

C * C * C

CONNECTICUT'S YOUTH IN THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

BY COLONEL OTTO H. SCHROETER

Project Superintendent, Legion and Peoples Forest, Camp White, Winsted, Connecticut

Photographs courtesy of C.C.C.

REPUBLICANS and Democrats as well as party members of other hues, are usually united in praise of what is considered the most outstanding accomplishment of the New Deal, the Civilian Conservation Corps. This agency is unique among all other extra-Cabinet departments in the efficiency of the management, completeness of results, and absence of unethical or questionable practices in its conduct. Where criticism and censure has been the lot of many of its brother agencies, the C.C.C. has been most successful in accomplishing the objectives set for it when it was established.

With thousands of the Nation's youth roaming the country and living in hobo

jungles during the dark years of the depression, it was obvious to a great many people "that something had to be done about it." This youth problem, coupled with the fact that the natural resources of the country were in grave danger of exhaustion, fitted in perfectly with the Administration's panacea for recovery via the alphabetical Relief Route. On March 31, 1933, President Roosevelt affixed his signature to the amended bill for Emergency Conservation Work, and in so doing undoubtedly wrote his name large on history's pages as the Rehabilitator of Youth.

With remarkable swiftness, four governmental departments were organized

into the gigantic task of sending 275,000 young men into the forests by the first of July. The Department of Labor was assigned the task of selecting the applicants, the Department of Agriculture and the Interior had to plan out and supervise the work projects, and the War Department was charged with the task of housing, clothing, feeding and supervising the boys in the camps. The effective cooperation of these four departments was in itself unique in government history. Everyone seemed to have caught the enthusiastic spirit of social achievement which has continued to permeate the work of the C.C.C. The fifth anniversary of the establishment of the



Banding Trees for Gypsy Moth Eradication



Men Removing Elm Logs in Dutch Elm Project

organization, to be observed this month, will again present convincing proof to the thousands of visitors to the camps that the job has been done and done well.

Full credit for the remarkable administration of the C.C.C. must go to its Director, the Honorable Robert Fechner. His selection by the President to head the Corps was a most happy one. A vice-president of the American Confederation of Labor, and of the International Association of Machinists, he had been prominent in organized labor activities for thirty-seven years. He is being aided in the administration of the C.C.C. by an advisory council consisting of the representatives of the Department of Labor, War, Agriculture and Interior.

Connecticut's own Austin F. Hawes, State Forester, saw in the C.C.C. the opportunity to fulfill his long cherished desire of initiating an intensive conservation program in the Nutmeg State. The best foresters, en-

gineers and technicians available, who could meet the exacting requirements for this specialized type of work were

and to these were added the services of trained blacksmiths, carpenters and masons, where needed.

The original administration set-up of the C.C.C. in Connecticut was on a district basis. The camps in the State comprised the Fifth C.C.C. District and were under the control of the Commanding General First Corps Area at Boston, Mass. Colonel William H. Wilson, now Brigadier General and at the present time Commanding General of the First Corps Area, was in charge of the Fifth C.C.C. District. Austin F. Hawes, the State Forester, supervised the work projects in the camps, while B. H. VanBuren acted for the Department of Labor as State Selecting Agent. The latter two have continued in their original capacities, while Colonel Wilson having been promoted is now on duty at

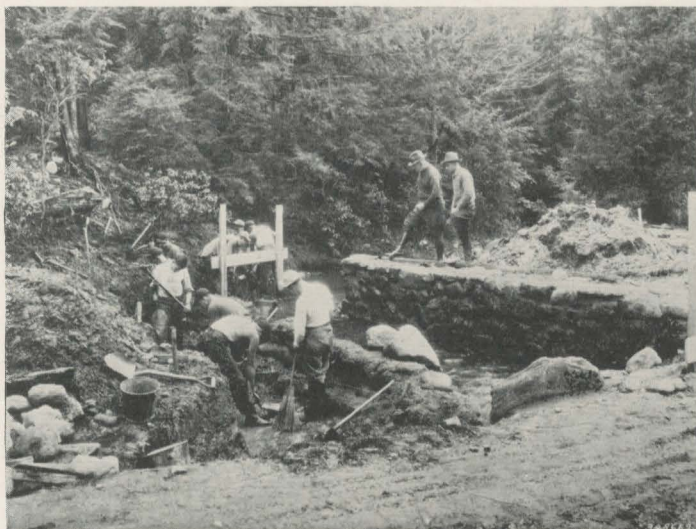


Natchaug River Bridge Built by C.C.C.

selected to head the technical service personnel of the camps. The same high standard was adhered to in the selection of the supervisor personnel of each camp

the Headquarters of the First Corps Area.

The remarkable spirit of coöperation
(Continued on page 63)



Culvert Construction in Tunxis State Forest



C.C.C. Operating Diesel Trail Builder

C. C. C.

(Continued from page 27)

in the work that has marked the relations of the Army, Forestry and Educational personnel in the camps is a tribute to the cordial relations which existed between Mr. Hawes, General Wilson and Mr. Joel Nystrom, the Corps Area Educational Advisor.

The forestry projects in Connecticut are many and varied. Hundreds of miles of truck roads and trails have been built through the State Forests, to open up the acreage for ease in reaching forest fires, and for recreational use by the general public. Silvicultural work and forest improvement cuttings have been made which will enrich the State's timber holdings many fold within the next twenty years. Demonstration plots of good forestry practice have been set up on State land and private land as proof to timber owners that the practice of sound forestry principles in their own woodlots can turn a virtual liability into a paying proposition.

With an alarming number of trees falling prey to insect pests and fungus disease, it was only natural that the C.C.C. focus its attention on this phase of the conservation program. Connecticut C.C.C. Camps have waged untiring war on gypsy moths, pine shoot moths, dutch elm disease and white pine blister rust. Thousands of acres have been covered by C.C.C. boys in search of gypsy moth's egg clusters and the unbelievable number found and destroyed prove the wisdom of this type of work. The eradication of wild currant and gooseberry bushes, the host plant of the white pine blister rust was an added step in the conservation of the white pine stands in Connecticut, which is one of the most valuable forest products of the State. C.C.C. fire-fighting crews have reduced the loss due to forest fires to a very appreciable extent. In spite of the hazardous nature of this type of work, the safety record of the camps has been remarkable.

In addition to these strictly forestry achievements, the C.C.C. proved its worth and will be best remembered by the citizens of Connecticut for its work during the 1936 flood in the Hartford and Middletown area. The work done by the various camps can be divided into two phases: Emergency work, rescuing marooned inhabitants, their belongings and live stock, guarding property and highway patrol work and then a thorough cleanup and disinfection of public buildings, storehouses and private dwellings inundated partially or totally by the flood waters, as soon as these buildings could be entered. Since every C.C.C. member had already been immunized against typhoid and smallpox, no time was lost when first calls for aid came in.

When it became evident on March 23, 1936, that conditions in the flooded areas would reach alarming proportions, State Forester Hawes placed the services of the entire Civilian Conservation Corps of the State at the disposal of Governor Cross, with the writer in charge of the work of the 18 camps. The Army

authorities of the Fifth C.C.C. District with headquarters at Fort H. G. Wright, N. Y. cooperated to the fullest extent in the emergency. Orders were issued by Colonel Edward J. Cullen, District Commander, to move the personnel from six of the more distant camps to camps located in or near the flood areas. This permitted a more rapid concentration of personnel where more were needed, and leaving only a small detachment for maintenance duty and also forest fire crews at the home camps.

This C.C.C. force with a maximum strength of 1,636 men was distributed in accordance with requests made by the State health authorities and as soon as one town was cleaned up and disinfected, the men were placed at the disposal of the next town. The following cities and towns received C.C.C. treatment: New Hartford, Putnam, Warehouse Point, Windsor Locks, East Windsor, South Windsor, Wilson Station, Hartford, East Hartford, Wethersfield, Glastonbury, Cromwell, Portland, Middletown, Haddam, Haddam Neck, East Haddam, Chester, Deep River, Hadlyme, Essex, Stafford Springs, Thompson and Union.

Hartford, East Hartford and Middletown were sub-divided into zones and placed in charge of qualified members of the supervisory personnel. The plan of operation was essentially the same in all areas. Removal and disinfection of furniture, removal of mud and spraying of walls with chloride of lime; cleaning out cellars, burying of carcasses ranging from cows to cats and a large number of domestic rabbits, disposal of submerged meats and canned goods. Over 25,000 cases of canned goods were handled in Hartford alone. It may be interesting to quote a few figures in connection with the work accomplished: 2,950 dwellings located in 24 towns were cleaned and treated; 868 structures such as schools, churches, municipal buildings, warehouses, garages and barns were also cleaned and disinfected. There were 98 trucks used during this emergency work and these trucks travelled a total distance of 115,834 miles without a single accident to vehicles or personnel. This fact alone speaks highly of the road discipline and careful attention to duty of the drivers, all of whom were enrolled members of the C.C.C.

The last two C.C.C. Companies were withdrawn from flood duty on April 24, closing a work project which ranks high in the annals of the C.C.C. of the entire United States.

The work was performed with dispatch and efficiency and great credit is due to all engaged in the work which called for long hours during good weather and bad, and the filth and slime encountered will be remembered for a long time to come. Letters of commendation and praise from town officials and individuals of every town affected attest to the fine work performed and a glorious finale was written by the City of Hartford, acting as host at a banquet to some 1,200 C.C.C. boys on the evening of April 29 in the Foot Guard Armory, an event climaxed by the presentation by



Upper left: William H. Wilson, Brigadier General U.S.A. Upper right: Honorable Robert Fechner, Director C.C.C. Work in Connecticut. Lower Left: Austin F. Hawes, State Forester. Lower right: Colonel Otto H. Schroeter, Field Artillery, Connecticut National Guard, Project Superintendent

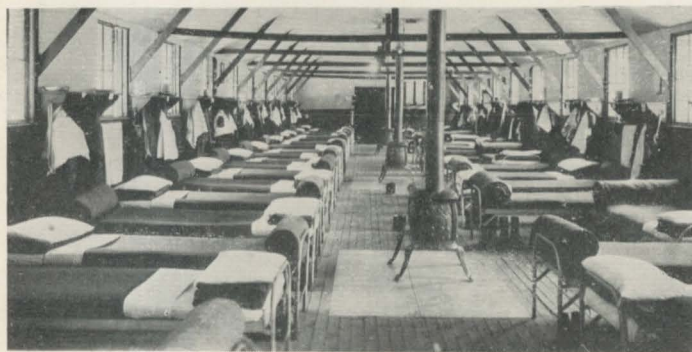
Mayor Thomas J. Spellacy of a handsome wrist watch to every enrollee of the Civilian Conservation Corps present.

These achievements of the C.C.C. Camps in Connecticut are definitely on a tangible basis. Their value to the State in dollars and cents can easily be computed. But to many of us engaged in the work of the Corps, the real thrill of satisfaction that comes with the knowledge of a job well done is present not when we total the number of acres worked over by forestry crews, but when we see many of our young men enter the camps, potential social misfits, potential or even actual delinquents, and see them mature and change into fine specimens of typical American manhood. If a word must be used to symbolize the C.C.C., let that word be "Training."

In the camps we use that word

quite a bit. We speak of job training, for example. Boys, many of whom had never used tools previously, are taught by expert foremen the skills necessary for such jobs as auto mechanics, carpentry, blacksmithing, tractor operation and repair, cooking, office practice, typewriting, road building, etc. This training is given right on the job itself, and is supplemented by correlated courses given in the evening during the enrollee leisure time. In addition, the Educational Department of the C.C.C., represented in the First Corps Area by Mr. Joel Nystrom, Corps Area Civilian Advisor for Education, supervises the work of a Camp Educational Advisor in each camp. This camp Advisor administers the camp educational program under the direction of the Camp Commander and the

(Continued on page 64)

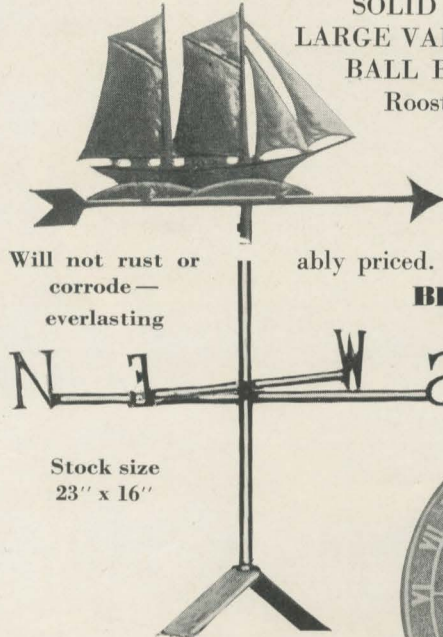


Spick and Span Camp Barracks

WEATHERVANES

SOLID CAST BRONZE
LARGE VARIETY OF DESIGNS
BALL BEARING VANE

Roosters — Birds — Dogs
Horses — Ships



Will not rust or
corrode —
everlasting

Any special size or
design may be obtained
on request. Reason-
ably priced. Send for latest catalog.

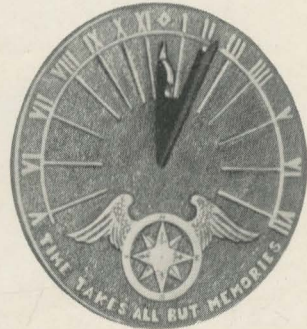
BRONZE TABLETS

A Specialty

SUN DIALS

Large assortment of de-
signs and sizes

Stock size
23" x 16"



Solid cast bronze

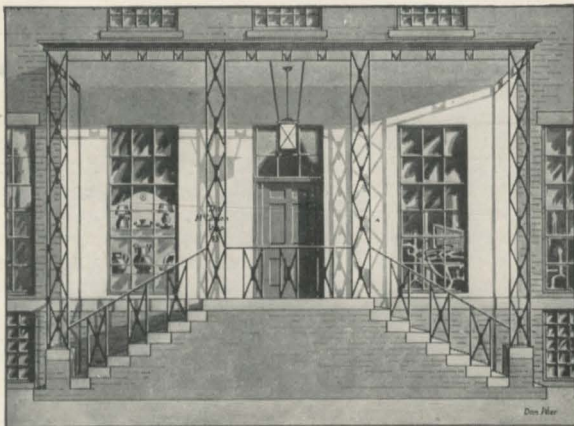
Write for our catalog show-
ing large assortment of Book
Ends, Ash Trays, Candle
Sticks, Thermometers,
Barometers — in bronze.

GRAHAM NOVELTY Co.

Established 1861

293 Wooster Street

New Haven, Conn.



Fireplace Furnishings

Distinctive Metal Crafts

Hand Wrought Aluminum

Garden Ornaments

THE McLAGON SHOP

43 Whitney Ave.

New Haven, Conn.

See our Exhibit (No. 181)

New Haven Tercentenary Exposition

C * C * C

(Continued from page 63)

Educational Council, consisting of all the supervisory personnel.

Considerable progress has been made during these past five years in the training program in the camps. More and more emphasis has been placed by Technical Service and Army Officials on this aspect of the enrollee's camp experience. Classes in Leadership, Character Building, and Safety First contribute to the development of these young citizens, while courses in Carpentry, Machine Shop Practice, Blue Print Reading, Surveying and Forestry, to name but a few, aim to expose the unskilled to trades and vocations in which they may find a lasting interest, and possibly a future calling. Recently arrangements were completed with the Connecticut Department of Education to enable enrollees lacking one, two or three years of high school or grammar school credits to take examinations in the Summer, which when passed successfully, will be rewarded with the issuance of equivalency certificates by the State.

The Arts and Handicraft work in the camps is quite well known to most New Englanders, since annual displays have been held in Sportsmen's Shows and exhibitions throughout the East.

These activities serve the double purpose of supplying fine hobbies for the boys and also help them to overcome the pangs of homesickness with which many of the enrollees who are away from home for the first time are attacked.

The fifth anniversary will mark the total enrollment in Connecticut of 19,503 of the State's youth. At the present time, there are 1,697 active enrolled members of the Corps in the ten Connecticut Camps. Of

this number, only one man is left from the first enrollment and four from the second, which should prove conclusively that the C.C.C. is only a stepping stone toward economic independence as it was planned to be, and not a project in which our young men settle down content to be supported by a paternal Government. The number of Connecticut Camps has varied from a maximum of 23 to the present 10, with two of these slated to be abandoned in a month or two. While some difficulty was experienced last year in filling the replacement quota for Connecticut Camps, applicants for existing vacancies in the State have doubled and even trebled during the past several months of the current business recession.

An effort has been made in this article to describe some of the activities of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Connecticut. It has been felt that the average citizen knows less about this great youth training organization than about any other significant organization on the American scene. The fact that Congress is apparently beginning to abandon the C.C.C. as a youth training center is greatly to be deplored. Anyone familiar with the history and ideals of these camps would certainly prefer to assure their existence on a permanent basis. Even in the Nation's most prosperous times, we have always had several hundred thousand unemployed youth between the ages of 17 and 24. Their continued presence will be a social factor greatly to be reckoned with by responsible citizens. What better method has yet appeared for training this mass of youth into desirable citizens and making them more employable, than the C.C.C.?

Mrs. Woodhouse Publishes Book

Mrs. Chase Going Woodhouse, professor of economics at Connecticut College and director of the Institute of Women's Professional Relations which has its headquarters at the college, has recently published a book entitled "Business Opportunities for the Home Economist."

The book is a practical study based on interviews with outstanding economists and employers over a ten-year period and tells what kind of jobs are available to the trained home economist, what the qualifications are for the job, how to apply for it, how to get a start, and the estimated earnings for each type of job. A feature of the book is the testimony of typical jobholders in each field, describing their work, explaining how they were able to advance, what training they lacked and what they had found superfluous.

Of added interest in connection with the preparation of the book is

the fact that all the clerical work was done by W.P.A. workers under the supervision of Mrs. Woodhouse. In the course of the work approximately 40 women were given training in typing, in the use of a computing machine and in making careful statistical tabulations. Many of these women have found occupation in private industry since receiving this training. A similar group is now working under Mrs. Woodhouse's direction in the preparation of a study of trends in occupations.

Mrs. Woodhouse's book was formally presented to Miss Mary M. Hughart, director of women's and professional projects of the Works Progress Administration of Connecticut at a dinner and symposium on consumer relations which was held by the Institute of Women's Professional Relations and the American Women's Association at the American Woman's club in New York city recently.

Watch for Our Connecticut Camera Club Council page in the June issue. There will be news to interest every Camera Club member. All latest gossip. Don't miss it.