Trees." We apologize for the error. Motion to accept the minutes as amended was made by Jim Rau 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 the report as printed was made by Tony Rodriguez and seconded by Bill Stallings. All in favor motion passed.

These couples celebrated wedding anniversaries in July: Jack and Goldie Vaughan, and Michael and Jane Smith. There are many birthdays in July: namely Janet Ketter, Frank Borello, Pat Mann, Josh Tetens, Steve Wingo, U. J. King, Karen Shepherd, Betty Gebhard, Ruby Pixler and Evelyn Timblin. Happy Birthday was sung to Ruby and Evelyn who were present. Bill Stallings reported that Larkin Dilbeck is still making progress on recovery from his fall and hip replacement in June.

Wes Culwell brought several copies of his book "The Civilian Conservation Corps of Lake Worth, Company 1816 located in Fort Worth, Texas" and autographed the book for several lucky members.

President Pixler stated our need for a new Chapter 123 Historian to replace Ruby Pixler. Bill Stallings volunteered to serve in the interim. More discussion was held about the 2016 CCC Legacy gathering in Texas and more ideas considered about logistics, transportation, and such matters. The gathering is scheduled for Thursday through Sunday, the week of September 26, 2016.

The Can was passed bur donations and the door prize drawing was won by James Pixler who returned the money to the Chapter. The blessing was offered by Rev. Pixler. Motion to adjourn was made by Troy Jones and seconded by Wes Culwell. President Pixler adjourned the meeting at 12:10 PM. Members and friends enjoyed the delicious meal served by the Kitchen Committee. Next meeting will be August 8, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Porter, Sec/Treasurer

THE STORY BEHIND THE CCC CAMP 1816 MEMORIAL MONUMENT AT LAKE WORTH

On Saturday, May 30, 2015, the brand new memorial monument honoring the memory and the CCC Boys of Camp 1816 at Lake Worth from 1934 to 1937 was dedicated. That day dawned with anything but peace and quiet; with repeated claps of thunder and sheets of rain. It was feared that the whole event would be a complete washout, and no one would show up. However shortly after complete sunup, the rain stopped and the clouds slowly started clearing away. Maybe just maybe....; but it was feared it was too late, people would not come. However, as the 10:00 AM start time approached, a few cars started driving up; a few local residents came walking over, and at the appointed time a really nice size crowd had gathered. The question is: How had this all come to be at this deserted, but peaceful plot of ground that was quite removed from the more popular areas of Lake Worth Park?

The idea of a monument came about very slowly much like the original ideas for the structures to be built by the newly created Civilian Conservation Corps back in the early '30's. Architects and designers principally in or

working for the National Park Service, influenced by the Art Deco and the Arts & Crafts Movements, began drawing plans for buildings and structures using rough hewn stone and wood that appeared to grow right out of the ground they were to be built on. Janet Ketter is credited with originally proposing some kind of memorial at the site of Camp 1816. Back in the 1980's she, along with a few local veterans of CCC Company 1816, started what became our CCC Legacy Chapter 123. However nothing came of the original idea.

We now fast forward to 2011. Wes Cullwell, a trained horticulturist and artist, lived on Lake Worth, and since this was the centennial of the lake being built, he decided to do a study of the trees around the lake. The outgrowth of this study became a large beautifully illustrated book, "The Trees of Our Lake," that he self-published in 2014. In doing the inventory he found three large post oak trees grouped close together near the road on Peninsula Club Circle. He estimated them to be about 200 years of age and situated on a large open plot of ground that Wes discovered had been the site of the Civilian Conservation Corps Company 1816 Camp, era of 1934-1937. This led to his wanting to know more about this camp, which in turn resulted in two more books on the history of the Corps at the lake, and the CCC Structures there. Wes got the City of Fort Worth to recognize the importance of the three post oaks. The base of the trees was completely covered by privet hedge, an invasive plant that is quick growing. A few local residents including John Degroat, got together and cleared out the hedges around the trees.

Now another local resident, Bob Crow, appears on the scene. Bob was the Co-Chair of the Lake Worth Centennial Committee. Wes had mentioned to Bob that he was going to try to get some kind of metal plaque denoting the location of Camp 1816. Bob thought he would be able to raise some funds for the project through the Lake Worth Centennial Committee. Bob contacted Lester England who was with the City of Fort Worth, and they decided about a location for the memorial. Bob in turn met with John Degroat whose house was on Peninsula Club Circle and who was president of the local homeowners association, and they then invited our President Mike Pixler to meet with them. Bob then contacted Rob Denkhaus, Natural Resource Manager of the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, about the project, and Rob recommended Nicholas Martinez to do the actual work on the memorial. Nic was the "go to guy" at the Nature Center, and was experienced in stone work. Bob asked Nic to do the work on his days off of Sunday and Monday, and Nic agreed. The original plan was for the monument to be flagstones from a local stone yard, but it was decided that this was not typical CCC material. Here we should mention that Quentin McGown, the foremost authority on the history of Fort Worth, had input that the memorial should follow CCC designs including rough stonework.

At this point Jim Rau, our 1st Vice President was brought in and Jim and Nic took over the design and construction of the memorial. Bob became responsible for the plaque itself. He knew of the process of photo etching a picture on black granite, and Wes had seen the aerial photo of the camp taken in the '30's, so this was decided for the plaque.

Wes Culwell took on the landscaping work around the future monument. He proposed using de-composed (crushed) granite for the base and this is what was used eventually. Mike Pixler assumed responsibility for the grounds in the area and did extensive mowing and cleanup. John Degroat and several other homeowners continued removing privet hedges to open up the grounds, in particular near where the flagpole had been.

One afternoon while some of the others were working on the layout for the monument base, Jim Rau walked over to the flagpole area. They knew this because the aerial photo that Wes had found clearly showed where it was. It showed a small circle at its base. Having the ground now exposed, Jim noticed several stones on the surface. He started scratching around and found more stones just beneath the soil surface. They appeared to be

laid out in a regular pattern. He soon realized there was a larger concentric circle outside of the smaller where the flagpole had stood. In fact this larger circle had had a low wall built with it. He and Nic realized they had a ready source of actual CCC-used stones for the project. Jim began pressure washing the stones. From here they began chiseling and grinding the stones to a rough shape just as the original "Boys" had done. When the foundation base was finished, Jim and Nic began laying out the monument structure as they went. Keeping their original goal of following CCC designs, the first and second layers going up were given a slope, not just an abrupt perpendicular appearance. The stones and mortar were stacked at random with no straight lines. As they progressed, Jim began thinking about putting the names of some of our CCC Boy members on the stones. They took some of the stones to a monument works nearby to see if it was feasible. The owner said, "Sure we can do that!" So six of our CCC Boy's names were embossed on the stones: Richard Crooks, Larkin Dilbeck, Bill McKee, Merle Timblin, Jack Vaughn, and Steve Wingo; with their dates and company numbers. Steve Wingo actually served in Co. 1816 at Lake Worth, and may be the last known to do so. Nic and Jim worked on the monument for seven long weeks; with many of the days in a driving rain.

The selected site of the monument is just south of the three "CCC Post Oaks," and they partially shade the monument. Looking south, the face of the monument with its shiny black surface and easily seen aerial view of the camp is at about a thirty degree angle. From the back side looking north is a smaller plaque telling the story of the CCC Oaks. Flanking the monument on either side are two small benches, elegantly designed and built by Nic Martinez and finished by Bob Crow.

One unexpected benefit of the project, and this is all thanks to Mike Pixler, in his mowing and cleaning up the grounds and by referring to the aerial photograph mentioned, he was able to locate and with great effort lay out the outline of all the original structures of the camp; such as the headquarters building, infirmary, barracks, mess hall, etc. Another unexpected was that as the work progressed, people that were driving by, noticed the activity, stopped and wandered over to ask, "What's going on?" A number got very interested, with some telling of their father, uncle or grandfather having been in the CCC. Some later came back to bring their children to see.

So, back to that rainy Saturday morning of the dedication, that turned beautiful. Four boys of a local scout group with their leader, were the Color Guard that raised the flags to kick off the event. CCC Legacy National President Joan Sharpe came all the way from Virginia (with just a slight deviation via North Dakota) for the occasion. The dedication was a great success, and all involved deserve a hearty "WELL DONE!"

We cannot leave before we tell of a potential problem that appeared just before the finishing touches were put on the monument. One afternoon as the guys were winding up and gathering their tools, a lone mockingbird swooped down and lit on the peak of the shiny surface top as if to show ownership. Jim and Nic thought uh-oh, "Have we created a bird poop station?" Much thought went into 'what can be done?' It was decided to add a rough rock ledge about 4-5" across the top. It did the trick; birds still light there but the slight lip is enough to protect the shiny black surface. Another thing, in addition to the increased interest of the local humans, nearly every evening several deer visit the monument area.

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

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