Civilian Conservation Corps—Instilling Morale and Dignity in America's Young Men

Sid Taylor, DOF, Park Naturalist, Aug 2008



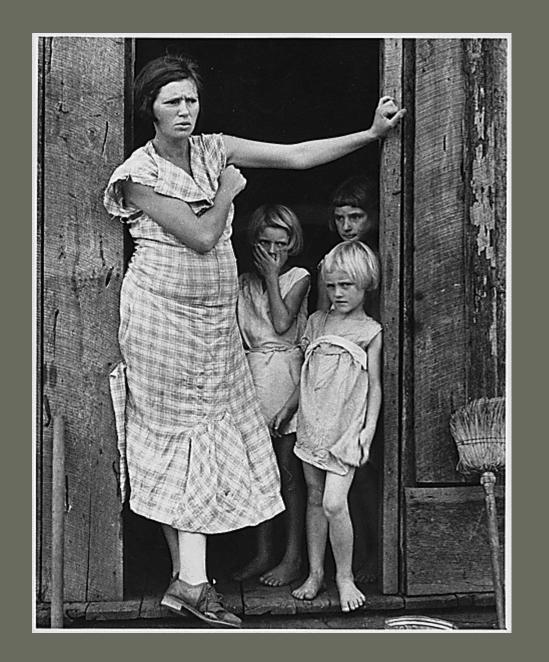


Destitution and poverty in the Great Depression were beyond what we can imagine today.



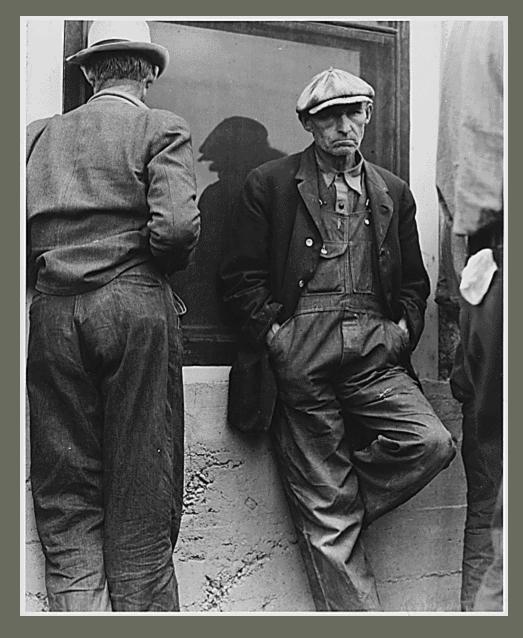
Family of an Alabama sharecropper

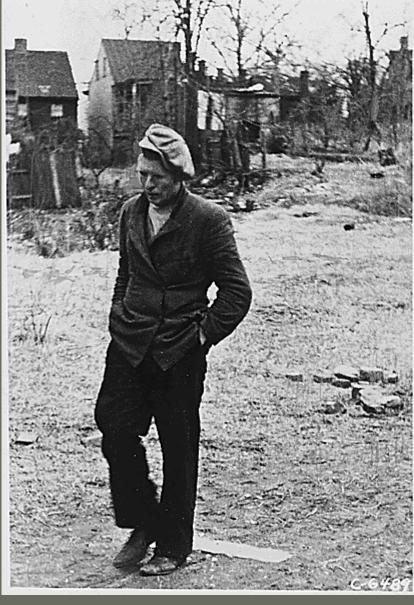
Half of the 123 million people in the US were living in poverty, below subsistence.



4.8 million were without work in 1932 in the United States. With 25% unemployment in 1933, men younger than 25 had no chance of competing for a job.







Urban and rural alike suffered from joblessness.



Long bread lines and long job lines were everywhere.



Two million people were homeless in late 1932, with 67,000 children on the streets in New York City.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, elected as NY governor in 1928, helped pass laws to aid in county and state reforestation in 1929. Abandoned or submarginal farm lands were purchased in 1930 to plant trees.







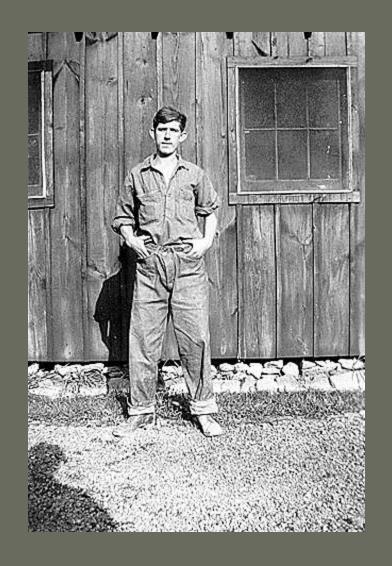
President Hoover's only answer to the Great Depression had been to veto a \$2 billion Public Works bill on July 2, 1932 which was to put the WWI veterans to work. He called it "a squandering of public money". He believed the Depression was a business and industry problem and business should fix it. "The cure for unemployment is to find jobs", Herbert Hoover, December 5, 1929.

"Our program is two-fold," President Roosevelt told the country. "Conservation of our natural resources and conservation of our human resources: Both are sound investments for the future....".

Upon his inauguration on March 4, 1933, FDR set his economic recovery plan into motion.



Roosevelt planned a fight against soil erosion and declining timber resources. With the labor of unemployed young men from our large urban areas, he established the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC): know until 1937 as the Emergency Conservation Work Act.



Logging, overgrazing, farming and settlement had left the landscape devastated across much of the country.



Mechanized plowing of the prairie and



prolonged drought resulted in severe erosion of the the topsoil.



The worst storm of the Dust Bowl occurred on April 14, 1935 in multiple states.



Dirt blackened the skies all the way to Washington, D C and landed on FDR's desk in the Oval office.



Read oral histories of the Dust Bowl in Timothy Egan's *The Worst Hard Time*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006



Cimarron County, Texas April, 1935



Amarillo, Texas 1936



The Great Depression led to the creation of a number of relief programs, one of which encouraged the movement of cattle from the Dust Bowl into Florida. With the cattle came the screwworm parasite causing major changes in the practice of cattle raising. Before the screwworm, cowmen used Cracker horses to herd and drive free roaming Scrub and Cracker cattle. With the arrival of the screwworm came the need to rope cattle and hold them for veterinary treatment and dipping. As a result ranchers turned to the larger, stronger Quarter Horse and Florida Cracker horse declined.

9000 banks closed in the US between 1930 and March 1933.



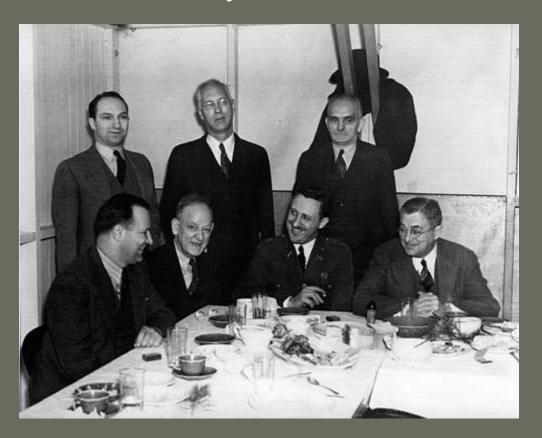
FDR dealt first with the economic chaos that gripped the country. He declared a Bank Holiday closing all twelve Federal Reserve Banks and closing or limiting withdrawal amounts at commercial banks in 43 states. In Florida alone eighty-seven banks went broke in 1929-30. FDR's action restored public confidence and the hoarders ceased their run on the financial institutions and removal of their monies. Banks started closing on March 4 and reopened on March 13.

On March 15, 1933 FDR called his four secretaries of Labor, Interior, Agriculture and War into the same room asking them to come up with the details, which they did in one afternoon. Seen here on the right, from Department of Agriculture, is Henry Agard Wallace.

Establishing the Civilian Conservation Corps to put young men to work.



Composed of representatives of the Secretaries of War, Labor, Agriculture and Interior, the Advisory Council served for the duration of the CCC, until July 1, 1942.



Standing: Dean Snyder, Labor; Fred Morrell, Forest Service;

C.W. Bailey, Veterans Admin.

Seated: Conrad Wirth, Interior;

Robert Fechner, CCC Administrator;

Capt. William Cooper,

Commanding Officer;

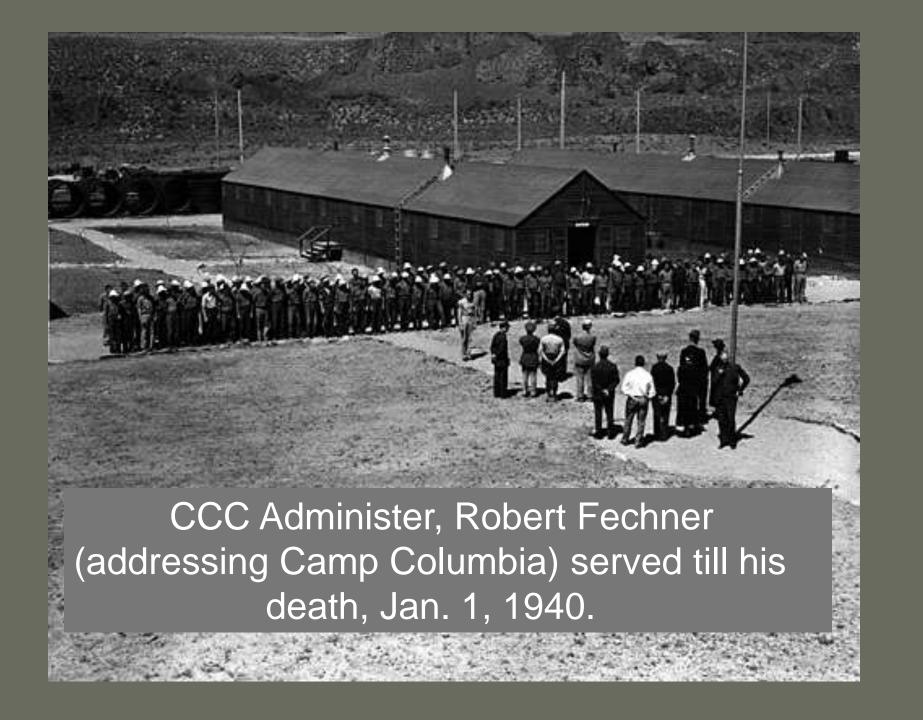
Gen. Tyner, War Department.

Jan. 13, 1939

Camp Roosevelt opened at George Washington National Forest near Luray, Virginia on April 17, 1933.

L-R: Maj. Gen. Paul B. Malone; Col. Louis Howe, Secretary to FDR; Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of Interior: Robert Fechner. Director Emergency Conservation Work; FDR; Henry A. Wallace. Secretary of Agriculture: Rexford Tugwell, Administrator Resettlement Admin.





Only boys from families already receiving Federal Emergency Relief were eligible for CCC enrollment until this requirement was relaxed in 1939.



Dept. of Labor, through its state and local relief offices, would be responsible for the selection and enrollment of applicants. By April 7, 1933 they had their first inductee. 250,000 were signed up for the first six month stint. NY sent the most; NV, the least.



3.1 million young men would serve in the nine years and two months of the Civilian Conservation Corps, with a total of 3,465,766 enrollees in 4,500 camps. Each camp had 26 Leaders and Assistants, 8 from the Army and 18 from the work agency.



Department of War would use their recruiting strategies to establish the logistics of the work force.

March Field Camp, California



After recruitment the first stop was a training camp for three weeks of physical conditioning with the Army.



Initially unmarried boys between eighteen to twenty five were enrolled for six months and eligible to re-up for a an additional six months.



Swearing in ceremony





Frequently, though work was established locally, boys were transported great distances from recruiting stations to CCC Camps. As there were not enough projects in the East to employ eastern men, many were sent to western states.



Drought in the mid-western states in 1934 expanded the program to include 50,000 more into the CCCs from the middle of the Country. The age limit was expanded to 28 to aid more struggling families.

A second modification authorized the enrollment of about 25,000 older local men who, because of their experience or special skills, were vital to train and protect the unskilled enrollee in his transition from city greenhorn to expert handler of axe and shovel. They were called LEMs, meaning Local Experienced Men. This satisfied demand from communities near the CCC camps that their own unemployed men be put to work.



Riving or splitting shingles



Shaping shingles with draw blade work

25,000 veterans of the Spanish-American War and World War I were included beginning in the summer of 1934 after 1000 of the "Bonus Army" returned to the White House Lawn.





Undoubtedly the greatest resource was the disciplined men serving as CCCs who were learning the routine of the army. The were being strengthened by the three hot meals provided each day, benefiting from health care, receiving literacy and vocational training, participating in morale boosting activities, and were growing personally due to their first trips out of home counties.



Tents were used for initial housing before barracks could be built,





and temporary Spike Camps were erected on projects in the woods.



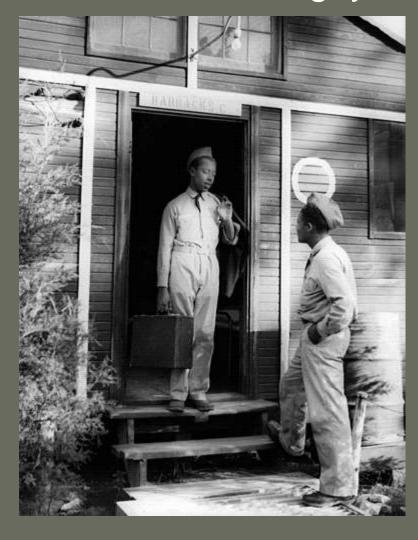


The Army used its own regular and reserve officers (together with regulars of the Marine Corps, Navy and warrant officers of the Coast Guard) to command camps and companies.

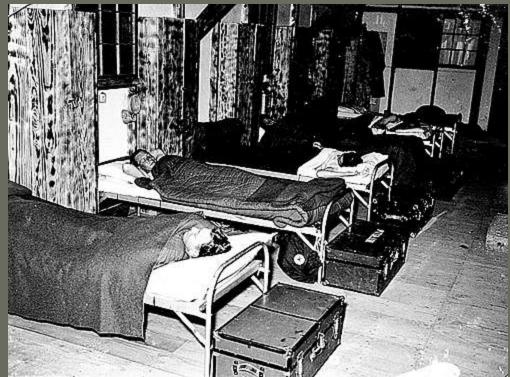


At Camp Roosevelt by 1942 there were 24 buildings, which included six barracks, a recreation hall, education building, wash house, officer's quarters, infirmary, mess hall and kitchen, Army office and garage and truck shed.

Barracks were shared with 199 others guys.

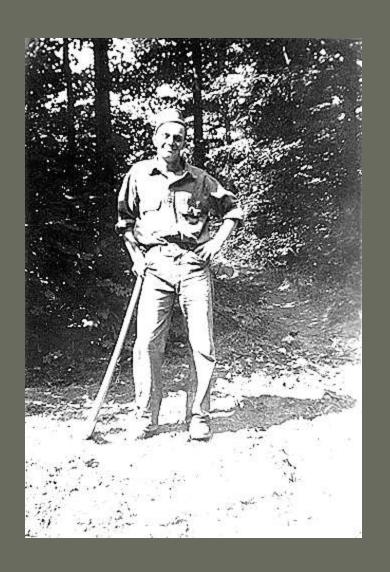




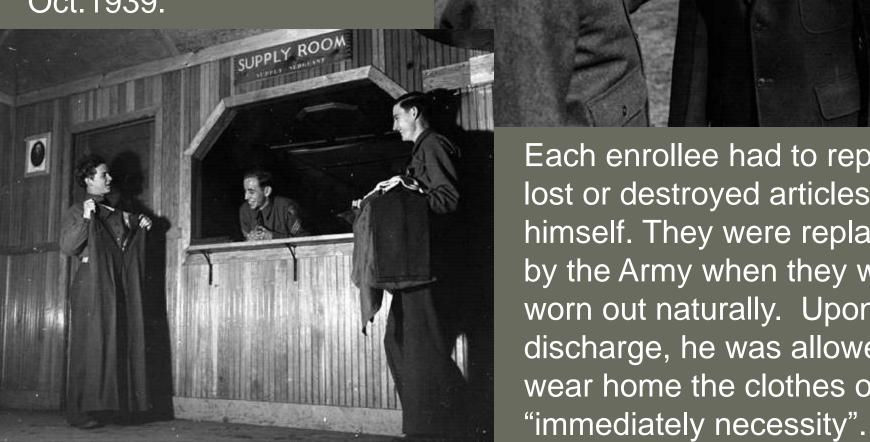


Uniforms:

This boy is happy to be in the CCC. He has just been given the issue of clothing furnished all boys who joined the Corps. Both clothes for work and their dress uniforms were spruce green in the winter and khaki for summer wear.



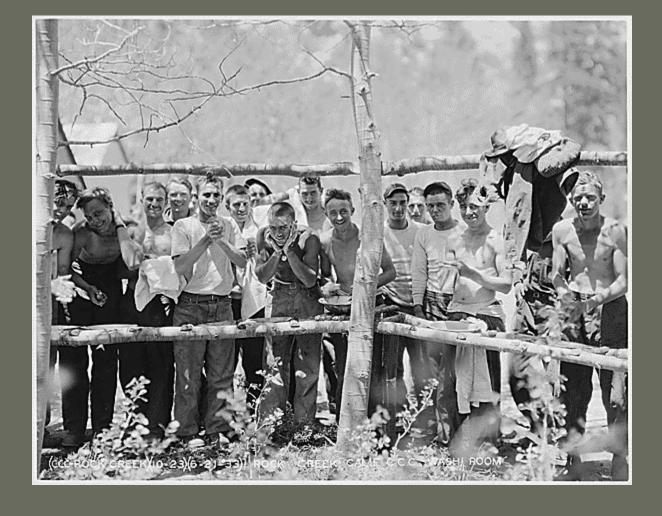
12% of CCC support funds were spent on clothes: Olive drab dress uniforms and denim work clothes. Olive drab changed to green in Oct.1939.



Each enrollee had to replace lost or destroyed articles himself. They were replaced by the Army when they were worn out naturally. Upon discharge, he was allowed to wear home the clothes of

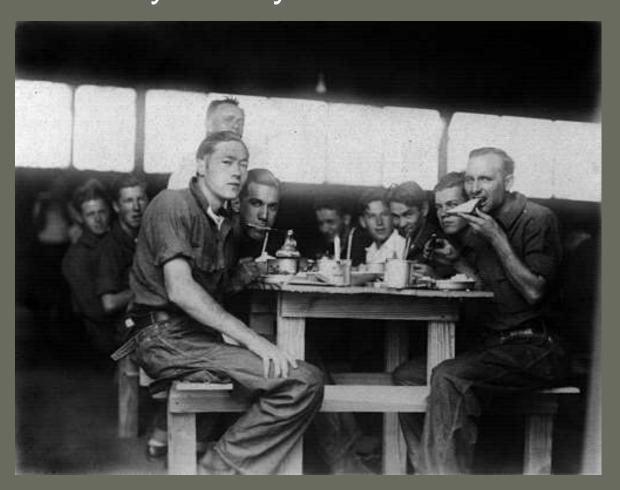
No frills Camp-life: doing the laundry.



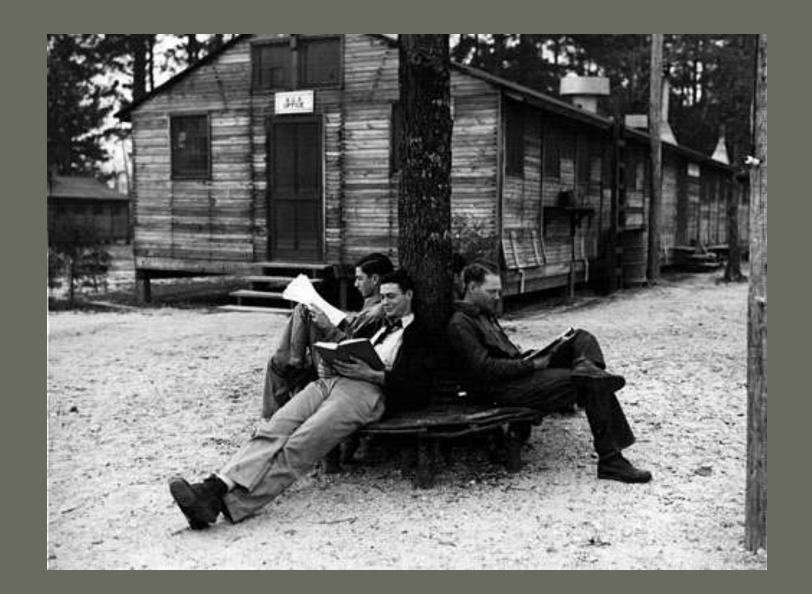


Enrollees took care of their own laundry, including bedding. Initially, winter wools in colder states were WWI surplus uniforms.

Pay was \$30 a month/ a dollar each day. \$25 was sent straight home to the family of the enrollee and he had \$5 a month pocket change. Families were not allowed to send any money to enrollees.



FDR's welcome to enrollees in 1934:

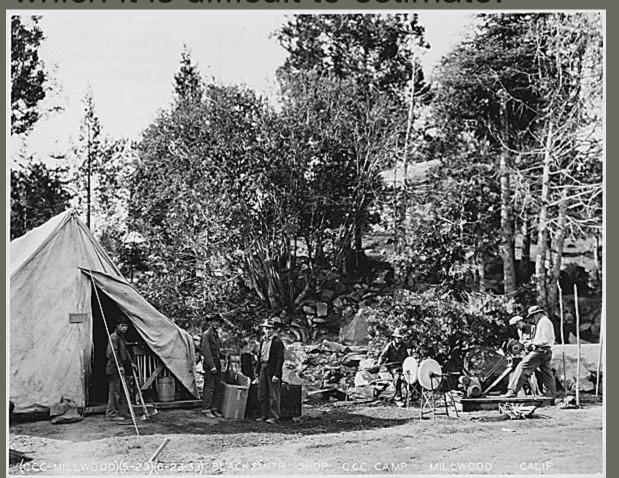


"I welcome the opportunity to extend a greeting to the men who constitute the Civilian Conservation Corps. It is my belief that what is being accomplished will conserve our national resources, create future national wealth and (will) prove of moral and spiritual value, not only to those of you who are taking part, but to the rest of country as

well."



"You young men who have enrolled in this work are to be congratulated. It is my honest conviction that what you are doing in the way of constructive service will bring you, personally and individually, returns the value of which it is difficult to estimate."



"Physically fit, as demonstrated by the examinations you took before entering the camps, this clean life and hard work in which you are engaged cannot fail to help your physical condition and you should emerge from this experience, strong and rugged and ready for re-entrance into the ranks of industry, better equipped than before."



"I want to congratulate you on the opportunity you have and to extent my appreciation for the hearty cooperation which you have given this moment so vital a step in this nation's fight against the Depression and to wish you a pleasant, wholesome and constructive stay in the CCC."



Interior and
Agriculture found the
projects in State and
National Parks in all
48 states, and Hawaii,
Alaska, Puerto Rico
and the Virgin Islands.





Daily work was supervised by the Forest Service, both Federal & State, National Park Service, or Indian Services of Department of Agriculture.

Five hundred CCC camps were under the control of the Soil Conservation Service performing erosion control. Erosion was ultimately arrested on more than twenty million acres.



The CCC made outstanding contributions in the development of recreational facilities in national, state, county and metropolitan parks. A third of all enrollees participated in demonstrating soil erosion control techniques to private land owners.



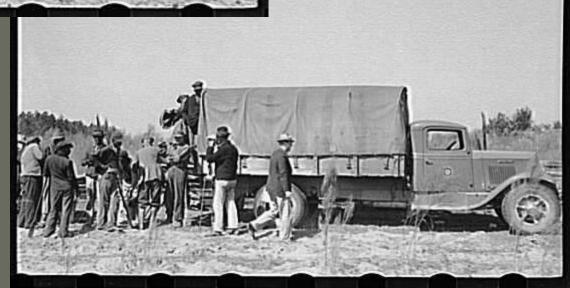
In Florida the Soil Conservation Service took up tree planting to control erosion. 200 million trees were planted in what would become Withlacoochee State Forest.







Roosevelt's Tree Army on the job





CCCs=Colossal
College of Calluses

Tree Troopers



Country-wide, 3 billion trees were planted



by the Soil Soldiers.



4,235,000 man-days were devoted to fighting fires. Wildfires were erupting every two and a quarter minutes, day and night, in the mid-1930s.



Fire fighting in the local Sandhills of Citrus County.





Fighting a fire in Highlands Hammock.

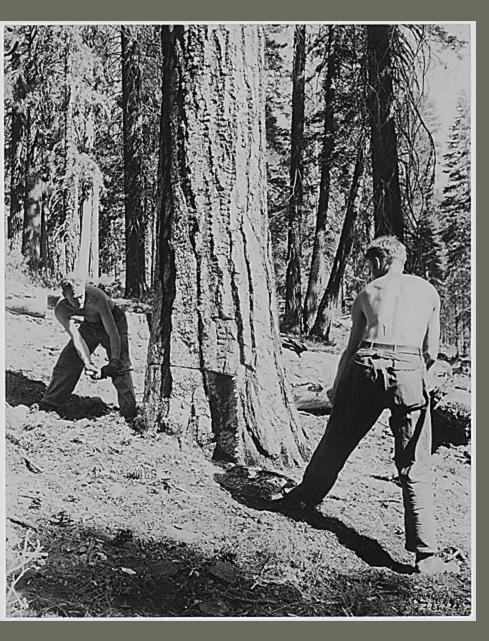




3,470 fire towers erected



89,000 miles of telephone lines were erected connecting the towers.





Clearing for roads in Sequoia National Park.





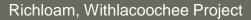
97,000 miles of firebreaks and minor truck trails were built.





In Florida the first trees were grown at Raiford State Prison, Sept.1929. 150,000 slash pines and 100,000 Longleaf from 80 bushels of seed (100 lbs.) Hux Coulter opened the cones in a "glue box" (to dry the cones and extract the seeds) at a Jacksonville glue factory at night.

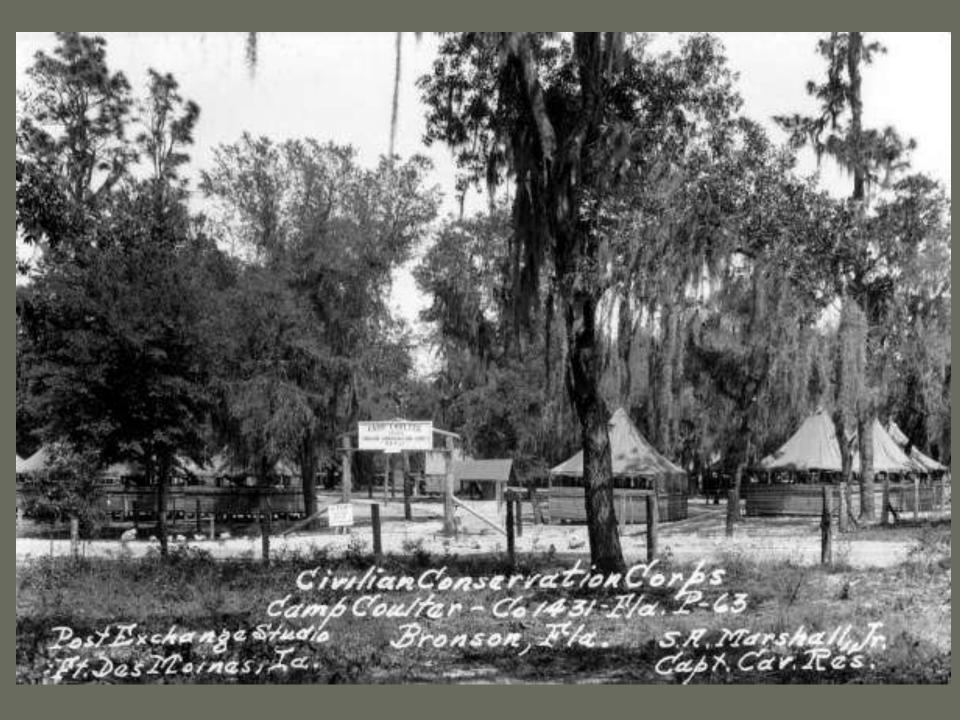






Clinton Huxley Coulter became Florida's State Forester, 1945 till 1969.





In Florida 49,000 men worked on CCC projects. The annual number of camps was twenty-one with a total of seventy three over the eight years.





Drainage was another important phase of land conservation and management. There were 84,400,000 acres of good agricultural land dependent on man-made drainage systems, an area equal to the combined states of Ohio, Indiana and Iowa. Forty-six camps were assigned to this work under the direction of the U.S. Bureau of Agriculture Engineering.

Residents of southern Indiana will never forget the emergency work of the CCC during the flooding of the Ohio River in 1937. The combined strength of camps in the area saved countless lives and much property in danger of being swept away. They contributed 1,240,000 man-days of emergency work in floods of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys.



Other disasters in which the CCC participated were the floods of Vermont and New York in 1937 and the New England hurricane of 1938. During blizzards of 1936-37 in Utah, a million sheep were stranded and in danger of starvation. CCC enrollees braved the drifts and saved the flocks.





The National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni (NACCCA) Journal, (February, 1997, p. 10) wrote that "a typical enrollee was between 18 and 19 years old upon enlistment, had completed eight years of school, and had been without a job for eight months prior to entering the Corps. He weighed about 147 pounds was 5' 8 ¼" tall, and (eventually) served in the CCCs from nine to twelve months."



Numbers of camps and enrollees peaked in 1935. By 1937, age limits were reduced to 17 through 23 years, and the relief requirement was abandoned. Fechner and FDR lobbied to move the CCC from its classification as an emergency agency to civil service. FDR even worked to expand the number of judges on the Supreme Court so he could make choices that would support the permanence of the CCC. Congress continued to restrict the funds, and in 1941, only 150 camps remained.



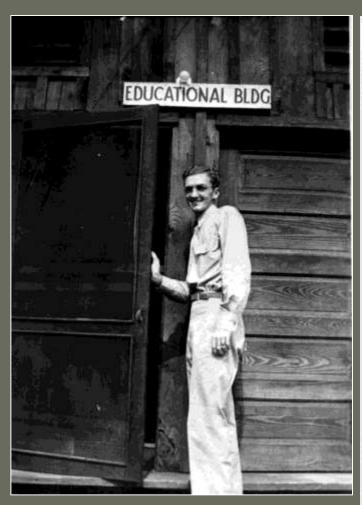
between 40,000 and 110,000 illiterates were taught to read and write.

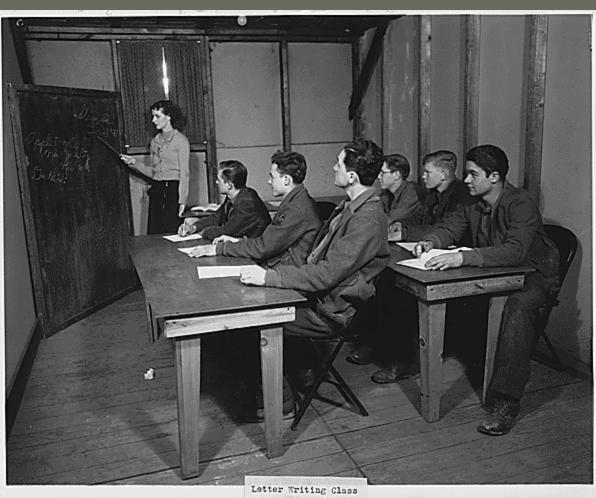


This training was on the enrollee's own time. Teachers were hired from the outside and called Educational Advisors. Some leaned to type.



Tens of thousands earned 8th Grade Diploma and some earned high school diplomas.





Writing letters home



One in 10 enrollees was black. Robert Fechner attempted to integrate the CCC outside of the South. Due to public uproar, in 1935, 150 "Colored Camps" were established. The president of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People, Thomas L. Griffith, supported this decision and said it was not discrimination as these men were making the same wage as the whites for the same work. 200,000 blacks had served by January 1940. 90% participated in camp educational programs.







Arithmetic and business were optional classes.

150 different vocational skills were taught by means of on the job training. Whatever specialty fell to the camp, the men learned skills that helped them gain employment on the outside with some moving into Federal jobs due to their CCC exposure.



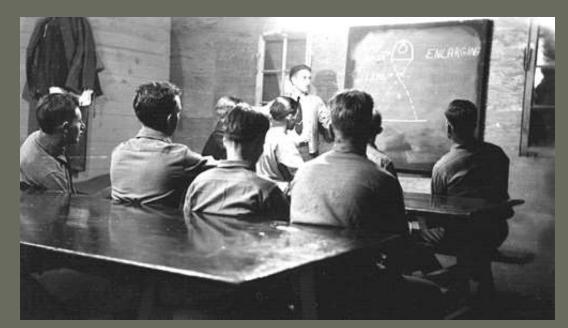
Surveying

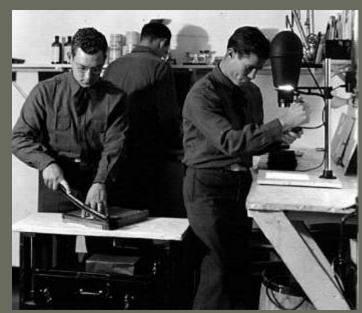




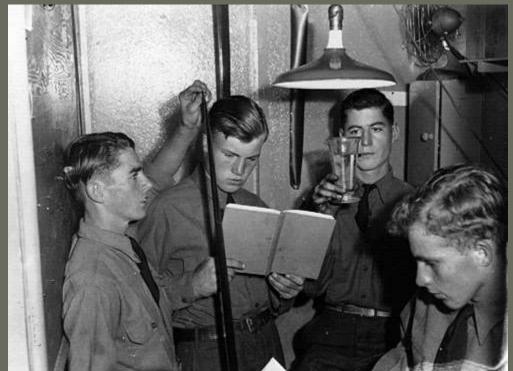
Radio Operating;
Communications;
Learning Codes







Photography





Terms of duty were also expanded for five key members per camp: three cooks, one mess steward and one leader, regardless of their marital status.

Leaders made \$45/month

Assistants, such as second cooks, made \$36/month



Mess stewards kept the cupboard inventory and oversaw the mess hall chores and menus.



Enrollees gained an average of 12 pounds each from the government rations.

One month's groceries, by the train car load for Fifth Corps area's (W. Va., Ohio, IN, KY) 45 camps. 200 enrollees per camp, plus staff, at 4500 calories a day (about 10,170 men).

Quantities consumed every 30 day	s in the Fifth Corps
Area were as follows:	
341,640 pounds of bread	= 65 miles of
	loaves placed end
	to end or
	18 carloads.
513,000 pounds of potatoes	= 13 carloads.
152,658 pounds of fresh meat	= 6 carloads.
69,174 pounds of sausage	= 3 carloads.
39,474 pounds of bacon	= 2 carloads.
24,840 pounds of ham	= 1 carload.
7,540 dozen eggs	= 1 1/4 carloads.
23,332 pounds of butter	= 1 carload.
16,038 pounds of cheese	= 1 carload.
135,000 pounds of sugar	= 4 carloads.
78,300 pounds of beans	= 4 carloads.
51,300 pounds of coffee	= 3 carloads.
63,663 cans evaporated milk	= 2 1/2 carloads.
40,068 pounds of flour	= 1 carload.
27,000 pounds of rice	= 1 carload.
45,900 pounds of onions	= 2 carloads.
22,680 pounds macaroni	= 1 carload.
24,786 pounds commeal	= 1 carload.
31,600 pounds	= 1 carload.
26,876 cans vegetables	= 2 carloads.
28,674 cans of tomatoes	= 2 carloads.
15,768 pounds of lard	= 1 carload.
5,552 packages of bran flakes	= 1 carload.
17,496 packages corn flakes	= 1 carload.
9,000 packages rolled oats	= 1/2 carload.
16,362 cans fruit	= 1 carload.
11,340 pounds of evaporated peaches	= 1 carload.
8,100 pounds of chicken fryers	= 1 carload.
5,562 pounds cocoa	= 1/2 carload.
2,052 gallons pickles	= 1 carload.
270 gallons mayonnaise	= 2 carloads.
324,000 pounds of ice	= 7 carloads.
48,600 gallons of fresh milk	= 1 1/3 carloads."

With camp construction, providing clothing, medical, dental and transportation services and feeding enrollees, nearly \$1 billion was put into circulation.



Mess Hall set for a Christmas meal, an opportunity in which etiquette was taught and expected.

Animal Husbandry





Horticulture

Woodworking, Yorktown, Va.

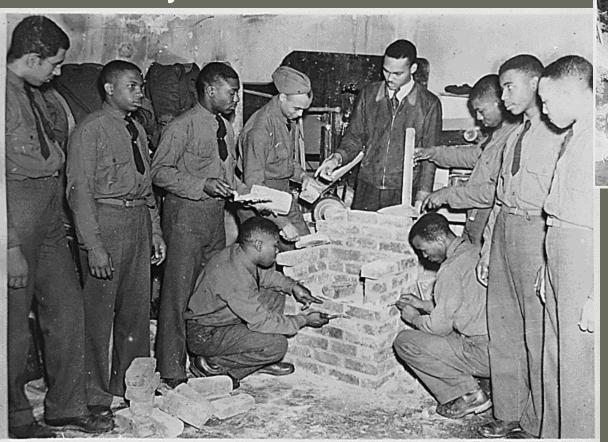


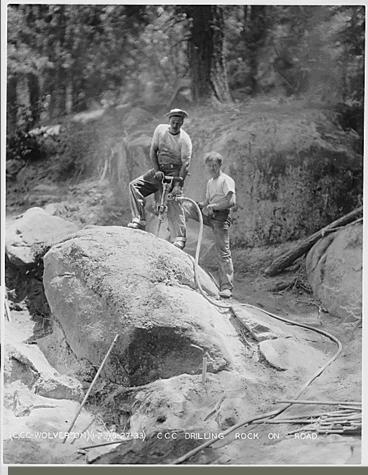


Landscaping

Rock busting; road construction

Masonry

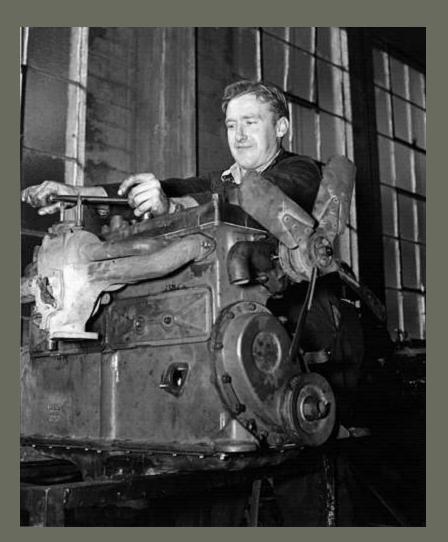






Auto mechanics included engine repair, truck driving and welding skills.







Machine Shop

Tractor repair



Diesel powered shovel repair

Wheelwright shop in 1933, Third Corps



Brick laying





Wall construction & Carpentry

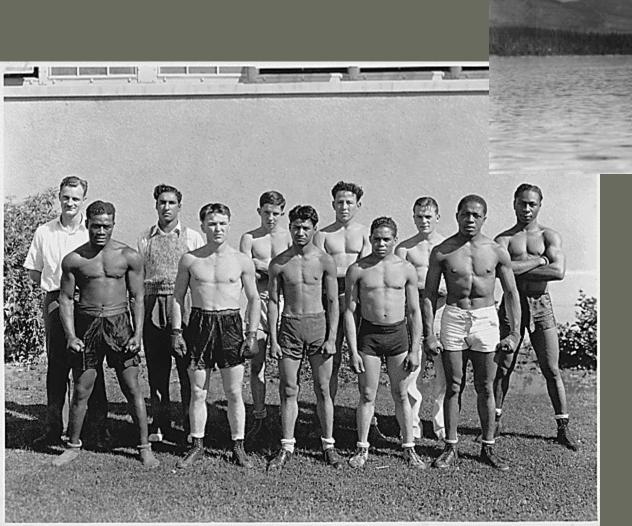


Bridge construction

Sawyer skills



Sports teams for boxing, baseball, softball, basketball, swimming and track were formed.



Music was an important pastime.

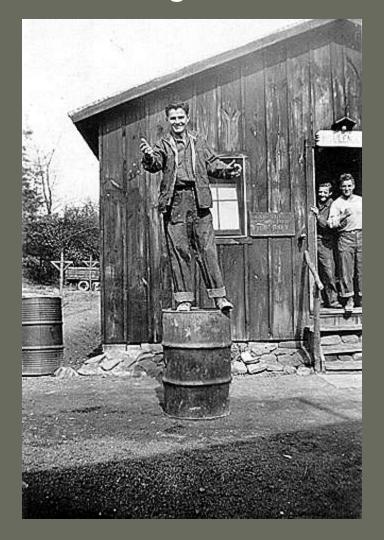




Dances were scheduled.

Enrollees participated in local community parades and festivals.

Public speaking skills were encouraged.





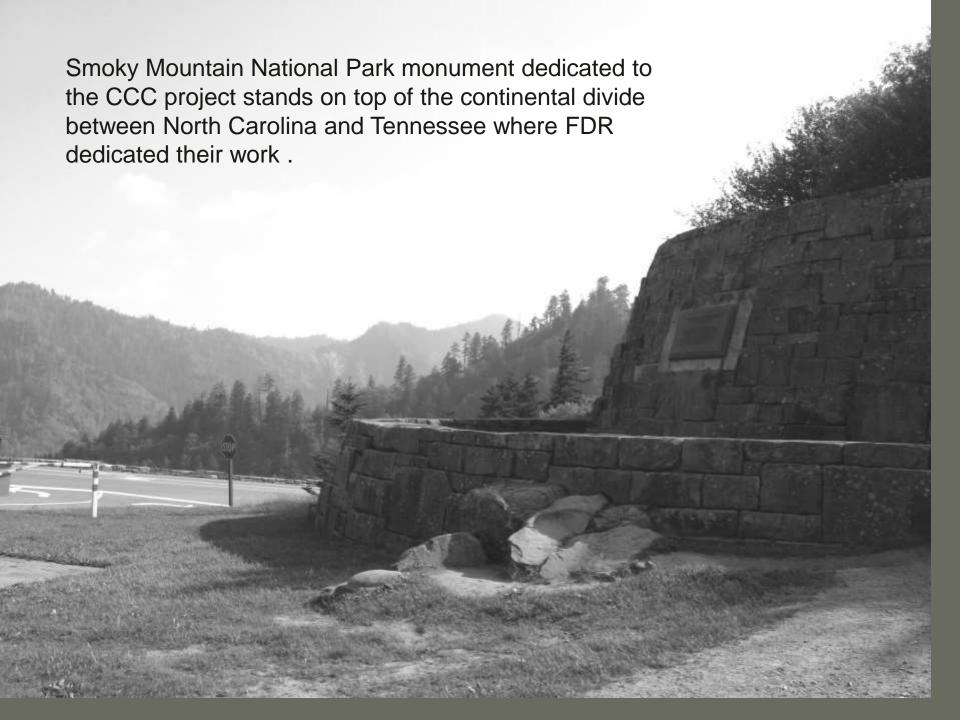
Leaves were extended.



22 camps in GSMNP established 900 miles of trails and most of the infrastructure used still today.

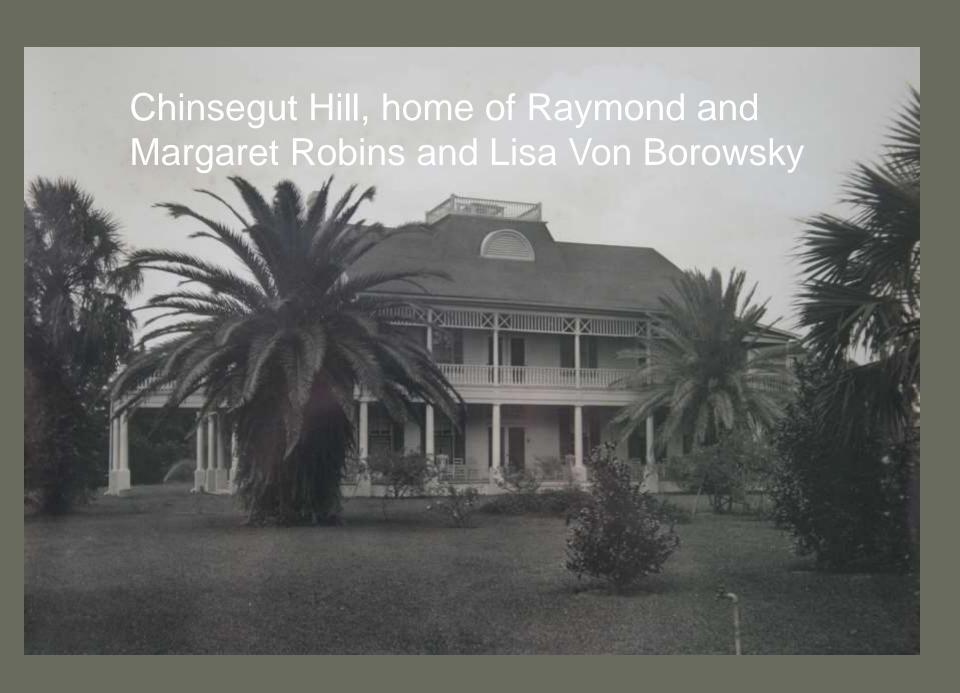
FDR dedicated the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, on September 2, 1940.





Florida maintained an annual average of twenty-five CCC camps throughout the program's existence. Examples of their work can be seen at Oleno State Park, Torreya State Park, Florida Caverns State Park, Fort Clinch State Park, Gold Head Branch State Park, Hillsborough River and Highlands Hammock State Park, the latter which houses a museum display of

The CCC





George Cason, Robert Holcombe, Emory Cason and Lisa Von Borowsky planting Cypress on the edge of Lake Lindsay, Dec. 1935



George Cason, Robert Holcombe, Emory Cason and Lisa Von Borowsky planting Cypress on the edge of Lake Lindsay, Dec. 1935



CHINSEGUT HILL SANCTUARY

WILLIAM FRANKLIN WARD FIRST COVERNMENT SUPERINTENDENT

THESE TWO THOUSAID EIGHTY AGRES COMPRIS-ING THE PLANTATION, WINTER HOME, GROVES, FIELDS, PASTURE AND FOREST LANDS OF RAYMOND ROBINS

MARGARET DREIER ROBINS
WERE DOMATED BY THEM IN A DEED DATED STEE
APRIL, 1988, TO THE UNITED STATES DEPART—
MENT OF AGRICULTURE IN PERPETUTY, FOR THE
MAINTENANCE OF A WILD LIFE REFUGE, FOREST
RESERVE AND EXPERIMENT STATION.

THE DOMORS WISH TO HERE RECORD APPRECIA-TION FOR THE WORK DOME ON THIS PROPERTY PROMOTING USE, COMFORT AND BEAUTY THROUGH MANY YEARS PRIOR TO ITS GIFT TO THE PROPLE OF THESE UNITED STATES.

R.T. LONG

PLANTATION MANAGER

MELVIN C. CHAPMAN FOREMAN & MECHANIC

LISA VON BOROWSKY CURATOR CARDENS
AND WILD LIFE

LILLY BRUMMERHOF KEEPER OF THE FOWLS

RIELDER HARRIS MEGRO LEADER & PLANTER

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MEMORIAL

EMERGENCY CONSERVATION WORK

ROBERT FECHNER, DIRECTOR

THIS RECORD IS TO COMMEMORATE THE WORK DONE BY CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORES DEADERS AND WORKERS ON CHINSDOUT WITH SANCITARY IN CONSTRUCTING RUSTIC BUILD -INCS. SANCHUARY OFFICE, MEMORIAL ROUNDAIN. EDICATIONAL AND RECRESTIONAL LODGE BUS CHAPTON TENC., ROADS, PENCIES, EROSION AND DESCRIPTION DIRECTOR AND THER ACTES PARTICIPATE BEAUTIFICATION COME DANGE AND REPROPERSINGUES AND OFFICES SHOULD CONSERVATION.

C.C.C.CAMP 4-1 AGRICULTURE

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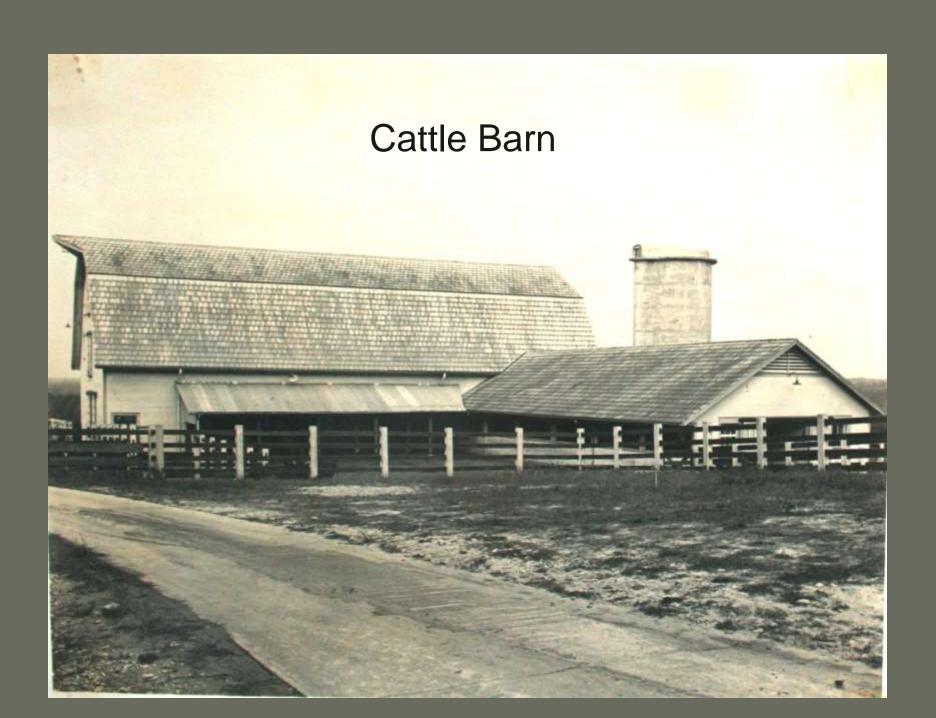
F. A. STENHOLM

S. O. KIMMELL BUNE W. J. INCCALL

"THE WILDERKESS AND THE SOUTHART PLACE SHARD SE OSAD FOR THEE! AND THE DESERT SHADL REJOICE AND BLOSSON AS THE ROSE." - ISAIAN.

STATE OF STREET

100 to 10





Milk house being constructed near Cattle Barn. A milking house was built between the two.





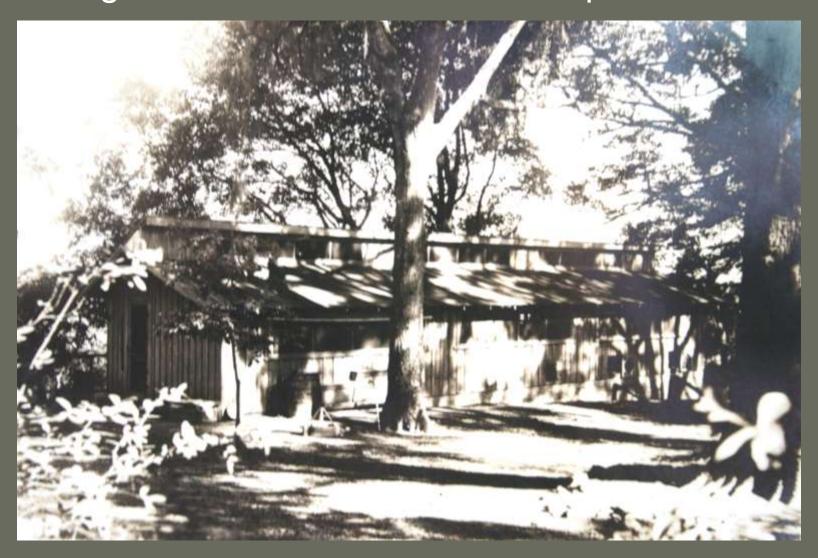


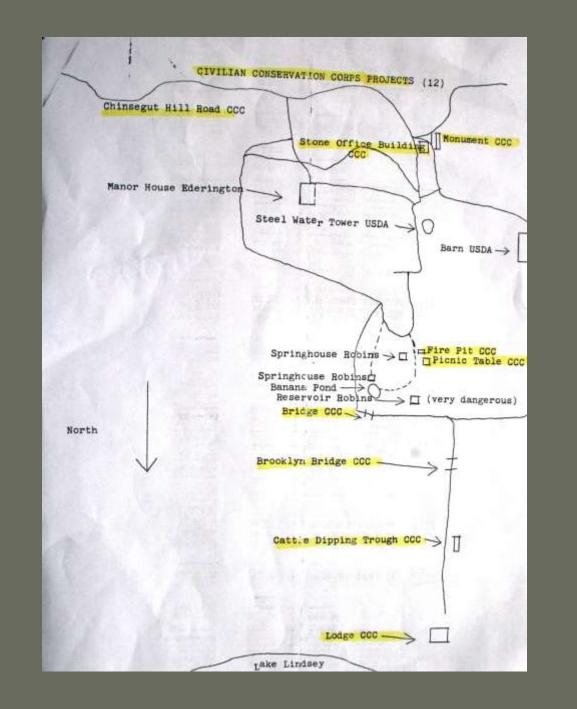
Red Poll cows for milking

Foundation for Hen Laying House, August 28, 1932

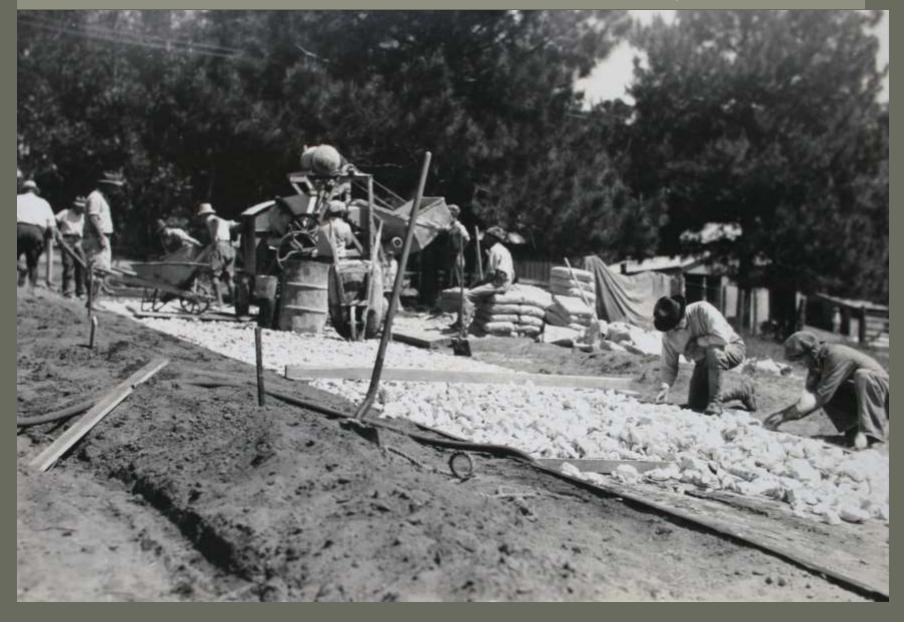


Old poultry bldg, remodeled for office, chicken killing room and lab with microscope.

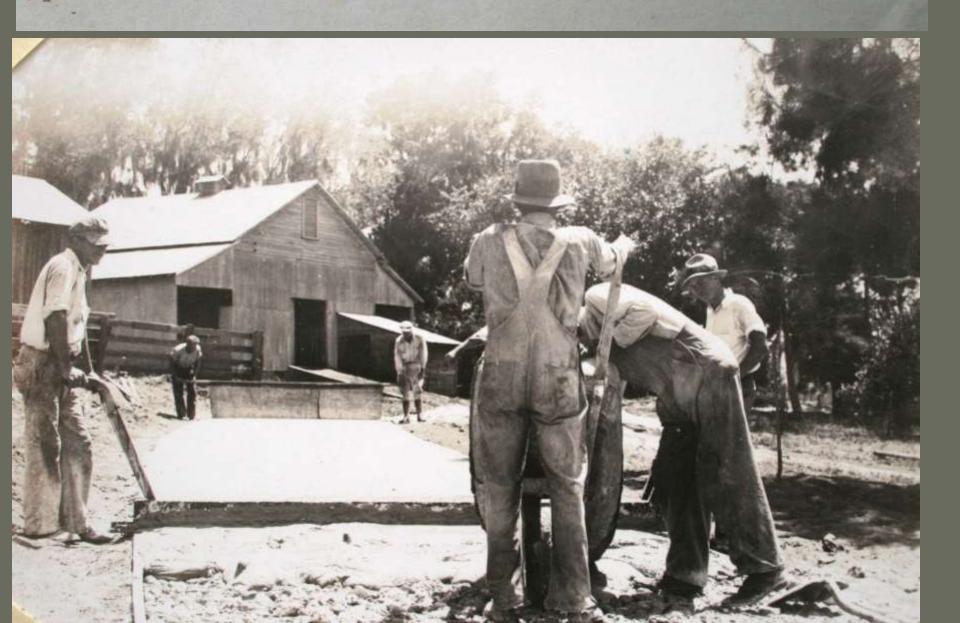




Concrete Macadam Rd Construction, 1934



Road Construction cont'd. (Chinsegut Hill) After the rock is grouted the top is finished off with a richer mixture of coment and sand.



Drilling a 12" drainage well. The well is 360' feep and the water stands 35' below surface of ground. An enormous quantity of water was secured and it is estimated that 5,000 gallons of water could be pumped per minute should it ever be needed for irrigation purposes.

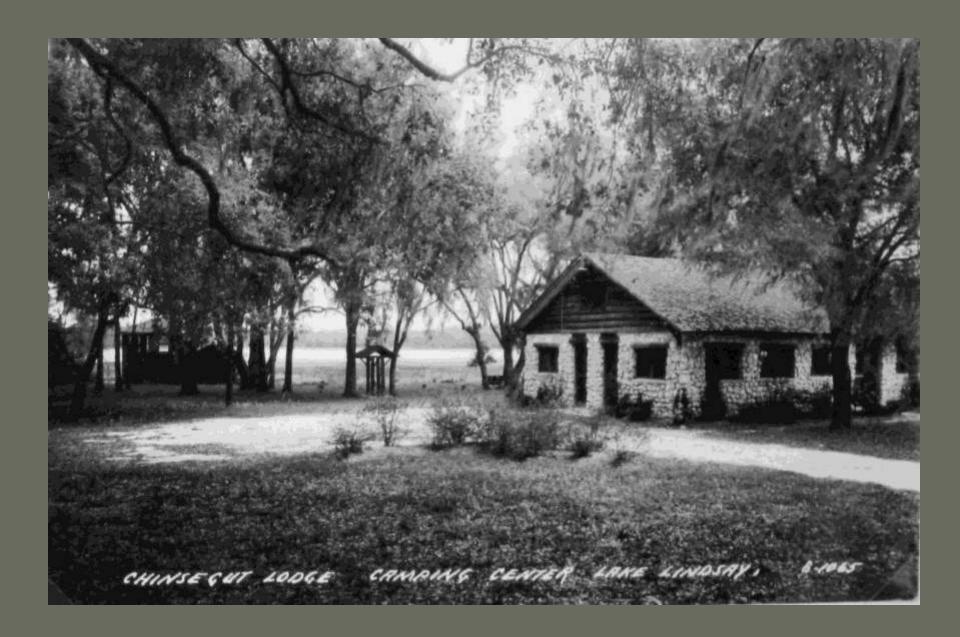


Digging water oak, live oak and holly trees for replanting along roads and entrance to Sanctuary. About 95% of these trees have lived. CWA helpers.









Civil Works Administration was a temporary agency in the winter of 1933-34 created to get the work started.











Florida's CCC State Parks



Florida's CCC Museum Highlands Hammock State Park 5931 Hammock Rd. Sebring, FL 33872 (863) 386-6094

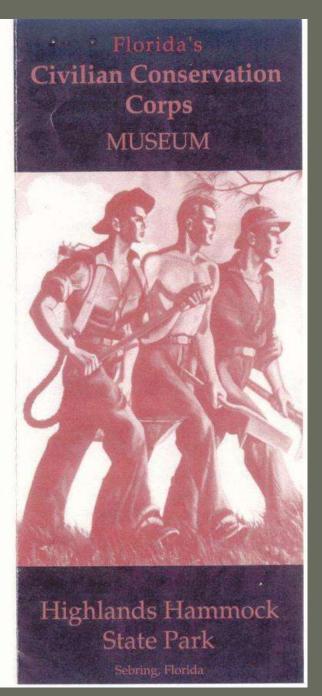
Painting on cover: courtesy of NACCCA
Printing courtesy of: NACCCA Florida Chapters and
Friends of Highlands Hammock State Park
Citizen Support Organization.

The Florida Park Service welcomes the opportunity to assist visitors with disabilities. Some accommodations are available to make the programs accessible. Please contact a staff member for more information.

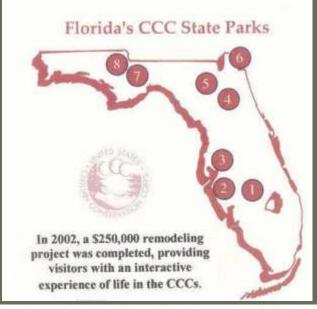


Florida Department of Environmental Protection Division of Recreation and Parks

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These eight parks developed by the CCC marked the beginning of the state park system. When you visit the parks, you will see the rustic style construction and the craftsmanship that characterize the CCC's work:

- 1 Highlands Hammock, in Sebring The CCC constructed the concession building, the museum building, roads, and bridges.
- 2 Myakka River, in Sarasota The CCC constructed the visitor center, cabins, picnic pavilions, and roads.

- 3 Hillsborough River, in Thonotosassa The CCC constructed the suspension
 bridge, picnic pavilions, and visitor center.
 4 Gold Head Branch, in Keystone
 Heights The CCC constructed cabins,
 pavilion, bathhouse, roads, and camping
 area.
- 5 O'Leno, in High Springs The CCC constructed the log pavilion, fire tower training building, and suspension bridge.
 6 Fort Clinch, in Fernandina Beach The CCC performed restoration work on the fort, and constructed the visitor center, roads, and camping area bathhouse.
 7 Torreya, in Bristol The CCC relocated the Gregory House, and constructed the barracks building, stone bridge, and trails.
- 8 Florida Caverns, in Marianna The CCC excavated the tour cave, and built the visitor center and roads.



"The Worker" Statue - Camp Lemont (IL) Co. 612



\$113 million in direct payments to families

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