

"Our Only Alma Mater": The Civilian Conservation Corps and the C&O Canal

Special History Study, Final Draft

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IN MEMORY OF COMPANY 333



We who are about to depart,
From this shore
Upon which we once embarked
Feel it our duty to express
The very feelings of our hearts:

The days passed swiftly by
To most of our regrets
We did our duties with a smile
And hardships we've tried to forget.

We have gathered a lot
From our stay,
We have beaten rocks
and are on our weary way.
In our hearts will remain
The teachings of our heavenly Father
And you will always be the same,
Our only Alma Mater.



Frank White

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Introduction

On November 6, 1938, a *Baltimore Sun* newspaper article informed readers the Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal would soon be watered again – only this time, it would be open to the public for recreational purposes. By next autumn, canoeists and other recreational boaters could travel between Georgetown and Seneca, MD, roughly the first twenty-two miles of the 184.5 mile defunct canal. This new usage was a far cry from the commercial coal transportation seen at the canal over the previous century. All this was thanks to the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The *Sun* did not explain any projects in depth but promised CCC workers were hard at work building roads and clearing the right of way. Beyond this, the article was short on details regarding the CCC. One detail is noticeable in its absence – the fact that all of these CCC enrollees were African American men.¹

Many of the African American men who worked for the CCC at the C&O Canal were experienced conservationists by the time of their arrival. A little under half of all CCC men at the canal labored previously at Wilderness, VA, part of Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park, on restoring the battlefield to its wartime appearance. Before Wilderness, a few worked in conservation and recreational work in Wolf Gap, VA, a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service administered project. This camp's administrators had experience as well, such as Major Lewis Heider's previous five years as superintendent of Vicksburg National Military Park.² CCC projects at the canal demanded such experience as the labor required to convert the C&O Canal into a recreational park was immense. Enrollees were up to the task. As of January 1, 1942 the CCC men logged 83,800 and 74,900 "man days," which a man day meaning the amount of work that can be done by one person in an eight-hour period,

¹ "Restored C&O Canal to Contrast with Earlier Days," *The Sun* (Baltimore, MD), Nov. 6, 1938.

² Todd Croteau, Tim Davis, Pete Brooks, Deborah James, Gregory Seale, and Courtney Jones, "Vicksburg National Military Park Roads and Bridges," *Historic American Engineering Record* No. MS-14 (Washington, D.C., 1997).

at Camps NP-1-MD and NP-2-MD respectively completing a herculean amount of work along the canal's first twenty-two miles.³ Compared to other CCC camps, both canal camps demonstrated remarkable consistency over their existence with few changes in administration and a high standard of work. Even after both camps closed in 1941 and 1942, CCC administrators hoped to re-establish both once the war ended because of the immense amount of work still needed. This obviously did not happen given the agency's official and final closure in 1942. Instead, the National Park Service stepped in during and after World War II to further develop the canal property into a public recreational site. The property would be designated a National Monument by President Dwight Eisenhower under the Antiquities Act in 1961 and as a National Historical Park by act of Congress in 1971.

What follows in this text is a special history study that focuses on a single theme to provide a basis for new interpretation of the C&O Canal by the NPS, C&O Canal Trust, or any other interested party and. As required by DO-28, this study is not a baseline document. The hope is that this document will inform future interpretation such as tours, wayside exhibits, and exhibits within Lockhouse 10 and any future research studies on related topics. . The primary goal is to outline all known information stemming from Camp NP-1 housing Company 325 (Co. 325) and Camp NP-2 housing Company 333 (Co. 333), both located in Cabin John less than one mile apart. The CCC story actually begins before Cabin John with Co. 333's prior assignments in Wolf Gap and Wilderness, VA. After tracing the enrollee experience in Virginia, the narrative moves to the C&O Canal. The bulk of this manuscript simultaneously traces the work projects

³ Charles H. Gerner, "Report of Civilian Conservation Corps Operations in the National Capital Parks, October 15, 1933 - June 30, 1942," (Washington, DC: National Park Service, June 1950), 101-102. Robert Coates, "Inventory of Work Accomplished by the CCC Camps Under the Jurisdiction of the National Capital Parks, October 19, 1933 to January 1, 1942," National Park Service, January 15, 1942; National Capital Region: Subject Files, Box 44, Entry 149, RG 79, NACP.

carried out by CCC enrollees at the canal and the enrollee lived experience, including their experience with education, religion, media, recreation, and so on. Finally, this work documents the legacy of the CCC by discussing still standing structures, identifiable alumni, and the presence of the canal camps in public memory.



Figure 1 - Aerial view of Camp NP-2. National Archives at College Park.

Tracking the exact work conducted by CCC men is somewhat difficult for several reasons. As the work was spread out along twenty-two miles, administrators did a poor job tracking exactly what was being done considering much of the work was the same – stabilizing canal walls, restoring the towpath, and bracing lock walls – no matter the location. Workers from other agencies or from private companies also completed some projects in this area as well

further making it difficult to specifically identify CCC work. As these camps were exclusively composed of African American men, tracking enrollees post-CCC is even more difficult given oppressive Jim Crow laws and structural discrimination that kept many of these men from advancing their careers and thus out of many public records.

The canal camps provide insight into African American CCC experiences in the mid-Atlantic region. By the time of the canal camps, the most contentious debates over segregation and African American enrollment had already transpired. Racial segregation within the CCC was a fact of life African American, but debates emerged often regarding discriminatory selection procedures for both enrollees and administrators. CCC administrators likely agreed to the canal camps because of pressures from unknown African American leaders as very few African Americans on relief rolls were receiving CCC assignments. Only one African American camp existed in Maryland as of mid-1938, a full five years into the CCC's existence, with hundreds, likely thousands, of African American men in need languishing on Maryland and Washington D.C. relief rolls. Virginia likely also had a backlog on African American relief rolls as well even though Virginia had significantly more African American CCC camps. Even though the canal camps are a small sample size overall, the information garnered here provides new insight into African American CCC experiences on NPS sites, in the mid-Atlantic region and beyond as surprisingly little historical research exists on African American CCC companies in the eastern United States.

Camp NP-2 specifically provides significant evidence of how African American leaders with little formal power were able to exhibit power and free will beyond title and rank. The CCC canal camps, like all others, had a dual leadership system. An Army officer along with three or four subordinates controlled logistics of the camp while National Park Service employees,

usually between four and ten, managed all project work along the canal. Stationed along with the Army officers was the lone African American administrator, the camp Educational Officer. C. Rushton Long, Co. 333's Educational Advisor, was perhaps the most respected and active administrator in the canal camps and was able to use his position of modest power to consistently grow his own personal influence while bettering the lives of those African American men for whom he was responsible. In its original conception, the educational advisor position was to do little more than organize classes for enrollees on topics ranging from basic education to technical skills. By the end of Camp NP-2's existence, Long was the *de facto* leader of the enrollees. He still oversaw their classes, coached and organized all sporting events, helped find the men jobs outside of the CCC, and connected the men with other black communities such as Shaw about eleven miles away in Washington D.C. There are suggestions that Long's influence spread a short mile down the canal to Camp NP-1 as well as the possibility that enrollees followed Long to Philadelphia post-CCC to enroll in trade school. This level of power, authority, and leadership was exemplary across the CCC.

Little is known as of this writing about the men stationed at the canal camps. Lists of names are readily apparent and a few men can be traced through later government records, but most men simply went back to their private lives after their CCC experience leaving little publicly available documentation. Some, like Amos Custis from West Point, VA, left the CCC to join the military before returning from his tour to settle down permanently in Washington D.C. Others had more tragic stories. Sidney Halsey of Covington, VA moved to Charleston, WV after his time with Co. 333 where he remained unemployed for a few years. He is also one of few enrollees for whom photographs are known to exist (see Figure 2). Halsey was one of the first men who signed up for the Selective Service draft on Oct. 16, 1940 and was likely assigned as an

orderly within a hospital. Tragically Halsey died on June 21, 1942 at the State Colored Tuberculosis Sanitarium in Denmar, WV and is buried in Covington. Custis and Halsey knew each other for certain with both having served on the camp's newspaper editorial staff when Co. 333 was stationed in Wilderness, VA.

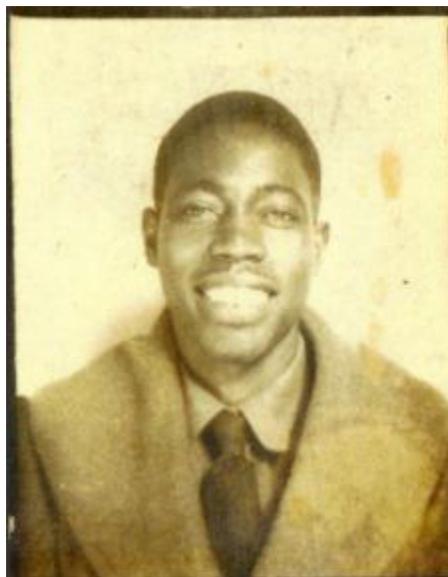


Figure 2 - Sidney Halsey, ca. 1940

Before continuing further, a brief note on government notation and terminology is needed. The CCC was a complex agency with often flexible rules and governance structures. Each CCC camp received an official three-part designation consisting of a code representing the type of work projects, a number, and a state abbreviation. For instance, Camp NP-1-MD was named as such because "NP" represented camps working in National Parks, the numeral "1" was simply an identifier, and "MD" meant the camp was physically located in Maryland (and bore no implications on the home state of the enrolled men). For this manuscript, the state abbreviation is dropped after its first use since there were no camps with shared names throughout this study. Some camps also received nicknames to help with identification and those have been used when

it provided clarity. Housed within each camp was a single company, meaning an organized group of men in the military sense, of two hundred enrollees plus a few administrators. Companies and camps were paired entities in that "camps" were generally the administrators, buildings, and projects while "companies" included all enrollees. Companies rarely operated at maximum capacities because of the relatively quick turnover caused primarily by desertions owed to the hard physical labor on the canal and the close proximity to most enrollees' family home. Each company was designated with a number that had no bearing on the company's duties or composition. For this report, companies are referred to using the abbreviation "Co." throughout. Finally, throughout this essay the term "administration" or "administrators" is employed to make reference to any number of government authorities holding any degree of decision-making power at CCC camps. This could include individuals within the CCC, Army, NPS, USDA Forest Service (USFS), Department of the Interior, or the White House. From the surviving records, we can never be certain. With these CCC records, sometimes it is unclear exactly which administrator issued a command or held authority in a situation. Using this catch-all term is inexact, but necessary. Finally, the majority of primary source records used in this study came from the National Archives and Record Administration in College Park, the C&O Canal National Historical Park library, CCC-produced newspapers, newspapers from nearby locales, and newspapers produced by the Black press.

This project is divided into several sections and sub-sections. Section One addresses the basic history of the CCC and the historiography of both the New Deal and the Civilian Conservation Corps. This section also contains a single sub-section specifically addressing the history and historiography of African Americans in the CCC. Section Two primarily documents the experience of Co. 333 before their arrival at the canal. The two sub-sections explore their

time at Camp NF-7-VA (Wolf Gap, VA) and Camp MP-4-VA (Wilderness, VA) respectively. Section Three moves to the C&O Canal and analyzes how and why the government decided to acquire the canal property and utilize CCC camps in the canal's restoration. A single sub-section primarily documents the earliest projects undertaken by the camps. Section Four delves into the lived experiences of camp life with three sub-sections dedicated to camp life, the CCC education program, and the eventual decline and closing of the camps. Section Five concludes with an overview of the CCC's legacy at the C&O Canal and recommendations for future work. The back matter includes appendices, photographs, maps, and a bibliography.

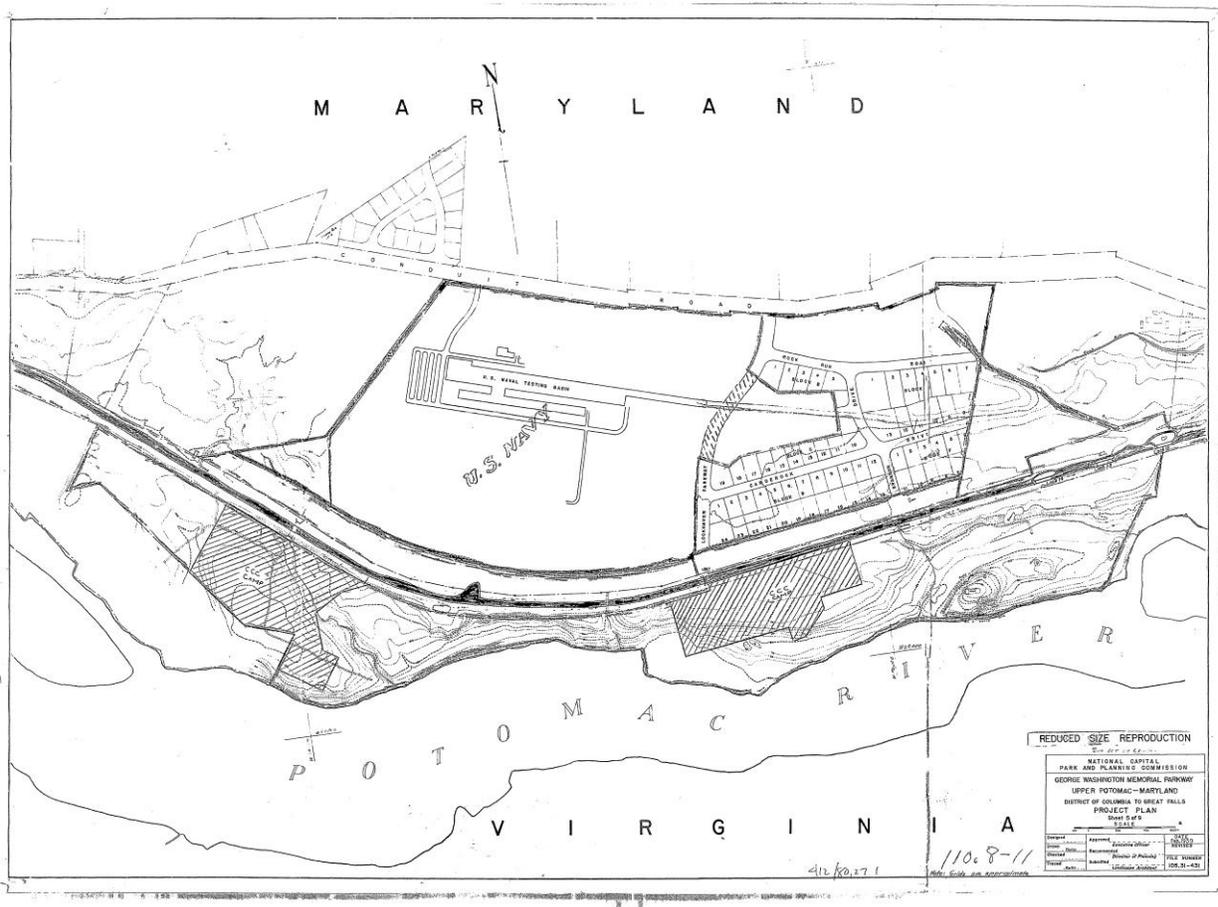


Figure 3 - General Plan, Carderock, 1939. Shaded areas indicate proposed locations of Camp NP-1-MD and Camp NP-2-MD.

SECTION ONE: HISTORIOGRAPHY & THE NEW DEAL

The CCC was a relief program established during President Franklin Roosevelt's (FDR) first hundred days designed to provide relief work for unemployed young men and their families. The original idea of the CCC is difficult to track throughout the literature, but most authors credit President Roosevelt himself. As the story goes, FDR calling a meeting on March 9, 1933 that included the secretaries of war, interior, and agriculture to propose an idea that would "put 500,000 men from cities and towns into the woods to plant trees, reduce fire hazards, clear streams, and check erosion." The President instructed these men to come up with a plan. Five hours later, they returned with just that. FDR approved and, after some minor revisions, the group presented the bill to congressional leadership for consideration. Two significant amendments were added onto the bill: Forest Service Chief Major R.Y. Stuart requested that CCC projects be conducted on both public and private land, and Congressman Oscar De Priest proposed a non-discriminatory enrollee selection policy. More on the latter of these amendments appears in the next section. On March 31 the Emergency Conservation Work Act became law by a Congressional voice vote. Given this bill took just three weeks to go from idea to law, it remained more a framework than guiding document with constantly evolving functionality as the program developed.⁴

Each CCC camp was to have two hundred enrollees overseen by a combination of Army officers and other agencies. In general, the Army was to supply the basics – food, transportation, water supply, clothing, toiletries, mess kits, and lodging. Housing was initially in the form of tents but would later be temporary wooden structures built by the enrollees themselves. Most

⁴ Robert Pasquill, Jr., *The Civilian Conservation Corps in Alabama, 1933-1942* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2008), 12-13. Ray Hoyt, *"We Can Take It": A Short Story of the CCC* (New York: American Book Company, 1935), 19-20. Leslie Alexander Lacy, *The Soil Soldiers: The Civilian Conservation Corps in the Great Depression* (Randor, PA: Chilton, 1976), 29.

camps worked twelve months out of the year and burned coal for heating. Camps also had trash incinerators as administrators concerned themselves with minimizing the human footprint on the natural landscape by the standards of the time. Other agencies – most often the Forest Service, National Park Service, or the War Department – supplied equipment and expertise related to work projects. In order to enroll in the CCC, each man had to be on a relief roll managed by state or local agencies. Pay was \$30 a month for all enrollees with the condition that enrollees send \$22 to \$25 of their salary to a dependent, usually the enrollee's wife, girlfriend, or parents. The rest the enrollee kept for spending money. Immediately after enrollment each man underwent a medical examination and Army physical. Those found to be in good physical shape underwent a ten day "conditioning" program to gain weight, become acclimated to CCC scheduling, and await their assignment to a project camp. The first enrollee entered the CCC on April 8 and the first camp – Camp NF-1 in George Washington National Forest (GWNF) near Edinburg, VA – on April 17.⁵

Both the New Deal and CCC have been subjects of scholarly inquiry and public interest for many years resulting in varied arguments, each of which shapes how politicians, academics, and the public understand and interpret these topics today. The New Deal was a massive series of government programs with varied results. Historians writing on this era almost all focus generally on a simple two-part question with no definitive answer: did it work? And what has been the New Deal's legacy? The general answer to the former is almost always in the negative –

⁵ There are suggestions from camp inspections that some enrollees gamed the system. For instance, Charles Cavanaugh left the CCC because his dependent reneged on an agreement where they would send Cavanaugh a portion of their allotment. Also note that \$30 in April 1933 is roughly equivalent to \$580 in 2017. "CPI Inflation Calculator," United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl> (accessed Sep. 1, 2017). Pasquill, 14-15. Stan Cohen, *The Tree Army: A Pictorial History of the Civilian Conservation Corps* (Missoula, MT: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 1980), 25-26. Carrie Leonard, "Roosevelt's Tree Army," *Curio* (Summer 1984): 42. Roy Wisler, Desertion Report, Nov. 1, 1939; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

the New Deal did not solve the Depression – but scholars radically differ in measuring legacy, successes, and failures.

The first wave of historical writings came from the Progressive or Consensus school of historical thought and despite similarities in approach, this group differed greatly in their conclusions. Historians in the late 1940s drew parallels between the New Deal and Progressives politicians, usually Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, to show there was nothing truly radical about FDR policies, just an extension of Progressivism.⁶ Even in noting New Deal shortcomings, Arthur Schlesinger, perhaps the most notable of this group of scholars, praised the programs for "representing an essential continuity which in face of crisis helped preserve American unity" and measured the New Deal as a success in terms of social morale as much as economic recovery.⁷ Starting in the mid-1950s, another group of Progressive historians represented disagreed with Schlesinger's forgiving assessment. To Richard Hoftstadter, the New Deal represented a radical shift in American governance because of both FDR's personal involvement and willingness to more expansively deploy federal resources.⁸ Carl Degler went even further in his assessment by terming the New Deal the "Third American Revolution," coming after the American Revolution and the Civil War, because the concurrent ascent of economic liberalism and long-term decline of *laissez faire* economic theory.⁹ Taking a more explicitly negative position, Edgar Robinson broke somewhat with progressives in that his

⁶ Samuel Elliot Morrison and Henry Steele Commanger, *The Growth of the American Republic, Vol. 2* (New York: University of Oxford Press, 1950).

⁷ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Coming of the New Deal* (Houghton Mifflin, 1958), 175-176.

⁸ Richard Hoftstadter, *The Age of Reform from Bryan to FDR* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955).

⁹ Carl Degler, *Out of Our Past, The Forces that Shaped Modern America* (New York: Harper, 1959).

interpretation positioned the New Deal as the centralization of federal power, the growing power of bureaucracy, and the encroachment of government on private economic freedoms.¹⁰

Following the Progressive school were the Revisionists, generally known for offering fresh criticisms of the New Deal, and New Left historians, who approached their historical topics of study with new approaches from radical, Marxist, and liberal schools of thought. The prime example of Revisionist scholarship comes from William Leuchtenburg, who challenged the notion of a revolutionary, progressive New Deal by depicting FDR's actions as partial in scope by excluding large social groups in need.¹¹ James Patterson further explored the New Deal's shortcomings and placed blame squarely on Congress and the conservative, primarily Southern wing of the Democratic Party.¹² By the 1970s, a general consensus emerged from this group of historians that was best summarized by John Braeman in 1972:

First, that the New Deal was committed to the preservation of the capitalist system through the elimination of its worst abuses and the establishment of minimum levels of existence for the mass of the nation's citizens; second, that Roosevelt personally, and the New Deal generally lacked any master plan for reshaping the American social order and thus dealt in ad hoc fashion with specific problems; and third, that the New Deal inaugurated the modern-day "broker-state", with its unequal distribution of benefits among different interest groups depending upon their political and economic muscle.¹³

Challenges and complications of this consensus next came from a loose group of historians referred to as New Leftists. New Left historians are more defined by a varied approach than an overarching narrative. For instance, Susan Ware focused her work exclusive on the effect the New Deal had on women, Howard Zinn challenged that the New Deal actually reduced

¹⁰ Edgar Robinson, *The Roosevelt Leadership, 1933-1945* (New York: Lippicott, 1955).

¹¹ William Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940* (New York: Harper, 1963).

¹² James Patterson, *Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal: The Growth of the Conservative Coalition in Congress, 1933-1939* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967).

¹³ John Braeman, "The New Deal and the 'Broker State': A Review of the Recent Scholarly Literature," *Business History Review* 46, no. 4 (Winter 1972), 409.

workers' rights by swallowing unions into mainstream politics, and Harvard Sitkoff argued the New Deal failed to properly address the disproportionately large economic problems facing African Americans.¹⁴ Since, New Deal scholarship has taken on radically different approaches with just as varied conclusions, but starting in the 1980s most historians moved away from ideology-driven and national-level analysis toward a more critical analysis of individual agencies, states, social groups, and "bottom-up" social and cultural histories that looked at the intersection of the New Deal with everyday life. Reflecting this thought upon the New Deal itself, both Alan Brinkley and David Kennedy argued New Deal politicians themselves constrained the realm of possibilities with their own narrowed ideologies although each author differed in their conclusions on how far administrations were willing to shift their beliefs.¹⁵

Of all New Deal programs, the CCC maintains one of the best reputations among historians and the general public. To historians, the CCC was a success from the perspective of government, enrollees, the military, and the public at large. Perusing all of the works above, few historians presented the CCC in a negative light. The earliest work on the CCC, John Salmond's *The Civilian Conservation Corps 1933-1942* remains the standard canon for an overarching reference book that is short on analysis but rich in administrative detail at the national level.¹⁶ A host of other works – many written by CCC veterans – published since the 1970s generally represent the agency in a positive light and dig a bit deeper than Salmond into specific details, such as *The Forest Service and the CCC*, *Roosevelt's Forest Army*, *Soil Soldiers*, and John

¹⁴ Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971). Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper, 1980). Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

¹⁵ Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Vintage, 1995). David Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

¹⁶ John Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942: A New Deal Case Study* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1967).

Paige's administrative history *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service*.¹⁷ Beyond Salmond, the highest quality monograph on the CCC published more recently remains Neil Maher's *Nature's New Deal* although it should be supplemented with Olen Cole's *The African American Experience in the Civilian Conservation Corps*.¹⁸ Maher focuses his analysis on the CCC's role in the American environmentalism movement and argued the success of the CCC labor force was enough to tip public and political opinion in favor of nature conservation for the foreseeable future. Cole's work constrains itself to California, so plenty of complexities facing African Americans, especially those in the South, remain fertile ground for historians.

In the past two decades, a new wave of historians writing on the CCC focused their analysis upon a single state. Most view the CCC as a successful relief agency that provided income and dignity to enrollees, generated positive public relations for President Roosevelt's New Deal agenda, and completed a range of recreational and preservation projects for the public good. Writing in 1998, James Wright Steely's book on Texas' first state park investigated the role of the CCC in completing this important state project. Two other historians continued Steely's Texas analysis: Kenneth Hendrickson's short article five years later provided a broader overview of the CCC's activities throughout Texas, and Keith Volanto's followed in 2008 explored the effect of CCC segregation on African American camps and local communities in West Texas.¹⁹

¹⁷ Alison T. Otis, William D. Honey, Thomas C. Hogg, and Kimberly K. Lakin, *The Forest Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps: 1933-1942* (U.S. Forest Service, 1986). Perry Merrill, *Roosevelt's Forest Army: A History of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942* (Montpelier, VT: Perry Merrill, 1981). Lacy, *Soil Soldiers*. John C. Paige, *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service, 1933-1942: An Administrative History* (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 1985).

¹⁸ Neil Maher, *Nature's New Deal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Olen Cole, *The African American Experience in the Civilian Conservation Corps* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1999).

¹⁹ James Wright Steely, *Parks for Texas: Enduring Landscapes of the New Deal* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999). Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr., "Replenishing the Soil and the Soul of Texas: The Civilian Conservation Corps in the Lone Star State as an Example of State-Federal Work Relief during the Great Depression," *The Historian* 65 (Summer 2003): 801-16. Keith J. Volanto, "'Up in Arms': Local Protest vs. the Placement of Black CCC Camps in West Texas," *West Texas Historical Association Yearbook* 83 (2007): 96-110.

A sample of other state-level works include those on New Mexico,²⁰ South Dakota,²¹ Alabama,²² Pennsylvania,²³ South Carolina,²⁴ and New Hampshire.²⁵ Still others narrow their research a local, sometimes single-camp, level. Denise Meringolo's work on Mesa Verde, for instance, shows how the government used CCC enrollees at NPS units to become the first "test audience" for recreational activities. The enrollees' experience then became visitor studies data, in effect, that would influence the future development of the NPS.²⁶ As of this writing, there are no published academic works that analyze the CCC in Maryland, Virginia, or Washington D.C., but research does exist documenting the CCC experience at the C&O Canal primarily in the form of grey literature. Outside of Angela Sirna's work, the best resource on the CCC in Maryland is Lisa Davidson and James Jacobs' *Historic American Buildings Survey* documenting CCC activity in the National Capital Region of the NPS.²⁷

It would be wrong to say the CCC is without its critics, most of who focused on the military aspect of the agency. For instance, Jeffrey Suzik, writing in 1999, was one of the more critical authors of the CCC by arguing the Army's role in the camps militarized society to high

²⁰ Richard Meltzer, *Coming of Age in the Great Depression: The Civilian Conservation Corps Experience in New Mexico, 1933-1942* (Las Cruces, 2000).

²¹ Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr., "The Civilian Conservation Corps in South Dakota," *South Dakota History* 11 (1980): 1-20.

²² Billy Hinson, "The Civilian Conservation Corps in Mobile County, Alabama," *Alabama Review* 45 (1992): 243-256. Pasquill, *The Civilian Conservation Corps in Alabama*.

²³ Joseph Speakman, *At Work in Penn's Woods: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Pennsylvania* (College Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

²⁴ Tara Mitchell Mielnik, *New Deal, New Landscape: The Civilian Conservation Corps and South Carolina's State Parks* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2011).

²⁵ David Draves, "The Civilian Conservation Corps in New Hampshire," *Historical New Hampshire* 43 (1988): 89-119.

²⁶ Denise Meringolo, "Turning Nature into History: The Professionalization of Public History in the National Park Service during the 1930s" (Ph.D. Diss., George Washington University): 193.

²⁷ Angela Sirna, "From Canal Boats to Canoes: The Transformation of the C&O Canal, 1938-1942" (master's thesis, West Virginia University, 2011). L.P. Davidson and J. A. Jacobs, "Civilian Conservation Corps Activities in the National Capital Region of the National Park Service," (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, Historic American Building Survey, 2005).

degree and threatened to create a class of "citizen-soldiers."²⁸ Schivelbusch echoed this analysis a few years later by viewing the CCC as one of the more productive cogs in the New Deal national security state machinery.²⁹ Historians have written surprisingly little on the CCC education program that caused so much strife in its time. Early in the CCC's existence, critics backed by the National Education Association and the American Association of School Administrators warned educational programming was a federal overreach that posed a threat to pre-existing public education programs controlled by state and local governments. Next, some members of Congress worried that Army control mixed with the educational program created *de facto* Army recruitment centers that would prey upon vulnerable youth and often drew unfavorable comparisons to the growing militarism in fascist nations. This debate continued until the CCC's ultimate closing with no readily apparent solutions, but such a complex debate has received scant treatment from historians except in some state-level works.³⁰

²⁸ Jeffrey Suzik, "'Building Better Men': The CCC Boy and the Changing Social Ideal of Manliness," *Men and Masculinities* 2 (1999): 152-179.

²⁹ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Three New Deals: Reflections on Roosevelt's America, Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany, 1933-1939* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006).

³⁰ Calvin W. Gower, "The Civilian Conservation Corps and American Education: Threat to Local Control?," *History of Education Quarterly* 7.1 (1967): 58-70.

AFRICAN AMERICANS & THE CCC



Figure 4 - Enrollees Repairing Prism at the C&O Canal. National Archives at College Park.

Technically speaking, the New Deal did not ascribe to anti-racist or integrationist values thanks to the national Democratic Party's need to retain the support of Southern Congressmen and their white constituents. The same could not be said of many high level administrators in appointed office. Most New Deal administrators were sympathetic to the plight of African Americans and sought to remedy discrimination. Most important among these for the CCC was Harold Ickes, the Secretary of the Interior who had formerly been president of the Chicago branch of the NAACP. During the mid-1930s, Secretary Ickes generally encouraged subordinates to pursue racial equality by hiring African Americans and pushing back against segregationist policies whenever possible. Eventually this would change as Ickes would mandate

full desegregation of NPS facilities by the end of World War II. Still, Ickes fell short of demanding radical change and rarely enforced racial equality outside of Washington D.C. and instead prioritized harmony with subordinates while the CCC was in its critical and formative infancy. Ickes' primary goal hereafter was to address both long and short-term needs of African American communities by building a pool of African American skilled labor alongside economic relief programs. An interracial group of advisors led by Clark Foreman, a liberal white Southerner, and assistants Robert C. Weaver, William J. Trent, Jr., and William H. Hastie, both African American themselves, held that racial social equality could only come once economic relief and equality created a broader base of support from the white public.³¹

Oscar De Priest, an Illinois House Republican and lone African American Congressman at the time, championed a "color-blind" CCC by amending the legislation to include anti-discrimination passages. What surprised many at the time was that Southern Congressmen so easily supported a new agency that made discrimination explicitly illegal without even a debate. The De Priest amendment meant the Civilian Conservation Corps Reforestation Relief Act outright rejected all segregation or discrimination in hiring works based on "race, color, creed, or criminal records." This made the CCC the only New Deal agency to include such a wide reaching measure immediately upon inception.³²

FDR's selection of Robert Fechner as CCC director was politically motivated in the sense that the FDR administration needed critical Southern and pro-labor Democrats to vote in favor of CCC and other New Deal legislation. Fechner satisfied both criteria as an officer in the

³¹ Raymond Arsenault, *The Sound of Freedom: Marian Anderson, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Concert that Awakened America* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009), 66-7. Terrance Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government: W.J. Trent, Jr. and the Struggle to Desegregate National Park Campgrounds," *Environmental History* Vol. 14. No. 4 (October 2009). Speakman, 132.

³² Holly Allen, *Forgotten Men and Fallen Women: The Cultural Politics of New Deal Narratives* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 71-2.

International Association of Machinists and as a native Tennessean who grew up in Georgia. With both voting blocs satisfied with Fechner, the CCC legislation easily passed Congress with anti-discrimination amendments intact. As it turned out, Southern Congressmen were further delighted with Fechner as he brought segregation nation-wide into the agency alongside a race-based quota system in some Southern states despite its illegality. For instance, Clarke County, Georgia had a black population of approximately 60% yet the CCC had not yet enrolled a single African American. Investigations found that state administrators simply placed African American candidates in lower brackets of economic need so they could legally hire white men first.³³ Complaints from African American leaders and reforms spearheaded by W. Frank Persons, who directed CCC enlistments policies, led to an increase in black enrollment, but Fechner actively sought to compound the problem. During the CCC's first year, Fechner established a policy that African Americans could comprise no more than 10% of the overall CCC, arguing that any deviation from the overall US black population of roughly 10% would result in unfair enrollment. This policy was outrageous to individuals like Persons and De Priest who pointed out that African Americans comprised of more than 10% on relief rolls. Making this even more unfair was Fechner's order that black enrollees could only serve in their home state, a policy that had a massive impact upon African American enrollment throughout the South where African American populations were highest. This decision affected potential enrollees in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.³⁴ Even worse, newspapers reported early of

³³ Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942*.

³⁴ The Julius Rosenwald Fund was established in 1917 for "the well-being of mankind" with a particular interest in social justice for African American equality and educational opportunity for African American children. Twelve states plus the District of Columbia had an African American population in excess of 10% in 1930: Mississippi (50.2%), South Carolina (45.6%), Louisiana (36.9%), Georgia (36.8%), Alabama (35.7%), Florida (29.4%), North Carolina (29.0%), D.C. (27.1%), Virginia (26.8%), Arkansas (25.8%), Tennessee (18.3%), Maryland (16.9%), Texas (14.7%), and Delaware (13.7%). Ann Burkly, "Blacks in the Civilian Conservation Corps: Successful Despite Discrimination," *Proceedings and Papers of the Georgia Association of Historians* 14 (1993): 38.

unfair treatment of African American enrollees by white administrators. For instance, the CCC dishonorably discharged Eddie Simmons, an African American enrollee from Harlem, without his final pay from a New Jersey camp for refusing to "fan flies" from a white officer. Simmons was correct in this refusal – such work, as it were, was not part of a CCC enrollee's duty. The NAACP filed an official complaint to Fechner on behalf of Simmons. Fechner actually sided with Simmons in this case and revised his discharge to "honorable" and, just as importantly, paid out the month's paycheck owed to Simmons. There were no indications that the Army officer had been disciplined in any way nor was the possibility of Simmons' full reinstatement part of the agreement.³⁵

The quota system, unfair treatment of enrollees, and lagging African American enrollment led to calls for change. A Julius Rosenwald Fund investigation from early 1935 that found CCC enrollment in Florida numbered at 863 whites and just 18 African Americans.³⁶ This type of inequality led black organizations to protest directly to the President via FDR appointee Edgar Brown, CCC Special Consultant on Negro Affairs. FDR launched a War Department investigation that quickly found that most localities actually ignored many of Fechner's restrictive orders. Lower-level administrators regularly sent African Americans to work across state lines and integration was generally being followed except in southern states. This investigation further recommended integration throughout the CCC and the abolishment of all-black camps. In response, Fechner directly contradicted the report's findings by sending every African American enrollee back to their home states and the implementation of "strict segregation," citing a racial violence problem despite no such findings in the report. Historians

³⁵ "CCC Youth Refused to Fan Flies Off Officer; Is Fired," *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, Jan. 13, 1934.

³⁶ Garth H. Akridge to Persons, Mar. 10, 1935; Selection Division, Correspondence, Negro Selection, RG 35, NACP. Salmond.

have long puzzled why Fechner took such a sharp turn towards segregation contrary to Army recommendations, but most generally assume Fechner's southern upbringing had more of an effect on his politics than his liberal leanings suggested.³⁷ Both Roosevelt and Ickes personally took an interest by late 1935. FDR issued a simple, one sentence directive to hire African American foreman in jobs requiring manual skilled labor.³⁸ Ickes directly instructed Fechner to hire African American supervisors within African American CCC camps. In Ickes' words, "I am quite certain that Negroes can function in supervisory capacities just as efficiently as can white men and I do not think that they should be discriminated against merely on account of their color."³⁹ The NAACP also became more involved by accusing Fechner and the CCC of discrimination. Fechner pushed back against such accusation, informing Thomas Griffith, NAACP President, that "negro enrollees themselves prefer to be in companies composed exclusively of their own race" and that "segregation is not discrimination."⁴⁰

By early 1935 and having made no progress on the quota issue, Persons took a new approach with Fechner by targeting a single aspect of the CCC – the education program. Director Fechner continued to segregate the CCC by installing yet another a new policy, this time that African Americans would only be enrolled in order to fulfill vacancies in existing black companies. In other words, the CCC would not create any new African American companies. Persons reasoned that if he could not significantly increase African American enrollment, then he

³⁷ Burkly, 39-40. Salmond.

³⁸ Franklin Roosevelt to Robert Fechner, Sep. 27, 1935; "African Americans in the Civilian Conservation Corps," FDR Presidential Library & Museum, <http://newdeal.feri.org/aaccc/aaccc07.htm> (accessed Aug. 4, 2017).

³⁹ Harold Ickes to Robert Fechner, Sep. 20, 1935; "African Americans in the Civilian Conservation Corps," FDR Presidential Library & Museum, <http://newdeal.feri.org/aaccc/aaccc07.htm> (accessed Aug. 4, 2017).

⁴⁰ Robert Fechner to Thomas Griffith, Jr., Sep. 21, 1935; "African Americans in the Civilian Conservation Corps," FDR Presidential Library & Museum, <http://newdeal.feri.org/aaccc/aaccc07.htm> (accessed Aug. 4, 2017).

should instead improve current enrollees' quality of life. The goal was to install at least some African American administrators within camps to potentially provide African American Army Officers and other qualified men with a modicum of power. The eventual goal was a camp with 100% African American administrators. The first step in this plan came with the suggestion that all educational advisers at African American CCC camps should be African American themselves (while camps with white enrollees would still have white educational officers). Again, this idea met resistance throughout the CCC and the Army, but the US Commissioner of Education, Secretary Ickes, and FDR personally approved. In May 1935, fourteen black educational advisers received their appointment and entered the field. From this point forward, all African American camps had African American educational officers. A similar push came again the following year that also met with success when twenty-five black medical officers and chaplains entered the field in August 1936.⁴¹

De Priest's efforts fell short of desired goals by the measure of both observers of the time and historians since. While some camps were integrated at first, the administrators segregated CCC camps following the direction of Fechner in mid-1935. Enrollment numbers were slow to grow as well, with the proportion of African American enrollees lagging between six and ten percent throughout the 1930s.⁴² Some scholars have since questioned if the De Priest amendment was actually needed to integrate the CCC citing other racially inclusive, relatively speaking, projects such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA) that had no such amendment. Regardless of the amendments perceived success or lack thereof, in the end around 140 African American camps hosting about 300,000 enrollees with an additional 30,000 black World War I

⁴¹ Burkly, 41-2.

⁴² U.S. House of Representatives Office of History and Preservation, *Black Americans in Congress, 1870-2007* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Congress, 2008), 282. Sitkoff, 51; 74-75.

veterans across forty-three states existed throughout the CCC's existence. In contrast, at least 2,500,000 white men labored for the CCC in about 2,500 camps. These numbers indicate that African American enrollment roughly tracked overall population ratios, but most gains were in the late 1930s and 1940s, which would have been five years too late for many men in need.⁴³

Historians often debate the cause of lagging African American enrollment and place most blame upon Director Fechner's actions. Further debate continues regarding the root cause of his actions: politics or racism. A combination of the two is the most likely reason although most historians lean more toward interpreting Fechner's actions as those coming out of a politicking mind, not an exclusively racist one. Fechner's primary concern was to retain the support of powerful white Southern Democrat politicians and their voting blocs in order to continue the CCC in the long-term. Just a few dissenting Southern Democrats could have derailed the entire program. A close secondary concern though for Fechner was the possibility of racially motivated extralegal violence. White communities in both the North and South openly protested black CCC camps regularly citing typical racist fears: criminality, an increase in drunkenness, and the possibility of young black men coming in contact with white women. White locals in rural communities as far north as Thornhurst, Pennsylvania and Hornell, New York wrote to Director Fechner openly protesting the formation of black camps near their homes. From this letters, Fechner reasoned that racial conflict loomed as a legitimate possibility. By 1937, Fechner consciously located African American camps on NPS and USFS land away from population centers.⁴⁴ An early Fechner solution to this problem in the North was a patriarchal one: small contingents of black enrollees were attached to white camps to demonstrate to white locals these young black men were fully under the control of white administrators and held in check by white

⁴³ Salmond, 88-101. Burkly, 38.

⁴⁴ Paige, *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service, 1933-1942*.

peers. The irony, as argued by staff of Gettysburg National Military Park, is that once white locals recognized over time the benefit of CCC labor, many communities – including those in the South – petitioned Fechner to place a CCC camp in their area no matter the race of enrollees.⁴⁵

Writing in 1967, John Salmond was one of the first historians to address the question of African American enrollment in the CCC. In short, Salmond found the New Deal program lacking. According to his interpretation, Fechner was to blame for African American woes because of his "southern attitudes" toward integration and being all-too-willing to bow to racist political pressures. Salmond does extend his blame beyond Fechner: FDR for not stepping in with executive authority, both northern and southern local communities for their outright racism, and dozens of white legislators who could have stepped in on behalf of their black constituents. In the end, Salmond viewed the CCC as a net positive for African Americans, but one that seemed relatively hollow given the quantity of undelivered promises. Salmond also expanded beyond the African American experience into the administrative history of the CCC concluding that the CCC's ultimate closure in 1942 with no efforts of revival post-war was because administrators considered it to be a temporary relief-centered program from the start. Fechner's inability to shake either the temporary or relief label doomed the CCC to never completely fulfill its potential to become a permanent conservation agency or vocational training program – but despite this Salmond still found the agency to be "of the profoundest importance."⁴⁶

Following shortly after Salmond was Calvin Gower's 1976 *Journal of Negro History* article on the fight for African American CCC leadership positions. Before this article though,

⁴⁵ Casimer Rosiecki, "Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow: The Civilian Conservation Corps at Gettysburg," *From the Fields of Gettysburg*, blog post, Mar. 26, 2015. "Seek to Keep CCC Camp Here," *Gettysburg Times* (Gettysburg, PA), March 14, 1936.

⁴⁶ Salmond, 87-88.

Gower's 1967 article on CCC educational programming outlined the program's administrative history. From an early point, the Army argued that formal education was outside of the CCC's scope. General MacArthur, interestingly enough, established in May 1933 a system where Army, USFS, and NPS staff would provide basic vocational education. Some members in Congress protested, temporarily halting the program, but ultimately the program won out in November 1933 through the efforts of the U.S. Commissioner of Education George F. Zook. By late 1934, the CCC administered educational programs in 1,468 camps under the guidance of Dr. Clarence Marsh, a dean at the University of Buffalo. Howard W. Oxley, an educator based in Manhattan, took over the national education program in early 1935 and held the position until the closing of the CCC. Under Oxley's guidance, CCC educational program participation increased from 35% in 1934 to 74% in 1936 to 92% in 1938 across the entire agency.⁴⁷ Still, Oxley's educational advisor position was not enviable to most people because it was a great challenge due to low literacy rates of enrollees. Writing in the *Journal of Negro Education* in 1938, Oxley reported that just 5.2% of all African American enrollees had graduated high school upon the time of their enrollment. In fact, a higher proportion of enrollees were illiterate (7.6%) than high school graduates, and far more had dropped out before the eighth grade (53.7%) versus those who continued on to at least some high school (38.7%). Somewhat surprisingly, roughly one-third of both white and African American enrollees reported having at least some vocational training before their CCC enrollment. In outlining a program to educate these men, Oxley devised one that was relatively straight-forward with two primary objectives: eliminating illiteracy and providing men a basic elementary-level education. Enrollees wanting a more advanced education

⁴⁷ Gower, 61-63.

were enrolled in courses at nearby universities despite many educational advisors' concerns over the availability for white-collar jobs for these men.⁴⁸

In his 1976 article, Gower builds on Salmond's work by focusing squarely on agitators for African American equality – such as those in FDR's "Black Cabinet" – and their agency rather than the biases of federal administrators. The typical antagonists, almost always Robert Fechner himself, play a central role in creating discriminatory policies. Gower pointed out that African Americans made modest gains in the CCC over time but were never able to fully overcome illegal discriminatory policies. Other historians outside of Gower generally pointed to the changing hearts and minds of administrators. Instead, Gower focuses on the actions of black leaders and the reticence of the FDR administration to violate Jim Crow segregation. For instance, Gower cited protests as early as May 1933 from Jesse Thomas of the National Urban League that no African Americans from majority African American Washington County, Georgia, had been enrolled by CCC administrators. Will Alexander of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation filed similar complaints regarding Georgia that same month. Over the next few years, other organizations filing complaints included the Julius Rosenwald Fund, Twin City Urban League, and the NAACP. This pressure did not change Robert Fechner – in fact his discriminative policies worsened over time – but did earn some concessions from Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, such as the appointment of African American educational officers at all African American CCC camps. Other powerful national leaders, including Howard University Secretary Emmett Scott, NAACP Executive Secretary Walter White, Senator Robert M. La

⁴⁸ As of this writing, there is no evidence any enrollee in Co. 325 or Co. 333 took university classes although it was entirely possible. The most likely place of enrollment would have been Howard University. Howard W. Oxley, "The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Education of the Negro," *Journal of Negro Education* 7 (July 1938), 377-9. United States Department of Interior, Office of Education, "CCC Camp Education: Guidance and Recreational Phases, Bulletin No. 19," Howard W. Oxley (1937), 7.

Follette, and Representative Arthur Mitchell, pushed for the CCC to appoint African American Army officers as camp commanders, although this campaign did not meet with similar success. These campaigns resulted in one and only all African American camp in Gettysburg, PA, but the CCC closed before any significant development took hold.⁴⁹

Since the 1980s, historians both within and outside of the NPS began to document and analyze the skilled conservation work done by African American CCC enrollees. A number of scholars specifically interested in battlefield preservation in the NPS investigated the role of CCC labor in constructing these spaces only to find that African American enrollees did most of the early work. Writing in 1985, John Paige documented the presence of African American CCC laborers at the Civil War battlefields of Gettysburg, Shiloh, and Chickamauga and Chattanooga. After significant pressures from "black organizations," the NPS and War Department agreed to create all-black CCC camps with the first being in Gettysburg National Military Park, the spiritual home of Civil War memory. As a sort of pilot experiment, officials appointed an African American camp commander, superintendent, engineers, and other administrative staff and supported a full conversion from white to black supervision, a transition that was finalized in 1940. Paige argued that NPS and Army officials all believed the Gettysburg experiment to be a full success, but as it wasn't finalized until late in the CCC's life there were no other all-black camps formed under NPS jurisdiction.⁵⁰

By the 1990s, a number of scholars began to investigate the details of African American labor through the CCC. Scholars had already written about general CCC labor as early as the

⁴⁹ Gower, 123-131.

⁵⁰ Paige, *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service, 1933-1942*. Edgar G. Brown, *What the Civilian Conservation Corps is Doing for Colored Youth*, (Washington, D.C.: Federal Security Agency, 1940), 1-5. Charles William Johnson, "The Civilian Conservation Corps: The Role of the Army," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1968), 167-168. Paige, Ch. 1.

1930s and 1940s, but now a new focus on black labor emerged. Most of these scholars approached their study with an assumption grounded in literature that the CCC generally discriminated against black men were throughout its existence. Instead of rehashing such stories, these scholars refocused their attention upon labor, achievement, and long-lasting change affected upon the landscape by these young men. One of these scholars was Oren Cole, Jr. writing in 1991 on African Americans in California-based CCC camps. Cole found that the men from these camps labored on a variety of conservation projects in state parks, national forests, and state forests, primarily developing roads, trails, and fire breaks. Some camps though performed specialized work, such as Camp La Cienega's work in Cleveland National Forest controlling pine beetles, containing a wild elk herd within Laguna Plateau Reserve, and fighting several major forest fires. This same camp also took on a project to train homing pigeons for communications during forest fire emergencies, meaning the men built coops, raised the birds, and trained them to fly to specific locations. According to Cole, this pigeon project was the first of its kind nation-wide and a grand success. Cole also found African American enrollees faced racism even in these remote California camps. Former enrollees reported "numerous racial remarks" targeting them from US Army officers, Forest Service employees, and even chaplains, thus showing the difficult life of black men in this agency extended throughout the nation.⁵¹

⁵¹ Cole, Jr., 126.



Figure 5 - Enrollee operates a road surfacing roller, Camp A-2, Beltsville, MD, May 1940. National Archives at College Park.

The most recent study of African American CCC camps comes from Timothy Smith's 2017 monograph on NPS managed battlefields. Smith argues the NPS and New Deal programs "drastically altered the way current battlefields were managed and the way new ones were developed" specifically in the way NPS officials sought to open sites to the public alongside a

professionalizing education program. New Deal agencies, primarily the CCC, provided money and labor while also symbolically shifting parks away from military sacredness toward restoration, access, and recreation. As for African American CCC camps, Smith found that the relationship between enrollees, agencies, and the public varied greatly from park to park. For instance, African American enrollees successfully restored a park with little incident in Richmond and similarly built new and impressive visitor centers at Appomattox and Gettysburg. However, enrollees conducting similar projects at Shiloh encountered discrimination largely because Senator Kenneth McKellar failed to provide the CCC much needed political support.⁵² Moving away from battlefields and back to the canal, Angela Sirna's thesis generally argues that the C&O Canal NHP emerged as a park equally dedicated to natural conservation, historical preservation, and public recreation. One chapter in particular is dedicated to detailing the experience of CCC enrollees at the C&O Canal and served as an excellent launching point for this study.⁵³

As for primary sources generated by the CCC, there is rarely a mention of race or ethnicity in any primary source documents outside of basic identifiers. This should not be too surprising given that just three of the 324 CCC camps (with 52,000 men in total) that operated in the Washington D.C. region consisted of African American enrollees. Two of the three African American camps in the entire region worked on the C&O Canal, both founded rather late in 1938, with the third organized at the U.S. National Arboretum in 1934. Even documents specifically from these camps generally fail to mention the race of enrollees. It is only through

⁵² Timothy B. Smith, *Altogether Fitting and Proper: Civil War Battlefield Preservation in History, Memory, and Policy, 1861-2015* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2017), 109-125.

⁵³ Sirna, 61.

hints, usually in education documents, that one could ascertain that these camps were home to African American men.⁵⁴

As a final note on the CCC's closure as a Federal agency, the Black press was perhaps the largest public supporter for the continuation of the CCC even after America's entry into World War II. The *Pittsburgh Courier* rightfully noted that ending the CCC would disproportionately harm African American youth given both the recent advent of all-black camps and the fact that a large number of white industries still refused to hire African Americans.⁵⁵ Others commentators from both within and outside of the CCC campaigned for the program to become a permanent fixture of American life as well. Most couched their arguments in appeals to either educational goals or the rehabilitation of troubled youth. For instance, former CCC educational advisor James Lanigan wrote in an editorial that the agency can best be understood as an alternative educational program rather than work relief.⁵⁶ John Janney, a writer, viewed the CCC as a perfect compatriot to the American public school system and colleges. In his view, these institutions only prepared people to become white-collar workers. Anyone wishing for a technical job simply had to figure it out on their own, which often meant dropping out of school at a young age. In Janney's argument, the CCC offered these youths an alternative path.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Davidson and Jacobs, 33-4.

⁵⁵ Paige. "CCC End Affects Negroes," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, Jun. 13, 1942.

⁵⁶ James Lanigan, "Education in the CCC: Weapon or Feint," *Education* 61 (1940), 91-94.

⁵⁷ John Janney, "C-Boys to the Rescue," *American Magazine* 131 (1941), 101-104.

SECTION TWO: THE COMPANIES' EXPERIENCES PRIOR TO ARRIVING AT THE CANAL

The two companies stationed at the canal, Co. 325 and Co. 333, had other assignments before ever arriving at Cabin John. Co. 325 was possibly a newly-formed company using a previously-used designation from another Maryland-based African American company, but it is impossible to tell without lists of enrollees. These lists are not readily available.⁵⁸ Co. 325's old home camp, Camp Navy-1-MD of Indian Head, was terminated on May 31, 1938, but no transfer orders came from administrators. No officers from Camp Navy-1 appeared on personnel registers at either C&O Canal camp, so it must be assumed that Co. 325 is an entirely new camp.⁵⁹ In contrast, Co. 333 had a longer path to Cabin John that involved full reorganizations, reassignments, and camp transfers. Over its nine years of existence, Company 333 was comprised of both white and African American enrollees, worked with both National Forest and NPS personnel, and built camps in both Virginia and Maryland. The company was first mustered on April 13, 1933 as a white junior unit in Fort Washington, Maryland before being transferred shortly thereafter to Camp NF-15 in Columbia Furnace, VA. As it worked primarily in and around what would become Wolf Gap Recreation Area, CCC and USDA Forest Service documents referred to the camp as Wolf Gap. On August 8, 1934 the company was converted into an African American junior unit for an unspecified reason. It is unclear from which specific location the CCC drew these new African American enrollees, but it can generally be assumed that they primarily came from Virginia. This company was transferred again on October 11, 1937 to Camp MP-4 in Wilderness, VA to work with the NPS at Fredericksburg and

⁵⁸ As of this writing, full lists of enrollees do not exist for virtually all CCC camps. Only partial lists can be reconstructed primarily using camp newspapers, inspection reports, and administrative correspondence. It may be possible to use personnel records held by the National Archives, but such a project would be cost prohibitive and many government records simply did not survive.

⁵⁹ Sirna, 70. *Official Annual*, Civilian Conservation Corps Third Corps Area District No. 3. (Direct Advertising Company, 1937), 38-41.

Spotsylvania National Military Park. Less than a year later, the Federal government entered the final stages of purchasing the C&O Canal and planned on creating two new CCC camps to renovate the neglected and flood-damaged property. The official purchase was signed on September 23, 1938, but work on the canal had already begun by CCC enrollees in the months previous. Officially, Camp NP-1-MD (housing Company 325) was founded five days before the purchase on September 18 with Camp NP-2-MD (housing Company 333) following soon after on October 5. As will be seen, often these exact dates served more as general guideposts than hard restrictions for the often hectic work schedule of the CCC.⁶⁰

Before analyzing CCC life at the canal, it is helpful to explore the previous assignments of Co. 333. A large number of primary sources survive from the canal, but just as many also survived from both Wolf Gap and Wilderness. Exploring the lives of enrollees at both Wolf Gap and Wilderness can help us better understand life at Cabin John. Granted, it is very likely that no individual served in both Wolf Gap and Cabin John, but a large number of enrollees and administrators continued their service between Wilderness and Cabin John. No administrators continued their service from Wolf Gap to Wilderness. It is unknown as to whether or not enrollees did as no list of Wolf Gap enrollees from 1936 or 1937 has been found. Regardless, diving into these Virginia locales provides a better understanding for African American CCC camps working in rural settings engaged in massive landscape conservation and preservation projects as were seen at Cabin John.

Camp NF-7 (Wolf Gap)

Company 333 worked along the Virginia-West Virginia border at Camp NF-15 (also designated as Camp F-7, Camp GWNF-15, and Camp F-15 depending on the speaker) in

⁶⁰ Sirna, 70. William Allen, "A Brief History of the 333rd Company, CCC," *The Towpath Journal*, March 31, 1939.

Columbia Furnace and Wolf Gap, roughly five and thirteen miles west of Edinburg respectively, from May 15, 1933 until their departure for Wilderness in mid-1937. This early founding date made the camp part of the first enrollment period in the immediate days after CCC authorization that saw ten camps founded to work within George Washington National Forest. Technically, the camp at Wolf Gap was the first camp settled in West Virginia and was categorized briefly as a West Virginia camp but was eventually reclassified as Virginia-based. Enrollees often crossed state lines when working on projects. The Wolf Gap Recreation Area itself was (and still is) bisected by the Virginia-West Virginia border.

Upon its founding Company 333 was a white company, but by August 1934 had been re-designated into an African American camp for unspecified reasons but likely as part of Director Fechner's hardening of segregation policies. Camp NF-15 and other George Washington National Forest CCC camps primarily developed the natural environment for recreational purposes. Primary projects throughout the camp's existence were constructing picnic shelters and trails, installing signage, and treating forested areas to prevent blights and invasive species. Top administrators – Company Commander Barnard and Project Supervisor Wilkins – remained intact through this shift in camp enrollees although there would be changes at later dates. The work generally remained the same as well before and after Camp NF-15 became an African American camp, with enrollees working on "construction of telephone lines, truck trails, a tool house, foot bridges, an office, and additional minor structures; maintenance of telephone lines, truck trails, and horse trails, roadside improvement; timber stand improvement; and the erection of many forest signs."⁶¹ Camp reports were similarly general in reporting the transition. Approximately 150 enrollees worked in a 100,000 to 175,000 acre area (depending on the report)

⁶¹ Otis, Honey, Hogg, and Lakin.

of George Washington National Forest on "road construction, road maintenance, telephone construction, telephone maintenance, stream improvement, forest improvement, and blister rust control."⁶²



Figure 6 - James R. Wilkins, camp superintendent of Camp NF-7, Photo by Alison T. Otis, 1982

Being a remote camp, problems with the supply networks were commonplace at Wolf Gap. A regular complaint at Wolf Gap, as with many other camps, was with the crippling bureaucratic inefficiencies of the federal government's food supply network. Maintaining morale and nutrition were an utmost priority for the CCC. Camp administrators often cited "hot food" for low sick rates amongst enrollees with the implication being that freshly prepared meals were

⁶² White pine blister rust is a disease that affects white pines throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. It is controlled by destroying currant and gooseberry plants near affected trees as the disease is not communicable between pines. Division of Plant Disease Control, *Status of White Pine Blister Rust Control on January 1, 1939* (Washington, DC: USDA Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, 1939). Otis, Honey, Hogg, and Lakin, 102-103. Kathy Mays Smith, *Gold Medal CCC Company 1538: A Documentary* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 2001), 64. Charles Kenlan, "Camp Report," Aug. 5, 1936; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

far healthier than enrollees' diets prior to their enrollment. Wolf Gap administrators expressed significant concern over the long distances traversed by government food deliveries.

Administrators occasionally suggested that it would be more practical for camp leaders to purchase food locally, but this was only allowed for certain types of food. J.J. McEntee as Acting Director formally requested at least once that the Adjutant General's office allow the buying of local foodstuffs as, by McEntee's logic, food prices would be cheaper, local farms would be supported by CCC money, and the enrollees would receive fresher food and better nutrition. McEntee's supported his arguments by claiming that other CCC camp directors across Virginia also ran into food shortages because of poor logistics, so if leeway were granted at Wolf Gap the entire system could be renovated. The Adjutant General's office considered but did not allow this request, so six months later this camp was still receiving late and poor quality food deliveries. Other than food issues, this camp seemingly had no other major problems per official inspections. The only negative report found problems in securing quality contractor labor, problems that administrators apparently remedied as no further complains came from Wolf Gap in the next two years.⁶³

James Wilkins, a white resident of Winchester, Virginia, worked as a foreman with the USDA Forest Service during the 1930s and received an appointment from the CCC as camp superintendent for both Camp NF-15 and Camp F-1 (Camp Roosevelt, the CCC's first established camp). Ten CCC camps operated within George Washington National Forest, but Wilkins' assignment meant Camp Wolf Gap paired with Camp Roosevelt. This is a critical

⁶³ J.J. McEntee to Adjutant General, Aug. 18, 1936; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. E.T. Conley to Emergency Conservation Work, Nov. 25, 1936; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. Charles Kenlan to J.J. McEntee, Feb. 24, 193; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. Donald Dow, Camp P-57 Memorandum, Feb. 24, 1937; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. Charles Kenlan, "Camp Report," Feb. 25, 1935; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

symbolic pairing in that Camp Roosevelt was the first-ever CCC camp and generally held by administrators and historians as the most emblematic of the overall organization. Wilkins was a relatively young man at just twenty-three, meaning he was a peer of the CCC enrollees he oversaw. Historians interviewed Wilkins in the 1980s about his perspective as camp superintendent. Interviewers were not careful to distinguish between his experiences leading a white camp versus the African American camp, so it is unclear as to exactly which camp or which time frame Wilkins refers to throughout. The lone reference to race or ethnicity came from Wilkins came when discussing firefighting, a training that all enrollees received. In case of an emergency – which did happen when a fire burned approximately 1,500 acres at one point – all nearby camps, including African American camps, came together to work in unison and as equals. Wilkins' office was positioned in Edinburg directly between Camp NF-15 and Camp F-1. As the camps were on opposite sides of the town and both roughly thirteen miles away, this meant Wilkins had to do a lot of driving to accomplish any in-person work. Given that Camp F-1 was the CCC's flagship, it can be safe to assume that Wilkins spent more time with this camp. Overall, Wilkins' recollections dovetail with the overall CCC story of difficult physical labor mixed with great success for both enrollees and environment. The most telling quote could have come from any CCC booster piece: "It wasn't only a case of getting a lot of work done. It was a case of saving the young population that had become drifters, getting them back into some kind of productive work and some self-respect for themselves." Beyond these generalizations, the interview focused on daily routine, memorable projects, and the pride Wilkins had to have been part of such a successful program.

Throughout the interview, Wilkins does provide some insight into the unique situation facing these George Washington National Forest camps even if he was not aware of said

uniqueness. First, CCC administrators encouraged Wilkins to personally recruit local men with relevant skills to act as foremen in the camp. This was relatively common throughout the CCC, but most camps had little problem finding skilled laborers to work as foremen – not so in this relatively remote area. Often men who were barely qualified, if at all, would be hired on for these positions. Wilkins stated "We'd just pick out men who had skills that we wanted, timber skills or mountain skills, wouldn't get lost, and knew how to do timber cruising and everything of that sort." Wilkins did not specify the specific backgrounds of individual men he hired, but it is highly likely they were all white as the national CCC office only approved the hiring of African American foremen after Co. 333 departed Wolf Gap. As for the enrollees, Wilkins recalled that the men primarily – about two-thirds – came from urban areas in Washington, Norfolk, and Richmond with the rest coming from Appalachian locales. It is not clear from the interview as to which camp Wilkins recalled, the race of these enrollees, or the specific time frame. Regardless, at this camp Wilkins remembered a dynamic where "city boys" were woefully unprepared for vocational labor compared to the "mountain people" while, on the other hand, enrollees from Appalachia struggled in the educational program compared to urban enrollees with better access to classroom education. This created a dichotomy that could have developed into an irreparable rift between the men, but according to Wilkins such a problem never developed.



Figure 7 - Two enrollees clearing timbered area of dead wood, Camp A-2, Beltsville, MD, May 1940. National Archives at College Park.

Second, Wilkins entered his position with a preconceived notion of Appalachian residents and believed his own work helped to civilize the mountaineer, going so far in this belief that he thanked himself and the CCC for their civilizing work. The basis of Wilkins' logic lay in transportation. Enrollees built vehicle-accessible roads into mountainous areas with the intention of "opening up" these areas for Federal development. According to Wilkins, "Once we built

roads, they started going to high school, and in a few years you couldn't tell the mountain people from the valley people. Before you could pick 'em out of the crowd like a sore thumb." Enrollees built or repaired Stultz Gap Road, Liberty-Lost River Road, Lower Cove Truck Trail, and Thornbottom Road all for use of USDA Forest Service personnel with the assumption that residents would use the roads to better their lives. However, most residents were unable to use these roads because, like with both the Tennessee Valley Authority and creation of Shenandoah National Park, the government forcibly purchased the homelands of local residents, usually at a sharply reduced valuation, leaving locals little choice but to move out of the mountains and into the valleys. To be fair, Wilkins' belief was extremely common at the time amongst government reformers who believed that it was the government's responsibility to modernize the mountaineer. The prime example of such a New Deal belief was demonstrated by the Tennessee Valley Authority, but the CCC also espoused such an ethos within Appalachian camps.⁶⁴

By August 1936 Wilkins moved on from his position and administrators appointed B.J. Brockenbrough. Other CCC documents from Wolf Gap show a more-or-less above average quality of camp life. All buildings, clothing, and sleeping arrangements were considered "good," men were sufficiently trained in both fire prevention and first aid, and enrollees had at their disposal a wide range of automobiles and machinery such as trucks, tractors, "trail builders," and "dirt movers." Overall, inspectors assessed the camp condition as "highly favorable." Wolf Gap projects expanded to include stream improvement and water management, two skills that would prove useful a few years later at the C&O Canal. As an example, a camp inspection report dated

⁶⁴ Harold L. Bordue memorandum, July 19, 1935; Box 6, Entry 145, RG 95, NACP. Harley E. Jolley, *"That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace": The Civilian Conservation Corps in North Carolina, 1933-1942* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 2007), 33. David Whisnant, *Modernizing the Mountaineer* (Boone, NC: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1980). Robert Seth Woodard, Jr., "The Appalachian Power Company Along the New River: The Defeat of the Blue Ridge Project in Historical Perspective" (Master's thesis: Virginia Tech, 2006), 47-48.

August 5, 1936 reported a camp with four Army officers and 151 African American enrollees. Of the 151, administrators assigned 22 of them to camp work with the bulk force of 112 assigned to general National Forest work. The rest were either on sick leave or not yet assigned. Just 11 of these enrollees were considered "local" although inspectors did not clarify this designation. Camp NF-15 seems to have been generally on par with other National Forest CCC camps except for the low number of "local" enrollees, a problem likely caused by the low number of African Americans living in Shenandoah County, VA during this time period.⁶⁵

Camp NF-15 officially closed on Oct. 11, 1937 and the U.S. Army salvaged twenty-five camp buildings. While the Army dismantled the camp, administrators had already shifted CCC to a new project at Wilderness battlefield near Fredericksburg on the other side of Virginia. In total, Company 333 spent thirty-eight months working in George Washington National Forest with twenty-three of those as an African American camp. As of this writing, a full enrollee list for Camp NF-15 has not been found, so it is not known how many enrollees transferred to Wilderness along with the company. Census records though suggest that at least some enrollees transferred from Wolf Gap to Wilderness, meaning the Company 333 in Wilderness was effectively the same group of enrollees as the one in Wolf Gap.⁶⁶ From administrative lists however, none of the Army or USFS personnel went along with the company. This makes sense considering USFS administrators no longer affiliated with a now NPS-based CCC camp and

⁶⁵ Charles Kenlan, "Camp Report," Aug. 5, 1936; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

⁶⁶ The 1940 U.S. Federal Census asked respondents their residence as of both April 1, 1935 and 1940 but only recorded full-time administrative staff at each camp. All enrollees were "enumerated at their homes." As an example that shows some enrollees transferred, Oliver F. Morgan was present at Camp MP-4 in Wilderness during the Dec. 1937 to Jan. 1938 time period according to camp newspapers. Census records from 1940 indicate that Morgan lived in his hometown Washington D.C. in 1940 and lived in rural Shenandoah County, VA in 1935, making it extremely likely that he worked at Camp NF-15 in Wolf Gap. Constance Potter, "The 1940 Census Revisited," *Genealogy Notes* (Winter 2012), 50. Ancestry.com, 1940 United States Federal Census [database online], Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012, Year: 1940; Census Place: Washington, District of Columbia, District of Columbia; Roll: T627_555; Page: 64A; Enumeration District: 1-93.

would instead stay in George Washington National Forest. For instance, Robert C. Mali, second in command at Camp NF-15 as of August 1936, became commander of Camp Roosevelt (F-1) in December 1937. Another Camp NF-15 administrator, Donald R. Hyland, also stayed in the area and lived in Woodstock, VA as of January 1938.⁶⁷

Camp MP-4 (Wilderness)



Figure 8 - Camp MP-4, Wilderness, Virginia, November 1934

In Camp MP-4 at Wilderness, enrollees now worked in battlefield conservation and preservation, effectively transitioning from conservation projects based in shaping natural resources for an acceptable degree of human use to preservation-minded recreation work focused on protecting cultural landscapes. The battlefields around Fredericksburg, Wilderness included, housed nearly a dozen CCC camps. Wilderness itself had four and each of these regularly rotated companies. Company 333 was the third of four companies to occupy Camp NP-24/MP-4 and the only African American. Now under the direction of the National Park Service, enrollees repaired battlefield trenches, repaired and built roads, and smoothed out landscape that had become overgrown in the intervening seventy years since the battle. Park beautification was the primary goal of this company accomplished through transplanting and planting trees and shrubbery. Public use was also of high concern as enrollees also renovated pre-existing picnic areas.

⁶⁷ "CCC Camp Directory, 1941-42"; Entry 13, RG 35, NACP. Charles H. Kenlan, Inspection Report: Camp Wolf Gap; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. Otis, Honey, Hogg, and Lakin, 85. Early Orndorff Papers, Series 1, Folder 2, Special Collections Research Center, Swem Library, College of William and Mary. *Harrisonburg Daily News Record*, Feb. 7, 1936.

Enrollees working to plant trees on the battlefield reported finding a range of archeological remains – or "souvenirs" as the men called them: bullets, pieces of rifles, a small cannon, and skeletal remains. Perhaps surprisingly, finding such "souvenirs" was actually enjoyable for the men. Leroy Moore, an assistant camp enrollee leader, expressed relief at the company's move to Wilderness because the men preferred battlefield restoration over National Forest conservation projects.⁶⁸

Few problems emerged during Co. 333's year-long presence in Wilderness. The only significant conflict came from a complaint filed by James Dempsey, a nearby landowner, claiming that CCC enrollees trespassed upon his land. Dempsey asserted that Capt. Poindexter, the camp commander, instructed enrollees to use Dempsey's field as an athletic field without permission. Dempsey requested Poindexter to keep enrollees off his land, but Poindexter likely ignored this request. In response, Dempsey traveled to Camp MP-4 to protest directly and, in response, Poindexter supposedly ordered Dempsey to leave government property and to stay away from the camp. In another letter, Dempsey referred to Poindexter's response as "ungentlemanly" and stated that he would "certainly exercise [his] rights as an American Citizen and go to [the Forestry Superintendent's] office" whenever he felt it necessary. Dempsey challenged Poindexter's authority by further stating "While there, I defy you to molest me in any way." According to Army personnel, Dempsey also demanded the CCC pay him \$10 per month for use of the land. The CCC refused on the grounds that such payments were against Federal policy. Ironically enough, Dempsey's house caught fire not long after such demands. As the CCC

⁶⁸ *Out of the Wilderness*, Dec. 31, 1937.

trained enrollees in firefighting, enrollees from Co. 333 responded to the call and saved the building. There were no suggestions of foul play.⁶⁹

Connected to the Dempsey problem was that CCC Camp inspectors believed the three commissioned officers at Wilderness, including Poindexter, were generally under-experienced for their jobs. As of an inspection dated March 3, 1938, Poindexter had been on duty since July and the other two officers possessed just five months of CCC experience combined. This lack of experience led to workplace tension and transfer requests from other administrators. Making matters worse, Poindexter and Technical Superintendent Earl I. Carner did not get along professionally according to regional and national administrators. Some examples supplied by inspectors included Carner's reluctance to release trucks for recreational use despite Poindexter's requests and Poindexter's refusal to allow Carner to eat breakfast after 8:30 AM. Both were relatively small issues that never developed into a major crisis but illustrate the often competing agendas of NPS and Army personnel in CCC camps.⁷⁰ A solution came when the CCC simply separated quarters for technical personnel away from other camp residents, thus providing Carner some physical distance between himself, enrollees, and Poindexter. Before March 1938, technical personnel quartered alongside enrollees, which meant that they were forced to follow the schedule of enrollees. Starting in March 1938, a new partition was constructed in a barracks for this staff so they could follow their own schedules and be left alone by Poindexter. According to a follow-up inspection dated April 18, Carner and the Superintendent had been "working in complete harmony and accord."

⁶⁹ Patrick King, "Camp Inspection Report: Camp MP-4," March 3, 1938; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. J.J. McEntee to Patrick King, Mar. 3, 1938; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. James Dempsey to Major General Albert J. Bowley, Feb. 28, 1938; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. James Dempsey to Leo Poindexter, Feb. 28, 1938; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

⁷⁰ Patrick J. King, "Camp Inspection Report: Camp MP-4," March 3, 1938; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. Charles Kenlan to C.L. Wirth, March 30, 1938; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

A permanent solution to both the Dempsey and Carner problems also came in April 1938. Poindexter was transferred out of Wilderness to Indian Head, MD on April 11. They credited the new partition for solving the workplace problems, but in all likelihood the problem was solved once Poindexter left Wilderness for good.⁷¹ Further, Dempsey again allowed the CCC use of his land after Poindexter's departure. Dempsey provided no explanation for his sudden change of heart, but the timing was certainly suspect. After Poindexter's transfer, his career took a sharp turn downward once the Army allowed his term of service to expire with no renewal. Writing in a May inspection report, Patrick King made clear that Poindexter "had not handled things as tactfully as he might have," "developed needless friction," and "was careless with proper attention to his reports." With Poindexter gone, a state of "harmony" prevailed at Camp MP-4 until the unit departed for the canal.⁷²

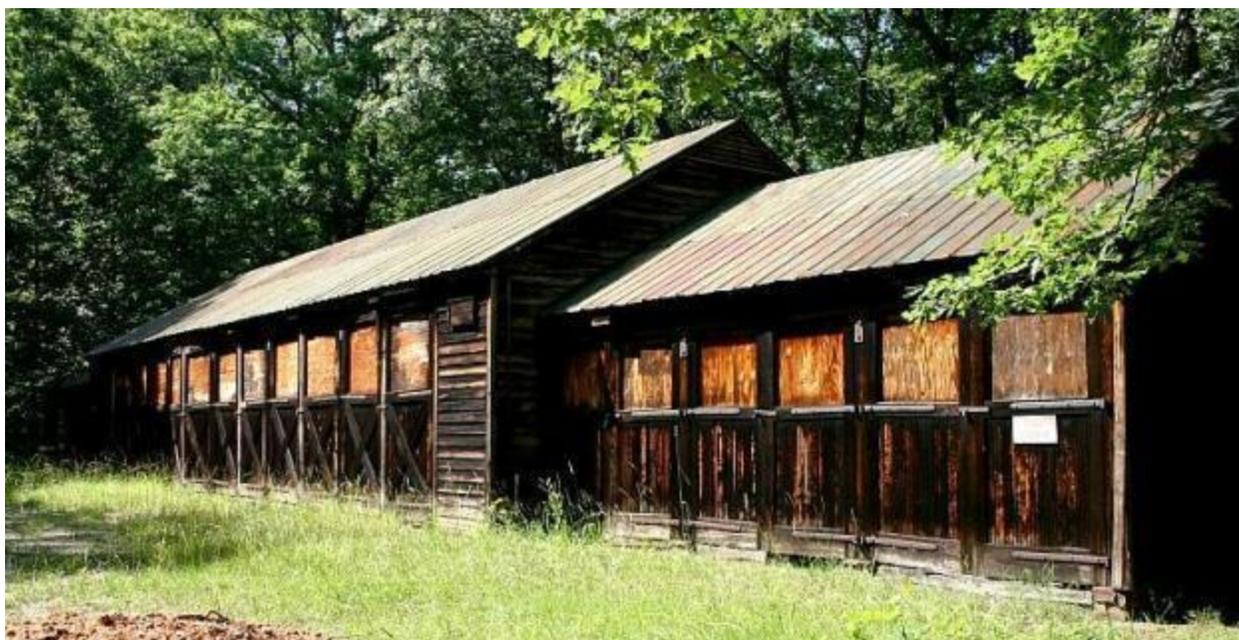


Figure 9 - Shop building at Camp MP-4, Wilderness, Virginia

⁷¹ E.R. Conley to Robert Fechner, April 18, 1938; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

⁷² Patrick J. King to Charles Kenlan, May 31, 1938; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. Ray Schenck to NPS Regional Office, May 5, 1938; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

SECTION THREE: CCC TO THE C&O

The C&O Canal Company broke ground on July 4, 1828 with a ceremony participated in by President John Quincy Adams. Starting in the 1840s, canal boats hauled commercial goods, primarily coal, from as far west as Cumberland, MD to as far east as Georgetown once the canal was completed. Building the canal took much longer than imagined as labor disputes, rocky terrain, and material shortages burdened the company with excess debt. Because of this, the canal only reached Cumberland by 1850 – significantly later and much shorter than the originally intended terminus of Pittsburgh and the Ohio River – and thus the company ended the canal there recognizing the original plan was no longer economically feasible. In the end, the canal measured 184.5 miles in length with seventy-five locks, not to mention dozens of other structures including dams, aqueducts, bridges, and lockhouses. By the 1880s, the combination of improving railroad technologies and periodic, devastating flooding meant the canal was becoming increasingly obsolete as a commercial entity. Still, its navigational business operations continued until 1924. Flooding caused operators to cease commercial boat traffic because of the extent of the damage to the canal and the fact that repair costs were too great. The canal was effectively neglected upstream of Lock 5.⁷³

Within two years of the 1924 flood, U.S. government officials discussed ways to acquire and utilize the largely-derelict canal property. Most proposals favored converting the land into a roadway. By the late 1920s, Congress moved to authorize appropriations to acquire the first stretch of canal to Point of Rocks, ultimately culminating in the 1930 Capper-Cramton Act that set aside funds for acquiring and developing this piece of canal, among other connected

⁷³ Barry Mackintosh, *C&O Canal: The Making of a Park* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service History Division, 1991). Harlan Unrau, *Historic Resource Study: Chesapeake and Ohio Canal* (National Park Service, 2007).

properties.⁷⁴ The onset of the Great Depression in 1929 meant Federal funds dried up as policy sought to reduce spending, so financial considerations forced government officials to shelve plans for the C&O Canal for the time being. The election of FDR and announcement of New Deal programs changed that. The establishment of the Public Works Administration (PWA) was generally seen as a sign that the C&O Canal project was a possibility. The PWA and other work relief agencies like the CCC could supply a massive amount of manual labor at a relatively low cost, so government employees eying the canal revived the idea. Finally, after another flood, a lawsuit, and the intervention of both FDR and Eleanor Roosevelt, the government purchased the entire canal for \$2,000,000 sale in early 1938 with another \$500,000 set aside for constructing a parkway and canal rehabilitation. All parties signed a sales contract on August 6, 1938 and other legal matters were postponed, thus allowing Federal work to begin via the CCC.⁷⁵

As the government had just purchased a derelict canal, officials set about to establish unemployment relief projects to ensure the property would be of public benefit. Of special interest to most federal administrators was the area around the historic Great Falls Tavern and all areas below to Georgetown.⁷⁶ New Deal administrators requested CCC administrators assign camps to the area in 1938 with the explicit intent to desilt and beautify the canal from Georgetown to Great Falls, roughly fourteen miles, with an eye toward future public recreation.⁷⁷ CCC labor made the best sense to all involved considering the sheer amount of manual labor needed, but there were other agencies that could have handled the task, such as the WPA, PWA,

⁷⁴ Mackintosh, 8. *Capper-Cramton Act 1930* (61st U.S. Congress) Pub. L. No.72-284, 46 Stat. 482.

⁷⁵ The C&O Canal was owned by several different governmental and private interests throughout its existence, but its stock was owned almost entirely by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company (B&O) once the state of Maryland divested in 1904. The federal government acquired the canal from the B&O as part of a deal that resulted in the B&O receiving favorable loans. Mackintosh, 11-19. John A. Lynch, Jr., "Justice Douglas, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and Maryland Legal History," *University of Baltimore Law Forum* 35, No. 2 (2005): 125.

⁷⁶ Harlan D. Unrau and G. Frank Williss. *Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s: An Administrative History* (Denver, CO: National Park Service, Sep. 1983), Ch 3-A.

⁷⁷ Paige, 115.

or any number of private contractors. In a correspondence with Harold Ickes in 1934, Frederic A. Delano, chairman of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCP&PC) and FDR's uncle, first floated the idea of using CCC labor to conserve and restore old canal locks to benefit the C&O Canal as well as bridges in an effort to extend the George Washington Memorial Parkway westward into Maryland (a project that would not actually be undertaken and completed until the 1960s, well after the shuttering of the CCC). About a year later in September 1935, officials from the NPS and NCP&PC drafted a \$4,000,000 executive order for land acquisition and CCC labor along the Potomac River extending to Harpers Ferry. This executive order draft paralleled other recent orders allocating money to NPS activities – namely the Blue Ridge Parkway – but FDR refused approval knowing that significant financial and legal hurdles remained to the question of federal ownership of the canal.⁷⁸

There is no specific reason why government officials decided to use CCC labor to renovate the C&O Canal, nor is there a direct order explaining the decision to locate two African American camps at the canal. A likely reason for selecting an African American company for the canal project was the minimal contact these camps would have with the general public. Administrators hinted at this when the NPS requested a special use of CCC enrollees to direct parking at Great Falls on Sundays, specifically requesting white CCC enrollees from a camp at Rock Creek, MD. Officials felt white enrollees were "better adapted for this work" and were willing to deal with the inconveniences of requesting Rock Creek enrollees rather than simply deploy a few African American men from Cabin John. This type of action was rare though and it is entirely possible that administrators selected African American companies for Cabin John

⁷⁸ Mackintosh, 12-13.

simply because they were next in queue.⁷⁹ Regardless, shortly before the purchase of the canal became official the NPS took interest in deploying CCC labor to the property. Acting Director A.E. Demaray expressed a vision where the NPS managed a range of CCC projects involving "erosion control, landscape and trail development, lock restoration, clean-up operations, etc" at the canal. This same letter also claimed that there were several CCC camps already in mind and ready for canal assignment, although Demaray did not disclose exactly which camps these were.⁸⁰ The NPS instigated this project because of a reorganizing effort in 1937 that saw the agency open regional offices (with the C&O Canal eventually assigned to Region One out of Richmond, Virginia) thus allowing more direct administrative attention paid to the canal.⁸¹

While no explanation for the overall CCC deployment survives, there are some explanations for why Co. 333 specifically received a canal deployment. Racial motivations almost assuredly played a significant role. CCC officials working with Camp MP-3 in Wilderness, VA reported a "very special and pressing need" for "contact and guide service," meaning a service wherein individuals would guide visitors to parking lots, trails, and historic locations, that "might be met by white enrollees." It is possible this request for a new white company was an excuse to shift the African American company out of the park, but there is no clear evidence to suggest this was the case. This led to administrators transferring the African American company of that camp – Company 333 – to make room for another white company. Administrators believed that African American enrollees would not be capable of engaging with park visitors not because of their abilities, but because of an "unfavorable public reaction" to African Americans interacting with the public at a historic Civil War site. Officials found a

⁷⁹ F.F. Gillen memo, May 25, 1940; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2844, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

⁸⁰ A.E. Demaray to Daniel Willard, Jr., Jun. 4, 1938; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2836, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

⁸¹ Phoebe Cutler, *The Public Landscape of the New Deal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 61-62.

"homeless" white company, Camp F-9 had just been discontinued, and instructed Camp MP-4 (occupied by Co. 333) to prepare to accept this new white company. Upon this decision, officials further suggested moving Co. 333 to Cabin John. Administrators also selected Company 325 for canal projects. Co. 325 arrived at the canal much more quickly than Co. 333 likely due to the company's nearer proximity in Indian Head, MD.⁸² Administrators recognized that canal work required significantly more than two hundred men, so they decided in June 1938 the C&O Canal would be a sufficient destination for Co. 333. The men of Co. 333 gained experience at Wilderness doing the type of work required to restore a canal, specifically conservation-minded landscaping needed to renovate the canal and towpath.

Despite the good fit for Companies 325 and 333 to the canal, there were some initial doubts because the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners, wherein Cabin John was located, lodged formal complaints regarding a potential African American CCC camp and formally rejected the federal plan. This action infuriated a myriad of CCC officials, all of whom intended to ignore these "completely without foundation" local complaints going forward. Herbert Evison, Acting Regional Director for the CCC, described the behavior records of African American companies as "fully as good as that of either white junior or white veteran companies." Other administrators like Stanton Smith went further in their assessment stating directly that African American companies are "as a general rule more amenable to discipline and their conduct better than white boys." Some locals actually favored the presence of the camps. The Greater Kensington Civic League, after seeing the progress made in rewatering the canal, specifically requested in October 1939 that the CCC place a second camp at the canal, a plan that

⁸² Comparatively little is known about Co. 325 at the canal simply because the camp did not have a newspaper and the educational programming was under the *de facto* control of C. Rushton Long and Co. 333. Co. 325 retained most of its white administrators when moving from Indian Head to Cabin John but it is unknown if any African American enrollees also made the move. *The Tomahawk* (Indian Head, MD), April 1938.

was already underway by the NPS and CCC. The Kensington group heaped praise upon the CCC enrollees in their resolution and noted their "pleasure and satisfaction" with the project already at this early date. This is especially notable considering the president of the Civil League, Washington I. Cleveland, was the head of the Kensington Chamber of Commerce and thus wielded significant local political clout.

NPS officials feared the War Department would use complaints like those from the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners as an excuse to declare African American CCC camps a hassle and would simply let existing camps dissolve. After a short exchange, the War Department (and the Army) agreed with the NPS that local support was not necessary to form a camp on federally-owned land, thus plans for the two camps at Cabin John progressed quickly.⁸³ Protests around Cabin John were quickly stamped out through "conference with the opposition" spearheaded by C.M. Finnan, Superintendent of National Capital Parks and settled by Director Fechner.⁸⁴ After a few months, locals were eventually "satisfied" with the camp presence, thus proving federal officials correct. The final hurdle for the transfer was the approval of Director Fechner, which he granted quickly and without question.⁸⁵ Supporting the decision to establish the canal camps, there was just one known incident between CCC enrollees and the surrounding

⁸³ Sirna, 68. Stanton G. Smith to C.P. Russell, August 5, 1938; National Capital Region: Subject Files, Box 40, Entry 149, RG 79, NACP. J.K. Parsons to Adjutant General, June 3, 1938; National Capital Region: Subject Files, Box 40, Entry 149, RG 79, NACP. Ira C. Whitacre to Major General J.K. Parsons; Herbert Evison to Board of County Commissioners, June 6, 1938; National Capital Region: Subject Files, Box 40, Entry 149, RG 79, NACP. Stanton G. Smith to C. Marshall Finnan, June 16, 1938; National Capital Region: Subject Files, Box 40, Entry 149, RG 79, NACP.

⁸⁴ Herbert Evison to Stanton Smith, Aug. 3, 1938; Stanton Smith to C.P. Russell, Aug. 5, 1938; Herbert Evison to Arno Cammerer, Aug. 17, 1938; Memos and Correspondence Concerning CCC Camps, 1935-1942, Box 7, Entry 118, RG 79, NACP.

⁸⁵ Fred T. Johnston to Washington Cleveland, Oct. 12, 1939; Washington Cleveland to Conrad Wirth, Oct. 7, 1939; Herbert Evison to Stanton Smith, Aug. 3, 1938; Stanton Smith to C.P. Russell, Aug. 5, 1938; Herbert Evison to Arno Cammerer, Aug. 17, 1938; Memos and Correspondence Concerning CCC Camps, 1935-1942, Box 7, Entry 118, RG 79, NACP. Parsons to Adjutant General, Sep. 30, 1938; George Tyner, Disposition Slip, Oct. 1, 1938; General Administrative Files, Sec. 1-A 3rd Corps Area Dec. 1938 to June 1939, Box 272, Entry 118, RG 407, NACP. *The Montgomery Press-Mail*, May 27, 1937.

community. Angela Sirna detailed an incident when Maurice Salsbury, a local white man, accused enrollees of taking his canal boat on a joyride. Both Salsbury and lockkeeper William Davis reported to CCC administrators the boat was last seen the previous weekend filled to the brim with "colored men, in the uniform of the Civilian Conservation Corps, going down the river." It is unclear as to the outcome of this event for the enrollees, Salsbury, or the boat.⁸⁶

DEPLOYING THE ENROLLEES



Figure 10 - Aerial view of Camp NP-1. National Archives at College Park.

⁸⁶ Sirna, 78.

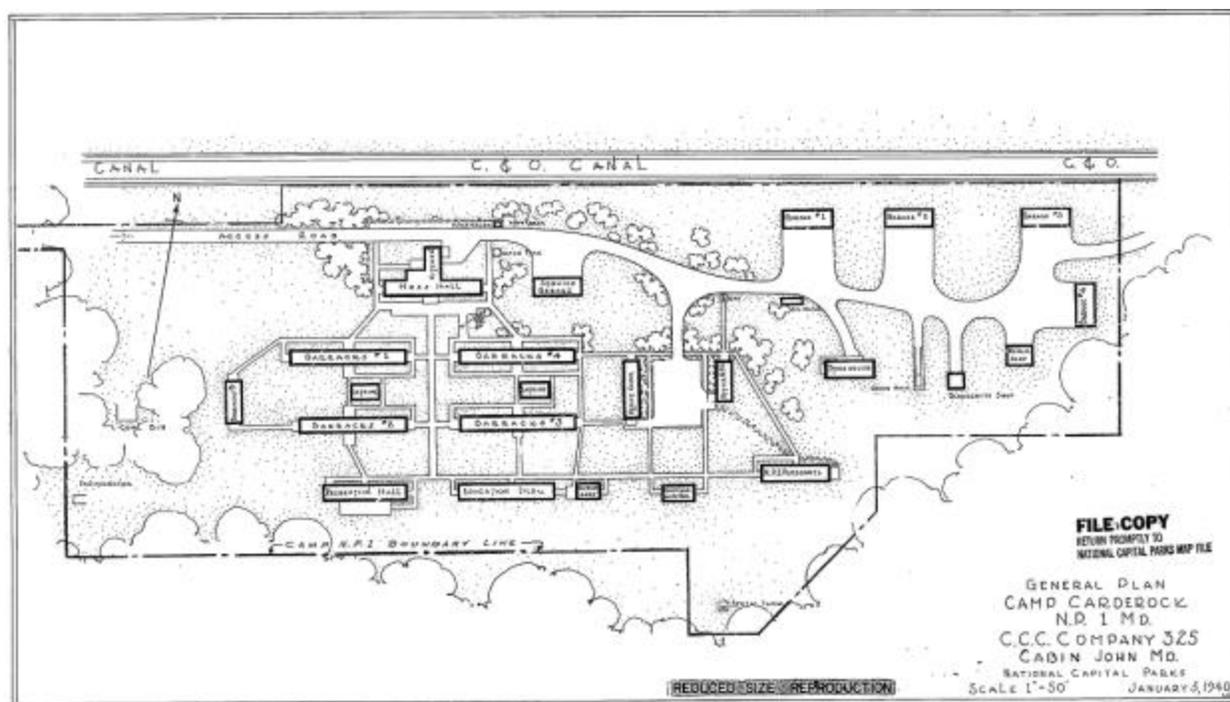


Figure 11 - Camp NP-1, NPS Map, Jan. 5, 1940.

The government established two new CCC camps around the time of the official and finalized purchase of the C&O Canal on September 23, 1938. Camp NP-1-MD (housing Co. 325) was officially founded on September 18 with Camp NP-2-MD (housing Co. 333) following soon after on October 5. The structures of Camp NP-1 were completed on October 25, just thirty-two days after opening. Camp NP-2-MD took a few months before being completed officially on February 2 of the following year. There is some discrepancy in government documents as some indicate enrollees arrived between mid-June and mid-July, a full three months before the camps were established on record. The fuzziness of this start date was intentional and likely because federal officials had to wait until formal acquisition of the canal property. Co. 325 occupied a temporary tent camp as of June 27, although the exact location is not readily apparent, with the intention of residing within barracks at Cabin John between July 15 and 18 (barracks were not

built until October).⁸⁷ Director Fechner approved Camp NP-2 on June 14 only to waffle back-and-forth on the camp's establishment over the next few weeks. The reasons for this indecision are not apparent. Possible explanations stem from local opposition to the camps and an unexpected high cost in establishing the camp meaning Camp NP-2 would simply be delayed to the next budget period. Time was an issue as well. Army officials were still working out the logistics for portable structures, primarily wooden barracks and other buildings, in mid-August before eventually settling on relocating structures from Camp Army-3 at Fort Belvoir, VA to Cabin John.⁸⁸ In September, the Adjutant General's office requested another \$19,790 for completion of Camp NP-2, an amount considered "excessive" by federal officials and caused by the high cost of skilled labor in the Washington D.C. area. On October 11, Fechner had enough of the delays and formally requested the War Department place Camp NP-2 on its expedited list, a request that was fulfilled. Still, despite this all of the camp's necessary systems – water, sewage, and electrical – remained incomplete until early 1939.⁸⁹ The only photo known to exist as of this writing from Co. 325 was that of George Tyler, but it is still unknown whether or not Tyler transferred to Cabin John in 1938 (Figure 12).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁸⁸ George Tyner Memorandum, Jul. 5, 1938; George Tyner to Robert Fechner, Aug. 19, 1938; ; General Administrative Files, Sec. 1-A 3rd Corps Area Dec. 1938 to June 1939, Box 272, Entry 118, RG 407, NACP.

⁸⁹ L.S. Ostrander to Adjutant General, Sep. 21, 1938; L.S. Ostrander to Adjutant General, Dec. 13, 1938; General Administrative Files, Sec. 1-A 3rd Corps Area Dec. 1938 to June 1939, Box 272, Entry 118, RG 407, NACP.



Figure 12 - George Tyler, Co. 325, Indian Head, MD.

Now that the camps were established on paper, administrators moved forward with agency plans. The federal government informed the public of the CCC's plans for the canal in April 1938 although details were scant.⁹⁰ New Deal money poured into the C&O Canal development starting in 1938 without a clearly defined project plan. Perhaps the largest government expenditure – other than the CCC camps themselves – was a \$500,000 allotment from the Public Works Administration for "development and improvement of the old C&O canal" in October 1938. Camp Superintendent C. Marshall Finnan informed the public at this point that "surveying will begin" for approximately the first twenty miles of canal and that "a large part of the labor will be done by CCC enrollees stationed at Carderock." No mention was made of either the fact that work had already begun by this point or that the CCC enrollees were

⁹⁰ "2 CCC Camps Will Be Set Up On C&O Canal," *The Washington Post*, Apr. 30, 1938. "New CCC Camps Planned," *The Sun* (Baltimore, MD), Apr. 30, 1938.

all African American.⁹¹ Just two days later Director Fechner publicly announced CCC plans which included an announcement of a "new camp near Cabin John" and that "another camp had been placed in operation there." A few newspaper articles announced publicly that the government planned on converting the canal to recreation use and that the CCC had already begun "preliminary work" by late October 1938. This work included the restoration (dredging, draining, and removing vegetation) of the canal area between Lock 14 (milepost 9.5) and Widewater (milepost 13.8) by the approximately 350 enrollees using tractors, "steam dredging shovels," and manual labor. No newspaper articles mentioned that these camps were explicitly for African American enrollees. These omissions are particularly telling, indicating that Fechner and other government officials likely wanted to avoid any potential public outrage over the camps.⁹²

According to Superintendent Finnan, canal camps were only to complete projects related to "the necessary preparatory work incident to the reconstruction." Each camp was further instructed in November 1938 not to conduct any full restorations so the NPS could determine the best usage of the property.⁹³ NPS staff conducted a basic public opinion study in 1938 on the government's intentions for the canal that found locals expressed great interest in the government's project as many already used the canal for their own recreation purposes. The vast majority desired the government to preserve the canal "in as natural a condition as possible" with a fully restored towpath and re-watered canal prism. Locals also felt that motorized craft should not be allowed on the canal in favor of classic horse- or mule-drawn flat-bottom barges. This

⁹¹ *The News* (Frederick, MD), Oct. 3, 1938.

⁹² "News CCC Camp to be Opened in Maryland," *Cumberland Evening Times*, Oct. 5, 1938. "CCC Camp to be Continued," *The Daily Mail* (Hagerstown, MD), Oct. 5, 1938. "Restored C&O Canal to Contrast with Earlier Days," *The Sun* (Baltimore, MD), Nov. 6, 1938. "C&O Canal Restorations Work Begun," *The Washington Post*, Oct. 17, 1938.

⁹³ C. Marshall Finnan to Fred T. Johnson, Nov. 25, 1938; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2836, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

anecdotal study is that it included an early suggestion of converting lockhouses into "minimum accommodation" so as to facilitate multi-day canal trips and combat the possibility of an invasive hotel industry.⁹⁴ Away from public view, a memo from Edmund Rogers, the Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, to NPS Director Arno Cammerer suggests that many within the NPS suspected the CCC canal project would result in significant destruction of the natural landscape. Director Cammerer dispatched Rogers to the canal in late 1938 to meet with both camp superintendents and observe CCC work projects. Overall, Rogers was thoroughly pleased with what he saw from a conservationist's point of view. In his own words, "I found no evidence of wanton or unnecessary destruction, but rather gained the impression that the work was being carried on with a conservative and sound approach."⁹⁵ In January 1939 with both full NPS blessing and taking public interest to heart, Director Fechner announced four hundred CCC enrollees were hard at work restoring the C&O canal "as a recreational waterway" under the supervision of the NPS. Newspaper articles downplayed the enrollees' work, directly quoting Director Fechner as claiming enrollees were simply "clearing small trees and bush growth from the bed of the canal" for its first eighteen miles. Fechner was quick to clarify though that enrollee work would escalate soon with the "shaping and rebuilding of the towpath," which included the filling-in and grading of the path and "the rehabilitation of fifteen lockhouses, construction of parking areas, picnic grounds, roads and trails, a water supply system, and a sanitation system in

⁹⁴ NPS Branch of Research and Information Memo to Director Finnan, Oct. 24, 1938; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2836, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP

⁹⁵ Edmund Rogers Memo to Director, Dec. 10, 1938; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2836, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

the Great Falls area." Fechner estimated that these tasks would take between three and five years to complete.⁹⁶



Figure 13 - Enrollees spreading gravel over freshly spread tar, Camp A-2, Beltsville, MD, May 1940. National Archives at College Park.

⁹⁶ *Cumberland Evening Times*, Jan. 20, 1939. "Canal Work is Started," *The Daily Mail* (Hagerstown, MD), Jan. 21, 1939.



Figure 14 - Enrollees spreading gravel over freshly spread tar, Camp A-2, Beltsville, MD, May 1940. National Archives at College Park.



Figure 15 - Enrollee flattening gravel over freshly spread tar, Camp A-2, Beltsville, MD, May 1940. National Archives at College Park.

Moving into 1939, NPS administrators typically utilized skilled PWA labor whenever possible for projects but would later assign CCC enrollees to the same projects after expending funds earmarked for PWA labor. As for the specifics of these projects, the NPS clearly made recreation a priority over that of other skilled work such as property surveys. Administrators reduced the budget for engineering survey work in favor of more quickly readying the canal for public use. Granted, a reduction of \$6,500 out of an overall \$213,000 project budget is not particularly large, but it does illustrate where the administrators' priorities lay. Major recreation projects at this point focused on re-watering the Seneca-Little Falls section of the canal, repairing the Widewater area, and flood repair and prevention. Both PWA and CCC laborers were to be

assigned to these projects, especially Widewater, during winter 1939.⁹⁷ Beyond this, both agencies' laborers worked on "landscaping, repair and restoration of historic buildings lock-houses, lock shanties, shops, lock bridges, etc. development of such areas as Great Falls, Carderock, and Georgetown, construction of buildings for minor canoe concessions, and docks and facilities for portage around locks." As an aside, the NPS immediately restarted a historical research program at the canal for the purpose of creating create an interpretative map that would align with physical restoration.⁹⁸



Figure 16 - CCC enrollees repairing a segment of the canal between Georgetown and Seneca c. 1940, C&O Canal NHP Archives.

⁹⁷ It can likely be assumed this assignment was made, but no primary source documents confirm this assignment's finalization. Frank T. Gantside Memo, Sep. 26, 1939; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2836, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

⁹⁸ A copy of this map has not been found as of this writing. T. Sutton Jett Memo, Sep. 25, 1939; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2836, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

In August 1939 the NPS discussed the possibility of expanding the CCC project. The canal and towpath from Georgetown to Seneca was already beginning to take shape as a recreational area. Some officials also suggested expanding the project from Seneca to Cumberland more than once. A few officials within the Naturalist Division of the NPS believed the canal should be restored the entire 184.5 miles to Cumberland in order to achieve the "full utilization of the inspirational and educational values." H.E. Rothuck, chief of the division, likened the twenty-two mile project from Georgetown to Seneca as cutting off a brilliant novel after just a few chapters and felt that nothing in or near D.C. compared to the opportunities offered further upstream.⁹⁹ Outside of this handful of ideas from the NPS, there is no indication anyone else in the CCC or NPS took this suggestion seriously.

⁹⁹ Frank T. Cartside memo, Aug. 2, 1939; H.E. Rothuck memo, Aug. 2, 1939; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2836, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

SECTION FOUR: THE CANAL CAMPS



Figure 17 - Enrollees Repairing Prism. National Archives at College Park.

The canal camps were just the second and third segregated African American camps for work in Maryland.¹⁰⁰ A large backlog of in-need young African American men awaited CCC assignment. Both camps were originally planned to house two hundred enrollees, although each could hold more if necessary. Throughout their existence though, both averaged between 150 and 180 owing to a relatively high turnover rate.¹⁰¹ Also, for the purposes of "efficient and orderly administration," the NPS considered the two separate canal camps a single unit. Federal guidelines required the NPS submit work programs and job descriptions to CCC administrators

¹⁰⁰ The first was Co. 325's first home, Camp Navy-1-MD in Indian Head.

¹⁰¹ Davidson and Jacobs, 63-4.

who then crafted the official work projects. Then, administrators assigned enrollees to projects and work would begin. As Camp NP-1 and NP-2 projects overlapped nearly in total, administrators recognized that most of these documents would simply be duplicates with a different camp name listed at the top. By recognizing the camps as one unit, this policy allowed for the NPS to submit a single application for each project, thus speeding up work on the canal.¹⁰²

Officials planned Camp NP-1-MD and Camp NP-2-MD to minimally impact the natural environment, a difficult task given each camp needed to house approximately 200 men.¹⁰³ From aerial photos and administrator letters, enrollees cleared few trees for the camp construction and constructed temporary access roads, a temporary bridge, and portable structures for lodging designed to be dismantled upon the camp's eventual closing. Camp NP-1 was located within a "rather heavily wooded area" that required some land clearance according to inspectors while saving the oldest and largest trees.¹⁰⁴ As for the structures themselves, Camp NP-1 consisted of typical CCC buildings:

Camp NP-1-MD included a T-shaped mess hall and kitchen, four 20' x 140' barracks, a 20' x 100' recreation hall, a 20' x 40' officers' quarters, a 20' x 80' technical service quarters for NPS personnel, an educational building, two latrines for enrollees, office structures for both the army commander and the technical service supervisor, and a pump house as well as the usual project support buildings of garages and a blacksmith shop. While the enrollee barracks featured a one-room dormitory arrangement, the officers' quarters were divided into six rooms for five occupants and the technical service quarters into ten rooms for eight occupants. Bathrooms accounted for the extra rooms in both quarters. The storage building and three garages built by the NPS were of rigid rather than portable construction. The education building was enlarged from 20' x 60' to 20' x 120' in 1939. The camp had well water pumped into a tank tower, coal stove heating, and access to the city electrical system. The septic system had an outlet to the Potomac River

¹⁰² C. Marshall Finnan to Fred T. Johnson, Nov. 25, 1938; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2836, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

¹⁰³ Ross Abare, "Camp Inspection Report, NP-2," August 26, 1939; Division of Investigation: Camp Inspection Reports, Box 94, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

¹⁰⁴ Edmund Rogers Memo to Director, Dec. 10, 1938; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2836, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

and garbage generated by the camp was hauled away by a civilian pig farmer or burned in the incinerator at Camp NP-2-MD.¹⁰⁵

Similar to its sister camp, Camp NP-2 also had four barracks, although slightly longer at 20' x 160' due to a ten foot bathroom at either end, a 20' x 100' structure containing a hospital, headquarters' office, and supply room, a functionally identical mess hall and kitchen education building, recreation building, technical service quarters, and officers' quarters. Support structures, such as a garage and pump house, were all initially made of cloth and resembled tents, but were replaced with "rigid" wooden structures in 1939.¹⁰⁶ The enrollees at this camp also seemed to take pride in camp aesthetics as well by painting structures, planting grass, and landscaping around roads. Road access was a challenge in Camp NP-2's early days as the only access was via a private road. The owner closed that road in early 1939 likely because the Army deemed an underpass hazardous. Enrollees constructed a new access road on the unused land set aside for the Washington Memorial Parkway. Enrollees helped build a temporary bridge across the canal, graded the land, and cleared overgrowth. These roads were also converted into gravel roads instead of worn dirt-and-grass pathways that became somewhat inaccessible during poor weather. Enrollees brought in gravel from the river bed between the two camps for the purpose of grading and from "the clean-up of the spoilage at several [unnamed] old quarries" for the purpose of stabilizing vehicle roads and foot paths.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Davidson and Jacobs, 63-4. "Historical Record of CCC Camp Buildings - Camp NP-1-MD," (January 1939, supplemental 4 October 1939); Construction Completion Reports, Box 1, Entry 395, RG 77, NACP. Box 1, Entry 395, RG 77, NACP. "Historical Record of CCC Camp Buildings: Camp NP-2-MD," Nov. 15, 1941; Construction Completion Reports, Box 1, Entry 395, RG 77, NACP. Box 1, Entry 395, RG 77, NACP.

¹⁰⁶ Davidson and Jacobs, 63-4. "Historical Record of CCC Camp Buildings- Camp NP-2-MD," (April 1939, supplemental 25 April 1941); Construction Completion Reports, Box 1, Entry 395, RG 77, NACP. Box 1, Entry 395, RG 77, NACP.

¹⁰⁷ It was not made clear exactly which quarries were referenced here. Towpath, June. Edmund Rogers Memo to Director, Dec. 10, 1938; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2836, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP

Veteran – comparatively speaking – CCC officials oversaw the first, most critical projects undertaken by enrollees.¹⁰⁸ First Lieutenant Edwin T. Arnold and Captain E.D. Wilberger were placed in command of Company 325 and 333 respectively. Arnold had worked for the CCC for about a year of his appointment while Wilberger had been in the agency for nearly four years, almost the entire life of the CCC at this point.¹⁰⁹ The most critical of these projects was the re-watering of the first twenty-two miles of canal and restoring the parallel towpath. According to plans, this would have required CCC men to shape and repair 50,700 cubic yards of the canal. As work required a great quantity of gravel, CCC men operated a rock crusher on site and hand-placed 9,835 square yards of larger stone riprap (loose stone used to create foundations for shorelines) to prevent erosion. Government documents record these activities as efforts to conserve the area's natural landscape, but as asserted by public historian Angela Sirna it would be more appropriate to describe their work as the preservation of cultural landscapes considering the vast majority of the area was man-made to some degree. As evidenced by extensive government planning and interest in the canal's historic qualities, it is clear these CCC men developed a historic property for recreational use and to recapture its original appearance.¹¹⁰ Other projects included standard landscaping work – clearing debris, renovating roads, and constructing walkways – alongside what may be called preservation work for that time period, such as reconstructing a frame lockhouse. Other labor fell outside of the purview of preservation standards, such as safely demolishing lockhouses determined to be in an unrecoverable state. For instance, enrollees worked in the summer of 1939 to rehabilitate Lockhouse 5. This project included tearing down chimneys, replacing wooden walls, and

¹⁰⁸ Note that little documentation of the canal's condition upon the CCC's arrival exists today with most documenting the area around Georgetown with generally intact locks.

¹⁰⁹ Sirna, 67.

¹¹⁰ Sirna, 61. Gerner, 38.

repairing structural beams with the intention of a "return to the days of glory." This also included adding modern plumbing, heating, and electrical systems to Lockhouses 5, 7, and 10.¹¹¹ Other projects included running 1.8 miles of temporary telephone lines between camps, constructing 1.5 miles of 14' wide gravel road, 200 acres of tree and shrub removal, and preparing 4,000 cubic yards of crushed stone.¹¹² As the camps developed, most projects cruised along with little need of administrative involvement. Most work was relatively routine, such as canal excavation work. As such, little exists in source material to distinguish exactly when certain project work took place. One exception came from local newspaper articles excitedly reporting in August 1940 the presence of flowing water at Great Falls for the first time in sixteen years thanks to CCC enrollees. The same newspaper also reported the CCC had brought in National Capital Parks engineers to open Locks 15 and 20 and inspect the path for leaks, implying to readers the lock mechanisms nearest Great Falls would soon be fully operational.¹¹³

Most camp projects went smoothly except for an apparent lack of skilled labor to guide enrollees in the early days of these camps. At a Camp NP-1 inspection dated July 21, 1938, inspectors found that enrollees worked entirely alone using carpenters' tools while supervisory carpenters built new structures. Using enrollees for skilled labor was against policy entirely after Dec. 1, 1937. If forced into such a situation, CCC administrators were to either request more funds or discontinue work entirely. Two other nearby Maryland CCC camps did not have these issues, although some had issues with projects requiring a high proportion of skilled labor. Inspectors worried that changes were necessary at Camp NP-1 or "the work will undoubtedly

¹¹¹ "Canal Boats' Horns to be Heard Again," *The Washington Post*, Jul. 12, 1939. "Restoring Canal Lockhouse," *The Washington Post*, Jul. 12, 1939. Macintosh, 36.

¹¹² Davidson and Jacobs, 66. "Inventory of Work Accomplished by CCC Camps Under the Jurisdiction of National Capital Parks"; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2844, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

¹¹³ "Water Filling Canal Again at Great Falls," *The Washington Post*, Aug 27, 1940.

prove defective." Making matters even worse, Camp NP-1 still did not have a potable water supply as of this point either, an issue the Adjutant General's office placed on highest priority. Administrators addressed each of these points swiftly. Less than a week after the initial July 21 report a new report found Camp NP-1 had an "ample" water supply from a newly drilled well of approximately 402 feet. The Adjutant General also approved a request for eight new skilled laborers – specifically carpenters, plumbers, and electricians– totaling \$5580 along with \$900 in supplies likely to further develop the water supply.¹¹⁴

The few surviving inspection reports show conditions at both camps were more than sufficient throughout their first two years. Inspectors reported kitchen facilities, food supplies, and cleanliness above average in all reports during this time period. Enrollees were responsible for basic maintenance and cleaning the camps. Reports consistently indicated work projects to be "well administered" and "in proper order." Furthermore, of the twenty-three inspected structures and services rated in August 1939, three were "superior," thirteen "excellent," seven "good", and none as either "fair" or "poor." This marked a significant improvement over the first camp inspection in October 1938 after its first month with no superior ratings, two excellent, two fair, and the rest good. One of the few reported problems filed with the two canal camps at this early point was a minor issue with the entrance road to Camp NP-1. As for the entrance road, enrollees remedied this problem by the next camp inspection, although neither the problem nor solution was readily apparent from reports.¹¹⁵ Camp conditions changed slowly toward the negative into 1940 and 1941, a change that is addressed in the final section of this chapter.

¹¹⁴ J.J. McEntee to Adjutant General, Jul. 22, 1938; C.R. Landon, Disposition Slip, Jul. 25, 1938; George Tyner, Disposition Slip, Jul. 25, 1938; General Administrative Files, Sec. 1-A 3rd Corps Area Dec. 1938 to June 1939, Box 272, Entry 118, RG 407, NACP.

¹¹⁵ Supervisor of Recreation and Land Planning Memorandum, Oct. 7, 1940; Memos and Correspondence Concerning CCC Camps, 1935-1942, Box 7, Entry 118, RG 79, NACP. Ross Abare, "Camp Inspection Report: NP-1,"

FOOD, NEWSPAPERS, RELIGION, & RECREATION

The camp mess hall was one of a few centers of life for enrollees. At Camp NP-2, all enrollees dined together for breakfast at 7 A.M. and "supper" at 5:10 P.M. Lunch (or "dinner" as it was called) was served at noon with camp assignees eating in the mess hall and canal-assigned enrollees likely dining on a "field meal" at the project site. Enrollees at these camps, like all other CCC camps, followed a military regiment for eating meals. The Army issued a field guide of menus and recipes every thirty days. Each camp mess officer was issued rations credits for use in ordering from Army depots. Field meals consisted of non-perishable foods while camp meals were usually prepared fresh by camp staff. Records for Camp NP-2 did not distinguish between camp and field meals. This possibly means that all project-assigned enrollees returned to the mess hall for lunch or camp cooks brought meals to the project site.¹¹⁶

Generally, the cooks at both Camp NP-1 and NP-2 were well-trained. The quality of the camp food supply illustrates the continued success of these canal camps as administrators regularly cited food quality as an important indicator of camp quality. For instance, inspectors reported in February 1941 that all the cooks at both camps were graduates of the Cook and Baker School at New Cumberland, PA, a vocational program used by the CCC to train new recruits in all needed kitchen duties. Cooks prepared a varied diet that included regionally-available foods like oysters and clams. Other foods included basic staples like milk, eggs, bread, and varied fruits and vegetables. Cooks also prepared at least one protein for most suppers and dinners, including meats such as bologna, pork shoulder, salmon, beef liver, corned beef, and ham. Breakfasts usually consisted of milk, eggs, bread, and a fruit, such as peaches, cherries, or pears.

Aug. 24-25, 1939; Harold Chafey, "Camp Inspection Report: NP-1," Oct. 13, 1938; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

¹¹⁶ Wilmer R. Burgess, "CCC Form 10: Food Report," Aug. 21, 1939; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. Speakman, 79.

Meats were the most expensive of all food provided – meals including meat cost \$33.89 for the entire camp on average versus \$14.18 for those without – but CCC administrators were willing to spend this money to ensure enrollees received proper nutrition. Enrollee weight gain, almost entirely due to the massive amount of food served in camps, was often cited throughout the CCC as evidence that these men's fitness and health improved greatly.¹¹⁷ A weekly meal schedule from 1941 included twenty-one meals: eight included meat while thirteen did not. Further, administrators spent as much money on dinners as breakfast and supper combined (breakfast averaged \$13.62, supper \$23.88, and dinner \$41.64). Still, as with most CCC camps, administrators worried that mess was not consistently balanced.¹¹⁸ The issue of late food deliveries once seen by Co. 333 while present at Wolf Gap resurfaced again at Cabin John. CCC inspectors found that meal plans required regular alteration because of late deliveries, non-deliveries, or low quality of meat supplies. An explanation for this problem was not given, and the excuse used at Wolf Gap, camp remoteness, did not apply here. Conditions, primarily those related to cleanliness, generally declined the longer the camps remained open and staffed according to inspection reports, but neither camp declined to the point of serious concern.¹¹⁹

Smoking tobacco was a prevalent activity amongst enrollees and accepted, even encouraged, by camp administrators. Camp newspapers joked that enrollees started every month smoking "Chesterfields, Carmels [sic], Phillip Morris, and brands of distinction" before "settling down to normalities" by the second week with "Wings, Dominoes, and Marvels." By the last week of the month, the "thoughtful and thrifty" re-rolled hand-rolled cigarette stubs out of

¹¹⁷ Maher, 98.

¹¹⁸ Ross Abare, "CCC Inspection Report: Camp NP-1," Feb. 28, 1941; Ross Abare, "CCC Inspection Report: Camp NP-2," Feb. 27, 1941, CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. Speakman, 79.

¹¹⁹ Wilmer R. Burgess, "CCC Form 10: Food Report," Aug. 21, 1939; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. Renee Corona Kolvet and Victoria Ford, *The Civilian Conservation Corps in Nevada: From Boys to Men* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006), 80. Maher, 13.

desperation before struggling with nicotine withdrawal by the final days of the month.¹²⁰ This anecdote provides a hint to the prevalence of tobacco culture at the canal camps and the relative poverty of enrollees. It also pokes fun at the immaturity of these young men who quickly burned through their monthly paycheck on cigarettes rather than budgeting themselves properly. Illustrating the extent of CCC tobacco culture, Co. 333 organized a pool (billiards) tournament while in Wilderness consisting of four different variants and prizes awarded to winners and runners-up. Winners' prizes ranged from a carton of cigarettes for some champions to a single pack for the runner-up in the Last Ball competition. Other factors that likely contributed to the enrollees' smoking habit was that the CCC furnished camp libraries with chrome smoking stands.¹²¹

Another key aspect of CCC life at the canal and throughout the nation was the company newspapers, published by about two-thirds of all camps. Administrators encouraged each individual camp to produce a newspaper for many reasons: to foster community, educate new enrollees, keep men informed on CCC policies, provide a creative outlet, and allow men interested in writing, editing, typing, and printing an avenue to receive a modest level of training (Figure 18). Only four issues of Co. 333's newspaper are known to have survived, two each from Wilderness and Cabin John. There is no indication that any comparative publication even existed for Co. 325 at Cabin John.¹²² Still, the glimpses provided by Co. 333's four issues reveal both the realities of camp life and how administrators envisioned the CCC. Like other company newspapers, Co. 333's echoed the overall ethos of the New Deal. Harmony, cooperation, and

¹²⁰ *Towpath Journal*, Mar. 31, 1939.

¹²¹ *Out of the Wilderness*, Dec. 31, 1937.

¹²² At least fourteen issues of *The Tomahawk*, Co. 325's publication while in Indian Head, MD, survived. However, since it is not known if these two Co. 325s had any enrollees overlap, these newspapers were only used to better understand the relationship between the CCC and African Americans in Maryland more broadly.

hard work were the primary themes throughout all enrollee-written articles. Camp administrators also penned essays most often to explain to enrollees what could be achieved through working together toward a common goal. Motivational essays appear throughout, such as "Questions for You" where William Green, an enrollee leader and music instructor, posed several hypothetical questions (e.g. "Do you have any object in life?") alongside song lyrics (e.g. "Don't Give Up") meant to inspire a presumptively dejected audience. Achievements were also given prominence, such as when someone received a first aid certificate or left the CCC for full-time employment. Editors also dedicated several pages to historical essays on Co. 333, the CCC overall, and on the life of African Americans within the Public Works Administration. Newspapers also provided enrollees a space for public announcements, future scheduling, educational programming, and reminders about camp rules and protocol.



Figure 18 - Typing class, Danville, IL. National Archives at College Park.

Christian worship was also a cultural cornerstone to CCC camps at the canal. Three spiritual advisors frequented Co. 333, all of whom were likely African American men. Both Chaplain William Marsh, U.S. Army Reserve, and Reverend Walter Toms of Washington D.C.

traveled to the camps to lead enrollees in religious services. Chaplain Marsh visited the camp biweekly while Reverend Toms held discussion groups and Bible classes every Sunday. Rather than traditional preaching or sermons, both religious leaders held open discussion sessions for enrollees.¹²³ Another chaplain by the name of "Roberts" also visited the camp regularly although the chaplain's activities were not readily apparent.¹²⁴ Chaplain Marsh also visited Co. 333's men while they were stationed in Wilderness as well while another local leader, Reverend Murchison of New Site Baptist Church in Fredericksburg, led sermons about once a month.¹²⁵ The connection between Co. 333 and Chaplain Marsh is significant in that his presence illustrates a connection between company and spiritual leaders that involved significant movement and travel for the chaplain. Chaplain Marsh signed on to be a spiritual leader with the CCC in 1935 and as of August 1939 served nine camps including the canal camps, Gettysburg, Beltsville, Brandywine, Fredericksburg, VA, and others. Even though Chaplain Marsh was in the Army Reserves, there is no indication that he was being paid to visit Co. 333. As of June 1941, the CCC employed 154 full-time and 189 part-time clergymen with another roughly 500 unpaid volunteers serving the spiritual needs of enrollees. According to both Salmond and the 1942 *Youth in the CCC* study, clergy were of "limited ability and made little attempt to adjust the level of their services to the enrollees" and "put more stress on preaching than on personal contact," thus making "their work in the camps not as effective as it could have been."¹²⁶ From surviving reports, it seems that all clergymen serving Co. 333 were exceptions to this conclusion. For instance, Chaplain Marsh regularly gathered African American enrollees from camps near to Washington D.C. for baptismal ceremonies. The Chaplain baptized approximately 175 enrollees

¹²³ John Gholson, "Religious Activities," *Towpath Journal*, Jun. 29, 1939.

¹²⁴ *Towpath Journal*, Mar. 31, 1939.

¹²⁵ *Out of the Wilderness*, Mar. 31, 1938.

¹²⁶ Salmond, Ch. 8. Kenneth Holland and Frank E. Hill, *Youth in the CCC* (Washington: American Council of Education, 1942), 214.

in August 1939 at the Francis Junior High School swimming pool with at least 500 others in attendance. Also noted in newspaper articles was the presence of Archie Spangler, a local white man, who had been converted and baptized in order to assist the local Gospel Mission in CCC outreach. This Francis Junior High ceremony was the second of its kind led by Chaplain Marsh. The first took place at Mount Moriah Baptist Church in 1938 with 150 baptisms and a third ceremony involving 110 enrollees with about fifty coming from Cabin John took place in October 1941. This does not sound like ineffective spiritual leadership in the least.¹²⁷

These CCC men were also afforded the time and facilities to pursue their own recreational activities. Camp inspection reports indicated that enrollees participated in a range of recreational activities: baseball, basketball, billiards, swimming, ping pong, wrestling, boxing, and card games (Figured 19 & 20). Administrators screened films weekly, although the specifics of these films were not made clear in reports, and led groups of men to Washington D.C. on "twice weekly recreation trips." Men from Camp NP-2 (and likely some from Camp NP-1) traveled to use Twelfth Street YMCA facilities, an African American facility with which some men were likely already familiar.¹²⁸ Pool facilities were the primary draw of the YMCA. Company 333 visited every Friday evening and organized themselves into competitive teams. Camp newspapers hinted at some sort of regular competition as Thomas Christian encouraged his fellow enrollees to come out and "join the Sharks and Whales."¹²⁹ Educational Advisor Long organized some swimming competitions with a clear ulterior motive – to find the most competent lifeguards in the camp. After a series of river and pool competitions, Long took four

¹²⁷ "To Baptize 175 in Swimming Pool," *The Washington Post*, Aug. 27, 1939. "150 CCC Boys Baptized Here in Pool as Spirituals Ring," *The Washington Post*, Aug. 28, 1939. "Baptize 100 CCC Enrollees at Mt. Moriah Bapt. Church," *Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), Oct. 11, 1941.

¹²⁸ Davidson and Jacobs, 65. Camp Inspection Report - NP-2, (28 February-1 March 1941); Camp Inspection Report - NP-1, (2 February 1942); CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

¹²⁹ *Towpath Journal*, Mar. 31, 1939.

men (Robert Welch, Thomas Jackson, Henry Jefferson, and Silas Samuels) to the YMCA for a race. Jefferson and Samuels were the top two, so Long sent those men off to a five day life guard training program at Company 1360, another African American CCC camp in Fort Keede.¹³⁰



Figure 19 - Enrollees boxing, unknown location. National Archives at College Park.

¹³⁰ Amos Custis, "Sports," *Towpath Journal*, Jun. 30, 1939.



Figure 20 - Enrollees boxing, unknown location. National Archives at College Park.

Long also served as the team's head basketball coach and successfully campaigned for the construction of a baseball diamond, further buttressing the importance of the education program and his own importance as a leader within the camp. Boasting basketball uniforms that they believed to be some of the best out of the entire CCC, each enrollee-player also wore a warm-up sweatshirt with the number 333 sewn onto the front. Men from the camp traveled often to play other basketball teams representing other African American CCC camps. The Co. 333 basketball team played at least six games in their debut 1938-39 basketball season and competed against their immediate neighbors Co. 325, Co. 2317 (Bedford, PA), Co. 2314 (Beltsville, MD), and three other unnamed African American camp teams. Company basketball teams also played against local high schools on occasion, although the details of these events were not

documented.¹³¹ By Camp NP-2's first spring in Cabin John, Long convinced other administrators to allot time for constructing a baseball diamond (see Figure 21). Enrollees cleared out a field of all weeds, trees, and debris so as to form a ball field on the northwest corner of Camp NP-2 about fifty feet away from the towpath. A dirt infield was even packed out of earth hauled from nearby. As of June 1939, the stated goal was for Co. 333 to have the best baseball diamond of all CCC camps in the region.¹³² According to the company newspaper, the diamond's completion meant baseball became perhaps the new favorite sport amongst enrollees. Each barrack formed their own team consisting of between ten and fourteen men (full rosters are listed in Appendix B) and, as of summer 1939, each of the four barracks teams planned on competing against other company teams in the surrounding area. Co. 333's newspaper offered a cheeky challenge from the "Triple Threes," as the barracks teams nicknamed themselves, to nearby African American camps.¹³³ Unlike basketball, there is no evidence canal company teams played against locals even though other white companies in the region certainly did.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Thomas Christian, "Sports," *Towpath Journal*, 31 Mar. 1939.

¹³² James Carey, "Camp Improvement," *Towpath Journal*, Jun. 30, 1939.

¹³³ Amos Custis, "Sports," *Towpath Journal*, Jun. 30, 1938.

¹³⁴ A complaint letter filed in the Adjutant General's office state the baseball club from Company 360 in Boonsboro, MD failed to appear for an arranged game with the Blair Base Ball Club out of Martinsburg, WV. The Blair club requested they be reimbursed for \$6.03 in travel expenses from the CCC. P.L. Hoover to CCC Headquarters, Jul. 14, 1939; General Administrative Files, Sec. 1-A 3rd Corps Area Dec. 1938 to June 1939, Box 272, Entry 118, RG 407, NACP.



Figure 23 - Breeze Hill Camp baseball team, NY. National Archives at College Park.

Beyond these sports, enrollees also participated in physical combat sports, musical performances, and dramatic arts. Evidence of these activities all comes from Co. 333 newspapers from Wilderness, but it can likely be assumed that the company brought these activities along with them to Cabin John. As for boxing, the Co. 333 boxing squad squared off against Camp MP-3 (Camp Chancellorsville in Fredericksburg) in early 1938 and won three out of four matches with a return match scheduled for February 7, 1938. This successful outing was followed up with an inter-barrack boxing event organized by Long with enrollees serving as referee, announcer, time keepers, and judges. Other administrators, namely Capt. Poindexter and Lt. Korsteria, encouraged inter-barracks boxing events believing them to be good for physical fitness and morale. Inter-barracks wrestling events also took place at about the same time but no details were ever recorded.

The arts played a role in camp life and enrollees regularly performed for one another. While in Wilderness again, Co. 333 had at least twenty-eight musical performances by enrollees on some evenings with full song and performer lists in the camp newspaper.¹³⁵ At least some enrollees also played instruments at camp that they likely brought along with them as part of

¹³⁵ *Out of the Wilderness*, Dec. 31, 1937.

their personal effects. Some probably did not play so well, as evidenced by newspapers' mocking of Claudius Greene when he "goes around camp every night with a brass pipe in his mouth making funny noises," but obviously some played well enough to perform ably for one another.¹³⁶ Co. 333 also performed a series of one act plays for their peers in December 1937 that built toward larger productions. John Gholson and Amos Custis took the lead in the play *A Night on the Western Front*, a comical act "concerning two privates on patrol duty during the World War" referred to in camp newspapers as the most popular amongst enrollees, with Oliver Morgan, George Barbour, and Frank White also appearing. This same group developed a two act play to be performed the following year entitled *The Way Out*. This group of young thespians was under the direction of C. Rushton Long. Co. 333 also hosted dances in Wilderness. Administrators brought in an orchestra from Charlottesville, the Sampson Happy Pals, to perform and invited guests from Fredericksburg, Orange, Washington D.C., and the Shenandoah Valley area. From reports, it's not clear if any of these guests were women, but either way all guests dined on ice cream and cake in the mess hall afterwards.¹³⁷ Some lighthearted joking in company newspapers suggest the men generally got along, but some regional differences were readily apparent when it came to dancing. For example, an anonymous author nicknamed "The Surveyor" poked fun at "the camp's jitterbug No. 1" William Allen who suddenly stopped dancing once "the Baltimore boys" arrived in camp, presumably because they were more experienced dancers and Allen contracted a sudden bit of nervousness. A number of enrollees – perhaps as high as one-third – joined a swing dance club. Most of whom were from the streets "14th and U" or "7th and T" in Washington D.C., both within the Shaw neighborhood. Shaw, at

¹³⁶ *Towpath Journal*, Jun. 30, 1938.

¹³⁷ *Out of the Wilderness*, Dec. 31, 1937.

the time, was known primarily as the locus of African American cultural life within the city especially during the 1920s "Black Broadway" era.¹³⁸

EDUCATION & AGENCY (1938-1940)

Education was of exceptional importance to the canal camps. As seen with recreational activities, C. Rushton Long served as nearly every leadership role at once – coach, organizer, director, and so on – and inspectors regularly praised the effect his educational programming had on enrollees. The CCC consistently invested more money in the canal camp educational programs, for instance expanding the Camp NP-1 education building in 1939 to match the larger structure present at Camp NP-2. The CCC hired fourteen African American men to fulfill these duties in 1934, but by 1940 virtually every African American CCC camp had an African American man working as an educational advisor. The NAACP viewed this as a victory by successfully forcing a new government agency to actually fulfill the non-discrimination-in-hiring amendment drafted by Representative De Priest. Most camps categorized educational programs in one of two categories: mass formations or volunteer studies. The former primarily consisted of training required for the effective completion of work projects, such as safety, forestry, physical education, or health. The latter included a range of education activities from English to Ancient History to the study of the Bible. Specifics were up to each camp educational officer.¹³⁹ In this way, the canal camps were no different from other African American CCC camps, but Long's

¹³⁸ "The Surveyor", *Towpath Journal*, Jun. 30, 1938. Derek Hyra, *Race, Class, and Politics in the Cappuccino City* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), 17, 84.

¹³⁹ William I. Zirkle, "Educational Activity Report," Feb. 25, 1935; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

extensive programming certainly set Co. 333 apart from both African American and white CCC camp counterparts.¹⁴⁰

C. Rushton Long – an African American college graduate and Camp NP-2's Educational Advisor – was the primary leader for enrollees at Camp NP-2. The primary reasons for this were Long's capability, the popularity of his educational and recreational programs, and because, according to the assessment of CCC Camp Inspector Ross Abare, Camp NP-2 was insufficiently staffed with supervisors, thus allowing Long to occupy a leadership space unavailable to most education advisors.¹⁴¹ The CCC was lucky to have Long, who came from a family of educators, philanthropists, and charitable people. Long's father Charles was a graduate of the Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) and founded several trade schools in the greater Philadelphia area. C. Rushton Long himself graduated from Bates College in 1932 with honors as the President of the Phil-Hellenic Greek Society and a member of the Reportorial Staff of the student newspaper.¹⁴² After his time in the CCC, Long returned to Philadelphia as the assistant director of the Booker T. Trade School, where his father Charles served as director. The elder Long established the trade school in 1947 and modeled it on a similar school he founded after World War I explicitly to teach African American veterans a broad range of skills in tailoring, shoe repair, and upholstery. Approximately 600 signed up for classes in its first year and attendance would eventually swell to a peak of 900. The trade school closed in 1964 because of a combination of the elder Long's failing health and difficulties finding qualified faculty members. Still, even at an age of 85 the elder Long dedicated himself to bettering the lives of less-fortunate

¹⁴⁰ Michael Shane Hoak, "The Men in Green: African Americans and the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942" (master's thesis, College of William and Mary, 2002), 38.

¹⁴¹ Ross Abare, "Camp Inspection Report: Camp NP-2," August 25-26, 1938; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

¹⁴² *The Bates Student* (Bates College, Lewiston, Maine), Mar. 25, 1931.

Philadelphians by also offering the family farm to the state for juvenile rehabilitation, a project that C. Rushton Long helped direct. Having his father as a mentor, it is clear that C. Rushton Long would have been a well-trained and especially motivated educational advisor for the CCC.¹⁴³

In describing the men of Co. 333, Long reported the majority as in dire need – exactly the type of men the CCC was designed to help. Long believed most enrollees "entered camp with no objective in life and with a spirit of defeatism," but thanks to the CCC these same men now possessed a modest education, vocational training, and – perhaps most importantly to New Deal administrators – a "wholesome perspective and attitude on life." From conquering illiteracy to applying to college, Long presented a succinct and convincing argument that the CCC delivered illiterate, depressed men unto the world as empowered skilled laborers. Echoing the lessons seen in trade schools like his fathers', Long preached the necessity of cooperation, concentration, and dedication to a greater good. Long never explicitly connected such concepts to race in camp newspapers, but the connection to racial uplift ideology is obvious. For instance, in a guest editorial entitled "Cooperation" Long encouraged enrollees to "[take] time out to improve your mind in order that you might be a more helpful citizen while in Camp and thus learn how to be of more service to your community following the end of your enrollment period." Economic relief came for these men and their families but so too did a steady diet of civics lessons.¹⁴⁴

An important factor that made Long a leader of these young men came from his pedagogical approach grounded in meeting specific enrollees needs as opposed to telling

¹⁴³ "Hampton Tailoring Director Aids in Organizing Program," *The New York Age*, Jul. 3, 1948. "William E. Holmes Gets Philadelphia Newspaper Honor," *The Progress* (Clearfield, PA), Feb. 27, 1952. "Farm Offered to help Delinquent Boys," *The Mercury* (Pottstown, PA), Apr. 1, 1968.

¹⁴⁴ *Out of the Wilderness*, Dec. 31, 1937.

enrollees what needs they had. Long personally interviewed enrollees face-to-face, asked them to fill out written questionnaires, provided a two-week orientation course, and distributed a five-page "General Guide to New Enrollees" to everyone upon their arrival. The questionnaire asked enrollees for basic information alongside unique questions such as church membership, club or lodge membership, arts clubs membership, educational interests, favorite magazines and newspapers, favorite sports, and what sports the enrollee wished to learn. He provided a concise yet thorough listing of overall CCC objectives, camp history, buildings, important personnel, the general routine of daily events, and encouragement to sign up for the educational program. The camp routine as outlined by Long was as follows:

- 6:00 AM: First Bugle, get out of bed
- 6:30 AM: Reville, Flag Ceremony
- 7:00 AM: Breakfast
- 7:30 AM: General clean-up of camp buildings and grounds
- 7:50 AM: Work Call
- 12:00 Noon: Dinner
- 4:00 PM: Return from work project
- 5:00 PM: Retreat, Flag Ceremony
- 5:10 PM: Supper
- 6:00-9:00 PM: Classes
- 9:00 PM: Lights extinguished in barracks
- 10:00 PM: General lights extinguished

Long concluded his pamphlet with a few "helpful hints" to further acclimate enrollees. Among these were several suggestions to keep both barracks and body clean (rewards were given to the cleanest and neatest dressed enrollee), practice good safety, and use leisure time as an opportunity to better oneself with classes and activity programs. Ever the long-term goal-oriented administrator, Long also made sure to discover each enrollee's goal for immediate post-

CCC life and long-term career aspirations. The educational program offered all the basics of CCC education, but also incorporated these surveys to guide future course offerings.¹⁴⁵



Figure 24 - CCC Enrollees flag ceremony (reville), unknown location. National Archives at College Park.

¹⁴⁵ Patrick J. King, "Camp Inspection Report: Camp MP-4," Mar. 3, 1938; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

Long also created and directed educational programming at Camp NP-2 while Camp NP-1's programs were directed by Earl H. McCrary, A. Robinson, and A.F. Williams at various points (McCrary was active in October 1938, Robinson by August 1939, and Williams by February 1942). From inspection reports, Camp NP-1's programs were just as thorough as Long's, but surviving documentation for Long's activities are more detailed. It is likely that Long's programming served as a model for Co. 325's given regular changes in Camp NP-1 personnel, Long's more extensive activities, and that the CCC treated the two camps as a single entity for administrative purposes. Instruction ranged from the traditionally academic – such as Practical English and History – to vocational and professional job training including courses in Truck Driving, Cooking, and Journalism. A full list of courses, instructors, and their titles can be seen in Appendix D. From the list of instructors, it is clear that teaching was taken seriously in Co. 333 with fifteen different instructors across twenty-six classes. Instruction took many forms in what today might be called experiential learning. Enrollees received instruction via "demonstrations, illustrations, talks, lectures, and discussions" before continuing their learning in the field. Photographs from the National Archives and Records Administration reveal men from Co. 325 engaged in experiential education, such as using woodworking equipment to make camp structures. Later photos from 1942 show men taking a military vehicles auto mechanics class at a school near Rockville (see Figures 25 & 26).



Figure 25 - Camp NP-1 Woodworking Shop, National Archives at College Park. Photo by W.J. Mead.



Figure 26 - From NACP: "No. 1067 - Camp NP-1. National Defense Training - Auto Mechanics Class: Negro enrollees from Camp NP-1 are engaged in various activities of a national defense auto mechanics training class in the school building near Rockville, MD." Feb. 8, 1942. Photo by W.J. Mead.

To find instructors for vocational courses, Long recruited men employed with Camp NP-2 as Foreman, CCC or Army administrators, and sometimes experienced enrollees themselves. For academic classes, Long either taught these himself or hired teachers, usually women, who were recent college graduates. Long traveled to Washington D.C. early in Camp NP-2's life span in search of an appropriate instructor for academic classes and ultimately recruited Pansy Williams, a recent Howard University graduate. Ms. Williams taught courses in African American History, Practical Mathematics, Reading, Writing, and English to enrollees. According to the camp newspaper, Williams was perhaps the most popular of all camp instructors who spoke fondly of her time as an instructor. She wrote in a published letter to the camp newspaper

that enrollees were "considerate, cooperative, thoughtful, and even willing to have a woman tell them a thing or two." Women were common enough as instructors at CCC camps, but experiences varied and little is known of Pansy Williams beyond her brief essay in the Co. 333 newspaper. Some other highlighted examples of instructors were enrollee John Gholson's carpentry class, wherein most students constructed locker boxes for personal use. With Gholson's guidance, enrollee Leroy Thomas built a fourteen foot long boat that was included in a University of Maryland exhibit of CCC products.¹⁴⁶

Safety was taken seriously in Co. 333 as Long developed an expansive safety education program. All administrators took a hands-on approach by personally teaching safety classes alongside educational films and close foreman supervision. Long boasted in his reports that there has not been a single "lost time accident since May 1934" at Co. 333, which he considered a remarkable statistic. As an example, eighty-four Co. 333 enrollees, nearly half of those currently on-site, earned their Standard First Aid Certificates through a course offered by the American National Red Cross in early 1939 with another 152 enrolled in the CCC-led first aid class. Camp administrators were so proud of this fact that newspaper editors dedicated an issue of Co. 333's newspaper to those CCC enrollees who "received proficiency" in first aid. Camp Surgeon Donald Singe's editorial outlined the goals of this program: "The work and teachings you men have acquired...is the building of a broad and firm foundation...give evidence to the world that you are wiser, happier, stronger physically and mentally, more educated today than you were yesterday."¹⁴⁷ Safety training provided more than first aid with courses offered in preventing and

¹⁴⁶ *Towpath Journal*, Jun. 32, 1939.

¹⁴⁷ *Idem*.

combating forest fires.¹⁴⁸ Enrollees regularly patrolled their stretch of the canal as well in the interest of security and to ensure the stability of ongoing canal work projects. In one instance, a CCC patrol discovered a man living in a makeshift hut along the canal. It was quickly discovered the man was an AWOL White House policeman who abandoned his post and likely suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.¹⁴⁹



Figure 27 - First Aid class, Dr. E.D. Kimbrall, Co. 2694, Harrison, MI. National Archives at College Park.

Camps also held commencement exercises "with all the aspects of a secondary school graduation" for both scholarly and vocational achievement to provide enrollees with a sense of accomplishment. Enrollees received educational certificates from Long once they successfully completed 144 hours of coursework. Director Fechner attended a Co. 333 graduation ceremony in June 1939 and presented forty-four educational certificates, thirty-five "proficiency" certificates in cooking, carpentry, painting, stenography, and truck-driving, and a "character and

¹⁴⁸ *Out of the Wilderness*, Mar. 31, 1938. Raymond Sydansk, "Forest Protection Requirements Report for the C&O Canal Recreational Waterway Georgetown to Seneca Section," Office of National Capital Parks, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, (April 1940).

¹⁴⁹ "White House Guard, Missing 8 Days, Found," *The Washington Post*, Jul. 7, 1939.

citizenship" award to Robert Barksdale of Washington D.C. Camp Surgeon Singe presented ninety-one First Aid Certificates and nine Special First Aid Medals for the top achievers.¹⁵⁰ Fechner spoke briefly, along with religious leaders and Long, on the importance of the education program for ensuring the success of attendees in their post-CCC life. Those in attendance were reminded by speakers that the CCC was merely the first step toward becoming well-rounded, engaged, and productive citizens. Long continually drove this point home by instructing graduates that "men receiving certificates must not stop but continue to improve along all lines – education, work – and good clean recreation."¹⁵¹ About a month later Co. 325 held their own commencement with Robert Fechner in attendance again. Speeches were highly similar to those at Co. 333. Dr. Marshall instructed graduates on how to "choose a vocation" through "struggle and triumph." Fechner briefly reminded enrollees to view manual labor as empowering, and never degrading, work.¹⁵²

From camp reports, educational programming benefitted a large number of men, but it is difficult to ascertain exactly how many. Of course, the commencement listings suggested the vast majority of Co. 333 completed programs created by Long, but camp inspection reports are not clear on exact enrollment or pedagogical outcomes. For example, a report from August 25, 1939 indicated men learned to read and write, developed vocational skills, and utilized their CCC-provided education to secure jobs or trade school admission. However, the report also indicated that just 34 of the 172 enrollees attended programs daily across the five nights per week dedicated to education at Camp NP-2. Attendance at Camp NP-1 seems to have been much

¹⁵⁰ These nine men were Frank White, Morris Langston, William Murden, Carl Palmer, Amos Custis, LeRoy Thomas, William Green, Robert Barksdale, and Claudius Greene. Claudius Greene, "Notes on Commencement," *Towpath Journal*, Jun. 29, 1939.

¹⁵¹ *Towpath Journal*, Jun. 29, 1939. "Fechner Confers Certificates at CCC Commencement," *The Washington Post*, Jun. 22, 1939.

¹⁵² "600 Attend CCC Graduation at Cabin John, MD," *Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), Jul. 22, 1939.

better with 89 of the 181 attending across a three-day academic week. The confusion in these reports comes from the lack of clarification as to how many nights a week each enrollee attended classes. It is possible that just 34 enrollees attended class at Camp NP-2, but it's more likely that number represents attendance for just one night out of the week with different enrollees each night. This means that significantly more than 34 enrollees attended classes although the exact number is unknown. The same logic applies to Camp NP-1 attendance numbers as well. Long and his counterparts at Camp NP-1 also reported that enrollees regularly used camp library facilities but did not report how enrollees used these facilities or usage numbers. Both canal camps maintained a modest library of about 700 books along with current magazines with a 300 square foot reading room furnished with "Chrome Leather chairs, settees, chrome smoking stands, floor lamps, and attractive pictures on the walls." The newspaper *Happy Days*, an agency-produced publication targeting new enrollees as its audience, was also in stock with twenty issues in total. Several enrollees subscribed personally to daily and weekly newspapers. The reading room was open to all enrollees and primarily saw use during what little leisure time they enjoyed in the evenings and on weekends.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ Davidson and Jacobs, 65-6. C. Rushton Long, "CCC Camp Instructional Report," Aug. 25, 1939; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.



Figure 28 - CCC Library, Co. 1278, Beaver Dams, NY. National Archives at College Park.

Before establishing the educational program at Cabin John, Long oversaw a more modest program at Wilderness. A little more often than once a week Long organized a job training for enrollees on a variety of subjects like landscaping, carpentry, blacksmithing, and transplanting trees, all subjects useful for conservation work. From newspapers, Long hired two female instructors – Mrs. R.L. Terrell and Miss J.E. Armstead – on Works Progress Association assignment from Orange, Virginia to help instruct an unknown number of classes. Almost certainly though, these women taught courses in varied high school subjects like English and Math.¹⁵⁴ Even though the Wilderness program was less elaborate, Long still managed to offer twenty-eight unique educational activities including some with multiple different paths (such as "Job Training" having options in carpentry, landscaping, and relocating trees). Long also included a course listed as "American & Negro History," something that the vast majority of enrollees would have never encountered as African American history was not taught in the vast majority of African American schools, not to mention that a large number enrollees did not complete their secondary education. The inclusion of an African American History course hints

¹⁵⁴ *Out of the Wilderness*, Mar. 31, 1938.

at Long's desire to form enrollees into not just productive citizens, but also to form these men into productive *African American* citizens. One would never know Co. 333 was an African American company from surviving materials, so Long's inclusion of such a course suggests he engaged in other unknown activities that could be characterized as racial uplift.¹⁵⁵

As a final note, a camp inspection report from February 28, 1941 names "Sutton T. Jett" as a Senior Foreman and Historian at Camp NP-2. The inspector transposed the name and this entry actually refers to Thomas Sutton Jett, future Director of the National Capital Region of the NPS. Jett accepted a temporary NPS position based out of Fredericksburg in 1933 before transferring to Washington D.C. in 1938. The timing that made his path similar to that of Co. 333 was likely coincidental, but Jett was assigned to work at the canal. This transfer was part of a new project where Jett was to act as lead in evaluating the canal for potential in future park development. It is likely that Jett interacted with CCC enrollees regularly throughout this period as he developed recommendations for interpretation along the towpath primarily consisting of "almost a hundred legends," meaning interpretive signs, along the canal's first twenty-two miles. Jett's reports also recommended the continuation and expansion of CCC work as it would help facilitate what he deemed to be the best course of action: re-watering the entire length of canal and offer boat tours to the public. CCC men were integral parts of these first NPS tours of the C&O Canal by leading mules along the towpath, manning the bow, and operating the canal locks. There is no evidence that these men led tours at any point, but their physical actions provided a type of living history of canal operation for visitors.¹⁵⁶ Jett led perhaps the first official tours of the canal via mule-drawn boat in 1941. These tours were aboard the *Canal Clipper* barge

¹⁵⁵ Patrick J. King, "Camp Inspection Report: Camp MP-4," Mar. 3, 1938; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

¹⁵⁶ Sirna, 62-3. Mackintosh, 41, 181.

and traveled from Georgetown to Lock 5 and back (Figures 29, 30, 31, 32, & 33). World War II cut into Jett's plans as he enlisted in the Navy, only returning to the NPS in 1950 in the regional office.¹⁵⁷



Figure 29 - Back reads "Canal Barge Trip." The NPS excursion boat *Canal Clipper* with a CCC worker holding its mule with a girl astride, summer 1941. National Archives at College Park.

¹⁵⁷ Joseph D. Whitaker, "Thomas Sutton Jett, 78, Ex-Park Service Official, Dies," *The Washington Post*, Jan. 18, 1989. C&O Canal Association, "Canal Loses Three Persons Important to History," *Along the Towpath* 21.2 (April 1989), 15. Macintosh, 41.



Figure 30 - The NPS excursion boat *Canal Clipper* entering Lock 5, summer 1941. National Archives at College Park.



Figure 31 - From NACP: "C&O Canal (Proposed) National Park. Mule-Powered Outing – Within a few niblick shots of the Nation's Capitol dome, nature lovers find recreation from early May through late October on this mule-powered barge. The barge makes regular scheduled runs up and down the lower end of Chesapeake and Ohio Canal in just primitive surroundings such as these. Credit: U.S. Department of the Interior" The NPS excursion boat *Canal Clipper* with its mule and driver, 1942.



Figure 32 - From NACP: "Nature and Historical Barge Town of C&O Canal Recreational Waterway" The NPS excursion boat *Canal Clipper* with three CCC workers accompanying its mule, summer 1941.



Figure 33 - Canal Clipper I with CCC enrollees, c. 1941 CCC workers open a gate at Lock 5 while another worker clears debris from the pocket to allow the NPS excursion boat Canal Clipper to pass, summer 1941. National Archives at College Park.

DECLINE (1940-42)

"Is reoccupancy of camp planned within one year? We hope so." Ray M. Schenck, Field Supervisor, late 1941

While there is no clear point of decline, it is certain that things began to change for the worse at canal camps starting in 1940. That year's camp inspection reports documented more problems in camp than usual, as was commonplace nationwide for camps once they were two or three years old. This is not to say that camps rapidly declined or that camps were in a state of total disarray – critical problems were short-lived and usually remedied – but these were issues that were not present in the preceding years at the C&O Canal, in Wilderness, or in Wolf Gap. Inspection reports that once never checked a single category below "good" on their five-point

scale now rated about 25% as "fair," which is certainly a decline in just two years.¹⁵⁸ These reports further revealed a general slovenliness throughout. An emergency phone call to the Adjutant General's office followed up by a memo reported that "mess is not properly balanced, especially breakfast; camps were found to be unclean; morale of boys not good; the lights in the barracks were inadequate...", a far cry from the efficient camps of early 1939. Perhaps the most dramatic problem came when an anonymous whistleblower letter dated June 28, 1941 arrived at the CCC Director's office accusing Co. 325's foreman of drinking on the job. The letter claimed enrollees feared for their safety. An investigation led officials to Charles W. Williams, an AWOL enrollee from Germantown, Pennsylvania who was anticipating an eventual dishonorable discharge for desertion. Williams had been in Cabin John for less than a month before being punished for refusal to obey orders, assaulting another enrollee with a brick, and then abandoning his post – not the sort of resume to give his whistleblower letter much credibility. Given William's background and supposed behavior, Ross Abare dismissed the complaint out of hand. As Sirna pointed out, the dismissive response to such a complaint is still indicative of another type of tension within the camp. Administrators viewed Williams as well as a large number of enrollees as "lazy" or "unwilling to work," something that likely was not entirely true and carries a significant amount of racial bias. A few interviewed enrollees were a bit surprising though, such as Raymond Swann, a skilled mechanic who, per his request, switched from the canal project to be a mechanic's assistant only to desert his post for no clear reason. One could interpret these desertion reports at face value – certainly some CCC men were lazy at times – but more likely the investigator penned his report through the lens of racial bias. With CCC administrators, such as Director Fechner, none-too-fond of African American camps, it is not

¹⁵⁸ This scale was in descending order: Superior, Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor.

surprising to see such language in an investigative report.¹⁵⁹ Some of the blame for this does lie with the administrators themselves however. For instance, Camp NP-1 and other African American camps in the region did not have mattresses long enough to fit bed frames. Camp administrators instructed enrollees to "roll up a blanket to fill the space" for months before Charles Kenlan, CCC Assistant to the Director, instructed the supply depot to correct the issue.¹⁶⁰

Regional CCC networks were also to blame for the woes at Cabin John by failing to provide adequate supplies. The central repair shop was a common cause for headache with canal camp administrators regularly reporting serious delays in mechanical repairs and general incompetence. For instance, October 1940 saw such a total failure in repairing a piece of heavy equipment that NPS officials found eleven problems still present upon its return to the camp. Even basic mechanical issues were present like an improperly assembled clutch with missing parts. Further, twelve trucks awaited repairs and a shortage of tires, batteries, and light bulbs threatened to further ground the rest of the fleet, approximately four Army trucks and thirty-five technical service trucks between the two canal camps. An Army truck had been sitting in the shop for about five months and a dump truck had been waiting for 185 days, delays lengthy enough to merit serious concerns by the NPS.¹⁶¹ It should be noted though that by 1942, however the facilities themselves at Camp NP-1 were more than sufficient, even "very good" by

¹⁵⁹ Sirna, 80-81. Roy A. Wisler, "Investigation Report: Camp NP-1, Company 325, Cabin John, Maryland," November 1, 1939; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. Salmond. Ross Abare, "Camp Inspection Report: NP-1," August 25, 1939; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

¹⁶⁰ Sirna, 78-79. Ross Abare, "Camp Inspection Report: Camp NP-1," Feb. 27-28, 1941; E.W.McC., "Memorandum," February 27, 1941; Ross Abare to Charles Kenlan, July 7, 1941; Charles Kenlan to Adjutant General, Nov. 6, 1940; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

¹⁶¹ E.W. McC., Memorandum, Feb. 27, 1941; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. Charles H. Gerner memo, Jan. 21, 1941; Charles H. Gerner memo, Jan. 2, 1941; Charles H. Gerner memo, Oct. 21, 1940; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2844, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

inspection standards, with no clear explanation for the positive changes. Camp NP-2 had no enrollees on site at this point so inspections were moot.

Like others throughout the nation, desertion also plagued these camps from the start. Co. 325's track record was especially troubling to administrators with 100 out of a 214 (46.7%) total discharges from July 1938 to June 1939 recorded as "administrative desertion." Charles Kenlan took specific attention to these numbers in September 1939 and requested the Adjutant General's office investigate the matter. This investigation found nothing out of the ordinary at Camp NP-1 and blamed desertion on the "inadaptability to camp life of the individual enrollees concerned."¹⁶² Still, numbers this high were certainly a statistical anomaly as a 20% national desertion rate troubled Director Fechner greatly at about the same time. The cause for such desertions was fleeting though as a long-term study from 1937 to 1940 by the Selection Division found no singular cause and that desertion differed from man-to-man. Some cited poor camp leadership, others claimed recruiters gave them a false impression of CCC life, and still others cited homesickness. By the end of the study's time frame, fear of being drafted into what seemed an inevitable war with Nazi Germany also drove men away. The final cause of desertions by 1940 though was economic in nature – men were simply finding jobs.

Starting in the spring of 1941, the CCC enacted a new camp reduction policy where administrators were forced to reduce the size of the CCC by ten percent. Camp reductions were nothing new as similar reductions were enacted in 1938, 1939, and 1940, but this one appeared different. The previous year, Congress rejected a reduction request and actually increased the agency's budget. In 1941, however, the national defense program ramped up in anticipation of

¹⁶² Charles Kenlan to Adjutant General, Sep. 21, 1939; M.J. Conway to Headquarters Third Corps Area, Sep. 21, 1939; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

America's potential entry into war. The recruitment of young men was a challenge for national defense programs, so the government mandated a CCC reduction starting on April 1, 1941 from 1,500 camps to 1,100. The majority of those camps cut from the CCC were transferred to various military agencies.¹⁶³ In response, all administrative regions were ordered to set a priority of camps for when cuts would be made. In July 1941, National Capital Parks set their priority for surviving camps in the following order: NP-6-VA (Fort Hunt, Alexandria), NP-1-MD (C&O Canal, Cabin John), NP-7-DC, NP-16-VA (Oronoco), NP-14-DC, NP-2-MD (C&O Canal, Cabin John), and NP-4-MD.¹⁶⁴ There was no clear reason why administrators favored Camp NP-1 over Camp NP-2.

Most scholars of the New Deal argue that programs, the CCC included, came to an end because American entry into World War II meant the mobilization of labor for the war effort. This was only partially true at Cabin John. Camp NP-2 closed on October 15, 1941, still well before America's entry to war.¹⁶⁵ After its closing, CCC administrators requested that Camp NP-2 be dismantled for an unstated purpose, but Irving Root, the superintendent of National Capital Parks, pushed back believing the C&O Canal projects justified retention of the camp for future CCC occupancy. All buildings were in the highest rated condition and administrators believed Camp NP-2 would be occupied again within the year. According to Root, Camp NP-1 had more than enough work on its own and believed another company would soon be assigned to Camp NP-2.¹⁶⁶ The outbreak of World War II crushed any hope for a Camp NP-2 revival. Plans to annex former CCC properties to military agencies took form just ten days after the U.S.

¹⁶³ Paige, Ch. 1.

¹⁶⁴ Lawrence F. Murray to Stanton G. Smith, Jul. 8, 1941; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2844, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

¹⁶⁵ Ray Schenck Memo, Nov. 15, 1941; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2844, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

¹⁶⁶ Ray Schenck, "Existing Unoccupied Camp Report," Oct. 1941; Irving Root to Stanton Smith, Oct. 27, 1941; Ray Schenck to Irving Root, Oct. 23, 1941; Records Concerning Abandoned Camps, 1934-1944, Box 2, Entry 119, RG 79, NACP.

declaration of war on Japan. The Adjutant General of the US Army on December 18, 1941 authorized the transfer of the four barracks at Camp NP-2 to Bolling Field, Washington D.C. with the full approval of CCC Director James McEntee – that is given the condition that all buildings be returned to the CCC once no longer needed by the Army.¹⁶⁷ Just a few days later administrators shifted the remaining buildings of substance to other sites. Three garages were shifted to the Civilian Public Service Camp CPS-3 at Patapsco State Park and the War Department took control of most of the remaining portable buildings (recreation hall, mess hall, headquarters building, officers' quarters, educational building, technical quarters, and office) and all built-in fixtures. All that remained at Camp NP-2 was the smallest portable buildings (boiler house, pump house, blacksmith shop, oil house, and incinerator house), one rigid garage, and the 167 storage lockers not needed by Army officials. Altogether, Camp NP-2's buildings were valued at \$22,700 with the structures remaining in situ valued at just \$1000 (the Army took \$20,200 in total).

Even as Camp NP-2 sat empty in May 1942, Ray Schenck looked forward to a post-war America where he would "locate these items after the war is over" and re-establish the program. Camp NP-1 continued operations into early 1942 with fully 176 enrollees and 106 of those assigned to work projects. Discharge rates grew even higher during this period but this was almost assuredly due to enrollees forgoing their CCC work to enlist in the military.¹⁶⁸ Camp NP-1 was redesignated as NP(D)-3 in April 1942, meaning the camp was fully converted from conservation, preservation, and recreation work into military support training. This camp

¹⁶⁷ W.N. White to The Commanding General, Third Corps Area, Baltimore, MD; Records Concerning Abandoned Camps, 1934-1944, Box 2, Entry 119, RG 79, NACP. Conrad Wirth to Charles Taylor, Mar. 10, 1942; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

¹⁶⁸ Ross Abare, "Camp Inspection Report: Camp NP-1," Feb. 2, 1942; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

officially closed in July, but not before former CCC men received specialized training needed by the military in automotive repair, welding, aviation mechanics, carpentry, and electrical work.¹⁶⁹ All buildings to be relocated were moved out of Camp NP-2 by the end of April 1942, marking the end of the camp for the foreseeable future.¹⁷⁰ These Camp NP-2 structures were re-erected for use by the Aqueduct Police in safeguarding the Washington D.C. water supply. Throughout the dismantling of camps, the NPS planned for future interpretive projects at the site. On January 27, 1942 the NPS assigned Stanley McClure to Camp NP-1 for final inventories and to manage a CCC crew tearing down Camp NP-2. Throughout this task McClure also developed a historical interpretation program as he partnered with Jett in the National Capital Parks office for "future historical work."¹⁷¹ The final mention of either canal camp in government documents came from the Army in December 1944. Stating they no longer had need of the camps, the Army asked the NPS to make a recommendation for future use either by that agency or for removal to the government entity that would eventually become the State Park Department of Maryland.¹⁷²

Schenck was wrong about the return of the CCC to the canal, but he was correct in that a great deal of labor was still needed at the canal. From a March 1941 inspection report of Camp NP-1, Ross Abare gave a coded list of completed and uncompleted projects with far more uncompleted than completed jobs. These programs were coded and summarized by titles, but the core goals of the camps can still be seen in the uncompleted list: surveys, bridges, access roads, towpath restoration, canal excavation, and the construction of water management buildings.

¹⁶⁹ Sirna, 82. Ross Abare, "Camp Inspection Report: NP-1-MD," February 2, 1942; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

¹⁷⁰ Conrad L. Wirth, "Report on Disposition of CCC Camp Structures," Jan. 16, 1942; Ray Schenck to O.A. Miller, Apr. 29, 1942; Stanton Smith to Conrad Wirth, Feb. 12, 1942; Ray Schenck to Stanton Smith, Jan. 19, 1942; Records Concerning Abandoned Camps, 1934-1944, Box 2, Entry 119, RG 79, NACP. Ray Schenck to Stanton Smith, May 6, 1942; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP.

¹⁷¹ Stanley McClure Memo, Mar. 3, 1942; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2844, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

¹⁷² M.A. Stephens to Conrad Wirth, Dec. 1, 1944; Memos and Correspondence Concerning CCC Camps, 1935-1942, Box 7, Entry 118, RG 79, NACP.

Abare placed blame for the backlog on the need of bureaucrats to approve every bit of skilled labor required for the jobs, but that was obviously the least concerning issue by the end of the year with impending war and camp closures. Planning documents from August 1941 provided more details into CCC policy during a period while preparing to temporarily close Camp NP-2. Keeping that in mind, it's likely that administrators created new projects to further emphasize the importance of the program for this area and property. The silences in this document are also telling. For instance, there is no listing for Job #405: Excavating Canal ditch. This absence suggests that all excavation work had been completed by this period. The same can be said of all other jobs listed as completed. As for "work contemplated," uncompleted projects all appear below with the month and year that the project was approved, estimated man-hours included in parenthesis, and any other relevant land area specifics. As there were no supporting details, it can be assumed that some of these projects were completed – such as the Engineer's Garage in Great Falls, for example – but some certainly were not and it is likely impossible to tell for many.

- Surveys, Jun. 1939 (478)
- Fire Presuppression, Oct. 1938 (2375)
- Landscape Undiff. Clean Channel Supplemental, 35 Acres, Nov. 1938 (2777)
- Prep. and Trans. Materials, May 1939 (1348)
- Lockhouses, Dwellings, 4 total, Apr. 1939 (1639)
- Excavation of Canal, 12481 cubic yards, Jun. 1939 (3676)
- Minor Road, Navy Maint., 1.2 miles, Jul. 1939 (1013)
- Riprap, 5006 sq. yards, Aug. 1939 (3725)
- Public Picnic Grounds, New Approval (4000)
- Water Control Structure, Jan. 1940 (1154)
- Access Road Maintenance, 1.5 miles, Nov. 1941 (480)
- Wells, Great Falls, May 1940 (410)
- Drains, Great Falls, 806 ln. ft., May 1940 (701)
- Sewage and Waste Disposal, Jan. 1941 (1065)
- Pipe Lines, Great Falls, 255 ln. ft., May 1940 (152)
- Landscape Undiff. (Maint.), 144.9 Acres, Jun. 1940 (992)
- Water Control Structure Flumes, 11 total, Mar. 1941 (1277)
- Swing Bridge, Carderock, Mar. 1941 (532)
- Latrine, Great Falls, May 1941 (818)
- Maintenance Water Level & Patrol C&O Canal, Nov. 1940 (2500)
- Canoe Docks, 34 total, Dec. 1940 (720)
- Tennis Courts, 12 total, Apr. 1941 (3062)
- Engineer's Garage, Great Falls, May 1941 (777)
- Engineer's Garage Access Road, Great Falls, May 1941 (1500)
- Parking Area, Great Falls, 12700 sq. yards, Jun. 1941 (4998).¹⁷³

From this list, certain insights can be made into NPS plans for the canal had WWII never happened. Administrators estimated these projects would cost \$8,642 altogether with just \$674 toward labor and the rest for materials. Of those labor costs, \$106 was for canal excavation while the rest was for constructing facilities at Great Falls (wells, sewage and waste disposal, pipe lines, and a latrine). This small sum was likely set aside to hire skilled laborers for construction projects. The other labor – as seen in the man hours listed above – would come from CCC enrollees. The suggested construction of thirty-four canoe docks along the first twenty-two miles of canal indicates the NPS planned on encouraging water tourism. The proposed construction of

¹⁷³ Ross Abare, "Work Project Report Supplement to Form 11: Camp NP-1," Mar. 3, 1941; CCC Camp Inspection Reports, Entry 115, RG 35, NACP. Ray Schenck, "Work Program Outline: Camp NP-1 & 2," Aug. 19, 1941; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2844, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

twelve tennis courts also presents the image of a different park than one might envision with a watered canal and towpath.

SECTION FIVE: LEGACY

Figure 34 – CCC enrollees replace a log wall and spillway at Lock 15 with concrete structures behind a wooden facade, 1939-1942.



Figure 35 - CCC enrollees replace a log wall and spillway at Lock 15 with concrete structures behind a wooden facade, 1939-1942.

Evidence of the CCC's work at the C&O Canal is readily apparent in the landscape and remaining structures. CCC projects renovated the majority of towpath and canal mileage, locks, and surviving lockhouses along the first twenty-two miles. While there have been significant physical changes in the intervening years, the presence of the canal, towpath, riprap, and access roads are all testaments to CCC labor. Surviving work program outlines from the CCC did not specifically identify work locations, but these locations can be inferred from these documents combined with early NPS efforts at the canal. Most surviving primary sources from the CCC were planning documents, so it is not always clear what projects were fully completed. For

instance, a 1941 planning document indicated the intent to construct thirty-four canoe docks starting December 1940, but this plan never came to fruition.¹⁷⁴

Enrollees aided in the restoration of four lockhouses. It is known for certain that three of these were the Lockhouses at Locks No. 5, 7, and 10, the latter of which is now available for rent as part of the C&O Canal Trust Canal Quarters Program, while the fourth is not readily apparent from primary sources. Lockhouse No. 7 (Figure 36) is not open to the public and but is not in good condition as of this writing. Like with most projects, it is not clear exactly what labor enrollees provided with both Lock and Lockhouse projects. For instance, the National Park Service Branch of Engineering issued a public contract – awarded to Corson and Gruman of Washington, D.C. – to construct new retaining walls, spillways, and trestles for Locks 15 and 16 (Figures 34 & 35). Most work was likely conducted by Corson and Gruman, but CCC men provided at least some support.¹⁷⁵ Enrollees replaced the original earth and wood construction with stacked logs at both locks while also pouring concrete at Lock 16 to repair the flood-damaged stop gate.¹⁷⁶ CCC enrollees also constructed the vast majority, if not all, riprap and rubble masonry seen in the first twenty-two miles of the canal while the PWA was responsible for the more "showy" stone, brick, and mortar work like repairing locks.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Work Program Outline, 1941; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2844, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP. Mackintosh.

¹⁷⁵ Davidson and Jacobs, 67. Branch of Engineering, Specifications - Public Works Administration Federal Project No. 712, (26 July 1939); NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2836, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.

¹⁷⁶ Susan Cianci Salvatore and Stephen Potter, "Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park Historic District (Additional Documentation and Boundary Increase, 2015)," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2015.

¹⁷⁷ "Work Accomplished by CCC – NCP," Jul. 1, 1940; NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Box 2844, Entry 10, RG 79, NACP.



Figure 36 - Lockhouse No. 7

CCC-built structures remain standing in the Great Falls area (mile 14) along the towpath: a concrete Boiler House, 1.5-story Pump House, and a "Comfort Station," meaning a restroom facility. Also at Great Falls, enrollees built a six-stall engineers garage to be used by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for repairs, storage, and office space. This garage is still standing and used by the C&O Canal NHP mule-pulled canal boat public programming. The following are descriptions of all CCC-related structures from the C&O Canal National Historical Park National Register nomination:

- "Pivot Bridge Ruins (1938), mile 9.92: Constructed to provide access to the CCC camps along the Potomac River. Only the foundation remains of what was a

wooden pivot bridge across the canal prism. The base is made of mortared stone and is approximately 12' tall, 10' long, and 8' wide.

- Boiler House - Great Falls (1941-1942), mile 14.27: The Boiler House was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The concrete block building measures about 10' x 15', has a wood-shingle gabled roof, and a tall brick chimney in the rear.
- Comfort Station- Great Falls (1941-1942), mile 14.28: Built by the CCC, the Comfort Station is a wood-framed building measuring about 15' x 22'. It has vertical-groove siding, a wood-shingle roof, and clerestory ribbon windows.
- Pump House - Great Falls (1941-1942), mile 14.29: The CCC-built pump house is a 1.5 story, brick building housing machinery that pumps the water supply for this area. It has a wood-shingle roof and the foundation measures about 20' x 28'.
- Engineer's Garage (1941-1942), mile 14.35: The CCC built this frame garage for the Army Corps of Engineers Washington Aqueduct maintenance yard adjacent to Great Falls. The garage included six equipment stalls, a repair shop, bulk storage, and office. The garage was repurposed to house mules when NPS rewatered the canal and initiated recreational canal boat rides in 1967.¹⁷⁸

The construction of new tennis courts at East Potomac Park was also a result of CCC labor.

Further, enrollees also constructed a well, about 800 linear feet of drains, about 250 linear feet of pipe lines, and about 12,500 square yards of parking lot in the Great Falls area. Most of this activity fell within the recreation category of work as outlined in initial planning documents, but

¹⁷⁸ Salvatore and Potter, "Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park Historic District (Additional Documentation and Boundary Increase, 2015)," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2015.

this was likely glossed over because enrollees also renovated Great Falls Tavern and lockhouses in the area.¹⁷⁹

NPS officials made all decisions regarding which lockhouses to keep and which to demolish. According to NPS Branch of Plans and Designs, the lockhouses were "an integral part of the waterway and so completely assimilated to their surrounding by reason of decades of weather that there can be no valid accusation that they compete with the natural beauties of the area or with the primary responsibility of providing a waterway affording active recreation." In other words, the lockhouses were a critical part of the cultural landscape and did not negatively impact recreational functions on the canal. Initial planning for the lockhouses envisioned using the homes for park personnel or concession stands for park visitors.¹⁸⁰ Although it cannot be said for certain, Stanley McClure and T. Sutton Jett were likely the NPS administrators responsible for such decisions.

There is little evidence of either Camp NP-1 or NP-2 as of this writing. Brick footings for abutments and central pier of a swing bridge at mile 10 built to provide camps direct access to the canal are still present, as are a few concrete footers from Camp NP-2 at Carderock Recreation Area. These footers were likely associated with one of the barracks, the kitchen, and an incinerator used to dispose of refuse. The cleared open space surrounding Carderock Recreation Area is also a remnant of CCC labor as enrollees cleared trees to make room for structures. The remnants of Camp NP-1 are now in a wooded area with minimal traffic and has never been formally investigated using today's standards. A Phase 1 Archeological survey is recommended to ascertain if any physical remains of the camp still exist.

¹⁷⁹ Davidson and Jacobs, 67. Gerner, 39.

¹⁸⁰ Salvatore and Potter, "Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park Historic District (Additional Documentation and Boundary Increase, 2015)," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are for how the C&O Canal NHP, C&O Canal Trust, and C&O Canal Association could further develop the known history of the CCC at the C&O Canal. One possibility is a newly commissioned administrative history to supplement Barry Mackintosh's with more focus placed on the 1924 to 1945 time period. Another possibility is to conduct more research into how the National Park Service engaged the legacy of the CCC after the agency's closure. This would include an analysis of interpretive efforts, conservation, and preservation. The C&O Canal Trust lockhouse program is the most obvious example of combined adaptive reuse and preservation. An updated administrative history or another special history study could contribute to questions lingering about the memory and legacy of the CCC at the canal post-1942. Another possible avenue of inquiry could be a systematic comparison of the canal camps to other CCC camps. There are some indications from NARA documents that federal administrators viewed the canal camps as exemplary, but more study would be needed to investigate thoroughly. Yet another could be funding to develop more public programming. This could include a lecture series, lockhouse exhibits, or digital projects. A potential digital project could be further development of the companion website for this project into a public digital repository of primary documents. The more these materials engage the public the odds increase of new information coming to light, not to mention the basic importance of public engagement to the NPS. Just as promising would be a new inter-regional study of the CCC's inter-relationship between the NPS, USFS, and other agencies. Telling a story that crosses governmental boundaries could offer new interpretations that previous frameworks missed due to their confining structure.

A baseline archeological survey of the Camp NP-1 and Camp NP-2 locations is desperately needed. Camp NP-2 most likely would result in little recovered artifacts given the extended presence of Carderock Recreation Area at the site. In contrast, Camp NP-1 is located in a now wooded area with little to no human interaction. Making this archeological study even more important is that we know far less about Camp NP-1 compared to Camp NP-2, so such a study could even the knowledge imbalance between the two. A phase one study has a high probability of finding new artifacts and could inform new historical interpretations. It could also be partially open to the public as a learning experience on its own as seen, for instance, with the slave cabin excavations at James Madison's Montpelier and ongoing public programming.¹⁸¹

Extensive genealogical study is also needed to detail these camps. As seen in the Appendix and companion website, the few men who were tracked in this study led remarkable lives which makes their time in the CCC as young men all the more historically relevant. It is highly unlikely that any CCC enrollees or administrators are living today, but there are potentially hundreds of CCC relatives living in the greater Washington D.C. area. From preliminary searches on Ancestry, Fold3, and HeritageQuest, it is clear that materials on these men are out there though any detailed search would be time and labor consuming. Still, the tragic story of Sidney Halsey in the introduction is worth sharing and further research, as is the story of Leroy H. Barnard, a camp commander in Wolf Gap who went on to serve with Department of Justice as part of the US legal team during the post-WWII Tokyo War Crime Trials. There are hundreds more stories to uncover and all of them tell, at least in part, a little bit more about the canal.

¹⁸¹ "Archaeology Digs," James Madison's Montpelier, <https://www.montpelier.org/archaeology> (accessed Aug. 12, 2017).

Appendices

Appendix A: List of CCC Enrollees & Administrators

Note: See companion website for full list of enrollee and administrator names appearing in Co. 333 newspapers.

From Wolf Gap (Camp NF-15) inspection reports

April 7, 1934

Army Staff

- Leroy H. Barnard, Camp Commander, Capt.
- Philip Bress, 1st LT
- Temple A. Wooters, 2nd LT

Forestry

- James R. Wilkins, Project Supt.
- James T. Foltz, Cultural Foremen
- John F. Keckley, Cultural Foremen
- P.O. Miller, Truck Trail
- Pat R. Hiner, Truck Trail
- G.R. McClanahan, Machine Operator

Feb. 28, 1935

Army

- Leroy H. Barnard, Camp Commander, Capt.
- Philip Bress, 1st LT
- Temple A. Wooters, 2nd LT
- Joseph T. Hurtt, 2nd LT

Forestry

- James R. Wilkins, Project Supt.
- R.C. Webster, Truck Trail Foreman
- P.O. Miller, Truck Trail
- James T. Foltz, Cultural Foremen
- Paul S. Rinker, Mechanic
- G.R. McClanahan, Machine Operator

August 5, 1936 / August 8, 1936

Army

- Leroy H. Barnard, Camp Commander, Capt.
- Robert C. Mali, 1st LT.
- Donald R. Hyland, 1st LT
- Seymour Robins, 1st LT, doctor/medic

Forestry

- B.J. Brackenbraugh, Project Supervisor, Chief Fore.
- Ward Wood, Jr. Fore.
- Jas. T. Foltz, Jr. Forester
- S.J. Paxton, Mechanic
- M.C. Cain, Squad Fore.

From Out of the Wilderness (31 Dec 1937) Newspaper

Administrative Staff

- Capt. Leo H. Poindexter, Commanding Officer
- 2nd Lt. James L. Keck, Adj. N.T. Officer
- 2nd Lt. Lee H. Kostora, Mess Officer and P/X
- C. Rushton Long, Educational Adviser

Park Service Staff

- Earl I. Carter, Project Superintendent
- T.J. Tinder, Foreman
- Fred L. Parker, Foreman
- A.A. Appearance, Foreman
- Russell Almond, Foreman
- Roy Williams, Foreman
- Basil Mason, Blacksmith
- Roscoe Beasley, Mechanic
- John Mason, Foreman Helpers
- Fred Peeples, Foreman Helpers
- Dan Roberson, Foreman Helper
- Johnnie Story, Foreman Helper
- Scott Tinder, Foreman Helper

Newspaper Editorial Staff

- Willie Murden, Senior Leader
- Amos Custis
- Alfred Ford
- Sidney Halsey
- John Gholson
- Carl Palmer
- Oliver Morgan, Long's advisor
- Leroy Moore
- Frank White
- Morris Langston

From Wilderness (Camp MP-4) inspection reports

March 3, 1938 (Camp MP-4)

- Earl I. Carner, Camp Superintendent
- Ralph Happel, Historian Jr.¹⁸²
- Roy A. Williams, Foreman
- Alphonzo Apperson, Foreman
- Fred L. Parker, Foreman
- Robert I. Scott, Foreman
- Russell H. Almond, Foreman Jr.
- Tazewell T. Tinder, Foreman Jr.
- Katherine A. Long, Clerk-Steno. Jr.
- Lucille G. Hinton, Stenographer Jr.
- Roscoe C. Beasley, Mechanic
- Basil L. Mason, Tool Sharpener
- Scott M. Tinder, Blacksmith helper
- Fred Peeples, Foreman Helper
- Johnnie Story, Foreman helper
- James D. Robertson, Mechanic Helper
- John R. Mason, Foreman Helper
- Leo H. Poindexter, Captain Inf-Res.
- Southgate W. Taylor Captain CA-Res.
- Lee H. Kostora, 2nd Lt. Inf-Res.

From C&O Canal (Camp NP-1 and Camp NP-2) inspection reports & Newspapers

Oct. 13, 1938 (Camp NP-1)

- Lewis G. Heider, Project Superintendent
- Roger J. Hudson, Senior Engr. Foreman
- Williams G. Barber, Foreman
- Lawrence C. Lemmon, Sr. Foreman Archt.
- Virgils Berry, Gen. Mechanic
- Norman B. Krebs, Gen. Mechanic

Newspaper Editorial Staff (Mar. 31, 1938)

- Oliver Morgan, Editor in Chief
- John Gholson
- Frank White
- Herman Johnson

¹⁸² Happel wrote the first administrative history of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park. Ralph Happel, "A History of The Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park," National Park Service (1955).

From Towpath Journal (31 Mar 1939)

- Everett D. Wilberger, 1st Lt. Cav. Res., Commanding Officer (Admin Staff)
- Bernard E. Babcock, 2nd Lt. Ca. Res., Adjutant (Admin Staff)
- Donald C. Singe, Capt. Med. Res., Camp Surgeon (Admin Staff)
- C. Rushton Long, Educational Adviser (Admin Staff)
- L.G. Heider, Project Superintendent
- H.V. Moulding, General Foreman
- A.C. Silvius, Forester
- J. Sheppard, Landscape Foreman
- G.W. Harris, Carpenter

Newspaper Editors

- Frank White, Editor
- Edmond Jackson, Associate Editor
- Carl Palmer
- Amos Custis
- Morris Langston
- Thomas Bunting
- William Allen
- William Green
- John Gholson
- James Chaney
- Claiburn Pina (?)
- Thomas Christian

From Towpath Journal (30 Jun 1939), Changes in personnel

- Sandford W. Hickey, 2nd Lt. C/-Res, Adjutant
- J. Fritz, Forester
- Pansy L. Williams, Special Instructress
- Harry Dean, Associate Editors
- James Carey
- Edward Thompson

From August 25, 1939 Report on Technical Personnel

Camp NP-1

- Lewis G. Heider, Project Superintendent
- Roger J. Hudson, Senior Engr. Foreman
- Williams G. Barber, Sr. Foreman
- Lawrence C. Lemmon, Sr. (Lcp. Arc) Foreman
- George W. Brew, Jr. Foreman
- Ralph C. Ward, Jr. Foreman

- Donald F. Green, Mechanic
- Norman B. Krebs, Mechanic

Camp NP-2

- Harry V. Maulding, Sr. Foreman
- Josiah Shepard, Sr. (Lcp. Arc.) Foreman
- Jules Fritz, Sr. Foreman
- George W. Harris, Jr. Foreman
- Earle R. Jenkins, Asst. Clerk
- Thomas A. Basnight Jr., Mechanic
- George F. Clayton, Mechanic

Notable Passages from Desertion Investigation dated Nov. 1, 1939 by Roy Wisler

May

- James L. Briscoe: "did not like his job in the field and could not be pleased"
- Elsey J. Ransom: "went AWOL...reported he secured a job while away, but he made no attempt to notify the camp of his whereabouts...allottee was contacted...stated she did not know why he had left camp and was not aware of the fact"
- John Risby: "...a very shiftless sort of person and took no interest..."
- William H. Stanley: "Was a night guard for the technical service and was found asleep on the job by one of the Foreman on several occasions...to avoid work..."
- Raymond Swann: "...wanted to change his job...retained as a mechanic because he was better than any other enrollee...deserted rather than carry out orders"
- George Thompson Jr.: "...inability to observe personal cleanliness due to his being a KP working in the kitchen...he did not like working in the field..."
- Charles H. Washington: "...home was in Pisgah, MD, he was nightly, constantly leaving camp to go to Washington D.C. where his wife and child was and it was noticed that he was not interested in his work."

June

- Charles Cavanaugh: "...very quiet nature and no opportunity for observation was available, but it was felt that his reason for leaving was that his allottee was not sending him a certain amount of the allotment of which an agreement had been made before he was enrolled."
- Thomas J. Handy: "...a cook who had caught a venereal disease and rather than report it to the Camp Surgeon for disposition...left camp."
- Frederick Lowman & Harry Lowman: "...were first cousins...KPs and always seen together. Their work as KPs was very unsatisfactory...only worked a few days on the job and then went AWOL and never returned to camp."
- Floyd N. Lyles: "...left camp due to the fact that some of his clothing was stolen and was afraid that he would be charged for the stolen clothing."
- Willie Stern: "Worked in the blacksmith shop and because of unsatisfactory work was sent out to the field project and did not like the work and so left camp."

- Roosevelt Wright: "...a truck driver...due to his negligence in observing safety rules was sent to field project from whence he left camp..."

July

- Reginald Datcher: "...due to not having been away from home before and the new ways of living in the CCC made him homesick."
- Henry Fleming: "...deserted to be with a brother who did not reenroll the preceding month."
- Robert Maith: "...desired to visit his home in Baltimore every weekend and his people came for him...convinced his parents that he did not want to stay in camp...removed from driving NPS truck."
- Herbert M. Rhodes: "...AWOP attending school. When he did not report on July 1, he was carried AWOL until the limit required him to be discharged."
- Hayward Single: "Never caused any trouble in camp and was quiet...deserted without anyone knowing about it..."

August

- Charles E. Ashby: "...brother reported to the Company Commander that he had never been away from home or done any work prior to entering the CCC and wanted to stay at home too much."
- Joseph Beane: "Left against the wishes of the Company Commander and did not heed warning to get a job certificate...was AWOL frequently."
- William Green: "Frequently AWOL and took no responsibility...wanted to go home from camp..."
- Sylvester Brooks: "Enrollee questioned...had no reason to desert."
- Raymond S. Smith: "...AWOL several times and seemed to be lazy..."
- Albert J. Tongue: "Failed to return after pay day on August 1, 1939 and remained away..."

From Census Population Schedule, April 1940

Note: CCC enrollee's appearance on the census for their home district. Only full-time CCC employees were enumerated within the census records of Montgomery County. All of those listed in the 1940 census were assigned by the Army.

Camp NP-1

- Howard H. Ruppert, Company Commander, White Male, 39 years old, married, college graduate, born in Ohio, living in Pinegrove Furnace, PA on 4/1/1935, Company Commander, Civilian Employee of US Army, worked 52 weeks at \$2174
- Donald C. Singer, Medical Officer, White Male, 30 years old, married, college graduate, born in Pennsylvania, living in Schenectady, NY on 4/1/1935, Medical Officer, Civilian Employee of US Army, worked 52 weeks at \$2940
- Marion A. Thorpe, Educational Advisor, African American Male, 28 years old, married, college graduate, born in South Carolina, living in Rock Hill, SC on 4/1/1935, Educational Advisor, Civilian Employee of US Army, worked 52 weeks at \$2000

Camp NP-2

- Everett D. Wilburger, Head Capt., White Male, 42 years old, single, high school graduate, born in Nebraska, living in Louisberg, PA on 4/1/1935, Company Commander, Civilian Employee of US Army, worked 52 weeks at \$3466
- John A. McCrary Jr., Lieut., White Male, 27 years old, single, college graduate, born in Virginia, living in Alexandria, VA on 4/1/1935, Subaltern, Civilian Employee of US Army, worked 52 weeks at \$2276
- C. Rushton Long, Educational Advisor, African American Male, 30 years old, single, college graduate, born in Virginia, living in Kane, PA on 4/1/1935, Educational Advisor, Civilian Employee of US Army, worked 52 weeks at \$2000
- Irvin B. Ady, Foreman, White Male, 30 years old, single, completed two years of college, born in Virginia, living in Ft. Hunt, VA on 4/1/1935, Landscaper, Civilian Employee of US Army, worked 52 weeks at \$1860

From February 28, 1941 Report on Technical Personnel**Camp NP-1**

- Roy E. Rountree, Project Superintendent
- William G. Barber, Foreman
- Harrison C. Jacobs, Sr. Foreman (Engr.)
- George W. Brew, Foreman
- Norman B. Krebs, Gen. Mech.
- Donald F. Green, Gen. Mech.
- Henry L. Benson, Asst. Clk. Typist
- William M. Barber, Carp.
- Albert R. Lucas, Plumber
- Ira R. Beckner, Heavy Equip. Opr.

Camp NP-2

- Harry V. Maulding, Sr. Foreman
- Josiah Shepard, Sr. Foreman
- Jules Fritz, Foreman
- Thomas A. Basnight Jr., Foreman
- George Clayton, Gen. Mech.
- Sutton T. Jett, Sr. Foreman, Historian

From February 5, 1942 Report on Technical Personnel**Camp NP-1**

- Roy E. Rountree, Superintendent
- Harrison C. Jacobs, Sr. Foreman
- Stanley W. McClure, Sr. Foreman
- William G. Bzrber, Foreman
- George W. Brew, Foreman

- Hugo Hableutzel, Foreman
- Norman B. Krebs, Mechanic

Appendix B: Baseball Clubs (Towpath, June 1939)

Barracks #1

- John Gholson
- Bernard Spicer
- Quinlon Garrett
- Herbert Eldrige
- Van Lewis
- William Owen
- Jake Kitching
- Junius Payne
- Odis Stowe
- Walter Claven
- William Dysen
- William Wall
- Lorenzo Kelliebrew

Barracks #2

- Charles Harvey
- James Reeder
- James Mosley
- Wilton Jennings
- James Cary
- James Chaney
- Theato Wilburn
- James Campbell
- Harlie Gaddie
- Thomas Jackson
- Claudius Greene
- Ralph Gibson
- Alonzo Davis
- Sam Reid

Barracks #3

- Robert G. Brown
- Carl Palmer
- Randolph Tilghman
- Reginald Sterling
- John Hancock
- Earl Bailey
- Francis Lowery
- Marshall Sykes
- Raymond Brooks

- Amos Custis

Barracks #4

- Francis Carter
- Thomas Burrville
- George Cofield
- Robert Miles
- Henry Barnes
- Francis Johnson
- Claibron Pina
- Edward Caufield
- Jessie Corbin
- William Braxton
- Albert Edwards

Appendix C: Other Athletics Teams (*Out of the Wilderness*, Dec. 29, 1937)

Boxing

- Dan Simmons
- Elwood Godson
- Benjamin Sullivan
- Alexander Tucker
- James Moore
- James Johnson

Wrestling

- Kelley Tucker
- Peter Carter
- Joseph Carter
- Charles Harvey

Basketball (*Wilderness*, Dec. 31, 1937)

- Robert Miles
- Arthur Edwards
- John Cunningham
- John Hughes
- Willie Graves
- James Johnson
- James Moore
- Alonzo Slight
- Edward Anderson
- James H. Jackson
- Homer Williams
- Peter Carter
- Amos Custis

Basketball (*Wilderness*, Mar. 31, 1938)

- Henry Jefferson
- James Jackson
- John Clifton
- Robert L. Miles
- Herman Johnson
- Odis Stowe
- Edward Anderson
- John Stork
- Ernest Rivers
- Amos Custis

Pool (Straight Pool)

- Leroy Huntam (?)
- Joseph H. Long
- Leland Miller
- James Mason
- George Emey (?)
- James Brown

Pool (Black Ball)

- Nathan Anderson
- Kelley Tucker
- George Wiggins
- James Reide
- Robert Roy
- James Edwards
- Willie Jas Smith
- Bonnie Quarles
- James Wallace
- Elwood Gadson
- Alfred Brown
- Eddie Washington
- Herman Ricks
- Willie Murden
- Thomas Bunting
- Clarence Johnson
- John Taylor
- Alexander Tucker
- Leroy Thomas

Pool (Last Ball)

- Eugene Raddick (?)
- George Wiggins
- Samuel Reid
- Amos Custin

Pool (Rotation)

- Robert Hill
- William Gorum
- Willie Graves
- Peter Carter

Appendix D: Course Schedules at Canal Camps

Note: All educational program information comes from inspection reports and camp newspapers.

Classes Offered for Company 325 at Camp NP-1-MD (Cabin John) by Subject, August 1939

Reading & Writing	Stenography	Buildings	Vis. Edu.
Arithmetic	Typewriting	Surveying	Forums
English & Spelling	Woodworking	Fire-Pre.S.	Teacher Tr.
Civics & History	Dramatics	Road Trails	Leader Tr.
Agriculture	Music	Sex Edu.	Lectures
Auto Mechanics	Fine Arts	Safety	
Cabinet Making	Hand-crafts	First Aid	
Landscaping	Woodcarving	Personal Hygiene	

Classes Offered for Company 325 at Camp NP-1-MD (Cabin John), August 1939

Subject	Instructors	Title
English and Penmanship	Nelson Burke, Jr.	WPA Instructor
Athletics	Carl D. Coleman	WPA Instructor
Music	Louvenia Alford	WPA Instructor
Carpentry	Nathaniel Neal (Enrollee), Lionel Cromwell (WPA Instructor), R.C. Ward (Enrollee) & Harold T. King (Enrollee)	
First Aid	Ira L. Ferguson	WPA Instructor
Handcrafts	Maxine Wilson	WPA Instructor
English & Civics	William M. Thornton	WPA Instructor
Journalism	J.F. McCallan	WPA Instructor
History & Science	William B. Griffith	WPA Instructor
Sign Painting	Irving W. Carter	Enrollee
Painting	Lewis E. Holmes	Enrollee
Leaders' Training	W. Edward Johnson	Enrollee
Typewriting	John Henry Johnson (Enrollee) & Nathaniel Tracy (Enrollee)	Enrollee
Elementary English	Richard B. Washington	Enrollee
Building & Estimating	L.G. Heider	Project Superintendent
Blasting & Dynamite	W.C. Barber	Foreman
Masonry & Concrete	G.W. Brew	Foreman
Auto Mechanics	D.H. Green (Foreman) & N.B. Kerbs (Foreman)	
Landscaping	L.C. Lemon	Foreman
Camp Administration	Edwin T. Arnold	Company Commander
Health Education	Capt. Donald C. Singe	Camp Surgeon

First Aid	Capt. Donald C. Singe	Camp Surgeon
Safety	L.G. Heider (Project Superintendent) & Capt. Donald C. Singe (Camp Surgeon)	
History, Science, & Current Events	A. Robinson	Educational Advisor
Mess	W. Burgess	Assistant to Company Commander
Camp Discipline	A. Robinson	Educational Adviser

Classes Offered for Company 333 at Camp NP-2-MD (Cabin John), August 1939

Subject	Instructors	Title	Category
Reading & Writing	Miss P.L. Williams	WPA Teacher	Academic
Current Events	Carl Palmer	Leader	Academic
History	Miss P.L. Williams	WPA Teacher	Academic
Hygiene	Capt. Donald C. Singe	Camp Surgeon	Academic
Penmanship	Miss P.L. Williams	WPA Teacher	Academic
Practical English	Miss P.L. Williams	WPA Teacher	Academic
Practical Mathematics	C. Rushton Long	Educational Adviser	Academic
World Affairs	C. Rushton Long	Educational Adviser	Academic
Typing	Amos Custis	Project Assistant	Academic
Commercial Art	James Cheney	Asst. Leader	Vocational
Carpentry	Capt. Everett D. Wilberger (Camp Commander) & John Holson (Asst. Leader)		Vocational
Journalism	C. Rushton Long	Educational Adviser	Vocational
Trail Canal Excavations	G.W. Harris	Foreman	Job Training
Canal Drainage	J. Sheppard	Landscape Architect	Job Training
Truck Driving	H.V. Maulding	General Foreman	Job Training
Cooking	Capt. Everett D. Wilberger	Commanding Officer	Job Training
Dramatics			Informal
Music	William Green	Asst. Leader	Informal
Model Making	Claudius Geeno	Asst. Leader	Informal
Social Courtesy	C. Rushton Long	Educational Adviser	Informal
First Aid	Capt. Donald C. Singe	Camp Surgeon	Misc. Activities
Safety	L.G. Heider (Proj. Supt.), Cap. E.D. Wilberger (C.O.), H.V. Maulding (G.F.), & C.R. Long (Ed. Ad.)		Misc. Activities
Health	Capt. Donald C. Singe	Camp Surgeon	Misc. Activities
Teacher Training	C. Rushton Long	Educational Adviser	Professional Training
Foreman Training	Harry V. Maulding	General Foreman	Professional Training

Leader Training	Capt. Everett D. Wilberger	Camp Commander	Professional Training
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Classes Offered for Company 325 at Camp NP-1-MD (Cabin John), Feb. 2, 1942

Subject	Instructors	Title
Arithmetic	A.F. Williams	Educational Advisor
Beginners	A.F. Williams	Educational Advisor
Reading & Spelling	A.F. Williams	Educational Advisor
Auto Mechanics	L. Penn (Defense Tr. Instr.) & R.S. Hamilton (Defense Tr. Instr.)	
Carpentry	E.G. Facey	Defense Tr. Instr.
Metal Work	B.F. Brown	Defense Tr. Instr.
Welding	J. Hurd	Defense Tr. Instr.
Electricity	W.E. Webb	Defense Tr. Instr.
Leader Training	Lt. A.S. Briggs	Company Commander
Safety	Roy E. Rountree	Project Supt.
Occupational Guidance	A.F. Williams	Educational Advisor
First Aid	A.F. Williams	Educational Advisor
Business & Social Courtesy	A.F. Williams	Educational Advisor
Stone Masonry	George W. Brewer	Foreman
Carpentry	W.G. Barber	Foreman
Road Maintenance	H.C. Jacobs	Foreman
Auto & Truck	Norman Krebb	Mechanic

Additional Maps

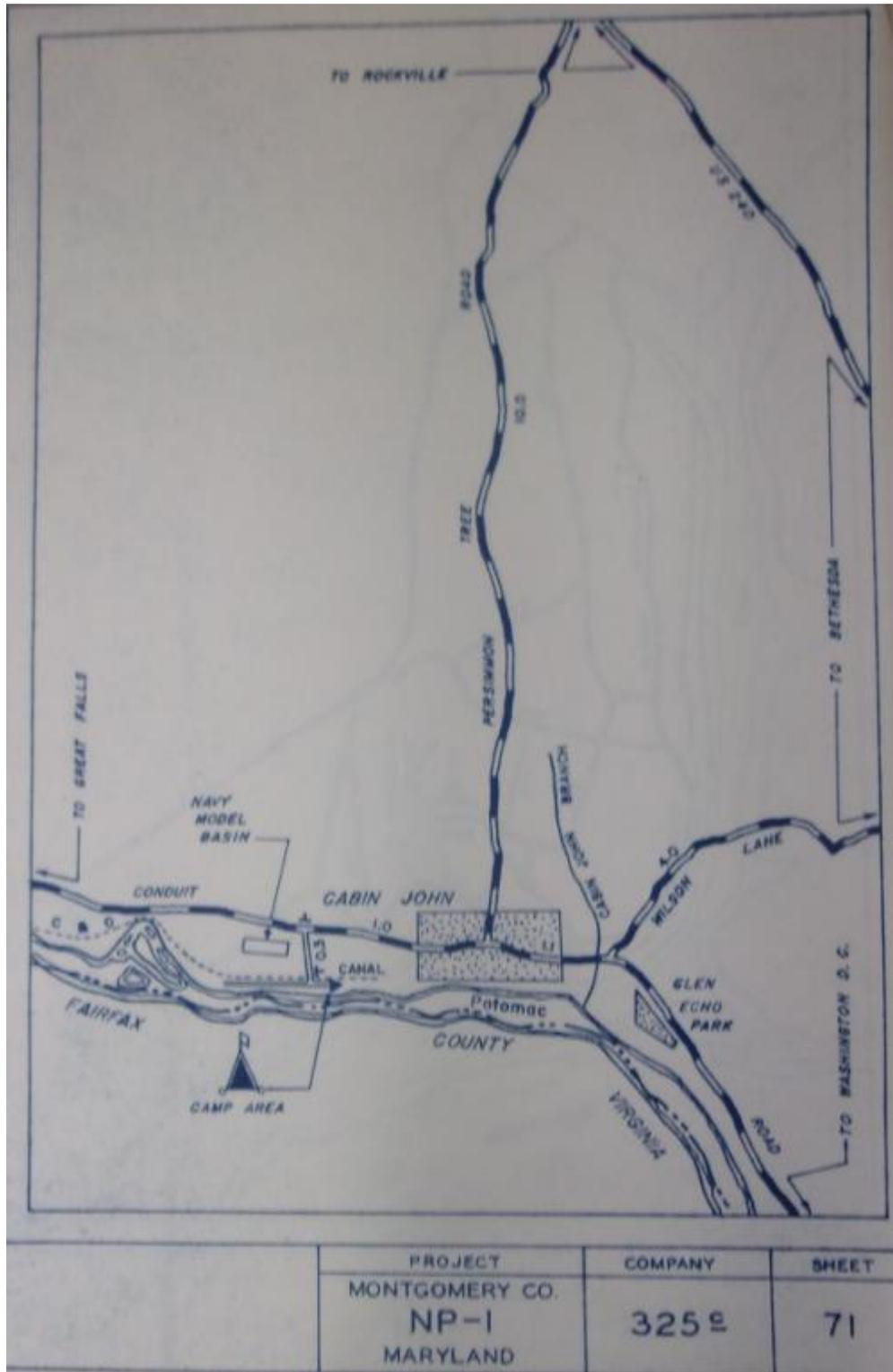


Figure 37 - Camp NP-1. National Archives at College Park. RG 35.

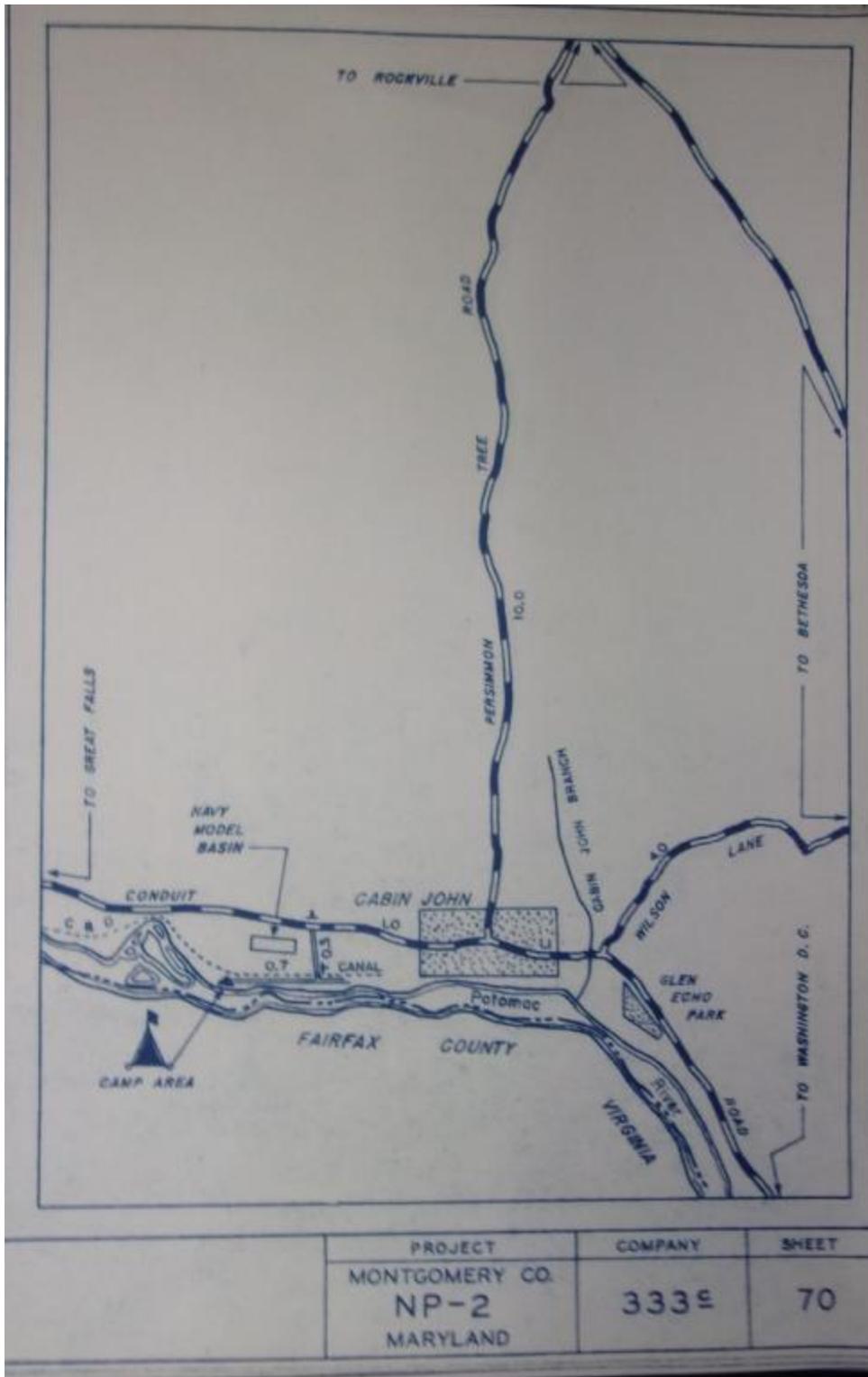


Figure 38 - Camp NP-2. National Archives at College Park. RG 35

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College of William and Mary, Swem Library

Early Orndorff Papers

FDR Presidential Library and Museum

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Battlefield

Bound Volumes Collection

Photograph Archive

Library of Virginia

Civilian Conservation Corps Newspapers Collections

Montgomery County Public Libraries, Rockville Memorial Library

Newspapers

National Archives at College Park

RG 35: Records of the Civilian Conservation Corps

RG 77: Records of the Office of Chief of Engineers

RG 79: Records of the National Park Service

RG 407: Records of the Adjutant General's Office

Newspapers & Periodicals

Along the Towpath

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The Baltimore Sun

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The Mercury (Pottstown, PA)

Montgomery County Sentinel

Montgomery Independent

The Montgomery Press-Mail

The New York Age

The New York Times

Norfolk Journal and Guide

Out of the Wilderness

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