

"THE BEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED":
THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS AND
SOUTH CAROLINA'S STATE PARK SYSTEM

Tara Mitchell Mielnik

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate Faculty of Middle Tennessee State University
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for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

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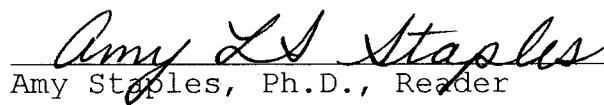
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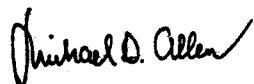
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ABSTRACT

"THE BEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED": THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS AND SOUTH CAROLINA'S STATE PARK SYSTEM

by Tara Mitchell Mielnik

Prior to 1933, the state of South Carolina had no state parks. With the advent of the New Deal and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the state suddenly found itself able to use this federal labor and the guidance of the National Park Service to construct a system of state parks throughout the state, providing the genesis of a successful state park system today. This dissertation examines CCC work in South Carolina's fledgling state park system, including the experimental Recreational Demonstration Areas and Wayside Areas. Tangible evidence of the CCC, as well as other New Deal programs, in South Carolina demonstrates programs that changed the landscape of the state while these programs simultaneously improved the living conditions of the state's citizens. The dissertation synthesizes administrative and social history with architectural history to fully examine the impact of the work of the

Civilian Conservation Corps in South Carolina, both on the people and the landscape, and concludes that the CCC was successful in both endeavors.

This case study of the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the building of South Carolina's state parks demonstrates the impact the New Deal had not just on the lives of the young men in the CCC but also on other South Carolina citizens who found previously unknown recreational opportunities in the new state parks. In addition, the factor of race played a role in the South Carolina CCC experience, a role that while not always pleasant, benefited more African-Americans than in any other southern state. The seventeen state parks built by the CCC in the state retain varying degrees of integrity, although most of the parks still feature the CCC-constructed recreational facilities, paths, and other structures. The styles and types of CCC construction have continued to influence the rustic architecture found in the parks today. This study of the work of the CCC in South Carolina's state parks provides insight into the issues of race, of state and federal relationships, of popular culture, and the conservation ethic of the South during the pivotal Depression decade.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION:

STUDYING THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

On 24 October 1929, the stock market crashed, marking the beginning of a period of American history that came to be known as the Great Depression. Throughout the country, people lost their jobs, their savings, and, many believed, their future security. In South Carolina, the economy was depressed even before the stock market crash, and the crash only intensified the desperate situation in the state. Cotton prices dropped, banks failed, and city governments throughout the state went bankrupt. In the early 1930s, at least seventeen counties in South Carolina had an unemployment rate of over thirty percent.

Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal came to the state in March 1933. By the end of that summer, over four hundred thousand South Carolinians, twenty-five percent of the state's population, were on relief, managed by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). In a program tainted nationwide by favoritism, nepotism, and racism, South Carolina was the only state in which more African-Americans received FERA aid than whites. One of FDR's New

Deal relief programs, Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) came to the state in 1933, shortly after FDR had proposed a "civilian Conservation Corps," along with other relief programs, in March.¹ Although officially known as Emergency Conservation Work, the program retained the popular title Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and officially became CCC in 1937. The program provided jobs for thousands of unemployed young men and World War I veterans. For their work, the men received housing, clothing, food, and payment of about a dollar a day. Of that, their families received between \$22 and \$25 a month in direct payment.

The Civilian Conservation Corps camps fell under the direction of the War Department and in many ways resembled army camps. These camps provided a structured environment for many young men who had never known such structure. Enrollees received educational classes at the elementary, high school, and college levels, as well as vocational instruction in typewriting, agriculture, landscaping,

¹President Roosevelt initially proposed conservation-related employment at a White House press conference on 9 March 1933, then sent a memorandum to the secretaries of War, Interior, Agriculture, and Labor on 14 March 1933. See Edgar A. Nixon, ed., *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Conservation, 1911-1945*, Vol. 1 (New York: Arno Press, 1972).

mechanics, electricity, and forestry, among other topics. Recreational opportunities for the young men abounded as well. Swimming, cards, and table tennis provided nightly entertainment, and movies were shown frequently. Sports teams in basketball and baseball formed and played against other CCC camps or local high schools. Dances were held in the camp recreational hall with local girls, and the camp library provided both educational and recreational reading material. Camp chaplains tried to meet the boys' spiritual needs, and they attended worship services led by local ministers. The Civilian Conservation Corps attempted to provide an atmosphere conducive to producing fit and healthy young men for their service in "Roosevelt's Forest Army."²

In South Carolina as elsewhere, the Civilian Conservation Corps performed a variety of work. It promoted soil conservation by the planting of kudzu, a non-

²"Roosevelt's Forest Army" is just one of the many nicknames the CCC received during its nine year existence and is the title of Perry H. Merrill's book about the CCC, *Roosevelt's Forest Army: A History of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942* (Montpelier, VT: by the author, 1981). For a more complete administrative history of the CCC, see John A. Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942: A New Deal Case Study* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1967).

native plant that quickly became a feature of the southern landscape. The CCC augmented necessary firefighting activities with fire prevention activities, including the building of watchtowers and fire lines, and the stringing of telephone lines for faster notification of dangerous situations. It planted millions of trees in reforestation projects and nurseries throughout South Carolina and in other states. In addition, the CCC developed state and national forests, recreational areas, and parks. Prior to the work of the CCC, South Carolina had no state parks; by the end of CCC work in the state, sixteen state parks had opened, the first at Myrtle Beach in July 1936.

The work of the Civilian Conservation Corps undoubtedly changed the landscape in South Carolina, nowhere more so than in the seventeen state parks that were constructed between 1933 and 1942.³ In addition, the CCC state parks provided the genesis of the state park system in South Carolina. By 1942, at the end of CCC construction, there were sixteen state parks opened to the

³Although the CCC built sixteen state parks during its work period in South Carolina, the program also developed six waysides along national highways. One of these waysides later became Colleton State Park, bringing the total of CCC-built parks to seventeen.

public, all constructed by the CCC and operated by the South Carolina Forestry Commission. Currently, there are 47 state parks located all over the state and operated under the authority of the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism.⁴

This dissertation examines both the lives of the men of South Carolina's CCC camps and their work in building the state parks, and explores the influence of these first state parks and their architecture in the development of South Carolina's state park system. Combining social and administrative history with architectural history and material cultural resources, this dissertation synthesizes both "old" and "new" history, and both "traditional" and "public" history, in the words of historian David Hackett Fischer, combining "story-telling and problem-solving in a 'braided narrative'."⁵ To date, there is no comprehensive

⁴This introductory material is taken from "A Lasting Legacy: The Civilian Conservation Corps and South Carolina's State Parks," a brochure for an exhibit by the same title, written by the author. The exhibit was on display at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History from Dec. 1999 through June 2000. Tara Mitchell Mielnik was exhibit curator and Tim Belshaw was exhibit designer.

⁵ David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), xi. See also Fischer's article, "The Braided

study of the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the state. This study will fill a significant gap in scholarship about South Carolina history, especially about the crucial decade of the 1930s. The study will also make contributions to recent regional and national scholarship about the significance of the 1930s and the individual programs of the New Deal.

New Deal historiography has both praised and castigated Roosevelt and his New Deal programs for their successes and failures. Initially, early New Deal historians, writing in the first decade after World War II, almost universally hailed Roosevelt and the New Deal as a successful governmental recovery program that fundamentally changed the federal government's role in American life, most notably in Arthur Schlesinger's trilogy *The Age of Roosevelt* (1957-1960, reissued 2003) that hails the transformative powers of the New Deal. At the same time, participants in the New Deal wrote their own memoirs, largely loyal to the administration, including Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes's *The First Thousand Days*,

Narrative: Substance and Form in Social History," in Angus Fletcher, ed., *The Literature of Fact: Selected Papers from the English Institute* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 109-133.

1933-1936 (1955) and Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, *The Roosevelt I Knew* (1947)⁶. By the 1960s, historians began examining the New Deal more critically. William E. Leuchtenburg's synthesis study *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal*, while largely sympathetic to New Deal policy, assessed its results as largely unfinished, and Leuchtenburg anticipated other opposing views of Roosevelt and the legacy of the New Deal, which chastised the president and his programs for their failures in many areas, especially in economic and racial reform, best represented by Paul Conkin's *FDR and the Origins of the Welfare State* (1967).⁷

In more recent years, Jordan A. Schwarz's *The New Dealers* (1993) has emphasized the point that one of the major goals of the New Deal was to pull undeveloped portions of the United States, including the South, into the modern mainstream. Roger Biles's *The South and the New*

⁶Arthur Schlesinger, *The Age of Roosevelt*, 3 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957-60, 2003); Harold L. Ickes, *The First Thousand Days, 1933-1936* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955); Frances Perkins, *The Roosevelt I Knew* (New York: Viking, 1946).

⁷ William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963); Paul K. Conkin, *FDR and the Origins of the Welfare State* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1967).

Deal (1994) surveys what this New Deal attitude meant to the South, one of the most impoverished regions of the country. Biles concludes that reclaiming both the land and the people of the South was a key part of the projected new infrastructure. But he also finds that New Dealers were rarely able to solve the persistent problem of race in their attempts to build a modern South. At the same time that new historical overviews of the New Deal have been developed, architectural historians, such as Linda McClelland and Jim Steely, have become much more interested in the design legacies of the New Deal agencies -- especially the significant relationship between the National Park Service, the CCC, and other New Deal agencies -- in building a new public recreational system for Americans, both on the national and state level. Finally, scholars such as Olen Cole, Jr., and Patricia Sullivan have begun new investigations into the impact of race on New Deal policy and how the New Deal both benefited and harmed African-Americans.⁸

⁸Jordan A. Schwarz, *The New Dealers: Power Politics in the Age of Roosevelt* (New York: Knopf, 1993); Roger Biles, *The South and the New Deal* (Louisville: University Press of Kentucky, 1994); Linda McClelland, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998);

This study contributes to this new historical scholarship through its in-depth exploration of one southern state. The case study of the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the building of South Carolina's state parks demonstrates the impact the New Deal had not just on the lives of the young men in the CCC but also on other South Carolina citizens who found previously unknown recreational opportunities in the new state parks. In addition, the factor of race played a role in the South Carolina CCC experience, a role that while not always pleasant, benefited more African-Americans than in any other southern state. The seventeen state parks built by the CCC in the state retain varying degrees of integrity, although most of the parks still feature the CCC-constructed recreational facilities, paths, and other structures. The styles and types of CCC construction have continued to influence the rustic architecture found in the parks today. This study of the work of the CCC in South

James Wright Steely, *Parks for Texas: Enduring Landscapes of the New Deal* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999); Olen Cole, Jr., *The African-American Experience in the Civilian Conservation Corps* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999); Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

Carolina's state parks provides insight into the issues of race, of state and federal relationships, of popular culture, and the conservation ethic of the South during the pivotal Depression decade.

A growing number of historians recently have been utilizing the large body of primary source material available for studying the Civilian Conservation Corps. As the CCC men themselves age, perhaps the most valuable sources for research are disappearing daily. It has been this researcher's experience that the men who served in the Civilian Conservation Corps are more than happy to talk about their memories of their time in the CCC and that they are the most entertaining of primary source material. During the course of research, the author has spoken with or corresponded with approximately eighty men who served in the Civilian Conservation Corps in South Carolina, primarily through contacts developed with the Fort Moultrie chapter of the National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni (NACCCA). Of this number, approximately twenty have developed into more lengthy conversations or correspondence. Not only have these men provided memories but have also produced photographs, annuals, scrapbooks, and even camp cookbooks and textbooks.

Most of the CCC alumni are in their eighties, and while many still play golf every day and remember the CCC like it was yesterday, others have dimmer memories that could not always be substantiated. Written primary documentation, especially in the form of project reports, architectural plans, and blueprints, is also readily available, both at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History and at the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, both in Columbia. Contemporary newspaper accounts and camp newspapers are housed both at the Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina in Columbia and at the South Carolina Historical Society in Charleston. These combined sources provide not only a sense of how the CCC operated in South Carolina but also of what everyday life must have been like for the boys who entered the CCC, often because they had nowhere else to go.

In addition to the relatively untouched primary sources available in South Carolina and at the National Archives, many secondary sources have contributed to the conception of and context for this study. Several general histories of the New Deal and the Civilian Conservation Corps provided a great deal of background to the program that gave South Carolina its state parks. These sources

include the recent works by Leuchtenburg, Schwarz, and Biles mentioned previously, as well as traditional works like Kenneth Davis' *FDR: The New Deal Years* (1986) and Anthony Badger's, *The New Deal: The Depression Years* (1989). Other books provided insight into Roosevelt's special interest in nature and conservation, including the aptly titled *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Conservation* (1957, 1972), edited by Edgar Nixon, and A. L. Riesch Owen's *Conservation Under F.D.R.* (1983).⁹

Three works have made names for themselves in Civilian Conservation Corps history, if only because they were the only histories of the CCC for many years. These include John Salmond's excellent overview of the organizational structure of the CCC, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942: A New Deal Case Study* (1967). Salmond's book is unequalled in tracing the administrative history of the CCC but provides very little information regarding the daily life of the boys and men who made up the CCC. Perry

⁹Leuchtenburg, *FDR and New Deal*; Schwarz, *New Dealers*; Biles, *South and the New Deal*; Kenneth S. Davis, *FDR: The New Deal Years, 1933-1937* (New York: Random House, 1986); Anthony J. Badger, *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-1940* (New York: Noonday Press, 1989); Nixon, ed., *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Conservation*; A.L. Riesch Owen, *Conservation Under F.D.R.* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983).

Merrill's 1981 book, *Roosevelt's Forest Army*, focuses primarily on CCC work in New England and Vermont, appropriately for the author, who was the state forester of Vermont during the 1930s. Half of his book is drawn from personal recollection, while the other half is from personal correspondence with approximately 300 former CCC workers. On the other end of the spectrum is Leslie Alexander Lacy's *The Soil Soldiers: The Civilian Conservation Corps in the Great Depression*, which is primarily a fictional account of a young man's life in the CCC, interspersed with factual information blatantly plagiarized from Salmond, with no references.¹⁰

Three newer works have emerged in the literature on the CCC, setting an example for others. Olen Cole, Jr.'s recent *The African-American Experience in the Civilian Conservation Corps* (1999) looks at a much neglected segment of the CCC population but concentrates primarily on African-Americans in California camps, a situation that was likely to be somewhat different than the experience of blacks in camps in South Carolina or in other states in the

¹⁰Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*; Merrill, *Roosevelt's Forest Army*; Leslie Alexander Lacy, *The Soil Soldiers: The Civilian Conservation Corps in the Great Depression* (Radnor, PA: Chilton Book Company, 1976).

southeast. Dan Utley and James Steely have provided an excellent case study of one park in *Guided with a Steady Hand: The Cultural Landscape of a Rural Texas Park* (1998), in which they trace the history of Mother Neff State Park in Coryell County, Texas. Jim Steely has also published a more in-depth look at Texas's State Parks in his *Parks for Texas: Enduring Landscapes of the New Deal* (1999), beginning with the earliest push for the preservation of Texas's historical sites in the 1880s, but concentrating primarily on the work of Governor Pat Neff in the 1920s and the role of the Civilian Conservation Corps in park-building throughout Texas in the 1930s. In many ways, Steely's book serves as the model for this dissertation, although this dissertation seeks to provide a greater look into the everyday lives of the men in the CCC and less of an administrative history found in both Salmond and Steely's work.¹¹ In addition to book-length case studies, several articles and theses highlighting Civilian Conservation Corps work in specific states have also been useful. Most valuable for this study include two articles

¹¹Cole, *African-American Experience*; Dan K. Utley and James W. Steely, *Guided with a Steady Hand: The Cultural Landscape of a Rural Texas Park* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 1998); Steely, *Parks for Texas*.

published after the initial research and writing phase of this study had begun, both by Robert A. Waller, professor emeritus at Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina.¹²

Other works on the Civilian Conservation Corps and its relation to various aspects of other government agencies have been published by the Government Printing Office and the various agencies. These include *Mountaineers and Rangers: A History of Federal Forest Management in the Southern Appalachians* (1983); *The Forest Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps* (1986); *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service* (1985); and Linda McClelland's 1993 study, *Presenting Nature: The Historic Landscape Design of the National Park Service*, published in 1998 as *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction*, by Johns Hopkins University Press. Although the CCC performed different types of work for different agencies, much of the enrollees' daily life was very similar from camp to camp, as revealed by these studies. McClelland's book is a

¹²Robert A. Waller, "Happy Days and the CCC in South Carolina," *The Historian* 64 (Fall 2001): 39-61, and "The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Emergence of South Carolina's State Park System, 1933-1942," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 104 (April 2003): 101-125.

fascinating study of park building through the National Park Service, and the CCC's contributions make up a significant portion of her research. Other histories of the federal government's involvement with park building include former National Park Service director Conrad Wirth's *Parks, Politics and the People* and Hal Rothman's *America's National Monuments: The Politics of Preservation*. Phoebe Cutler's *The Public Landscape of the New Deal* focuses on the work of several New Deal programs, including the CCC along with the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Resettlement Administration, and the Works Progress Administration in detailing the ways in which the programs of the New Deal forever altered the American landscape.¹³

¹³ Shelley Smith Mastran and Nan Lowere, *Mountaineers and Rangers: A History of Federal Forest Management in the Southern Appalachians, 1900-1981* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1983); Alison T. Otis, et al., *The Forest Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942* (Washington, DC: U.S. Forest Service, 1986); John C. Paige, *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service, 1933-1942* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1985); Linda McClelland, *Presenting Nature: The Historic Landscape Design of the National Park Service, 1916-1942* (Washington, DC: National Register of Historic Places, 1993); McClelland, *Building the National Parks*; Conrad L. Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, (Oklahoma City: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980); Hal Rothman, *America's National Monuments: The Politics of Preservation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994); Phoebe Cutler, *The Public Landscape of the New Deal* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

All of these works provide a great deal of context for the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps and national and state park building during the period of the 1930s.

General works on South Carolina history set the stage for what life was like for South Carolinians in the 1930s. Walter Edgar's award-winning *South Carolina: A History* (1998) is the first comprehensive scholarly treatment of the state's history in many years and has proved a valuable source for understanding the shaping forces of primarily rural South Carolina. Jack Irby Hayes's 1972 doctoral dissertation and resulting 2001 book *South Carolina and the New Deal* is the only comprehensive work done on this extremely important period in the state's history. This work provided a good deal of contextual information as well as suggestions for other research avenues. The Hayes study mentions the Civilian Conservation Corps rarely, however, which must be viewed as an unfortunate oversight given the impact of the work of the CCC in the state.¹⁴

¹⁴Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998); Jack Irby Hayes, Jr. "South Carolina and the New Deal, 1932-1938" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1972); Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001).

The dissertation is divided into three sections, each made up of two to three chapters. This introductory chapter has provided the background historiography and presents the challenges of researching the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The second chapter sets the stage for the South Carolina experience during the Great Depression. The third chapter is a history of the Civilian Conservation Corps and provides an organizational and structural history of the CCC. These chapters provide the necessary background in understanding both the atmosphere in which the CCC operated in South Carolina and the important bureaucratic framework at the national level.

The second section describes the experiences of the boys, young men, and veterans who enrolled in South Carolina's CCC. Incorporating the interviews and photographs provided by several CCC alumni, chapter four seeks to explore the very personal history of the Civilian Conservation Corps as well as the history of the organization itself. Chapter five highlights the important contributions and different experiences of World War I veterans who enlisted in the CCC, along with African-Americans, who participated as well, albeit in segregated camps.

The final section will discuss several of South Carolina's state parks in detail, beginning with the Recreational Demonstration Areas established by the National Park Service, including Cheraw, in the northeastern part of the state, which was the first state park project begun by the CCC. Other parks throughout the state are also discussed: Poinsett and Sesquicentennial in the central portion of the state; Table Rock, Oconee, and Paris Mountain in the northwest; Colleton, Edisto, and Hunting Island in the lowcountry; and Myrtle Beach on the northern coast, the first South Carolina state park opened to the public. These parks were chosen to represent the various geographic regions of the state, and according to the available primary materials for each park. Available sources vary for the different state parks, and a variety of building types are described throughout this section to highlight the different types of projects in the parks.

The section on parks will look at the formation of the parks, the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the buildings and structures within the parks, and a survey of the rustic architecture in these early parks that continues to influence state park architecture in South Carolina.

South Carolina's state parks are a tangible architectural legacy of an influential New Deal program. The story of the CCC in South Carolina is the story of a New Deal program, which while limited in scope and reach, was a success for the hundreds of young men who participated, and was also a success in implementing a conservation and public recreation ethic into South Carolina state government through the establishment of the state park system.

CHAPTER TWO

DEPRESSION AND NEW DEAL IN SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolinians gathered in Columbia on the afternoon of 24 October 1929, to watch the biggest football game in the state. The Tigers of Clemson College, undefeated that year, came to town to play the University of South Carolina Fighting Gamecocks in a game that would all but decide the Southern Conference championship. The Clemson-South Carolina match was (and is) the biggest intrastate football rivalry, and Big Thursday, as the annual event was known, regularly drew several thousand fans. The year 1929 was no different, as fourteen thousand fans jammed the stadium at the State Fairgrounds for the contest. Clemson won, 21-14, handing the Gamecocks only their second loss of the season, and fans went home, satisfied with a well fought game if not happy with the outcome.¹

Big Thursday 1929 happened to be Black Thursday, the day the stock market took its fatal plunge and ushered in the era known as the Great Depression. The news from New

¹Don Barton, *The Clemson-Carolina Game, 1896-1966* (Columbia: State Printing Company, 1966), 120-25.

York City traveled slowly to South Carolina, and when the initial shock wore off, most South Carolinians wondered what it all meant and what it would mean to them personally. The state's economy was depressed before the crash, and few South Carolinians were investors in the stock market. But the economy quickly worsened, as banks closed, cotton prices dropped, and mills laid off workers.

The state's dependence upon cotton had pushed the state's economy into an economic downturn as early as the end of World War I, when overproduction of cotton and overextension of credit caused a sizeable price decline. In addition, the boll weevil wreaked havoc on the cotton crop in the early part of the 1920s, nearly devastating the crop in the state. Cotton farmers then had less cotton to sell, and for lower prices. Since over half of the state's workers worked in agriculture, almost exclusively in cotton, the downturn in prices and the devastation of the crop directly affected half the state's workforce. Of the other half of the workers, approximately 25 percent worked in manufacturing, primarily in the cotton mills, which also felt the brunt of the failure of the cotton crops. Workers

both in the fields and in the factory had less work to do, and received less money for it.²

South Carolina's industrial economy consisted primarily of cotton textiles; according to historian Jack Hayes, the state's manufactured products were dominated by cotton production, with approximately 70 percent of the value of the state's manufactured products being cotton textiles. This single industry dominance was unique to South Carolina.³ Competition from other domestic textile producers and the emergence of synthetic fibers in the mid-1920s, combined with the failure of the crop in South Carolina, caused a depressed textile market in the state. Textile securities dropped by half in the years between 1923 and 1929. Mill owners responded by cutting the workforce and increasing the workload or by hiring part-time workers instead of full-time workers, keeping production quotas at an unrealistic level for part-time employees. In doing so, some saved their mills but created

²Jack Irby Hayes, Jr., *South Carolina and the New Deal* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 7-8. Hayes's book is the best history of South Carolina's experience during the New Deal and should be consulted by anyone interested in learning more about the impact of the various New Deal programs in the state.

³Ibid.

a workforce of overworked, underpaid, employees who could not afford to keep their families fed and their children in school.⁴

Although the South Carolina economy was already depressed, the stock market crash plunged the state into further economic havoc. Cotton prices bottomed out, dropping from a high of 38 cents a pound in 1919, then to 17 cents a pound in 1920 and to less than a nickel per pound in 1932. Land values plummeted accordingly, as did the per capita income in the state, which fell from \$261 in 1929 to \$151 by 1933. The textile industry followed, with the average annual wage of the mill worker dropping 31 percent. The banking industry, which had suffered during the agricultural depression of the 1920s (when 49 percent

⁴Ibid., 8. The impact of the cotton textile industry on many aspects of life in South Carolina in the decades prior to the Depression is fully discussed in David L. Carlton's *Mill and Town in South Carolina, 1880-1920* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982). The lives of cotton mill workers in Georgia and the Carolinas during these same decades has been examined in Jacqueline Dowd Hall, et al., *Like A Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987). For a closer look at the lives and political feelings of South Carolina mill workers through the first half of the twentieth century, see Bryant Simon, *A Fabric of Defeat: The Politics of South Carolina Millhands, 1910-1948* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

of the state's banks closed) only worsened during the early 1930s, when even major financial institutions closed. Panic spread among depositors, who rushed the banks to withdraw savings, endangering banks that were otherwise sound.⁵

Governor Ibra Blackwood offered hollow assurances regarding the resilience of the economy and appealed to "patriotic" South Carolinians to leave their money in the state's banks. Blackwood's 1933 State of the State Address, according to historian Walter Edgar, "could have been ghost-written by Herbert Hoover," so unrealistic were its goals and expectations. State government seemed unwilling or unable to do anything: the Board of Public Welfare had ceased to exist in 1926 when then-Governor J. G. Richards vetoed its appropriations, and the state constitution permitted public assistance only to Confederate veterans, their widows, and faithful former slaves. The state provided no assistance to the blind, aged, or dependent children until the state constitution

⁵Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 7-9; Walter Edgar, *South Carolina*, 499. See also Gilbert C. Fite, *Cotton Fields No More: Southern Agriculture, 1865-1980* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), 91-138, for the impact of the cotton industry upon the South during the Depression.

was amended in 1937. In meeting the needs of the unemployed and the destitute, local governments were as ineffectual as the state government. In August 1930, Columbia's mayor, Lawrence B. Owens, declared that, although unemployment had risen slightly, there was no crisis, and the city council refused to set up a municipal unemployment agency. In Charleston, when the People's Bank closed, the deposits for the city payroll were lost. Other cities, such as Greenville, Columbia, and Florence, tried to trim the budget by cutting jobs, a technique also tried at the state level, but those local governments failed to provide assistance to the newly-unemployed. The city governments of Columbia and Charleston, the University of South Carolina, and the state government resorted to paying their remaining employees in scrip. Unemployment rates climbed as textile mills and local governments laid off workers throughout the state.⁶

⁶Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 9, 56-57; Edgar, *South Carolina*, 499-500; John Hammond Moore, *Columbia and Richland County: A South Carolina Community, 1740-1990* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993) 339-340; Walter J. Fraser, Jr., *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 379.

The urban unemployed of South Carolina found small solace in the overtures of their city governments and civic organizations. In Charleston, city trucks provided transportation for the unemployed, where they traveled to local farms on the outskirts of the city, where they might pick vegetables that farmers were willing to donate. A similar project in Columbia created a municipal woodyard where needy families could obtain fuel; the Woodyard Fund also provided a room and a meal for transients willing to work in the woodyard. During the Christmas season of 1930, Columbia civic groups (including the Rotarians, Lions, Kiwanis, and Knights of Columbus) collected food, toys, and clothing, and even the Ku Klux Klan (in full Klan regalia) passed out fifty baskets of food on Christmas Eve. Private charities in Columbia served more than 700,000 free meals in 1931.⁷ Without garden plots or farm animals to rely upon, the urban poor were forced to rely on whatever charity was extended.

Farm families in some ways were luckier than the "city folk," in that they were more self-sufficient, at least in

⁷Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 9-12; Moore, *Columbia and Richland County*, 338-339.

food. Those families who owned their own farms often grew much of what they ate, owned a milk cow, and raised a few chickens to provide eggs and meat. A few pigs meant that seasoning meat was available; more pigs provided pork for meals and for bartering. But even in fairly prosperous farm families, the Depression "taught you not to wish for what you couldn't have," in the words of one South Carolinian.⁸ Less than 3 percent of rural South Carolina homes had electricity, which meant that hardly anyone owned luxury items such as electric ranges, washing machines, or refrigerators. The Depression also forced many farm families into the paying workforce, when they could find a job. Fathers and older sons tried to find work in the textile mills at the rate of ten cents an hour, while older daughters or unmarried sisters looked for jobs in department stores. Younger children hired out to pick cotton in neighbors' fields.⁹

The rural poor, both black and white, were less fortunate. Sharecroppers often had no choice but to

⁸Quoted in Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 11.

⁹ Ibid., 10-12; D. Clayton Brown, "Modernizing Rural Life: South Carolina's Push for Public Rural Electrification," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 99 (January 1998): 66; "Chapter Celebrates CCC Anniversary," *Charleston Post and Courier*, 2 April 1998.

concentrate on the cash crop. If they grew gardens, the plots were small. Cows, hogs, and chickens required time and money that sharecroppers did not have. With such a meager diet, poor in nutrients and vitamins, malnutrition and disease ran rampant among the rural poor. David Kennedy, writing about the Depression Era, calls Southern sharecroppers "probably the poorest Americans."¹⁰ Lorena Hickok, a journalist assigned to reporting conditions to the Roosevelt administration, described the plight of the Southern sharecropper in January 1934 as "half-starved Whites and Blacks, struggling in competition for less to eat than my dog gets at home, for the privilege of living in huts that are infinitely less comfortable than his kennel." The living conditions of Southern sharecroppers were so bleak that Hickok was shocked: "I just can't describe to you some of the things I've seen and heard down here these last few days. I shall never forget them - never as long as I live."¹¹

¹⁰ David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 192.

¹¹ Richard Lowitt and Maurine Beasley, eds., *One Third of a Nation: Lorena Hickok Reports on the Great Depression* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 158-159.

While the Depression affected all South Carolinians in some way, African-Americans were particularly hard hit, in both the rural and urban areas of the state. Rural blacks, like most of their white counterparts, worked as sharecroppers and tenant farmers, except there were more of them. Urban blacks usually worked in service industries, as maids, porters, janitors, dishwashers, laundresses, or cooks. In the early 1930s, many urban black women working as maids, laundresses, or cooks lost their jobs, as their white employers could no longer afford to employ them. Businesses in the cities felt pressure to lay off black men working as porters, waiters, dishwashers, or janitors, in order to hire unemployed whites. Black-owned businesses in the cities almost disappeared during the Depression because their patrons could not afford to pay for their services.¹²

At the time of the presidential election of 1932, South Carolinians of all income levels, urban and rural, black and white, felt the ravages of the Depression. By

¹²Paul Lofton, "The Columbia Black Community in the 1930s," *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association* (1984): 89; I. A. Newby, *Black Carolinians: A History of Blacks in South Carolina from 1895-1968* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 245-50; Edwin D. Hoffman, "The Genesis of the Modern Movement for Equal Rights in South Carolina, 1930-1939," *Journal of Negro History* 44 (October 1959): 348, 360-62.

1932, 45 percent of South Carolina farmers were delinquent in paying taxes on their farms. That same year, the *Charleston News and Courier* reported 1,400 Sumter County families were "unemployed, hungry, and practically naked," and at least two residents of Pineville and two in Beaufort died of starvation.¹³ Meals, when available, became more and more monotonous, as fewer and fewer families could afford delicacies such as seasoning meats, ice, or sugar. Mothers and wives mended clothing and shoes, and then mended them again. "New" clothes were most often fashioned out of old clothes or flour or feed sacks. "Visiting" and church became the most popular spare-time activities, replacing going to the movies. Children dropped out of school to look for work, because they did not have clothes to wear or were so malnourished or sick they were unable to attend. Families who had once felt financially secure found themselves forced to cash in life-insurance policies, to bring older children home from college, or to move in with relatives.¹⁴

¹³*Charleston News and Courier*, 19 May 1932, 28 September 1932.

¹⁴Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 8-13.

Two South Carolinians who were teenagers in the early 1930s remember distinctly the effects that the Depression had upon their family life and employment. Wilbert Bernshouse of Sumter, South Carolina, recalls that as a teenager in 1932, he worked part-time at a furniture store, and most of his earnings "went to the family which wasn't much at ten cents an hour." Bernshouse's father had gone to New Jersey to look for work, while his mother "did cooking and catering." James Dawkins, who worked near Darlington as a laborer for the State Highway Department after his high school graduation in 1931, remembers that his wages had been cut to ten cents an hour and that he was only allowed to report to work three days a week by 1934.¹⁵

Columbia's central location in the state and its role as a transportation hub made it a stopping point for hundreds of transients, including sharecroppers, unemployed mill workers, and some unemployed professionals. Temporary quarters were found for some of these transients at the

¹⁵Wilbert Bernshouse, "Autobiography," [1996], handwritten manuscript. Photocopy in author's possession. James P. Dawkins in National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni, Chapter 36, "Fort Moultrie Chapter of the NACCCA," typewritten booklet, [1984], photocopy in author's possession.

YMCA, Camp Jackson, or the county jail, but the city could not, or would not, provide for them all. At least one hundred people lived in boxes and abandoned cars at the Columbia city dump in 1932. In 1935, Columbia Mayor Lawrence B. Owens was quoted as saying: "They don't worry about themselves, so I stopped worrying about them."¹⁶

South Carolina's voters were overwhelmingly Democrats in the 1920s and 1930s, and the state's senators, representatives, and Governor Blackwood provided a strong base of support for Franklin Roosevelt in 1931 and 1932. South Carolina refused to listen to Herbert Hoover's hollow promises of "prosperity just around the corner," and the state gave Roosevelt his widest margin of victory in any state, with 98 percent of the vote. South Carolina's junior senator, James F. Byrnes, emerged as a close confidant of the new president, a leader of the New Deal, and South Carolina's most influential senator on the national stage since John C. Calhoun.¹⁷

The state's support for Roosevelt paid off immediately during the president's First Hundred Days. According to

¹⁶ Moore, *Columbia and Richland County*, 340.

¹⁷ Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal* 16-18; Edgar, *South Carolina*, 500-501.

South Carolina historian Walter Edgar, "Given the scope of economic distress in South Carolina, almost all New Deal legislation had an impact on the lives of its citizens."¹⁸ The Emergency Relief Act provided the states with grants to assist their needy citizens, administered under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). The South Carolina Emergency Relief Administration (SCERA) began operation in June 1933 under the directorship of Malcolm Miller. The grant money, administered at the county level, was used to provide jobs, food, clothing, and direct money for the needy, and it provided thousands of South Carolinians with subsistence, if not comfort. However, the administration of SCERA was an "administrative nightmare," due primarily to the absence of a state welfare agency before the creation of SCERA. Hopkins and the federal government expected the states to match the federal money in most cases, often at a ratio of three dollars for every federal one; the fact that Hopkins required South Carolina to match only 2 percent of the total FERA funds spent within the state is indicative of the desperate situation in which South Carolina found itself. With no state welfare program

¹⁸Edgar, *South Carolina*, 501.

to serve as an institutional foundation, South Carolina's state and local governments were required to create a large, complex administrative agency from scratch, resulting in untrained personnel working for little pay, described in one account as "conscientious, hardworking, sincere, and incompetent."¹⁹ Whatever the difficulties, SCERA provided some sort of relief to approximately 25 percent of the state's population, and South Carolina was the only state in which African-Americans received more FERA aid than whites.²⁰

SCERA money provided jobs in farming, construction, and public works for men but also provided opportunities for women in the forms of sewing rooms, day nurseries, and public libraries, as well as working with a school lunch program that provided hot meals for over a hundred thousand South Carolina children in 1934. Women also assisted county home demonstration agents in training rural families in canning and preserving fruits and vegetables and in

¹⁹Anthony J. Badger, *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-1940* (New York: Noonday Press, 1989), 194.

²⁰Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 39-40, 45; Leuchtenberg, *FDR and the New Deal*, 120; Watkins, *The Hungry Years*, 169-71; Badger, *The New Deal*, 190-200; Robert S. McElvaine, *The Great Depression: America 1929-1941* (New York: Times Books, 1984), 151; Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 170-189.

making clothes. As important was the work program as to the relief of South Carolinians, SCERA's direct relief, in the form of food and clothing, was even more important. SCERA workers planted vegetable gardens in each county to provide food, while over 100,000 head of cattle came to state slaughterhouses from the drought-stricken Midwest, alleviating Midwestern farmers while at the same time providing beef for malnourished Carolinians. With the assistance of FERA, SCERA distributed more than 14 million pounds of meat (in addition to the beef), 3.5 million pounds of flour, and 2.7 million pounds of potatoes, as well as butter, lard, rice, cheese, milk, sugar, and fruits between 1933 and 1935.²¹

Roosevelt never intended FERA and SCERA to be permanent relief measures, only immediate, stop-gap attempts to alleviate some of the devastation wrought on South Carolinians. More lasting relief came through other New Deal programs, such as the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA), the Social Security Administration, the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and the Public Works Administration (PWA). These New Deal programs

²¹Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 44-45.

generally were more successful than others in providing long-term relief. Other programs, most notably the National Relief Administration (NRA), also attempted to provide long-term relief, and while not usually judged as a success, NRA did provide limited relief to South Carolina's mill workers. Together, these programs provided economic relief to a variety of South Carolinians, reaching whites and blacks, young and old, men and women, urban and rural residents, professionals and laborers, and the educated and the uneducated alike. An introduction to these New Deal programs and their impact on the lives of South Carolinians is discussed below.

Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA)

South Carolina's farmers may have been some of the last to hear the news of the Great Depression; according to them, the economy had been depressed for a long time prior to 1929. In 1933, both cotton and tobacco were selling for less than the cost of production, prompting South Carolina congressmen, as well as those from North Carolina and Georgia, to approach Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace for assistance. Wallace responded with a plan setting guaranteed minimum prices for both cotton and tobacco, the

foundation of the Agricultural Adjustment Act. Passage of this plan led to increased support of Roosevelt and the New Deal among the farming population. During Roosevelt's First Hundred Days, March to June 1933, Congress passed the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA), asking farmers producing seven basic commodities (including cotton and tobacco) to take land out of cultivation in exchange for payment from the Secretary of Agriculture. South Carolina farm owners almost unanimously voiced approval of the plan and began signing contracts to plow under parts of their existing crops and to leave segments of land fallow in future years.²²

Although AAA provided a great deal of assistance to the struggling farmers of the state by the end of the

²² Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 122-125, 136; McElvaine, *The Great Depression*, 149-150; Badger, *The New Deal*, 152-169; Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 200-213. For a larger survey of the general impact of the Agricultural Adjustment Act, see Theodore Saloutos, "New Deal Agricultural Policy: An Evaluation," *Journal of American History* 61 (1974): 394-416, and Van L. Perkins, *Crisis in Agriculture: The Agricultural Adjustment Administration and the New Deal*, 1933 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969). Pete Daniel's *Breaking the Land: The Transformation of the Cotton, Tobacco and Rice Cultures since 1880* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985) provides a study of the way in which AAA and other New Deal agricultural programs sought to balance the availability of technology with the needs of Southern agriculturalists.

1930s, it did not end the economic struggle of many farming families; the war years of the early 1940s later brought the desired economic boon to South Carolina farmers, not the New Deal. In addition, AAA did little to relieve the drastic situation of South Carolina sharecroppers and tenant farmers, who rarely saw the benefits AAA provided to farm owners. Their only protection under AAA was a clause that provided that they would be allowed to continue to live in their homes and work the land, even if the landowner cut his overall production as required.²³

Tenant farmers were to receive parity payments through the AAA, a system that worked marginally well. Very few complaints about the system were reported, likely owing more to the tenuous relationship tenant farmers had with the landowners than to the success of parity payments. Although originally designed to provide direct payment to tenants, South Carolina Senator Ellison "Cotton Ed" Smith prevented this type of direct relief: "You can't do this to my niggers, paying checks to them. They don't know what to do with the money. The money should come to me. I'll

²³Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 212-13.

take care of them. They're mine."²⁴ This was just one instance when the issue of race prevented economic relief from reaching the population in which it had the potential to do the most good. It was up to other New Deal programs to provide relief to the rural South Carolina population. The federal administration had to find more creative ways to provide relief for the poorest of the South Carolina population, especially the large African-American population. Programs like the Rural Electrification Administration, the Soil Conservation Service, the Farm Credit Administration, and the Resettlement Administration provided additional assistance to South Carolina's farmers.

Rural Electrification Administration (REA)

Although the public had been advocating the extension of electricity to rural areas since about 1920, the public utilities in the state had deemed it too expensive to run lines to outlying areas (in reality, most of the state), and the state government simply could not afford to conduct the needed studies or run the lines by itself. But extending electricity to rural areas was a priority

²⁴Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 126-27; Senator E.D. Smith quoted in Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 213.

throughout mostly rural South Carolina, and in 1932, the legislature created a new division of the Railroad Commission to investigate the state's electrical industry. The Utilities Division of the Railroad Commission worked with the University of South Carolina's Department of Electrical Engineering to produce a statewide survey of potential electricity customers along state highways. The resulting study led to the passage of a bill designed to extend electrical services to farms situated on state highways, providing electricity to 11,000 homes. The South Carolina Rural Electrification Act of 1933 had one main catch: the money had to come from the federal government.²⁵

While South Carolina pursued providing farmers with electricity, at least on paper, the federal government, building on lessons learned through the experience of the Tennessee Valley Authority in providing electricity to rural Southerners, assisted in this effort. Beginning in 1935, the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) provided the federal financing required to extend

²⁵Clayton Brown, "Modernizing Rural Life," 75-78. For an example of the student projects at the University of South Carolina that contributed to the passage of the South Carolina Rural Electrification Act, see W. S. Smith, "Rural Electrification in South Carolina," (M. S. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1932).

electrical power into rural areas, which received electricity with great enthusiasm. South Carolina's rural landowners were quick to install electric lights and buy radios and electric irons when electricity became available. By 1940, almost 15 percent of South Carolina farmers had electricity; up from less than 3 percent in 1934. As the quality of life improved due to electricity, so did farm production: for example, egg production increased by 30 percent through keeping poultry buildings lit at night (perhaps keeping the chickens awake), and milk production increased by 5 to 15 percent at some farms.²⁶ Aside from the small gains in egg and milk production, REA did not directly affect most South Carolinians' pocketbooks, but it did improve the quality of life for many rural residents, enabling them to enjoy evening hours together while listening to news and radio programs.

Soil Conservation Service (SCS)

The Soil Conservation Service (SCS) began as the Soil Erosion Service in the Department of the Interior, but in

²⁶Clayton Brown, "Modernizing Rural Life," 76-85; Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 134-35; Badger, *The New Deal*, 177-78.

1935, Roosevelt transferred it to the Department of Agriculture. SCS worked to educate farmers about methods of soil conservation. South Carolina's farmland was badly eroded; in fourteen counties, at least half of the farmland was so eroded it was classified as useless. With labor provided by the Civilian Conservation Corps, SCS taught farmers the benefits of terracing, cover cropping, and reforestation. By 1936, five demonstration projects were underway in South Carolina, with 95 percent of farmers in the project area following prescribed SCS practices, and over 90 percent of farmers living in a twenty-five mile radius received instruction through SCS projects. Farmers and CCC boys planted over 700,000 acres of South Carolina land with soil-conserving crops and grasses and implemented soil conservation measures on more than 75 percent of the state's total cropland.²⁷

Farm Credit Administration (FCA)

The Farm Credit Administration lent money to farm owners to refinance farm mortgages and to assist in buying seed, livestock, and equipment. FCA provided over \$61

²⁷Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 129-30.

million in assistance to South Carolina farm owners but did not give direct assistance to sharecroppers or tenant farmers. SCERA's Rural Rehabilitation Division, however, did provide sharecroppers and tenants with similar loans for farm equipment, livestock, seed, and fertilizer. The Rural Rehabilitation Division, and later the Resettlement Administration (RA) and the Farm Security Administration (FSA), worked to relocate farmers living and working on marginal land to more productive land, while teaching the relocated families additional skills to increase their self-sufficiency. These programs eventually established six resettlement projects in South Carolina, providing some 460 families with new farmland. Resettlement provided a new start for black as well as white tenant farming families, although in segregated projects. Although ambitious, the resettlement program was plagued by mismanagement from the start. In addition, most resettlement farms in the state were designed to provide only a semblance of self-reliance; in actuality, the farms were too small to successfully raise cash crops such as cotton and tobacco. However, resettlement provided some individual families with a higher standard of living,

better land for farming, and greater education and opportunity for increased self-sufficiency.²⁸

National Recovery Administration (NRA)

Federal relief programs also impacted industrial and commercial activities in South Carolina. The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) and its National Recovery Administration (NRA) brought federal assistance to mill workers, although not without some backlash from the mill owners. Federal programs guaranteed a minimum wage, established a forty-hour workweek, and abolished child labor. These initiatives raised the standard of living for mill workers and their families and significantly improved their quality of life. South Carolina textile workers wholeheartedly endorsed NRA. One such worker, Henry Coyle of Gaffney, wrote the President: "I want you to know that I am for you in this most wonderful undertaking. . . .

²⁸Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 132-33; William David Hiott, "New Deal Resettlement in South Carolina," (M.A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1986), 6-8, 100-101. Paul K. Conkin's *Tomorrow a New World: The New Deal Community Program* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1959) is widely acknowledged as the definitive (if early) study of the resettlement programs of the New Deal.

[M]y faith is in you my heart with you and I am for you sink or swim."²⁹

Despite the positive impact NRA had on many South Carolina millhands, the federal requirement of a minimum wage for textile workers negatively impacted the state's black mill workers. Instead of paying black operatives the same minimum wage prescribed for whites, mill owners simply laid off their black employees, choosing to cut costs or employ more whites in those positions. Historian Paul Lofton calls the NRA "the one New Deal program that had a basically negative effect on South Carolina blacks."³⁰

Federal collective bargaining provisions rang hollow in South Carolina. Textile unions found it difficult to unionize in South Carolina, and striking workers faced state governmental opposition in meeting their demands. The failure of the 1934 general textile strike left many mill workers in South Carolina, as elsewhere, frustrated with the unionizing experience.³¹ Mill owners and

²⁹Quoted in Hall, *Like a Family*, 297.

³⁰Lofton, "Columbia Black Community," 91.

³¹ The failure to unionize textile workers in the state left a lingering legacy; by 1980, less than seven percent of the state's labor force was unionized. The difficulties of unions organizing in the South is discussed in J. Wayne

management felt threatened by the new federal regulations as well as foreign competition, until Congress, pressured by Senator Byrnes in 1936, increased the tariffs on imported textiles. Textile orders then increased to the point that South Carolina mills had to refuse incoming orders, until demand fell off with the 1937 recession. After the recession, the cotton and textile market in the state did not recover fully until the 1940s, during World War II.³²

Flynt, "The New Deal and Southern Labor," in *The New Deal and the South*, ed. James C. Cobb and Michael V. Namaroto (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1984): 63-95. The general textile strike of 1934 has received much recent attention. See Simon, *Fabric of Defeat*, for example, as well as Janet Christine Irons, *Testing the New Deal: The General Textile Strike of 1934 in the American South* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000); and John A. Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934: From Maine to Alabama* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002).

³²Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 100, 118-119; Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 177-189; McElvaine, *The Great Depression*, 158-162. See also Flynt, "New Deal and Southern Labor"; and Simon, *Fabric of Defeat*. For a detailed account of NRA's effect on the textile industry in the South, see James Hodges' aptly titled, *New Deal Labor Policy and the Southern Cotton Textile Industry, 1933-1941* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986).

Social Security

The minimum wage for workers was just one part of the federal strategy to increase consumer spending. Just as important was Social Security, which increased the buying power of the elderly. Social Security changed the expectations of aging South Carolinians. South Carolina was one of only six states that did not have a pension plan for seniors by the mid-1930s; one of fourteen lacking aid for the blind; and only South Carolina and Georgia had failed to provide assistance to dependent children. With the advent of Social Security at the national level, the state government had to act to amend the state constitution to provide assistance for these groups. The requisite 1937 amendments provided aid for the aged, blind, and dependent children. That same year, the legislature passed the Public Welfare Act, which created a permanent department to administer Social Security programs, as well as other welfare, insurance, health, and unemployment compensation programs. However beneficial the early Social Security program in the state, a large number of the population was overlooked. Farm and domestic workers were not eligible

for the program, leaving out most African-Americans and women, and the state's poorest.³³

FERA and SCERA had provided some initial direct relief to the most needy of South Carolinians in the early 1930s, and Social Security generally provided for children and the aged. But a large segment of South Carolina's population -- the middle class -- needed some sort of assistance, as well. FERA and SCERA met immediate needs such as food and clothing, but at the same time demonstrated the need to provide work relief for the middle class, and the New Deal institutionalized these programs through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Public Works Administration (PWA), which found jobs for skilled and unskilled manual workers as well as white collar employees. Both programs had similar objectives, to provide work relief while making

³³Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 56-57; Badger, *The New Deal*, 227-35. Until the 1937 constitutional amendment, the state constitution provided state pensions to be given only to Confederate veterans and their widows. The early effects of Social Security throughout the South are discussed in James T. Patterson, *The New Deal and the States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 85-101 and in George Brown Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1967), 487-91. The development of Social Security at the national level is placed into larger historical context in William Graebner, *A History of Retirement: The Meaning and Function of an American Institution, 1885-1978* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980).

a lasting impact on public infrastructure. The WPA concentrated efforts on projects with a budget of less than \$25,000, while the PWA primarily handled larger projects. Both agencies addressed a variety of needs in South Carolina and performed projects that left lasting benefits in the state.

Works Progress Administration (WPA)

WPA projects assisted the state government with projects aimed at improving infrastructure, education, and the arts. The agency changed the landscape of the state through road projects, improving the highway system and the quality of farm-to-market roads. WPA projects increased the number of miles of the state highway system by over 50 percent, from 6,000 to over 9,600 between 1933 and 1941. WPA educational work "contributed to the development of the educational facilities of the state unparalleled in its history," according to a 1938 state appraisal committee. The agency built or improved over 2,000 schools for white and black students, provided literacy training for children and adults, built facilities for state colleges, and provided training and counseling for teens and young adults through the National Youth Administration (NYA). The NYA

was one of the most successful WPA programs nationally, and became its own agency in 1939.³⁴

The WPA provided opportunities for South Carolina's blacks, as well as whites, probably more equally than most other New Deal programs. The WPA paid workers at the same rate, regardless of race. This policy drew criticism from many whites desiring work on WPA projects, and from white employers who began losing workers to higher paid jobs with the agency. White contractors in Greenville and elsewhere required black laborers to provide a "kickback" of their WPA wages in return for hiring them for jobs. While the WPA paid the same rates for whites and blacks, for the most part, the WPA, as with many other New Deal programs,

³⁴Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 58-60; Badger, *The New Deal*, 200-27. Despite the massive variety of projects conducted under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration, the only comprehensive study of the WPA is Donald Howard, *The WPA and Federal Relief Policy* (New York: Russell Sage, 1942). A plethora of works has discussed various aspects of the WPA's legacy. For the national context on the New Deal's youth programs, including the NYA, see Richard A. Reiman, *The New Deal & American Youth : Ideas & Ideals in a Depression Decade*, (Athens : University of Georgia Press, 1992). For the NYA project in South Carolina, see *Report of the State Commission of Forestry, July 1 1937 to June 30, 1938* (Columbia: General Assembly of South Carolina, 1938): 38-39. Later chapters of this study discuss the impact of the Civilian Conservation Corps on the lives of South Carolina's young men.

limited work opportunities for blacks to manual labor positions. Professional blacks in Columbia, including Dr. Robert Mance and educator and activist Modesta Monteith Simkins, protested the limited possibilities for South Carolina's African-Americans. WPA officials responded by creating professional positions in Columbia. Professional blacks worked for the WPA as teachers in adult and nursery schools and in health projects. While the WPA provided for black professionals in the state capitol, it is likely that this project was the only one of its kind in the state.³⁵

The WPA's Women's and Professional Division provided work for women, especially those who were single heads-of-households or who had spouses who were unable to work. Many of these projects were derivatives of projects initially begun under FERA and included sewing rooms, libraries, housekeeping or medical programs, and land beautification projects. Women also found work through other WPA

³⁵Lofton, "Columbia Black Community," 91; Hoffman, "Genesis of Equal Rights," 361. After teaching at Columbia's Booker T. Washington High School, Modesta Monteith Simkins became South Carolina's only full-time, statewide African-American public health worker when she was appointed as Director of Negro Work for the South Carolina Anti-tuberculosis Association. See Jill K. Hanson, "'A Room of One's Own:' Preserving Twentieth-Century Women's History in Columbia, South Carolina," Master's thesis, University of South Carolina, 1994.

divisions, especially working with the educational programs in classrooms, lunchrooms, or children's health programs. These programs were more than "make-work"; they provided women with much needed employment as well as assisted children, who were direct beneficiaries of some of the programs. The School Lunch Program in South Carolina operated through the assistance of local advisory councils, who assisted the federal government's work by obtaining additional food. South Carolina had the second-largest WPA school lunch program in the country, feeding over 77,000 school children daily and recording an average weight gain of three to eight pounds per child over the first five weeks of the program.³⁶

Professional women as well as men found work through the programs of the WPA's Professional Division, such as the Writers' Project and the Arts Project. Writers, historians, journalists, musicians, and artists found the Depression particularly hostile to their professions; they welcomed the opportunity to use their specialized training

³⁶Ellen Woodward, "Hot Lunches for a Million School Children," [1937?], Record Group 69, National Archives, available on-line <<http://newdeal.feri.org/texts/500.htm>>, accessed 12 December 2002.

and talents.³⁷ The South Carolina Writers' Project, under the direction of Mabel Montgomery and Louise Jones DuBose, found work for writers, researchers, editors, and typists. While the Writers' Project produced some twenty-three publications, including the massive *South Carolina: A Guide to the Palmetto State, Palmetto Pioneers, and South Carolina State Parks*, the Writers' Project also employed historians, including Dr. Anne K. Gregorie, the first woman Ph.D. in History from the University of South Carolina. Under Dr. Gregorie's leadership, historians began locating, transcribing, and preserving public records in all forty-six South Carolina counties, as well as some church records and private manuscript collections. The project, however, ignored records from black churches and manumission records. Although overall a successful project, in several counties local court clerks put the WPA workers in clerical positions, rather than allowing them to work on the records

³⁷Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal* 61-62; Badger, *The New Deal*, 205-7. While the WPA's women's programs provided relief for women, these programs were often the most expendable; officials in several states complained that the women's projects were always the first to be closed down. Susan Ware highlights the WPA's women's projects as well as the larger experience of women in the New Deal in *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).

project. The state director closed the projects in at least two counties when the local clerks refused to cooperate.

The Historic Records Survey, now a part of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, is still used daily by historians and genealogists alike. The Federal Writers' Project in South Carolina also collected narratives of African-Americans who were former slaves, recognizing the historical value of their life stories.³⁸

Other tangible benefits of the New Deal came through the Federal Artists Project (FAP). Musicians and artists in the employ of the WPA provided instruction to children and adults alike who were interested in music or art. The WPA also operated art galleries in Greenville, Columbia,

³⁸South Carolina Federal Writers' Project, *South Carolina: A Guide to the Palmetto State*, American Guide Series, Works Projects Administration (reprint, Oxford University Press, 1963); South Carolina Federal Writers' Project, *South Carolina State Parks*, American Guide Series, Works Projects Administration (Columbia: South Carolina State Forest Service, 1940); South Carolina Federal Writers' Project, *Palmetto Pioneers: Six Stories of Early South Carolinians* (Columbia: South Carolina Federal Writers' Project, 1938); Works Progress Administration of South Carolina, *Research and Records Work in South Carolina* (Columbia: np., 1940); Roberta V. Copp, "South Carolina's Historic Records Survey, 1935-1942" (M.A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1988), 25-52. For African-American slave narratives collected by the WPA, see Belinda Hurmence, ed., *Before Freedom, When I Just Can Remember* (Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, 1989), a collection of twenty-seven WPA slave narratives from South Carolina.

Florence, Walterboro, and Beaufort.³⁹ One early WPA project involved the reconstruction of a Charleston landmark, the Dock Street Theater. This building project delighted Charleston's historic preservation community, which previously had been ambivalent at best to New Deal projects. Artists employed by the FAP created scenery for the theater's second grand opening gala, and WPA administrator Harry Hopkins presented the key to the theater to Charleston Mayor Burnet Maybank. The Dock Street Theater was Charleston's first, but not its only, WPA historic preservation project; when the city sustained tornado damage in September 1938, Hopkins made \$500,000 available for building repairs, including to the historic City Market and City Hall. Mayor Maybank's support of Roosevelt and friendship with Hopkins helped to ensure the infusion of WPA money into Charleston.⁴⁰

³⁹ Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 41-43, 63-64; Lise C. Swensson and Nancy M. Higgins, ed., *New Deal Art in South Carolina* (Columbia: South Carolina State Museum, 1990), 30-32.

⁴⁰ Sidney R. Bland, *Preserving Charleston's Past, Shaping Its Future: The Life and Times of Susan Pringle Frost* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999): 89-94; Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston!*, 383-84. See also Susan G. Hiott, "New Deal Art in South Carolina," available on-line <<http://people.clemson.edu/hiotts/pwap.html>>, accessed 14 December 2001. Charleston benefited from an

Related to the arts projects conducted through the WPA, the Treasury Department contracted with artists across the country to provide murals and sculptures in courthouses and post offices throughout South Carolina. Vermont artist Stefan Hirsch's 1938 mural for the Federal Courthouse in Aiken caused a highly publicized controversy; when the mural was unveiled, the dark-skinned central figure, "Justice," caused an uproar among local white residents and the judge in whose courtroom the painting was installed. The Treasury Department tried to broker a compromise in which Hirsh would lighten the skin tone of the female figure, but Hirsh refused. The federal judge, Frank Myers, covered the objectionable painting with a curtain while court was in session.⁴¹ This controversy serves as a reminder that although most New Deal projects were welcomed throughout South Carolina, there was some criticism and even hostility when projects did not go as initially

inordinately large amount of New Deal money, especially from the WPA and the PWA, in part due to Mayor Burnet Maybank's political alliance with Senator James Bynes and his personal friendship with Harry Hopkins. See Marvin L. Cann, "Burnet Maybank and Charleston Politics in the New Deal Era," *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association*, (1979): 39-48.

⁴¹Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 41-43, 63-64; Swensson and Higgins, "New Deal Art," 20-32.

planned. Often, if not always, race played a role in projects, in terms of pay scale, availability and type of work, or even in the subject matter of a painting.

The WPA provided work relief for a large number of skilled workers, including educators, medical personnel, artists, and writers, as well as assisting state government in projects that would have otherwise been unaffordable, including infrastructure improvements in highways and schools. Another New Deal program, the Public Works Administration, concentrated on federal property within the state, and also assisted in funding for other non-federal projects.

Public Works Administration (PWA)

The Public Works Administration, established at the beginning of the New Deal, worked on repair and construction of federal property within the state and funded non-federal projects through a grant-loan system. The government also funded slum clearance and housing projects through PWA. In South Carolina, the PWA spent almost \$36 million from 1933 to 1939, which resulted in several projects that, in the words of historian Jack Hayes, "literally changed the face of the Palmetto State"

through the construction of highways, schools, courthouses, hospitals, post offices, a shipyard, and two massive hydroelectric projects as well as housing projects in Charleston and Columbia, and later, in Greenville and Spartanburg. The largest PWA projects in South Carolina were the federal Charleston Navy Yard and the two non-federal hydroelectric projects, Buzzard Roost and Santee-Cooper. The Charleston Navy Yard dated to 1901 but had fallen into disrepair, and by the early 1930s, it employed only 400 workers. In 1933, Navy officials recommended closing the Navy Yard, to the dismay of Mayor Maybank and Senator James Byrnes. Byrnes's influence helped save the Navy Yard, directing additional federal work to Charleston, and later that same year, the first PWA project began with the construction of the gunboat *Charleston*. Following the construction of the *Charleston*, the PWA constructed other boats and ships at the Charleston Navy Yard. The Navy Yard employed some 1600 workers as ship-builders, while other projects there provided an additional 1,700 workers on the repair and maintenance of the facilities and the construction of a new hospital and officers' quarters.⁴²

⁴²Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 71-73; Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston!* 386-88; Cann, "Maybank," 44.

The PWA also constructed hydroelectric projects throughout the state, which met with some controversy from the privately held power utilities. However, as the private companies proved unable or unwilling to extend electrical power to the most rural parts of the state, the federal projects received more acclaim than hostility. The Buzzard Roost project in the upstate and the much larger Santee-Cooper project in the mid-state and low-country provided much needed electrical power to much of the state. Initially designed as a private enterprise, the federal government refused to grant PWA money for a private project, instead requiring the state to set up a state public service authority to oversee the project and thereby enabling it to qualify for PWA funds. The state legislation, modeled after the federal Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), provided for improved navigation, reclamation of swampland, reforestation, and hydroelectric power through the construction of dams, canals, and power plants. The Santee-Cooper project alone was the largest, most expensive PWA project on the East Coast. Besides

For the impact of the Charleston Navy Yard during the decade immediately following the New Deal, see Fritz P. Hamer, "A Southern City Enters the Twentieth Century: Charleston, Its Navy Yark, and World War II, 1940-1948" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1998).

providing hydroelectric power across South Carolina, Santee-Cooper employed over 16,000 workers, created two lakes, drained swamps, and indirectly improved health through the eradication of malaria in a five-county area. In addition, the creation of Lakes Moultrie and Marion expanded recreational opportunities in hunting, boating, and fishing, and further impacted the changing landscape in the state.⁴³

The legacy of the New Deal in South Carolina is mixed, as it is elsewhere. The previous narrative highlights both some of the successes and failures of a variety of New Deal programs in the state. Programs such as the Agricultural Adjustment Administration failed to provide adequately for the rural poor, while the National Recovery Administration improved the lot of textile workers only marginally, at best. Many New Deal programs in South Carolina, as in other states, were fraught with racism, incompetence, or

⁴³Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 75-84; Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston!*, 386-388. For a complete discussion of the history of Santee-Cooper and its impact in the state, see Walter Edgar, *History of Santee Cooper: 1934-1984* (Columbia, SC: R.L. Bryan Co., 1984). See also "History of Santee Cooper," on-line at <<http://www.santeecoop.com/aboutus/history.html>>, accessed 17 December 2002.

corruption. Other programs, such as the Works Progress Administration, provided limited opportunities for previously marginalized sections of the population, including women and African-Americans. However small the gains or few the opportunities, these opportunities were indeed improvements over the situations for many in South Carolina prior to the New Deal.

There is no question that the New Deal changed South Carolina's landscape, from the rural landscape to the built environment of the cities. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the Resettlement Administration, and the Soil Conservation Service changed the way South Carolinians farmed their land, introducing terracing, crop rotations, and other farming techniques that changed the farm landscape. The Rural Electrification Administration added electrical lines to the landscape. WPA projects improved roads and added school buildings and art projects to small-town environments, as well as reconstructing historic buildings such as Charleston's Dock Street Theater. The PWA did a great deal to change the state's landscape, through its public buildings, roads, housing projects, and of course, the lakes, dams, and power plants of Santee-Cooper. These visual legacies should remind South

Carolinians and visitors of the impact of the New Deal within the state.

Another New Deal project, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), assisted in the creation of a new landscape for South Carolina, through its work in forestry, in fire prevention, in soil conservation, and in the construction of state parks. The CCC employed South Carolina's young men, white and black, and provided them with jobs, education, and vocational training. The CCC's work changed the state's landscape in many ways. The addition of telephone lines through rural areas and forests, the building of fire towers across the state, and the implementation of soil conservation projects such as the planting of kudzu permanently altered the countryside, while providing jobs and homes to thousands of young men. No CCC project has been more lasting than the seventeen state parks constructed with CCC labor, and along with Santee-Cooper, these state parks are perhaps the most visible and tangible New Deal legacy in South Carolina.

CHAPTER THREE

ECW AND CCC: AN ADMINISTRATIVE OVERVIEW OF THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

When Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated as President on 4 March 1933, he instituted a period of reform so sweeping it has become known as the "Hundred Days' War." Roosevelt's inaugural address compared the economic crisis at hand with one of war, and he stated that he intended to meet the crisis as he would any other enemy.¹ With such immediate responses to the exigencies of the Great Depression as a bank holiday, the slashing of Federal salaries, a farm bill, and an end to Prohibition, Roosevelt quickly turned the mood of the country from "depressed" to "relieved," in more ways than one.

During his first week in office, at a 9 March White House press conference, Roosevelt proposed conservation-related employment. Less than a week later, on 14 March 1933, Roosevelt asked four cabinet members, including the Secretaries of War, the Interior, Agriculture, and Labor,

¹William E. Leuchtenberg, *The FDR Years: On Roosevelt and His Legacy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 49-53.

to coordinate an informal meeting to plan the organization of the relief plan closest to his heart, the creation of a civilian group made up of unemployed young men to work for land and forest conservation across the United States.²

Within a week, Roosevelt was ready to present his proposal for a "civilian conservation corps" to Congress. Senators Joseph Taylor Robinson (D-Arkansas) and Robert F. Wagner (D-New York) and Representative Joseph Byrns of Tennessee sponsored the bill in the Senate and House. The President then met with committee members of both houses on 22 March and with the joint committee the next day. The joint committee met for two days, and it chose to extend conservation activities to state and private land as well as federally owned lands and to state parks; this amendment allowed men to work close to their homes. The bill that included the provisions for Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) was introduced in both the House and the Senate on 27 March, and after several amendments were proposed and discussed (but only three passed, including a non-discriminatory clause), the bill passed Congress and

²Leuchtenberg, *Roosevelt and the New Deal*), 41-52; Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps*, 10-11; Nixon, ed., *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Conservation*.

Roosevelt signed it on 31 March 1933.³ Although the bill officially created Emergency Conservation Work, the program was popularly known by the earlier title Roosevelt had given it, the Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC, and Congress officially changed the name to the CCC on 28 June 1937.⁴

On 5 April 1933, with Executive Order 6101, Roosevelt appointed widely respected labor leader Robert Fechner (1876-1939) to oversee Emergency Conservation Work. Fechner, born in Tennessee and raised in Georgia, had joined a machinist union local at age 16 and, at the time of his appointment, had served for 20 years as an executive officer of the International Association of Machinists. He also had lectured on labor relations at prestigious universities, such as Dartmouth, Brown, and Harvard, and had worked on Roosevelt's presidential campaign. Although Fechner's appointment as Director of ECW could be viewed as

³Nixon, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Conservation*, 138-149; Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 12-23. Congressman Byrns of Tennessee begrudgingly sponsored the bill at Roosevelt's request; he regarded the "scheme as idealistic and unfeasible," but realized the need to provide some sort of employment for young men. See Ann B. Irish, *Joseph W. Byrns of Tennessee: A Political Biography* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 169-170.

⁴Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 26.

a political reward, his selection also mollified labor leaders who were concerned with several ECW provisions, and Fechner's appointment received the approval of American Federation of Labor (AF of L) President William Green.⁵ Fechner proved to be both a capable and controversial leader. He remained director until his death in December 1939. Although Fechner was the "Director," the CCC was Roosevelt's pet project, and many decisions were ultimately left up to the President. Decisions such as where to place camps often languished on Roosevelt's desk until he had time to get to them. CCC historian John Salmond has noted that Roosevelt's "genuine interest in the Corps cannot be doubted; yet by insisting that he approve personally every single camp site, the President greatly limited Fechner's authority and geared the pace of the work to his own availability."⁶

Executive Order 6101 also provided for a salary of \$12,000 for the director and created an advisory council consisting of representatives from the federal departments

⁵Nixon, *FDR and Conservation*, 151; Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 27-29; Charles W. Johnson, "The Army and the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942," *Prologue* (Fall 1972): 141.

⁶Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 30.

of War, Agriculture, Interior, and Labor, the four cabinet offices that Roosevelt had initially consulted when drafting working plans for the CCC. Each cabinet department was responsible for overseeing a separate responsibility in the creation and operation of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The Department of Labor selected the enrollees, and the War Department operated the camps; while the departments of Agriculture and the Interior were charged with supervising the work projects. The executive order appropriated money for the payroll, supplies, and equipment needed to carry out Emergency Conservation Work. Such cross-agency cooperation was not unheard of; President Calvin Coolidge had organized the "National Conference on Outdoor Recreation" in 1924, calling upon his Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, Interior, Labor, and War to discuss "country recreation" for the American people.⁷

Labor Secretary Frances Perkins asked former Red Cross advisor Frank Persons to serve as Labor's representative to the CCC Advisory Council, and although Persons set up enrollee quotas based on state population, for the most

⁷Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 31; William G. Robbins, *American Forestry: A History of National, State, and Private Cooperation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 140; Steely, *Parks for Texas*, 37.

part he relied on local relief boards to select the men who would serve in the Civilian Conservation Corps. At first, CCC enrollment was limited to the segment of the population that Roosevelt most wished to reach with the CCC, unemployed, single men aged 18 to 25. Persons began selection of enrollees who fit this description on 6 April, the day after Roosevelt issued Executive Order 6101. The Army, charged with camp operation and initial training of the enrollees, accepted the first enrollees the next day. The first camp was established in Luray, Virginia, on 17 April and was called Camp Roosevelt. Roosevelt's interest in seeing the program work is evident in that within less than two weeks of issuing the Executive Order, the Civilian Conservation Corps was a working agency, with enrollees and at least one working camp. Less than a month later, Emergency Conservation Work was extended to white men, African-American men, Native American men, and World War I veterans. For the most part, women were excluded from ECW and later, the CCC, except in a few instances as clerical staff at regional levels, and as teachers in camps.⁸

⁸Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 26-31. An excellent introduction to the early organization and its first year of work is Joseph Speakman, "Into the Woods: The First Year of the Civilian Conservation Corps." *Prologue* 38 (Fall 2006), available on-line at

In addition to the initial allotment of 250,000 "Junior enrollees," the Labor Department hired 25,000 "Local Experienced Men" (LEM) to assist with the training of the young men in forestry, field work, handicrafts, and trades. The hiring of the LEMs served another purpose as well. It provided employment to unemployed loggers, foresters, and woodsmen at civil service rates of pay, further ameliorating the fears of organized (and unorganized) labor that the CCC would take jobs away from skilled and semi-skilled workers.⁹

Roosevelt charged the War Department with administering and governing the training and day-to-day life of the enrollees in the CCC camps. The role of the War Department caused the most controversy during the establishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps, and many of the CCC's early critics commented upon its resemblance to the military work and youth camps in Europe, most notably in Adolf Hitler's Germany. During Congressional hearings in March 1933, William Green, president of the AF of L, argued that the CCC legislation "smacks of fascism,

<<http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2006/fall/ccc.html>>, accessed 13 November 2006.

⁹Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 34-35; Steely, *Parks for Texas*, 38.

of Hitlerism, of a form of Sovietism."¹⁰ In 1935, an article in *The Nation* recommended moving the primary administrative duties from the War Department to the Forestry Service, in order to prevent the CCC camps from becoming "similar to the labor camps of Germany, which make a deliberate effort to bring about a mingling of classes on a footing of equality," which appeared to many as an early sign of Communism.¹¹ CCC officials continually battled this perception, claiming that similarities to European work camps were more coincidental than anything. Several writers acknowledged that both the European and American models of youth employment drew inspiration from American philosopher William James who had proposed conscripted youth doing manual labor for public service - in his words "an army enlisted against Nature" as early as 1906.¹² The CCC was modeled in part on the work of the International Voluntary

¹⁰Quoted in Johnson, "The Army and the CCC," 139.

¹¹Raymond Gram Swing, "Take the Army Out of the CCC," *The Nation* 141 (25 October 1935), 459-460.

¹²James's 1906 Stanford address was published in 1910. For a recent reprint of this essay, see Joyce Carol Oates and Robert Atwan, eds. *The Best American Essays of the Century*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001). See also Terry A. Cooney, *Balancing Acts: American Thought and Culture in the 1930s* (New York: Twayne Publishing, 1995), 157-65.

Service for Peace (IVS), an international volunteer organization that worked in Europe following World War I. Although some Americans had worked with IVS in the early 1920s and had observed such organizations as the National Union of Swiss Students and the German Free Corps, CCC promoters claimed that the European camps did not provide direct models for Roosevelt's CCC. Writing in 1942, sociologists Kenneth Holland and Frank Ernest Hill played down any similarities to German work camps: "It is important to realize the essentially American character of the CCC even in its earliest stages. Of equal importance to note is the relative completeness and even the relative superiority of [the CCC] as it began its life."¹³ As international tensions increased through the 1930s, comparisons to anything German became less and less favorable, but the CCC's connection to the War Department became more important.

In addition to early public concern over the role of the War Department in the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Army itself was dissatisfied with its assigned responsibilities. Many War Department officials worried

¹³Kenneth Holland and Frank Ernest Hill, *Youth in the CCC* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1942; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1974), 24.

that these new responsibilities would limit other Army activities by placing additional pressures on Army officers. These fears were well-founded; all but two army schools were closed, and their faculties and student officers were re-assigned CCC work. Of the almost 10,000 Regular Army officers on duty at the CCC's founding in 1933, over half were used on full-time CCC duty. Colonel Duncan Major of the General Staff Corps, and Secretary of War George Dern protested the War Department's involvement to trusted Roosevelt aide Louis Howe and to the President himself. When Roosevelt assured them that the War Department was the best agency for the job, Major found himself on the Civilian Conservation Corps' advisory board and as such wielded considerable power and influence. All of Fechner's directives to the camp passed through military channels. The War Department appointed reserve officers called up to serve with the CCC without contacting Fechner. The army's chief of finance served as the fiscal officer for the CCC, allocating some 90 percent of CCC funds. Fechner's staff, in contrast, was small, and the Director had to depend on the authority and efficiency of the Army

to carry out many of the President's wishes in regard to the CCC.¹⁴

The Army, conceding to the President's wishes, began organizing CCC camps the only way it knew how - the Army way. Camps were organized with 200-man companies, divided into sections and subsections (known as platoons and squadrons in military terms), supervised by leaders and assistant leaders. Although the military terms for these junior officers were "platoon sergeants" and "squadron leaders," the CCC retained the civilian terms "leader" and "assistant leader" as titles for promoted enrollees. A regular Army officer commanded each camp of 200 men, and four enlisted men were assigned to each camp as first sergeant, supply sergeant, mess sergeant, and cook.¹⁵

War Department officers and personnel were unprepared for such a rapid and large-scale mobilization, and throughout 1933, the War Department's handling of its new CCC responsibilities was generally haphazard. But the Army's experience in handling and training large groups of men made induction and camp life run fairly efficiently. By keeping organization centralized and granting wide

¹⁴Johnson, "The Army and the CCC," 139-44; Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 31-32.

¹⁵Johnson, "The Army and the CCC," 145-46.

latitude to area commanders and camp commanders, the Army was able to mobilize, train, and manage large numbers of men in a relatively short period of time.

Charged with the supply, administration, medical care, sanitation, and welfare of the 250,000 young men Roosevelt planned for the Civilian Conservation Corps, the War Department divided the country into nine geographically distinct corps areas, each commanded by a Major General.

The nine corps areas included

- First: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut;
- Second: New York, New Jersey, Delaware;
- Third: Washington, DC, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland;
- Fourth: Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee;
- Fifth: Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia;
- Sixth: Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan;
- Seventh: Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota;
- Eighth: Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona;
- Ninth: California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Oregon, Washington¹⁶

Each camp, or company, received a permanent number, with the third digit from the right identifying its home corps' area of origin, and the next two digits indicating its

¹⁶Charles Johnson, "The Army, the Negro, and the Civilian Conservation Corps," *Military Affairs* 36 (October 1972): 87.

order of formation.¹⁷ For example, in South Carolina, Company 409 was the ninth camp organized in the Fourth District. However, some camps were organized in one corps area but served in another, depending on where work projects were needed. At least five companies organized at Fort Dix, New Jersey, served in South Carolina early in the life of the CCC, with company numbers 1201, 1205, 1206, 1207, and 1221.

Companies were also identified by project number, with a letter signifying what type of project the camp worked on, and a number. "F" stood for forestry projects on federal land, "SCS" for Soil Conservation Service, "NP" for National Park (including national monuments, military parks, and historical parks), "SP" for state park, for example. Increasing confusion in tracing camps arises when camps were moved from location to location, and while the company number remained with the CCC company, the project number remained with the project. Camps also received unofficial pet names, often derived from a geographical location or local hero; in South Carolina, Company 445 near Cheraw, working on project SP-1 - Cheraw State Park - in

¹⁷Steely, *Parks for Texas*, 38; Otis, et al., *The Forest Service*, 9.

1933 named itself Camp Jeff Davis, while companies 5465 and 5466, projects SP-5 and SP-6, both worked simultaneously on Table Rock State Park and called their camps Camp Table Rock. Veterans of the CCC often describe themselves as being a part of the camp "SP-1" or by camp name, rather than the company, making their company's place and time of service difficult to trace.¹⁸

The War Department also worried about the public's perception of the Army and feared that the public would equate service in the CCC with that of the Army, and sought to distinguish between service in the two organizations. When Strom Thurmond, then a South Carolina judge, offered to dismiss theft charges against two teenaged boys if they enlisted in the Army, enrolled in the CCC, or obtained "reliable" jobs, the Army's immediate response was that only young men of "good character" were allowed to enlist in the Army but made no reference to the character of boys entering the CCC.¹⁹ Instead of poor public relations,

¹⁸"Civilian Conservation Corps Camps in the State of South Carolina, 1933-1942," photocopied report, Research Files, State Historic Preservation Office, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina, hereafter [SHPO, SCDAH].

¹⁹Nadine Cohodas, *Strom Thurmond and the Politics of Southern Change* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 73.

however, War Department officials noticed that the public perception of the Army improved in part as a result of the Army's work with the CCC. Morale among junior officers serving with the CCC improved as well. These unexpected developments convinced the War Department that although President Roosevelt was requiring the department to undertake CCC work, it could also be a valuable endeavor for the military. As the War Department began to see that it would have to serve the two roles of national defense and civilian conservation simultaneously, it began replacing regular Army personnel with reserve officers. The War Department also continued to protest involvement with the CCC on a permanent basis. By the fall of 1941, increasing world tensions had persuaded even President Roosevelt that a gradual withdrawal of the Army from CCC work in order to train for possible conflict was advisable. However, after Pearl Harbor, the Army, the President, and the CCC all saw benefits in keeping the two organizations closely related and desired to keep the CCC operating, in part as a military training organization for support personnel. Congress did not agree that CCC training would

provide work or training vital to the war effort, leading to the decision to stop funding the CCC in 1942.²⁰

Training and education were a part of the CCC from its inception. From the beginning, Fechner and Persons believed that the Civilian Conservation Corps was an ideal opportunity to educate and train a group of young men who were largely under-educated and, in many cases, illiterate. Education Commissioner George Zook supported Fechner's and Persons's attempts to provide educational opportunities for the young men of the CCC. However, CCC educational programming met with a great deal of resistance from the War Department and, in particular, from Colonel Major. Continuing his pattern of complaining to Louis Howe, Major wrote to him on 11 August 1933:

I have constantly fought the attempts of the long-haired men and short-haired women to get in our camps. . . we are going to be hounded to death by all sorts of educators. Instead of teaching the boys to do an honest day's work we are going to be forced to accede to the wishes of the long-haired men and short-haired women and spend most of the time on some kind of educational course.²¹

²⁰Johnson, "The Army and the CCC," 147-48.

²¹Major to Howe, 11 August 1933, quoted in Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 48.

Howe forwarded Major's concerns to Fechner and worked together with Fechner and Zook to develop an appropriate educational program for the CCC enrollees. Since the Army maintained control over the camps and did not want to interfere with working hours, the educational program was offered only at night and attendance was voluntary.²²

Clarence Marsh of the University of Buffalo was appointed Educational Director of ECW on 29 December 1933, and following other New Deal relief programs, Marsh used this opportunity to put to work unemployed teachers and university graduates. Developing an appropriate curriculum proved challenging due to the variety of educational experience of both the enrollees and the newly appointed camp educational advisers, and the lack of materials, time, and support from camp supervisors. In addition, camp commanders determined what types of classes could be taught at the individual camp level. Due to the lack of support on all levels of the program, Marsh resigned in frustration in 1935. Howard Oxley, a former educational advisor to the

²²Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps, 48-50; Merrill, Roosevelt's Forest Army, 19.*

Liberian government, replaced Marsh; Oxley stayed until the CCC was disbanded in 1942.²³

Under Oxley's direction, the CCC educational program became much more formal and standardized. Oxley outlined nine specific goals of the CCC educational program: the elimination of illiteracy, the removal of deficiencies in common school subjects, on-the-job training, general vocational training, avocational training, cultural and general education, health and safety education, character and citizenship training, and employment assistance.²⁴ This combination of both academic and vocational training apparently appeared more practical and thus more attractive to both the enrollees and the Army leadership, and camp educational programs became more formalized. By November 1937, each camp was required to provide enrollees a building for educational and vocational classes, and a compulsory educational program replaced the voluntary nature of the educational program. The more formalized program and the building erected specifically for educational purposes improved the morale of camp

²³Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 49-53.

²⁴Holland and Hill, *Youth in the CCC*, 158.

educational advisors, and the enrollees themselves took the educational program more seriously.²⁵

According to CCC historian John Salmond, "education must be counted one of the less successful fields of CCC endeavor," due to the lack of commitment to the educational program at all levels of CCC administration.²⁶ The educational program of the Civilian Conservation Corps faced a dearth of support on both the camp level and at the highest administrative levels. Like many other New Deal programs, the CCC's educational program had results at individual levels: by 1937, 35,000 illiterate young men had been taught to read and write; more than 1,000 had received high school diplomas and almost 40 college degrees had been awarded to CCC men at the halfway point of its existence. During the fiscal year 1938-39, over 8,000 additional enrollees learned to read and write, and over 700 received scholarships to attend college.²⁷

Although Fechner championed the educational program, he understood that education was secondary to the employment, and that the CCC "is a work centered

²⁵Ibid., 105-6.

²⁶Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 168.

²⁷Ibid., 53, 167-68.

organization and not a substitute for high schools and colleges."²⁸ Camp educational advisors were often poorly trained, little money was provided for books or supplies, and the young men themselves were often less than motivated to attend classes or study outside of class. As Salmond observed, "academic courses were of limited practical value to youths who would almost certainly lead non-academic lives."²⁹ One example of the inadequate funding and support for the CCC educational program can be found in *The Pinopolian*, the camp newsletter for Company 442, serving in Moncks Corner, South Carolina. Although in January 1935 more permanent buildings had replaced the temporary tent camp that had served as housing, the newsletter reported that

the little ten by eighteen feet room used by the Educational Department is being hampered due to lack of room. However, the "midget" room, or library, reading room, printing office, workshop, lecture hall, classroom, and Education Private Office has been given a very appropriate desk and reading table along with the general improvement scheme. The desk and table

²⁸ Robert Fechner, "My Hopes for the CCC," *American Forests* (January 1939), available on-line at <<http://www.newdeal.feri.org/forests/af139.htm>>, accessed 2 May 2000.

²⁹Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 168.

can not be used due to lack of assembling room.³⁰

It appears the irony of the situation was not lost on the enrollees editing the camp newsletter.

Both enrollees and the Army accepted the vocational education more readily than general academics. Officials offered vocational classes that related directly to CCC work, such as classes in truck driving, mechanics, equipment maintenance and repair, landscaping, surveying, carpentry, forestry, and wildlife conservation, as well as classes that related more indirectly to the administration and day-to-day operation of the camps, such as typing and office skills, accounting, and cooking and baking. In addition, some classes doubled as recreational activities. For example, in journalism classes, enrollees produced the camp newspaper while also providing interested enrollees an opportunity to explore reporting, writing stories, and newspaper production. Both the vocational and more recreational types of classes met with approval of the advisory committee, as they contributed directly to the mission of the CCC or, in the case of recreational classes, were offered only during "free time." Enrollees were

³⁰The Pinopolian (24 January 1935), CCC Camp Newsletters, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, SC.

encouraged to take classes that improved their work and that would introduce them to fields in which they might pursue full-time employment after they left the CCC. However, even these types of vocational classes met with later criticism, as CCC historian Salmond wondered if "one can legitimately question whether instruction in digging ditches and building dams was fitting the enrollee for life in an increasingly urbanized society."³¹

While the Labor Department was responsible for enrollee recruitment and selection and the War Department trained enrollees, governed their daily lives, and educated them, the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior supervised the various projects of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Agriculture managed approximately 75 percent of all CCC work, and more than half of these

³¹ Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 168; Ned H. Dearborn, *Once in a Lifetime: A Guide to the CCC Camp* (New York: Charles E. Merrill Company, 1936), 45-47. Dearborn's book, published early during the life of the CCC was intended to provide an overview of CCC camp life for new and prospective enrollees, to give them a taste of the educational and vocational opportunities they would have, and to encourage them to make the most of these opportunities. As Dearborn says on page 3, "One of the big reasons for preparing this Guide was to help you find out just what sort of work you are best fitted for or what kind of job you think you would best fit in. It will guide you through this great experience upon which you are beginning and which will leave its wholesome mark on you for the rest of your life."

Agriculture projects were under the direction of the United States Forest Service. Interior supervised its projects through the National Park Service (NPS), the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Reclamation, the Soil Erosion Service, and other bureaus. After 1935, the federal soil erosion program was transferred to Agriculture, under the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), and related CCC projects were likewise transferred.³²

The National Park Service was given direction of park development, especially the improvement of existing national and state parks and the development of new parks. NPS Director Horace Albright appointed Chief Forester John D. Coffman as supervisor of CCC work in the national parks. Albright also appointed the Chief Planner, Conrad L. Wirth, as supervisor of CCC work in state parks. In 1936, Albright's successor, Arno B. Cammerer, consolidated administration of the CCC programs under Wirth.³³

The CCC's work with Forestry and the National Park Service dramatically changed the professionals who worked

³²Steely, *Parks for Texas*, 39; Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 121.

³³John Paige, "The CCC: It Gave a New Face to the NPS," *CRM Bulletin* 6 (September 1983): 2.

under the auspices of the Department of the Interior. Only three landscape architects had worked with the Forest Service since its inception in 1905; when the CCC began in 1933, there were no landscape architects working for Forestry, and only ten working for the National Park Service. By the fall of 1933, over 1,400 CCC camps were working under the Forest Service or NPS, and NPS established a policy to hire one landscape architect for each camp. According to landscape architect Phoebe Cutler, the Park Service and the Forest Service "had begun the hunt which was to propel the profession of landscape architecture out of obscurity."³⁴ Indeed, the Forest Service and NPS were hiring landscape architects even before they graduated from college; NPS recruiter William Carnes boasted that NPS employed 400 landscape architects, while the membership of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) listed only 284 members. Approximately 90 percent of people in the landscaping profession worked for the government.³⁵ The rise in employment opportunities for landscape architects and other landscaping professionals caused a rise in interest in pursuing a

³⁴Cutler, *Public Landscape*, 84.

³⁵Ibid., 85.

professional degree in landscape-related fields; new programs sprung up in colleges around the country, especially west of the Mississippi River where the greatest numbers of national parks and forests provided the greatest demand for landscape professionals. The types of projects landscape architects were working on also changed, from private estates to park roads, trails, and facilities.

Darcy Bonnet, the regional landscape architect for California's CCC projects observed, "Most landscape architects hadn't messed around with public recreation."³⁶

Similar to the controversy over the Army's role in the CCC, controversy also arose surrounding the relationship between the National Park Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps. Most concerns came from within NPS. Many park superintendents and other NPS professionals were uncertain about putting numerous boys and young men to work in the existing parks, and feared that the predicted labor glut would result in the over-development of parks and in losses of cultural and natural resources. For example, near Memphis, Tennessee, a CCC crew stumbled across a major Mississippian period site at Shelby Bluffs State Park, as

³⁶Ibid., 86-87.

it cleared land for construction. Luckily, the archaeological significance of that site was recognized, and park development continued elsewhere. To counteract these fears, the NPS developed a project review system, in which all proposed CCC park work was to be reviewed at the Washington office by landscape architects, historians, archaeologists, and wildlife experts.³⁷ Although this project review allowed the Washington professionals a chance to assess potential impact on existing natural, cultural, and historic resources, it also added additional administrative steps to a program that was awash in bureaucratic complexity.

When his contemporaries complained that the CCC administration was too unwieldy to work efficiently,

³⁷Paige, "New Face," 2-3; Allen R. Coggins "The Early History of Tennessee's State Parks, 1919-1956," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 63 (Fall 1984): 314; Carroll Van West, *Tennessee's New Deal Landscape* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 199-201. Shelby Bluffs State Park had been acquired by the state in July 1939 for development as a state park for the large African-American population in the Memphis area. It was later renamed to honor Dr. Thomas O. Fuller. In January 1962, 187 acres of the original 616-acre park were transferred to Memphis State University (now the University of Memphis) in order to protect the archaeological remains. The Chucalissa site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 and as a National Historic Landmark in 1994. See also Carroll Van West, "Chucalissa Village," and Ruth D. Nichols, "T.O. Fuller State Park," in *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, ed. Carroll Van West, (Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1998), 157-58, 904.

Roosevelt replied, "Oh that doesn't matter. The Army and the Forestry Service will really run the show. The Secretary of Labor will select the men and make the rules and Fechner will 'go along' and give everybody satisfaction and confidence."³⁸ With the administrative duties of the Civilian Conservation Corps divided up over four cabinet departments, then further subdivided within those departments, and with the involvement of other governmental agencies, it is apparent that the bureaucracy involved in running the CCC was an organizational nightmare. Added to the federal levels of bureaucracy were the divisions at the corps district, state, and local levels, with the state and local relief boards; state forestry, agricultural, and parks departments; and state and local political officials often weighing in on decisions with their own opinions and preferences. However complicated, Roosevelt, Fechner, and the many others made it work for thousands of young men, and for thousands of acres of American land.

The Civilian Conservation Corps remained one of the most popular of the New Deal programs throughout its nine-year existence, and its demise resulted primarily from

³⁸Quoted in Arthur Schlesinger, *The Coming of the New Deal*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988), 338.

international pressures and fears. As the 1930s ended and hostilities in Europe intensified, the Army began focusing its attention elsewhere, pulling its best officers away from the CCC camps in order to prepare for war, leaving replacements in charge of the camps who were not as well prepared to lead large groups of young men. In addition, many young men who had joined the CCC began to fear the prospect of being drafted, because their CCC training made them more fit for military life. As a result, they deserted the CCC in record numbers by 1939. Fechner blamed this desertion on the weaker officers left in control of the camps. In addition to the weaker control over the camps and the fears of many young men, the United States economy had recovered to such an extent that many young men, who would have been unable to find work earlier in the decade, were now able to find more permanent jobs than those provided by the CCC. The boys who enrolled during the late 1930s into 1940 were "younger, less self-reliant, less developed physically, and more prone to homesickness or discouragement," leading to a decline in morale at camp and less effective work programs.³⁹

³⁹Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 181-184.

As the 1930s ended, the Civilian Conservation Corps was at its lowest point. With Fechner's death on 31 December 1939, the CCC lost its most vocal supporter after the President. By 1940, economic relief was no longer as pressing an issue, as more opportunities became available for the young men for whom the CCC had been designed. As the number of enrollees decreased, camps were closed and projects left uncompleted, and as hostilities in Europe and the Far East continued to intensify, pressures from within the United States began suggesting using the CCC as a military training camp for future soldiers. Representative James Richards (D-South Carolina) proposed legislation that would require six hours of military training a week for CCC enrollees, the first of nine bills introduced between 1939 and 1941 that would have further militarized the CCC. For the most part, however, the War Department was opposed to the idea of adding military training to the CCC, believing that such training should be given priority to men who were planning to be career soldiers. In addition, the War Department wanted to avoid the appearance of a large-scale military mobilization among CCC men. General George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff and a former CCC Commander, was also opposed to adding additional military

training to the CCC, although he did agree that noncombatant training would be an asset to the CCC.⁴⁰

South Carolina Senator James F. Byrnes introduced an amendment to the 1940-41 Relief Appropriations bill providing for noncombatant training in the Civilian Conservation Corps, with limited support from the Federal Security Agency, the War Department, and the White House. General George C. Marshall testified before the Senate Appropriations Committee, listing the benefits such training would have, from allowing the CCC to provide specialized training in fields that could be important to the Army to its emphasis on engineers' and cooks' roles. Byrnes' amendment passed with little opposition, and in 1941, 15 minutes of marching and 15 additional minutes of calisthenics were added to the daily routine of the CCC.⁴¹

The improving economy and ever-intensifying European hostilities continued to provide a prelude to the demise of the Civilian Conservation Corps, as well as other New Deal programs. The 1941-42 appropriations bill created a

⁴⁰Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 180, 193-6, 200-1; Johnson, "The Army and CCC," 154-55.

⁴¹Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 196-7; Johnson, "The Army and CCC," 155.

Congressional Joint Committee to examine all federal agencies and to propose elimination of those not essential to the war effort. Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, and the subsequent entry of the United States into war, the committee recommended the abolition of the CCC no later than 1 July 1942. Roosevelt tried to save his beloved conservation program and rallied support from even the War Department, but by April 1942, public opinion also favored closing the CCC. In early May 1942, Roosevelt asked Congress to appropriate funding to keep 150 CCC camps in operation during 1942-1943. In June 1942, the House voted 158 to 151 not to approve funding for the continuance of the CCC, and the Senate voted 32 to 32, with 32 abstentions. With no further funding, the CCC simply ceased operations at the end of the legislative session.⁴²

Although the Civilian Conservation Corps lasted only nine years, it was one of the most popular and successful New Deal programs of the 1930s. Several studies of the New Deal and the Civilian Conservation Corps rely upon statistics, such as the number of young men who enlisted or the number of acres of land reclaimed to judge the impact of the CCC. However, arguably a better way to judge the

⁴²Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 211-17.

successes of the CCC is to talk with the men who served and to let their stories of the lessons learned in the CCC and how that experience changed their lives speak to the achievements of the program. Another is to view the projects of the Civilian Conservation Corps that remain all over the country, in places like the Great Smoky Mountains or Yosemite National Parks, the lakes and dams of the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the hundreds of state parks across the country. The next chapters of this study will examine the accomplishments of the Civilian Conservation Corps in these ways, through the stories of those who participated in South Carolina's CCC program and the state parks they created.

CHAPTER FOUR

"A GOOD SET OF BOYS HERE AND I LIKE IT FINE: LIFE IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA CCC

Intended to put to work a large segment of unemployed American men, President Roosevelt also designed the Civilian Conservation Corps to make use of the virtues of America's young men -- their strength, their vitality, and their hunger for employment. In addition to providing employment for this segment of the population, the CCC assisted the families of the enrollees by requiring that part of the enrollee's pay be sent home for support. Money was spent in the local communities where the camps were located, providing indirect stimulation to the local economies. Most importantly, Roosevelt hoped to use the CCC to preserve the outdoor environment he loved and to foster this love of the outdoors in a new generation of American men. Reclaiming America's youth and America's land were Roosevelt's dual goals for the Civilian Conservation Corps. According to an early study of the

CCC, Roosevelt believed, "More important than material gains will be the moral and spiritual value of such work."¹

Relatively little is known about the individual daily life of the young men enrolled in the camps of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Many of the historical studies of the Civilian Conservation Corps are primarily bureaucratic or celebratory in nature, focusing on the accomplishments of the CCC as a whole, rather than the individual experience of the enrollees. More recent studies, concurrent with this research, have examined the social impact of the program on the enrollees, including physical, educational, and social development. Although some CCC studies mention the first-hand experiences of the enrollees and a few books have been privately published that record the memoirs of the men who served in the CCC, few of these men preserved the letters or diaries written during their time of service, and most of these primary sources, if they exist, are hidden in boxes in attics or basements. Camp newspapers, written and published by the CCC enrollees, have often shared the same fate, although some copies can

¹Holland and Hill, *Youth in the CCC*, 13.

be found in local or regional archives.² Camp records, as noted by Frank Holland, an educational adviser in the Corps, "were incomplete.... Very little record-keeping [was] maintained at the camp level, where the opportunity to record the lives of the men would have been greatest."³ As such, the memories of the men who served are the best link to describing the daily lives of these young men, both the work they did and the educational and recreational opportunities afforded by the CCC. This chapter examines the daily lives of these CCC men, often in their own words, in an attempt to better understand the perspectives of the enrollees as they experienced the program and benefited from it. The chapter takes examples from Civilian Conservation Corps camps throughout the United States but focuses on the experiences of the CCC boys in the southeast and in particular, South Carolina. Understanding the daily life and experience of the boys of the CCC is essential in

²Several of these works have been cited and discussed in the introduction to this work. An expanding body of recent work, undertaken simultaneously with this research, includes at least six theses and dissertations since 2000, in academic departments of history, geography, education, and social work.

³Holland and Hill, *Youth in the CCC*, 141.

understanding the legacy they left in the built environment and in the establishment of the state park system.

Although the CCC was comprised of a diverse group of young men and older veterans, most of the enrollees were white and native born. In 1940, the typical CCC enrollee was seventeen to eighteen years old, white, weighed 145 pounds, was 5 feet 8 inches tall, and had an eighth-grade education. Only 9 percent of enrollees were African-American, due to an unwritten quota system that restricted the opportunities for young black men.⁴ Other minorities participated in the CCC, including Native Americans, Mexican, Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino-Americans; these other ethnic groups were found mostly in the camps located on the west coast. In the South, the CCC consisted primarily of young native-born white men, mostly of Scots-Irish descent, with a larger percentage of African-Americans than in the rest of the country, but a percentage that was far less than the percentage of blacks in the region's general population.⁵

⁴Johnson, "The Army, the Negro and the CCC," 82.

⁵Holland and Hill, *Youth in the CCC*, 58-61. It should be noted that as time passed, the average age of a CCC enrollee decreased, as the older, more experienced enrollees found other employment or left the CCC to be

The young men joined the Civilian Conservation Corps for many reasons, although unemployment and a desire to assist their families ranked at the top of the list. In a survey conducted near the end of the CCC's work, Kenneth Holland and Frank Ernest Hill found that 77.5 percent of enrollees surveyed said they had joined "to help their families," with 62 percent giving that reason as their chief reason for signing up. Other reasons given included "had nothing to do"; "to get away from home"; "family wanted boy to go"; and "friends were going."⁶ The CCC provided a sense of stability and purpose for young men searching for work and a way to help their families.

Enrollees initially went to an Army base for their induction period, which in some ways resembled early basic training for the military. Most South Carolina enrollees found themselves at Fort Moultrie in South Carolina or Fort McPherson in Georgia, although early recruits were sent to Fort Benning, also in Georgia. A few companies that served in South Carolina came from Fort Bragg (North Carolina) or

married or for other reasons. The experiences of African-American and other minority enrollees will be examined in greater detail in a following chapter.

⁶Ibid., 47.

Screven (Georgia), and five companies in South Carolina were organized at Fort Dix, New Jersey. The induction period lasted, on the average, about two weeks. During this time, enrollees received physical examinations, vaccinations, and information about what would be expected of them in the camp. In a letter to his mother in May 1933, Wilbert Bernshouse wrote about his induction experience at Fort Benning, after having traveled from Sumter to Columbia, South Carolina, and then by train to Fort Benning, Georgia:

We got off [the train] at headquarters and carried our baggage over a mile across camp to a group of tents (What a walk). We were given a mess kit, 2 army blankets, 4 sheets, a matress tick, 2 towels, and a mosquito net.

At 11 AM Sumter time or 10 AM Columbus, GA time, we were given breakfast and was it good! Hominy, chipped beef, bread, butter, an apple, milk, apple butter, coffee, post toasties, and all you wanted of everything.

We rested around our tents till 4 PM and marched to the hospital, a building 2 or 3 times larger than ours and a good mile away. There was over 20 MDs and each examined for a different thing. At the end was 2 Drs vaccinating and giving typhoid shots. I took mine, steped off and dog if I didn't faint right there. I was alright in a minute but I sure did hate [that]. When we got back from the exams we were put in companies and sworn in for 6 months.

We carried our baggage another half mile to the tent we will occupy for the next 2 week or more and then went to supper which was just as good as breakfast.

Everybody's arm is sore and we are not doing anything today. We are to stay in a quarantined area till our 3rd typhoid shot.⁷

Even after fainting and in quarantine with a sore arm, Bernshouse concluded his letter, "There seems to be a good set of boys here and I like it fine."⁸ Bernshouse's induction experience was not unique. Sam Blanton remembered that when he joined the CCC in 1933, during his induction at Fort Moultrie, "one man grabbed [my] right arm and another the left and gave me shots. Boy! I was sore the next day."⁹

Local newspapers reported the induction experiences of local boys, often to the amusement of family and friends back home. Gene Milligan, a member of Company 421, attended

⁷Wilbert Bernshouse, Fort Benning, GA, to his mother, Sumter, SC, 19 May 1933, photocopy of letter in author's possession. Spelling in the original.

⁸Ibid.

⁹National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni, Chapter 36, "Fort Moultrie Chapter of the NACCCA," typewritten booklet, [1984]. Photocopy in author's possession. Afterwards cited as NACCCA.

induction at Fort McPherson. He reported to *The State* (Columbia, SC) newspaper that a day in conditioning camp consisted of breakfast at 6:30 am, drilling and hiking for three hours, dinner at 11:30, and supper at 4:30. "After supper, the fun begins," according to Milligan. "The guys start pulling jokes on one another." Induction also saw its share of regional rivalries, as Milligan reported that the enrollees from South Carolina and Georgia often boxed or wrestled, and that the South Carolina boys had all "won or drawn over the Georgia guys."¹⁰

Enrollees from other areas had similar experiences. Harlan Crook, a CCC enrollee from Mississippi, remembered that in 1934, during his induction at Fort McClellan, Alabama, "we were given shots and vaccinations. We were there for three weeks of conditioning. We exercised, we ran, we picked up rock and carried them across a little creek one day and carried them back across the next day." George Cmar, who traveled from Philadelphia to New York in 1933 to sign up, recalled his induction at Fort Dix as "shots - inspection - shots - uniform issued. Learned a lot about making catsup [and] drilling. Then we got word we were being shipped to camp in a place called Withersbee,

¹⁰*The State* (Columbia, SC), 14 June 1933.

South Carolina. Big disappointment!" Cmar described his group of fellow enrollees as "a bunch of conscripts from the East Side. . . . Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Italians, some Irish, and ME. Man, what a tough-looking bunch!" Another company organized at Fort Dix, Company 1207, served in Awendaw, South Carolina, north of Charleston in the Francis Marion National Forest. The last names of enrollees there demonstrate that they most likely were not South Carolina natives, either. Enrollees named Prinz, Sanchez, Schwimmer, Mastramatteo, Tarwaski, Pulcinello, and Dvorsky put out a camp newspaper called the "Ditch Diggers Digest" in the summer of 1935.¹¹ Apparently the "culture shock" of these boys from the big city being sent to rural South Carolina was not as traumatic as in other locales, as there is no evidence of any real trouble at these South Carolina camps. Comparatively, two incidents at Shenandoah National Park have been chronicled by Patrick Clancy, who recounts that two CCC camps had trouble when "Yankee" CCC recruits

¹¹NACCCA; *Ditch Diggers Digest* (8 May 1935), CCC Camp Newsletters, SCHS. Cmar recalled that their "big disappointment" stemmed from the hope that these New York City recruits would be sent to California.

from Pennsylvania were placed in camp with native Virginians.¹²

Along with the vaccinations, the uniforms remained in the minds of the men as one of the "highlights" of their induction period. Only after swapping with other new enrollees did the young men find uniforms that fit correctly. James Dawkins, who enrolled in the summer of 1934, recalled that "you took what they handed you and if you got a fairly good fit, you were fortunate. We swapped around however, and managed eventually to obtain clothing that came very close to fitting." At Fort Benning, Durwood Stinson received a pair of pants with a 46-inch waist, quite a shock for the eighteen-year-old who weighed 98 pounds. He remembered that "Another CC man who weighed 170 pounds and me put the pants on over our civilian pants. We buttoned the Army issue pants and with me standing on his shoes walked down the company street."¹³ These ill-fitting clothes were a common experience (and complaint) of new CCC boys all over the country, and many of them modified not

¹²Patrick Clancy, "Conserving the Youth: The Civilian Conservation Corps Experience in the Shenandoah National Park," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 105 (Autumn 1997), 463-467.

¹³NACCCA.

only the sizes but the styles of the uniforms to better suit their size and taste.¹⁴

Roosevelt's goals of providing for young American men was not limited to finding jobs, but in creating men from boys. The CCC met these goals both psychologically and physically. Having a job and providing support for their families helped these young men mature psychologically, while the physical nature of the work and the "three squares" a day meant that enrollees gained muscle and kept physically fit. Durwood Stinson was only admitted to the CCC on his third attempt to enroll. During his first two attempts, he did not weigh the required 98 pounds, weighing in at only 92 and 94 pounds. On his third try, prior to weigh-in, he ate "two hamburgers, two hot dogs, four bananas, and drank a pint of milk and two glasses of water" in order to make the scales read "a little over 98 pounds." Thirteen months later, he weighed 135 pounds, a testament to the power of the hard work and healthy food provided in the CCC. In their study of CCC enrollees, Holland and Hill report that at discharge, the "average enrollee" had grown

¹⁴ Jeffrey Ryan Suzik, "'Building Better Men': Education, Training, and Socialization of Working-Class Male Youth in the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942" (Ph.D. diss, Carnegie Mellon University, 2005), 107-8.

approximately a half an inch and gained between 10 and 13 pounds.¹⁵ At least three contemporary scholars have examined the physical impact that the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps had on young men throughout the country.¹⁶

During the induction period, these young men met other boys about their age, but from different places and walks of life. Some came from working-class, urban backgrounds; others sought work away from the family farm. For many, these few weeks of induction were the first of an extended stay away from their homes and families and an immense learning experience. After induction, the boys were placed into companies of approximately 200 and sent to the sites

¹⁵NACCCA; Holland and Hill, *Youth in the CCC*, 191.

¹⁶For the scholarly treatment of the way the Great Depression threatened masculinity and how the CCC contributed to redefining masculinity in the mid-twentieth century, see Bryant Simon, "'New Men in Body and Soul': The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Transformation of Male Bodies and the Body Politic," in *Gender and the Southern Body Politic*, ed. Nancy Bercaw, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), 131-60. For a comparison of the way that the work of the CCC transformed both the natural landscape and the bodies of the CCC boys while at the same time providing nationalistic political symbolism, see Neil M. Maher, "A New Deal Body Politic: Landscape, Labor, and the Civilian Conservation Corps," *Environmental History* 7 (Summer 2002), 435-461. The above-cited Suzik dissertation also examines the politicization of the CCC enrollees.

where they would set up camp for six months and perform their work.

The induction period and first few weeks of CCC camp life were new experiences for many enrollees, regardless of background. Colonel George B. Buell, commander of various CCC camps in North and South Carolina, and later adjutant in charge of District I at Fort Moultrie, recalled his first company in Aquone, North Carolina:

My company consisted of 200 boys; 100 from surrounding cities and the other 100 from the Mountains. The city boys were 'smart' citywise and versed in the ways of city life and its conveniences. The mountain boys were naïve, uninformed and many had never been more than 15 miles from their home areas. Totally unacquainted with modern toilets, showers, and latrine facilities, electricity, and the other 'taken-for-granted-conveniences' of the City, they were taunted, ridiculed and the subject of endless pranks on the part of the City boys. But oh, how the situation changed [when we arrived at camp]. When the owls hooted at night and the rattlesnakes and copperhead snakes crawled and the dark closed down and the forest became an eery, threatening jungle, the City boys cowed and the Mountain boys taunted them and played scary tricks. Now the shoe was on the other foot!¹⁷

During induction at the army forts, the many of the rural boys experienced modern conveniences to which they were

¹⁷George B. Buell, "The Saga of My Connections with the Civilian Conservation Corps," typewritten paper, [1984], photocopy in author's possession.

unaccustomed, but these same rural boys felt more at home at camp, while the more urban enrollees were as unfamiliar with the untamed terrain and wildlife as the rural boys had been with running water and toilets. Both sets of new experiences fostered teasing, jokes, and pranks.

CCC alumni remember some of the "endless pranks" that were played at camp, including making "Shadow Soup" as a remedy for laziness. "Shadow Soup" consisted of a pot of boiling water, over which a piece of meat was passed, letting only the shadow fall into the pot. After a steady diet of this special soup, shirkers were ready to return to duty in order to receive a more substantial meal. Although most pranks were good natured, others were more spiteful, but usually aimed at "rookies," slackers, or boys who did not abide by camp norms. One example is the "fishing trip" one young man experienced with the boys of Company 486 in Mississippi, where he was stripped down and scrubbed with "GI soap and two scrub brushes." The boy evidently learned the lesson the rest of the camp was trying to teach him, as enrollee Harlan Crook remembered, "after that, no matter how cold it might be, he took a shower in the morning and also after coming in from work." Company 441 at Greer, South Carolina, published a list of "good advice" and camp

norms for new enrollees who joined their camp in October 1937:

Obey your superiors. (This might include most everyone at least until you find out Who's Who.)

Make up your bed and keep the floor around it clean.

Be on time for mess.

Wash, and comb your hair before meals.

Become interested in some of the camp activities.

Write home at least once a week.

Make lots of good friends and then stick by them.

Be quiet when coming in late.

Respect your officers.

Put in an honest days work.

Respect the rights of the people in town. (After all, they were here first.)¹⁸

Enrollees could avoid being on the wrong end of camp pranks and jokes or more serious trouble by adhering to camp rules, both the official rules and the more unofficial ones set by the enrollees themselves.

Camp pranks were not limited to the enrollees. In his memoir, *Brother to a Dragonfly*, Will D. Campbell describes his first trip to preach at his brother's CCC camp in Mississippi. Although prepared to deliver a sermon to the young men (who were his own age), Campbell found himself

¹⁸NACCCA; *Hi-Land Hi-Lights* (October 1937), CCC Camp Newspapers, SCHS.

upstaged by the camp chaplain, who then graciously offered to put Campbell up for the night in a local motel. The next day, Campbell recounted the night's adventures with his brother Joe, enrolled at the CCC camp. Joe became angry and shocked his brother by telling him that the chaplain had put him up for the night in the local whorehouse.¹⁹ Most guest preachers were not subjected to such pranks, and for the most part, enrollees typically attended sermons and lectures. Whether enrollees viewed these lectures as a welcome diversion from work and classes, or if they were strongly encouraged to attend by camp leadership, varied from camp to camp.

Camp life was not all fun and games. The CCC meant to provide work for these young men, and work they did. Many different types of employment opportunities within the CCC were available, and the men were placed in areas where they demonstrated natural aptitude. Enrollees varied in the amount and quality of education they had received. Although some had graduated from high school or even attended college, many more had only eighth-grade or lower

¹⁹Will D. Campbell, *Brother to a Dragonfly* (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1977), 79-81.

educational experiences, and some were illiterate. The better educated men often received jobs of higher responsibility, such as running the camp canteen (where candy, cigarettes, and other "non-essentials" could be purchased) or mess hall, serving in the Camp Overhead as Leaders or Assistant Leaders, or serving as an administrative assistant to the camp officers. The Camp Overhead was best described in one of the South Carolina camp newsletters, written to inform the "folks back home" about life in the CCC Camp:

The Camp Overhead is made of enrollees who, in the opinion of camp officials, are capable of successfully overseeing the directing the various lines of duty. These young men don't necessarily have to have an education, but dependable authority in the position for which he receives his rating.... The Overhead, or enrollee camp directors, are held responsible for any misdemeanor. Their actions are considered as an example and are closely followed by respectful enrollees....²⁰

Frank Damon, who had graduated from Charleston High School, received an office job as Company Clerk, in part because he had taken typing classes in high school. Damon also served

²⁰The *Pinopolian* (28 March 1935), CCC Camp Newsletters, SCHS.

as editor of the camp newsletter, *The Cherokean*. Other CCC jobs included driving trucks and emergency vehicles, assisting in the dispensary and sick hall, and preparing meals. However, most men worked "in the field," clearing brush, planting trees, fighting fires, building roads and fire towers, and the like, doing the jobs for which the CCC had been founded. Many CCC men remember their jobs, most with a great sense of pride, and see the remaining structures such as the fire towers and state park buildings as a testament to their hard work.²¹

A typical day for a CCC enrollee began with a bugle call at 5:30 am, followed by exercises and the raising of the American flag. Enrollees straightened their barracks for a morning inspection and went to breakfast, usually a hearty meal. One camp's breakfast menu included fried eggs, oatmeal, milk, hot biscuits, syrup, stewed prunes, and fried potatoes. At around 7:45, a roll call was held, then enrollees loaded up on trucks to be taken to their worksites, and work began around 8:00 each morning. The day's work could consist of a variety of projects, depending on whether the company was assigned to the

²¹Frank A. Damon, Charleston, SC, to the author, 16 March 2000; Dearborn, *Once in a Lifetime*, 45-47.

Agriculture or Interior departments. Agricultural companies often engaged in forestry and conservation work, such as road building, tree planting, tree cutting, fire fighting, or stringing telephone wires. Work on utility infrastructure was more common than typically recognized. In this way CCC companies sometimes served as a basic labor force for other New Deal agencies, such as the Rural Electrification Administration and the Public Works Administration. A half-hour to hour lunch break was given on-site, with another truck bringing the meals, usually sandwiches, to the enrollees. Then it was back to work, until four o'clock in the afternoon, when the enrollees loaded back into trucks to be taken back to camp. Sometimes camp maintenance was performed in the afternoons, and the men were expected to shower and dress for mail call and dinner at 5:00 or 5:15. Evenings were usually left free for recreational games, going into town twice a week, crafts, reading, or classes, although by the end of the CCC, illiterate enrollees were required to attend literacy classes. "Lights out" was expected by 10:00 pm, with little protest, as the next day would begin early with hard work.²²

²²Holland and Hill, *Youth in the CCC*, 38-42; I. V.

CCC alumnus Wilbert Bernshouse remembers one job of gathering pine cones near McClellanville, South Carolina, to provide seed for a CCC nursery in October 1933: "We climbed the tall trees with climbing spurs and pushed the green cones off with a long stick. The cones were carried to Wedgefield and spread over the floor of an old house to dry."²³ Bernshouse also worked building fire towers near Sampit and Conway, as well as in the CCC Forestry Nursery at Georgetown. George Cmar, the young enrollee from Pennsylvania who ended up in Berkeley County, South Carolina, in 1933, learned to grade land for roads, camps, and a ballfield; dynamite stumps; run a bulldozer; cut ditches; and erect a fire tower. Cmar remembers the fire tower as a job to be proud of: "Man, that was a job! Bolting and riveting in the wind. And, sure enough, we put it up. Man, we city folks were proud!"²⁴

Cmar also remembered fighting fires "all over Berkeley County. At times we were up to our chests in water,

Butler, Charleston, SC, to the author, 23 November 1999;
Hi-Land Hi-Lights, CCC Camp Newsletters, SCHS.

²³Wilbert Bernshouse, "Autobiography," [1996], handwritten manuscript. Photocopy in author's possession.

²⁴NACCCA.

sometimes frozen stiff and wet." Fire-fighting and fire prevention were some of the most important jobs for the CCC, but also some of the most trying. Willis Felix Cox, serving in the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina, and later near Liberty, South Carolina, found many of his enrollees went absent without leave (AWOL) when expected to fight fires. As Leader, he restricted them to camp upon their return and put them to work cleaning out septic tanks. Most decided that perhaps fighting fires was not as demanding as previously thought.²⁵

Sometimes enrollees had to fight fires of their own making as well. While working at King's Mountain National Military Park near York, enrollees John Brumby and Clyde McGee sounded a fire alarm at four o'clock one Sunday morning in 1935, when a fire erupted from a lantern they had been using while trying to fill a truck's gas tank. The district newsletter reported, "the only damage reported was to McGee's throat from yelling so loud in giving the alarm."²⁶ Although these types of emergencies often were

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶*District I Opener* (23 November 1935), CCC Camp Newsletters, SCHS.

not the primary job of the enrollees, they quickly learned to be prepared for any emergency.

Besides fighting fires, South Carolina's CCC enrollees were often ready to respond to other emergencies. Company 441 in Greer proved their claim that they were "willing to help at any time" when enrollees assisted victims in a car accident outside of their camp in September 1937, and nine men volunteered to give blood for a transfusion to one of the victims. The next year, twelve enrollees from Company 441 volunteered when a blood drive was undertaken to assist a local woman who needed blood. Company 441 also journeyed from Greer to Tryon, North Carolina, to aid in the search for a missing hunter. The CCC enrollees found the missing man, dead from an apparent heart attack, and headquarters gave permission for the CCC camp to accept the \$50 reward. Enrollees at other camps were also called upon to assist in finding missing people, including a "lost Negro man" and a three-year old child at Myrtle Beach State Park in the summer of 1935.²⁷ With these necessary activities,

²⁷*Hi-Land Hi-Lights* (October 1937 and November 1938), CCC Camp Newsletters, SCHS; "Missing Persons" folder for Myrtle Beach State Park, Box 16, Forestry Commission, CCC files, SCDAH.

enrollees not only learned about manual labor but also learned how to deal with emergency situations.

CCC officers and camp leaders were very aware that "all work and no play" would be a very unhealthy way to run the camps, and ample recreational and educational opportunities were provided for the relaxation, entertainment, and edification of the young men in the camps. Organized sports, such as basketball and baseball, were among the most popular recreational outlets. Organized musical and singing groups attracted participation as well. Other, more spontaneous, diversions included playing cards, checkers, or dominoes; swimming in nearby lakes or rivers,; and reading. Enrollees made trips "into town" weekly, for shopping, movies, dancing, dates with local girls, or visiting bars and playing pool. These diverse recreational opportunities are some of the CCC alumni's fondest memories of their time at camp. For the most part, local citizens welcomed the CCC camps and their enrollees, who provided a much needed boost to the local economy with their \$5 per month allowance, which was often spent in local shops or at the local movie theater. John Genes worked as an ambulance driver and apprentice plumber both at Fort Moultrie and in Company 445 near Cheraw, South

Carolina, and recalled going into town to the Star Theater, selling his shoes for a quarter to obtain admission. Frank Damon recalls that while he served in the CCC near Cheraw, South Carolina, that the townspeople invited the enrollees to their homes for parties and dinners, and the enrollees reciprocated with dances and picnics at camp.²⁸ In these ways, the CCC camps tried to develop good relationships with the local residents, and as recreational areas developed, the local residents began using the facilities and appreciating the work of the enrollees.

Organized sports were among the most popular recreational activities among the young men in the CCC, and South Carolina's CCC men were no exception. Camps organized teams that played against other CCC camps and local high schools. Camp teams are prominently displayed in various camp and district yearbooks, and were well outfitted with matching uniforms and proper equipment, usually paid for out the money made in the camp canteen. Company 442, stationed at Moncks Corner in the winter of 1934-35, shared the basketball gymnasium at Berkeley High School with the local high school students. The coaching

²⁸NACCCA; Frank A. Damon, Charleston, SC, to the author, 13 March 2000.

staff of the high school assisted the CCC team in practices, and both high school and CCC games were played in the gym.²⁹

Several South Carolina enrollees excelled at the sports opportunities offered in the CCC and worked to create recreational facilities in their camps. Enrollees of Company 445, while building Cheraw State Park, constructed a clay tennis court, baseball diamond, horseshoe courts, a basketball court and a volleyball court for their own use at camp by working in their "off hours." Ellison Jamison received a medal and commendation from CCC officials for his achievements on the baseball field. While serving with the Supply Company at Fort Moultrie, Samuel Blanton played both basketball and baseball, and "helped District I win two championships in basketball." At least one enrollee, Frank Wells, left Company 421 at Poinsett State Park to attend the University of South

²⁹NACCCA; CCC District I Yearbooks, CCC Files, South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (hereinafter SCPRT); *The Pinopolian* 6 (7 February 1935), newsletter of CCC Company 442, CCC Camp Newsletters, SCHS.

Carolina on a football scholarship. The enrollees also enjoyed swimming and golf during their time at camp.³⁰

Two of Blanton's clearest memories of his time in the CCC involve trips he made to play baseball with his company. After a game with the camp at Withersbee, South Carolina, he and his teammates were headed back to Fort Moultrie when they

came across a wagon loaded with corn whisky [sic]. The colored man jumped off the wagon and we stopped and took 8 or 10 gallons. The truck went around a few curves in the snake-like road and a man was sitting in the middle of the road with a shotgun. He said, "All I want is my liquor, I don't want to hurt anyone" so we passed it out of the truck.³¹

Blanton also remembered playing baseball at a camp near Stokes, South Carolina, and meeting three girls who drove up in a Model A Ford Roadster. Later, he and another enrollee went on a double date with two of the girls, and he married one of them in 1937.³²

Other CCC enrollees also met their wives while serving in the CCC. Frank Damon, serving with Company 445 while

³⁰ *The Cherokeean* (20 May 1935), and *Poinsett Pointers* (29 April 1935), CCC Camp Newsletters, SCHS; E. E. Jamison medal and letter in CCC files at SCPRT.

³¹ NACCCA.

³² Ibid.

building Cheraw State Park, recalls that the dances in the camp recreational hall "were so great that in order for people outside of the camp to attend they had to present the invitation we sent them. We had well-known bands and everybody had a ball at our dances." One of the local girls who received an invitation to the Cheraw dances later became Frank's wife, Weta.³³ Other girls were less memorable. Wilbert Bernshouse recorded in his "Autobiography" that while in the CCC, he "double dated with another friend in an old house in town. I don't remember the girls but we did make cocoa."³⁴

In addition to sports and dating, the CCC enrollees found other ways to occupy their spare time. The camp recreation hall often hosted shows, plays, and dances, both for the enrollees and at times, for local residents. Frank Damon and Harry Kugley, along with two Cheraw girls, produced a live "radio show" that was "broadcast" to the rest of Company 445 at the recreation building in 1935. That fall, enrollees building Edisto Beach State Park hosted a Stunt Night, and those at Barnwell had an Amateur

³³NACCCA.

³⁴Bernshouse, "Autobiography."

Night. Recreational tournaments in pool, ping pong, checkers, and dominoes were held, with many enrollees participating in those events. At Cheraw, the tournament winners received prizes of canteen coupon books and a carton of cigarettes.³⁵

John Genes, who had hiked from Bennettsville, South Carolina, to Charleston to join the CCC, recalls his time in camp at Kingstree, South Carolina:

We told tall tales, played jokes on each other, played cards, checkers, and listened to guitar music. We would meet local people and be friendly with them, they were mostly farm families. In season, we went to corn husking, peanut boiling, candy pulling parties and wood chopping contests. The person who chopped the most wood won a 25 cent box of candy; which some girl always got and the poor boy was left with nothing, but a quick kiss.³⁶

Although enrollees lived and worked at the CCC camp, many of them participated in community life, as well, through sports, shopping and movies in town, friendships with local teens (especially girls), and in other community events.

Company 440 served in the South Carolina upcountry, building Paris Mountain State Park in the late 1930s.

³⁵*District I Opener* (23 November 1935), and *The Cherokean* (20 May 1935), CCC Camp Newsletters, SCHS.

³⁶NACCCA.

William Taylor, a member of the camp, remembers the CCC more like summer camp than a work experience:

In 1939-1940 the swimming area and concession stand, bath house all were alive and well with young people having a good time all through the summer. There was a juke box playing the music of Tommy Dorsey's, 'In the Mood,' 'Chattanooga Choo Choo,' and other artists and tunes to dance by.³⁷

Taylor also remembered driving into the nearby city of Greenville to "spend our \$5," the monthly allowance each boy received after the majority of his wages had been sent home to his family. Historian James Steely has commented that the CCC's resemblance to the popular summer camp experience of the 1920s "offered a comforting model for parents of younger CCC enrollees, even if they lacked the means for such higher-class rituals."³⁸ Indeed, most South Carolina CCC alumni remember their time in the CCC as a cross between summer camp and high school or college.

CCC boys played hard, but the work was hard, too, especially for some of the young men who were unaccustomed to outdoor work or were used to living by their own rules. Some tried to shirk their duties by playing sick or going

³⁷William H. Taylor, Aiken, SC, to the author, 1 November 1999.

³⁸Steely, *Parks for Texas*, 36.

AWOL for a brief time. Camp doctors often "cured the sick" by dosing with castor oil. Raymond Paul, assigned to build a road and causeway at Hunting Island State Park, near Beaufort, remembers trying to "goof off" by hiding out in the woods with several other men one day, but they "worried about being caught and the mosquitoes nearly ate us up. We decided that we would rather work than hide out."³⁹ Camp leaders punished others who "goofed off" by restricting them to camp on weekends, or assigning additional and less desirable camp jobs, like latrine duties or KP duty in the mess hall.⁴⁰

Although illness was given as an excuse to shirk work, enrollees sometimes were sick or injured, and epidemics in camp were an occasional occurrence. Colonel George Buell's reports from Fort Moultrie list the number of men in the camp infirmary each week, and the various camp newsletters contain several articles reporting on the condition of men in the hospital or welcoming them back to service.⁴¹ In

³⁹NACCCA.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Weekly Report, CCC Company 445, Fort Moultrie, SC, November 11, 1933 - December 30, 1933. Frank A. Damon

December 1934, Company 442 in Moncks Corner reported that approximately 60 enrollees had been confined to bed with the flu, after spending the early part of the winter in tent camps. Most of the sick were housed in the camp's Recreation Hall, although 18 had been hospitalized at the Naval Hospital in Charleston. Due to the epidemic, "camp activities are practically paralyzed. No lectures, movies, or sermons are to be permitted. Classes may be abandoned." Evidently most of the sick were back at work soon after, for by 24 January 1935, the camp newsletter reported that 48 new huts had replaced the "uncomfortable tents and inadequate quarters," and lectures resumed by 26 February, when the enrollees were treated to a lecture by a Miss Matheson of the Women's Christian Temperance Union.⁴²

Serious offenses -- especially desertion, stealing, and alcohol problems -- were met with serious forms of discipline, including formal admonitions and reprimands, forfeiture of pay, and reduction to lower ranks for those men who had been promoted to Leaders or Assistant Leaders. In the most serious of offenses, administrative discharges

Personal Collection, Charleston, SC. Photocopy of report in author's possession.

⁴²The Pinopolian (15 December 1934, 24 January 1935, 7 March 1935), CCC Camp Newsletters, SCHS.

or dishonorable discharges were options, as was legal action. Most disciplinary problems in the CCC appear to stem from the "culture shock" experienced by many of these young men: a large number of young men away from their homes and families for the first time found themselves with new freedoms and new temptations. These new situations manifested themselves in problems with liquor consumption in the new post-Prohibition New Deal era, and in absences-without-leave, usually in homesick boys stationed within walking or driving distance from home.

South Carolina CCC camps were not immune from these types of offenses. In South Carolina, George Buell and J. G. McMeekin posted the following list of rules for CCC enrollees, along with the admonition that "offenders... found guilty will be dishonorably discharged":

- Any member or members of this organization
1. Found drinking, drunk, indicating that he has been drinking, or having intoxicating liquors or narcotics in his possession will be dismissed.
 2. Any man lying, stealing, or making a false official statement will be dismissed.
 3. Any man guilty of insubordination to the commissioned personnel, the duly appointed leaders and assistant leaders, or the forestry personnel will be dismissed.
 4. Any man refusing to work will be dismissed.
 5. Any man AWOL seven (7) days or more (desertion) will be discharged.

6. Any man contracting venereal disease will be discharged.
7. Any man guilty of continued or serious misconduct, or unwillingness to abide by the rules and regulations prescribed for the Civilian Conservation Corps by those in responsible charge will be discharged.⁴³

Col. Buell's weekly reports detail several of these types of offenses, reporting raids on local bootleggers, the discharge of at least one enrollee for "physical disability (venereal disease)", and warrants being taken out for an enrollee accused of stealing government property and going AWOL.⁴⁴

Work was hard and recreational periods were fun for the boys in the Civilian Conservation Corps, but there was trouble in the camps at times. CCC officials tried to keep enrollees busy, and I. V. Butler, who served both in Louisiana and in California, claimed that there was not any trouble in his assigned camps because "too many activities [were] going on and everyone had something to do."⁴⁵ When trouble did arise, however, it often had to do with liquor.

⁴³Weekly Report, CCC Company 445, Fort Moultrie, SC, November 1, 1933. Damon Collection. Photocopy of report in author's possession.

⁴⁴Weekly Reports, CCC Company 445, Fort Moultrie, SC, 20 January 1934, 27 January 1934, 3 February 1934. Damon Collection. Photocopy of reports in author's possession.

⁴⁵I. V. Butler, Charleston, SC, to the author, 23 November 1999.

Frank Damon reports that while he served with Company 445 that "now and then one of the boys would come in drunk and would be loud and the commanding officer would have to restrict him to camp."⁴⁶ Three members of Company 445 were arrested for being "drunk and disorderly" at Fort Moultrie following a Halloween celebration in 1933 and were summarily discharged from the CCC.⁴⁷ Enrollees were not the only problem at Fort Moultrie, for on 23 and 30 December 1933, Col. Buell reported that a forestry foreman and an army private stationed in the Cheraw camp had both caused problems with drinking in the camp, setting a poor example for the enrollees. Buell requested that the forestry man and the private and his family be removed from the camp; although "no direct trouble has been experienced with [the private] himself...[h]is wife and worthless son are the centers of the trouble."⁴⁸ *The Pinopolian*, the newsletter of Company 442, reported in January 1935 that two men had

⁴⁶Frank A. Damon, Charleston, SC, to the author, 16 March 2000.

⁴⁷Weekly Report, CCC Company 445, Fort Moultrie, SC, 11 November 1933. Damon Collection. Photocopy of report in author's possession.

⁴⁸Weekly Report, CCC Company 445, Fort Moultrie, SC, December 23 and 30, 1933.

been given administrative discharges because of desertion, even after expressing their desire to remain in the CCC. According to *The Pinopolian*, "this makes six boys discharged since January 1, 1935, the other four being given like discharges due to their drunken condition and disorderly conduct." Another boy was discharged in February for a second offense of "serious misconduct."⁴⁹ Most of the time, the most serious offenses committed by South Carolina CCC enrollees were alcohol-related and were minor offenses compared with the trouble found in CCC camps in some other states, including in Florida and Virginia.⁵⁰

Many alumni of the Civilian Conservation Corps credit the CCC with giving them training that served their future employment or military service. James Timmons, who learned how to string telephone wire, left the CCC in the summer of 1938 and took a job as a lineman with South Carolina Electric and Gas for over thirty years. Beverly Gleason,

⁴⁹ *The Pinopolian* (24 January 1935 and 7 March 1935), CCC Camp Newsletters, SCHS.

⁵⁰ For example, historian Jerrell H. Shofner recounts a situation in Sebring, Florida, where three CCC men robbed a diner and were shot by the owner while fleeing, then later arrested. See Shofner, "Roosevelt's 'Tree Army': The Civilian Conservation Corps in Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 65 (April 1987): 453-55 for this and other incidents. See also Clancy, "Conserving the Youth," 463-67.

given the job of mechanic helper in 1936, so quickly learned the job that he was promoted out of the CCC as an enrollee and hired on as a civilian mechanic a year later, at quadruple the salary. Gleason later transferred to the Charleston Navy Yard where he retired after thirty years. The Charleston Navy Yard also employed enrollee John Genes, who had worked as an ambulance driver and plumber at Cheraw and Fort Moultrie. Others, like Walter Gunter who served at Poinsett State Park, used their CCC training in the military. Many recall meeting lifelong friends, and even their wives, while CCC enrollees. Still others, like Durwood Stinson, identify their CCC experience with "becoming a man," both figuratively and literally. Several South Carolina alumni point proudly to the state's parks as one of the Civilian Conservation Corps' most notable achievement. Most CCC alumni describe their experience in similarly glowing terms: "wonderful years [that] were thoroughly enjoyed"; "I am very grateful . . . and thank the Good Lord for giving me that opportunity"; "I loved all the months of my CCC life"; and as "the best thing that ever happened to me."⁵¹

⁵¹NACCCA.

However joyously most accounts of life in the Civilian Conservation Corps are remembered, it should be noted that there were obviously those young men who were dissatisfied with their experience. In their 1940 study of the CCC, Kenneth Holland and Frank Ernest Hill found that between 1933 and 1940, approximately 500,000 men out of the 2,750,000 CCC men enrolled, or 20 percent, had deserted the Corps or had been discharged for disciplinary reasons. These figures demonstrate that although CCC alumni almost universally remember their experiences in the Civilian Conservation Corps as "the best thing that ever happened," not all enrollees enjoyed their CCC experience.⁵² The vast majority of those enrollees have chosen not to join in the alumni activities that so many other alumni have participated in, and for the most part, their voices have almost disappeared from the historical record.

Young men who enrolled in the Civilian Conservation Corps lived life much as any other young man would. They attended classes, played sports, dated and danced, played practical jokes on one another, and, of course, worked

⁵²Holland and Hill, *Youth in the CCC*, 108, 127. See also Stephen O'Neal Rich, "The Civilian Conservation Corps: A Life-Changing Experience," MSW thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 2003.

hard. They formed lasting friendships with one another that have continued for over fifty years. CCC men and Depression scholars both have drawn comparisons of life in the CCC to summer camp, high school, or college, and these comparisons are not accidental. The CCC provided a similar experience that young men would have obtained if they had had the opportunities to attended summer camp, high school, or college, in that they received some sort of education in a variety of subjects, on-the-job training, and the opportunity to explore vocations and avocations of interest to them. For most of these young men, the CCC was the only opportunity they had, and they made the most of it. The lasting friendships made in the CCC appear to be as strong, if not stronger, than the bonds of college fraternities, and the life lessons learned while in the CCC have proven for many to be more valuable than a high school or college degree. In addition, through their work, the young men who enrolled in the Civilian Conservation Corps left lasting testaments to their life and work in the 1930s, in the national and state parks they developed across the country. The development of the state park system in South Carolina is one example of the legacy left by the men of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

CHAPTER FIVE

"WE ARE WILLING TO DO OUR BIT:" VETERANS AND AFRICAN AMERICANS IN SOUTH CAROLINA'S CCC

In the late summer of 1935, CCC Company 4475 moved to Wedgefield, near Sumter, South Carolina, to continue work on the state park that had been begun by Company 421. The CCC had constructed recreational facilities and a lake at Poinsett State Park, and during the summer, the public began using the recreational facilities provided at Poinsett even before the park officially opened. However, when Company 4475, consisting of 200 young African-American men, primarily from South Carolina, moved in to the Poinsett area, white Sumter residents refused to share the lake and park facilities with the young men who were building them. This incident from Poinsett State Park demonstrates the disparate experience of African-American enrollees in South Carolina's CCC; while receiving much-needed work, training, and educational opportunities through the program, they still faced segregation, discrimination, and often hostility. The CCC did not overcome those obstacles.

Segregation and discrimination were not new experiences to young black South Carolinians, but many African-Americans had hoped that the Civilian Conservation Corps would provide better opportunity than what they experienced previously. The incident involving the young black men at Poinsett echoed a larger issue in the CCC; how to deal with enrollees who did not fit the standard profile, such as African-Americans, other racial or ethnic minorities, or older men interested in CCC work. Although the CCC would not solve the problems of racism for African-Americans and other ethnicities, the program provided much needed work and economic assistance to these previously marginalized groups and included African-Americans, other minorities, and older men who were veterans of the first World War. In South Carolina, both African-Americans and veterans enrolled in the CCC, and while the program was successful in providing employment, these enrollees met with challenges based on their race or age. For the most part, both of these groups made the best of the situation, and they contributed to the development of South Carolina's state parks through their work, as well.

The initial enrollment of men in the CCC, or Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) as the organization was

originally known, was to be limited to unmarried young men, ages eighteen to twenty-five. Selection based on these criteria began on 6 April 1933, and enrollees began training with the Army the next day. However, Civilian Conservation Corps enrollment quickly grew to reflect a more diverse cross-section of the American public, and CCC work was extended to reach many different American men. Barely a month had passed from the beginnings of Emergency Conservation Work when white men, African-American men, Native Americans, and veterans all enrolled in Roosevelt's "Forest Army." In most cases, separate camps were created to serve the diverse needs of these groups and to maintain the segregated society of the times. These different camps were distinguished by different titles: "Juniors" for the young, white, single men; "Colored" for young African-American men; "Veterans" for the World War I veterans; and "Indian" for the Native American camps.

While Emergency Conservation Work provided employment for men of a variety of ethnic backgrounds and even ages, ECW afforded very little opportunity for women of any age or ethnicity, other than as secretaries or nurses in the district offices or hospitals. These few positions were limited to women with a certain amount of education and

training. With the beginning of the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1933, Eleanor Roosevelt enthusiastically supported the program and the opportunities it would provide for young men and pressed for a similar opportunity for young unemployed women. Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, the first woman cabinet member, joined the First Lady in these efforts. Primarily due to the demands and leadership from Eleanor Roosevelt and Perkins, an experimental camp for women opened in June 1933 in New York State. While the camp capacity was 360, only about seventy-five women were admitted in its first two weeks. Women had to be "without resources" and between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five to join, according to the requirements set by New York's Emergency Relief Administration.¹

A few other camps followed the example set in New York. These "She-She-She" camps, as they quickly became known, were operated by the Works Progress Administration's National Youth Administration, rather than Emergency Conservation Work. The women's camps focused first on literacy and then on vocational training, while providing a healthy diet and much-needed medical care for the few weeks

¹Blanche Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt, Vol. Two: 1933-1938* (New York: Viking Press, 1992), 88-91; Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 144.

the women were allowed to remain in the program. As in the male CCC camps, provisions were made for women of different ethnic backgrounds, and included white, African-American, and Native American women, although the women had to be unmarried and childless to participate. While the CCC boys signed up for six month terms and received \$30 a month in wages, women received only a \$5 a month maximum for an eight week enrollment period, along with room and board. Although Eleanor Roosevelt was frustrated by the discrimination between the opportunities offered to young men and young women in similar residential camps, her "She-She-She" camps provided some social and economic relief to over 8500 young women during the mid-1930s, before being eliminated by Congress in 1937. The ninety camps included two in South Carolina, at Kingstree and Orangeburg.² For the most part, however, women's participation in CCC-type work was limited to secretarial or nursing positions.

Other minority groups sought to participate in the Emergency Conservation Work. In mid-April 1933, 14,400 Native Americans in the Plains states and Far West were added to the rolls of ECW. Over the course of the CCC,

²Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt*, 88-91; Badger, *The New Deal*, 206; Robert A. Waller, "Happy Days and the Civilian Conservation Corps in South Carolina, 1933-1942," *Historian* 64 (Fall 2001): 44.

85,000 Native Americans enrolled in the program, working on two hundred reservations in twenty-three states. Unlike other CCC camps, the Native Americans employed with the CCC were housed in family camps, rather than in militarily structured camps. The work of the Native Americans in the CCC was largely focused upon projects dedicated to preserving sites important to their own culture. In addition, they were taught industrial skills in order to widen their chances for gainful employment outside of the CCC. Directors in the Department of Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs cooperated with the CCC's Indian Division, and both saw great benefit in extending conservation work to Native Americans; reservations were in need of soil conservation and reforestation as much as the rest of the country, and Native Americans were in need of employment as much as the rest of the population.³

Hispanic men, another ethnic minority, served primarily in ethnically integrated camps in the southwest. California's Hispanic experience mirrors that of other states, in that Hispanics were not regarded as "special

³ Cooney, *Balancing Acts*, 114; Cole, *African-American Experience*, 18; Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 23, 30-36.

enrollees" (as were the "Colored" and "Veteran" statuses), and the only way to trace the service of Hispanics in the CCC is by analyzing last names of enrollees.⁴ While Hispanics were integrated into the camps structure of the CCC, Veterans, Native Americans and African-Americans were housed primarily in separate camps, segregated on the basis of age, ethnicity, or race.

On 6 May 1933, Veterans' Administrator Frank T. Hines wrote to President Roosevelt to ask that veterans of World War I be allowed to serve in ECW. Roosevelt agreed that ECW would be an excellent way to assist these veterans, and on 11 May, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 6129, authorizing initial enrollment of 25,000 veterans, with no limits on age or marital status. The Veterans' Administration would be responsible for selecting veteran enrollees, on a state quota basis. Although the administration gave some consideration to integrating the veterans into regular camps, Frank Persons with the Labor

⁴Cole, *African-American Experience*, 17. Cole also mentions that other ethnic minorities in California including Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos, were not considered as minorities in the 1930s and that there is no separate information relating to them in California's CCC records.

Department overruled this idea, wanting to lessen the military atmosphere of the regular camps as much as possible. Veterans found themselves grouped together in special camps, and for many, this provided an opportunity to reconnect with other men who had shared similar experiences during World War I.⁵

The use of the Civilian Conservation Corps to provide employment and economic relief for veterans of the First World War was a stroke of genius by Roosevelt. His predecessor, Herbert Hoover, had invoked the wrath of public opinion with his dealings with the first Bonus Army of 1932, when these veterans marched en masse on Washington demanding an early payment of their promised service bonuses. With the federal budget in precarious balance, Hoover and Congress refused, and Hoover asked the police and then the U.S. Army for assistance in removing the veterans who had camped in "Hooverville" on the Mall. Under the command of Douglas MacArthur, Dwight Eisenhower, and George Patton, the army, using tanks and a machine-gun

⁵Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 30-36; Joseph Speakman, "Into the Woods: The First Year of the Civilian Conservation Corps," *Prologue* 38 (Fall 2006), available on-line at <<http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2006/fall/ccc.html>>, accessed 13 November 2006.

detachment, cleared the veterans and their families out of the makeshift camps and abandoned buildings where they had been staying, injuring over one hundred.⁶ The public was incensed at Hoover for calling out troops to "take care of" American war veterans, and this episode was the death knell for Hoover's hopes for re-election. When Hines requested ECW work for the veterans, the new President quickly decided that the Civilian Conservation Corps would be an excellent way to provide relief to these veterans without paying the early bonus. In addition, ECW would provide mental as well as financial support to these men who felt they had given their younger years to their country and were now being thrown away.⁷

In 1933, the average age of World War I veterans was 40, and some were in poor mental or physical health as a direct result of their wartime experiences. The CCC provided these veterans with an opportunity to reconnect with other veterans who had shared similar experiences, as

⁶Robert S. McElvaine, "Bonus Army," in *The Oxford Companion to United States History*, Paul S. Boyer, ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 81; Watkins, *The Hungry Years*, 133-41; Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 92.

⁷Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 36; Watkins, *The Hungry Years*, 162. For more on the Bonus Army, see Roger Daniels, *The Bonus March: An Episode of the Great Depression* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971).

well as providing this segment of the population with much needed economic relief. CCC historian John Salmond provides an excellent capsule of what CCC life was like for the veterans who served in the camps:

They were housed in separate camps and performed regular conservation work, modified to suit their age and physical condition. They benefited from the education and medical programs. To many veterans, the CCC became a rehabilitation center, a place where they could regain health and self-respect. Here they received a second chance, an opportunity to gain the knowledge, skill, or confidence they needed to earn a decent living.⁸

Because of their work in the CCC camps, World War I veterans again felt useful and believed that their government cared about them, unlike their experience with Hoover.

In South Carolina throughout June 1933, veterans of the First World War enrolled in the CCC, along with one Spanish-American War veteran, and were sent to Fort Moultrie for conditioning. South Carolina's initial veterans' quota was 350, and the state attempted to fill the quota throughout June, encouraging interested veterans to apply at the veterans' hospital in Columbia and

⁸Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 37.

promising work in reforestation camps in their home state.

The State newspaper in Columbia proudly reported that by 26 June, South Carolina had filled the state's allotment. The men departed for Fort Moultrie from Greenville, Columbia, Florence, and Charleston at the end of the month.⁹

Many of the veterans were glad to once again have a job and some income to support their families, and they enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect with other veterans. However, the veterans' experience in the Civilian Conservation Corps was not always a pleasant one. In the camps, these former military men found themselves once again under army command; in some cases, their commanding officer was a much younger man, with little to no actual combat experience. The veterans, unlike the CCC juniors, had wives and children as their dependents at home, and their money was, in most cases, the only income that their family received. Their families counted on the \$25 a month allotment. Such was the case of one South Carolina woman, who wrote to the governor after an unsuccessful attempt to claim her husband's monthly allotment after he had left the CCC for another job with the Public Works Administration (PWA). On December 4, 1935, Mrs. Edward James wrote,

⁹*The State* (Columbia, SC), 21 June 1933, 26 June 1933, 30 June 1933.

Dear Governor,

I am writing you to see if you can advise me on how to get my allotment and my husband's pay from the CCC. He enrolled in the CCC Aug. 26 1935 and was honorably discharged Sept. 30, 1935 and I haven't received my allotment or his pay either and I have wrote to every one I know to try and get it. I have wrote several letters to the commanding officer at CCC-SC SP 6 Pickens County, SC where he was stationed at and I can't even get an answer from him. I have also wrote to the Veterans Administration Facility at Columbia and to Atlanta where his discharge came from. I have been two months trying to get it and haven't got it yet and I am in great need of it. My husband is on the PWA and we can't hardly make it. We have five children and trying to keep four in school and they all need shoes and clothes. I have been depending on this money to get them all shoes and clothes. If I don't soon get it I guess I will have to stop them from school. So the only one I knew left to write to was you and I feel sure you will get it straightened out so I can get my money. I certainly will appreciate all you can do for me and please let me hear from you at once.

Yours sincerely, Mrs. Edward J. James,
Simpsonville, SC¹⁰

The letter was forwarded to H. A. Smith, State Forester in charge of CCC Forest Service and State Park projects.

¹⁰ Mrs. Edward J. James, Simpsonville, SC to Governor Olin D. Johnston, Columbia, SC, 4 December 1935, General-Dead File: Table Rock State Park, Forestry Commission, CCC files, SCDAH

Smith then wrote to Norman House, Project Superintendent at Table Rock State Park, to investigate the claim. It appears that Mr. James was inadvertently assigned a "no pay due" status at the end of his service in the CCC. House and Smith "straightened out" the matter, and the James family was paid \$22.50 in either December 1935 or January 1936.¹¹

Getting paid was apparently not the only problem for veterans stationed at Table Rock State Park in the fall and winter of 1935. Finding appropriate work for the veterans was not always easy, and it appears that building state parks was not exactly ideal. Roosevelt advisor Louis Howe received a telegram that was forwarded to South Carolina CCC officials regarding the treatment of veterans and their working conditions:

We Veterans stationed Pickens, South Carolina, find the time of work beginning 7:35 until 11:50 and from 12:50 until 3:50 a mighty long time for we old VFW veterans to stand on feet. We have palpitation of the heart, post hernia operation varicose veins and our nerves are wrecked. Would appreciate sitting down a couple minutes every hour to catch our breath. We are

¹¹General-Dead File: Table Rock State Park, Forestry Service, CCC files, SCDAH.

willing to do our bit as we did in '17 and '18.¹²

The copied telegram was accompanied by notations from the Regional Officer, H. E. Weatherwax suggesting that a three-, five-, or ten-minute rest period for these "older men" be implemented every hour to hour and a half.¹³ Two junior camps soon replaced the veteran camps stationed at Table Rock State Park; the younger enrollees apparently were better able to cope with the mountainous terrain and the hard labor required for development of the park in a timely manner.¹⁴

Other than direct participation in the Veteran CCC camps, some South Carolina veterans found work in regular CCC camps. Paul Hartley of Chesterfield County, South Carolina, worked with Company 445 near Cheraw. Hired as one of the local experienced men (LEMs), he assisted with the building of Cheraw State Park. Several years older than the enrollees he worked with, Hartley received the respect of the younger enrollees, who wrote an article

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴E. Thomas Sims and Julie Turner, "Table Rock State Park Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, SCDAH, 1989, 8-6.

about his war service in their camp newsletter. The article highlighted Hartley's medals, including his Purple Heart, the Medal Militaire, and the Croix de Guerre, and a letter of commendation for his service from King George. Hartley's service certainly impressed the young CCC enrollees at Cheraw, and they were pleased to be able to honor his service to the country during war and during peace.¹⁵ This situation appears to be unusual, and most documented veterans enrolled in separate veterans' camps.

Emergency Conservation Work provided for separate camps for the war veterans and the younger enrollees, and also provided separate camps for African-Americans. While the bill creating ECW was being discussed in Congress in late March 1933, Oscar DePriest, a Republican Congressman from Illinois, and the only African-American serving in the House of Representatives, proposed an amendment that stated "that in employing citizens for the purposes of this Act no discrimination shall be made on account of race, color, or creed."¹⁶ Although the non-discriminatory amendment extended CCC opportunities to African-Americans, it did not

¹⁵The Cherokean, 10 June 1935, CCC camp newsletters, SCHS.

¹⁶Quoted in Nixon, *FDR and Conservation*, 147.

question segregated camps, which quickly became the norm for most African-Americans serving in the CCC. Although the law creating Emergency Conservation Work prohibited racial discrimination in enrollment, the letter of the law was not followed in the early weeks and months of ECW. Although the program was fast-tracked by President Roosevelt and enrollment proceeded rapidly in the spring of 1933, African-American enrollment lagged vastly behind that of white enrollment, especially in the South. Southern selection agents were reluctant to begin enrolling blacks, especially when so many white youths needed employment.¹⁷

During the first weeks of enrollment, Georgia selection agents enrolled no African-Americans; Labor Secretary Frances Perkins received a letter on 2 May 1933, complaining that in Clarke County, Georgia, where the

¹⁷Johnson, "The Army, the Negro and the CCC," 82; Cole, *African-American Experience*, 14. Olen Cole's *The African-American Experience in the Civilian Conservation Corps* is to date the only book-length study of African-American enrollees in the Civilian Conservation Corps, and his book is primarily a case study of the experience in California. The classic study of African-Americans nationally during the New Deal decade remains Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue, The Depression Decade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978). For the experience of African-Americans in another New Deal program in the South, see Nancy L. Grant, *TVA and Black Americans: Planning for the Status Quo* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1990).

population was over 60 percent black, that no African-Americans had been selected for the CCC. Perkins passed the letter on to Frank Persons, CCC Recruitment Director at the Labor Department, who also received a call from Representative Oscar DePriest from Chicago asking for an explanation. When Persons contacted the Georgia relief administrator, Herman De La Perrier, De La Perrier responded that he believed that few black families needed an income as high as \$25 per month, and that local administrators reported that all qualified blacks meeting the CCC criteria were already employed, working in farming occupations. Persons also contacted Georgia governor Eugene Talmadge, who agreed to enroll up to 600 African-Americans into the Georgia CCC. Apparently Talmadge's promise did little to promote black enrollment in the state. Georgia's population was 36 percent African-American in 1933; by 12 June, fewer than 200 blacks had been enrolled in the CCC. It is estimated that only 13 black companies served in Georgia (out of approximately 130 CCC camps statewide), and half of those at the army posts Benning, Gillem, and Stewart. Similar complaints came to

Persons throughout 1933 from Florida, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Alabama.¹⁸

Although Persons' initial memorandum to the state selection agents had called for selection of enrollees "in accordance with the spirit of American government and American ideals of fair play," and that there would be "no discrimination on account of race, creed, color, or politics," the actualities of selection were largely based upon the prejudices of the state and local selection officials. Director Fechner, himself a Southerner, was loathe to question local norms, and when blacks were enrolled, they found themselves in segregated camps. From the beginning, Fechner maintained that he was committed to segregated camps. Fechner also stipulated that black enrollees should only work in camps in their home state as practical (but this practice was not always followed). Although not a written policy until 1939, Fechner appeared satisfied with a quota of African-American enrollment approaching 10 percent of total enrollment; but in 1933, African-American enrollment was barely over 5 percent. The

¹⁸Michael S. Holmes, "The New Deal and Georgia's Black Youth," *Journal of Southern History* 38 (February 1972), 444-445; Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 90-91; Cole, *African American Experience*, 14; Sitkoff, *New Deal for Blacks*, 49; Ren Davis, "Our Mark on This Land," *Georgia Journal* (March/April 1998): 23.

percentages varied widely; Mississippi's African-American enrollment was less than 2 percent of total enrollment, while South Carolina's African-American enrollment surpassed 35 percent. South Carolina's ratio of African-American to white enrollees matched more closely the ratio of the state's general population (45 percent African-American) than any other Southern state.¹⁹

When African-Americans enrolled in the CCC, they found themselves facing a microcosm of the larger segregated society. In some states, the small African-American population limited enrollment to such a small number that whites and blacks served in the same camps. There African-Americans found themselves in segregated barracks and serving in low status positions such as cooks in the mess hall. However, the vast majority of black CCC enrollees

¹⁹Charles Johnson, "The Army, the Negro, and the CCC," 82; Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 91; Cole, *African-American Experience*, 14; Hayes, *South Carolina on the New Deal*, 165; Edna Kennerly, "The Civilian Conservation Corps as a Social Resource in South Carolina," M.S.W. thesis, University of South Carolina, Columbia, 1940, 46. For more on the New Deal experience of South Carolina's African-American population, see JoAnn Deakin Carpenter, "Olin D. Johnston, the New Deal, and the Politics of Class in South Carolina, 1934-1938," Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1987, 335-41; I. A. Newby, *Black Carolinians: A History of Blacks in South Carolina from 1895 to 1968* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 248-49.

served in segregated camps, designated as "Colored" in official records. Director Fechner issued a directive in the summer of 1935 ordering the "complete segregation of colored and white enrollees. . . . Only in those states where the colored strength is too low to form a company unit will mixing of colored men in white units be permitted."²⁰ After visiting integrated camps in California, Fechner remained committed to "deintegration" of the camps in part due to "unfortunate relationships that existed in some of the camps where there was a mixture of white and negro enrollees" and the "vigorous resentment shown by some communities."²¹ When the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) complained to both Fechner and Roosevelt, Fechner responded "segregation is not discrimination," and Roosevelt failed to take a stand against the CCC director's position, calling it "political dynamite."²²

²⁰Quoted in Cole, *African-American Experience*, 26.

²¹Robert Fechner to Dayton Jones, California CCC selection director, 16 July 1935, as quoted in *ibid.*

²²Robert Fechner to Thomas L. Griffith, 21 September 1935, "CCC Negro Selection" file, Box 700, General Correspondence of the Director, Record Group 35, National Archives, College Park, Maryland; Cole, *African-American Experience*, 21, 26; Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 91. President Roosevelt's assessment of Fechner's position

Following the change in official CCC policy, enrollees were shuffled in many camps to realign the racial profiles of camps. In Palo Duro Canyon, Texas, two veteran companies providing employment for both blacks and whites were replaced with Junior Colored companies, who were almost immediately besieged with visits from the Ku Klux Klan. "Evidently," concludes Texas CCC historian Jim Steely, "no park authorities calculated that Major E.A. Kingsley, Palo Duro project supervisor, had been an avowed and enthusiastic KKK participant since the 1920s!"²³

Discrimination in the CCC began at the induction center. A 1935 article in the African-American publication *Crisis*, gave one young man's account of his time in the CCC. Luther Waddell recalled that at his induction at Fort Dix, New Jersey, white boys were processed before the African-Americans, and blacks received the picked-over uniforms, bedding, and tents. Army officials he identified as "Southern" were alternately offended and amused by the presence of blacks, either making offensive comments to and about the black enrollees or giving them pennies for singing and dancing. Waddell was assigned to a camp made

as "political dynamite" is quoted in Steely, *Parks for Texas*, 97.

²³Steely, *Parks for Texas*, 96.

up of African-Americans, but with white officers in command, and sent to work on a park in the Upper South (Colonial National Monument in Virginia). Although he experienced "Jim Crow" in the CCC, this young African-American could conclude in 1935 that "on the whole, I was gratified rather than disappointed with the CCC. . . .

[A]s job and an experience, for a man who has no work, I can heartily recommend it."²⁴ Although he experienced the typical racial discrimination during his CCC experience, Waddell's article indicated that he enjoyed his time spent in the CCC.

In addition to the segregated camps, African-Americans experienced discrimination in the Civilian Conservation Corps in other ways, especially in leadership positions. The failure to appoint black officers to command African-American camps came under fire from the NAACP and other African-American organizations. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, an active member of the NAACP, questioned Colonel Major and Director Fechner about the supervisory role of African-Americans in the CCC. Fechner discussed Ickes' concerns with the Advisory Council and also brought

²⁴Luther C. Wandall, "A Negro in the CCC," *Crisis* 42 (August 1935) : 254.

to their attention the request from several African-American college graduates who asked to be placed in supervisory positions in the CCC. The general opinion of the Advisory Council was that few blacks were capable of holding leadership positions, and the Council took no action on these requests. However, in 1934, Director of Education Howard Oxley appointed twenty-four blacks as camp educational advisors, and pressed General George Mosely, commander of the Fourth Corps area in the Southeast (including South Carolina), to place an African-American educational advisor in each of the "Colored" CCC camps. Mosely declined to do so; while assuring Oxley of his good intentions. Mosely related an account of an African-American educational advisor protesting police brutality of black enrollees and receiving a severe beating himself. Mosely believed, that in the Fourth Corps area at least, only white educational advisers could effectively deal with the local education officials, who were almost all white.²⁵

Much as she had advocated CCC-type camps for women, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt also supported the extension

²⁵Charles Johnson, "The Army, the Negro, and the CCC," 84-85; Watkins, *The Hungry Years*, 168.

of New Deal benefits, including the CCC, for African-Americans across the country. While most of President Roosevelt's advisors had not supported her "She-She-She" camps, several New Dealers joined Mrs. Roosevelt in promoting extension of the various New Deal programs to all Americans, regardless of race. Harry Hopkins of FERA, Secretary of the Interior Ickes, and W. Frank Persons in the Labor Department, among others, advocated with Mrs. Roosevelt to provide more equitable relief for the nation's African-Americans during President Roosevelt's second term. With their support, the Civilian Conservation Corps almost doubled its African-American membership, from less than 6 percent prior to 1936 to 9.9 percent that year and up to 11 percent by 1938, where it held steady. The numbers of African-Americans in supervisory capacities also increased slightly in Roosevelt's second term nationally.²⁶

For the most part, supervisory officials in CCC camps remained white, especially in the South. In her 1940 sociological study of South Carolina CCC camps, Edna Kennerly found that all commanding officers of CCC camps operating in South Carolina in 1939-1940 were white, as were the project superintendents. Kennerly found that,

²⁶Sitkoff, *New Deal for Blacks*, 64-65, 74-75.

contrary to the earlier opinion of General Mosely, in most "Colored" camps, the educational advisers were black. All of the enrollees serving as leaders and assistant leaders were African-American. Kennerly concluded her analysis of the "Negro Program" in South Carolina's CCC by stating "the education, health, recreation, and religious programs carried on are similar to those practiced in the white camps."²⁷ Although segregated by race, black CCC enrollees generally received the same camp experience as their white counterparts; however, their relationships with the local community were not always as cordial as those reported by white CCC participants.

Camp newsletters published by the African-American camps in South Carolina and the CCC yearbooks verify that, for the most part, African-American camps and junior white camps were very similar in structure, organization, and administration. Photographs and articles from these publications demonstrate that both white and African-American camps formed sports teams and musical groups,

²⁷Kennerly, "The CCC as a Social Resource," 47-48. Although Kennerly comments that the proportion of African-American CCC enrollees in South Carolina was not equal to that of the general population, she devoted only a page and a half of her one-hundred plus page master's thesis in Social Work to the situation of the "Colored" CCC camps.

attended religious meetings and educational classes, and dated local girls of their own race. Young African-American men from Company 5418 serving in Charleston County formed the Withersbee Quartet, a musical group that performed for other CCC camps around the state as well as on a radio program broadcast from Charleston. The work program for both camps was similar as well. In South Carolina, African-American camps worked on State Park, Biological Survey, National Forest, Soil Conservation, and State Forest projects, and many of them received training and worked for the first time in skilled labor positions. However, in the annual district yearbooks as in the rest of CCC organization, segregation prevailed, with the African-American camps being pushed consistently to the back of the books, following the listings of all of the white camps, regardless of company number.²⁸

Placing African-American CCC companies proved to be as problematic as enrolling African-Americans had been. Many local communities complained about having African-American

²⁸Marian Thompson Wright, "Negro Youth and the Federal Emergency Programs: CCC and NYA," *Journal of Negro Education* 9 (July 1940): 398-399; Kennerly, "The CCC as a Social Resource," 47; *Hi-De-Hi-De-Ho Newsletter and District I, Fourth Corps Area Annual, 1938* (Baton Rouge, LA: Army and Navy Publishing, 1938), CCC Files, SCPRT.

camps located nearby. Although the reasons varied from location to location, they followed a general trend. Complaints received in the director's office feared an increase in social disorder and drunkenness, a bad influence on the youth of the community, and the safety of white women. The complaints and fears were not limited to the South; Fechner received letters from Pennsylvania, Washington, DC, Indiana, Texas, and California among other states voicing their concerns about African-American camps in their vicinities. Fechner complained that "there is hardly a locality in this country that looks favorably or even with indifference on the location of a Negro camp in their vicinity," although he noted that there was far less protest about African-American camps in the South than in other regions.²⁹ As a response to the racist fears across the nation, Fechner issued a directive that African-American enrollees were to serve in their home state as much as possible, in campsites selected by the state's governor. The "Colored" camps in South Carolina bear out this order with the district yearbook for 1938 noting that almost all of the enrollees were South Carolina natives,

²⁹Quoted in Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 91-92. See also Davis, "Our Mark on This Land," 23.

and those who were not South Carolinians were fellow Southerners from Georgia, Alabama, or North Carolina. For example, Company 4470 was made up of African Americans mainly from South Carolina, with others from North Carolina and Alabama.³⁰

However, African-American camps were sometimes not even welcome in their home state; an episode at Poinsett State Park in Sumter, South Carolina involved both an African-American camp and a veterans camp. In the fall of 1935, Colored Company 4475 replaced the original camp that had been working on Poinsett State Park. Although the park had not officially opened to the public, Sumter citizens were using the lake for swimming, and protested the loss of the swimming facilities to African-American CCC enrollees. Several meetings were set up between the Forestry officials and local townspeople to deal with the issue, and although local leaders agreed that the camp was necessary to complete the work at Poinsett, they expressed their wish that the park be kept open for the exclusive use of local residents. Due to the public outcry, the black enrollees

³⁰ Lacy, *The Soil Soldiers*, 74-79; Salmond, *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 91-93; Steely, *Parks for Texas*, 94-95; *District I Yearbook 1938 SCPRT*.

were prohibited from using the lake for swimming during recreational periods and were only allowed on the state park grounds during work hours. Enrollees also experienced other hostilities from the local citizens, such as name-calling when they went into town.³¹

After only three months at Poinsett, the camp was transferred to Chester County in November 1935, where they completed most of the construction of Chester State Park between November 1935 and February 1937. Superintendent F. H. Murray had reported that "our company of Negro workers have proven satisfactory. They are easily controlled and have given no trouble in the community."³² When, in February 1936, the state forester submitted an application for retention of a CCC camp to continue work on Poinsett State Park, he noted, "Colored companies are not always acceptable to people in locality of camp. Sufficient notice of intention to occupy this camp with colored company should be given to allow us to contact local

³¹Sumter Daily Item, 26 July 1935, 31 July 1935, 25 October 1935, 26 October 1935, 31 October 1935, 12 November 1935.

³² "Narrative Report for Poinsett State Park SP-3, October 1st to Nov. 6, 1935," National Archives, Record Group 79, Entry 41, Box 123, photocopy in Poinsett State Park Files; and Chester State Park Files, SCPRT.

people."³³ Company 2413, made up of veterans, transferred to Poinsett from its work at Givhans Ferry State Park near Charleston, in February 1936, and by the end of March, completed a large number of landscaping projects, continued work on the incomplete bathhouse, and built two overnight cabins.³⁴

In South Carolina, the number of young African-American men who benefited from the Civilian Conservation Corps numbered over two thousand, and at least nine of the almost sixty CCC companies that served in the state were made up of African-American enrollees, primarily from within the state. In addition to the young African-American men and their families who directly benefited from CCC work, scores of other black South Carolinians benefited from the creation of state parks. Although the parks were segregated and facilities were not equal, South Carolina

³³Stephen W. Skelton, "Poinsett State Park: National Register Nomination Preliminary Research," 1989, unpublished paper in Research Files, State Historic Preservation Office, SCDAH, 15-16; *Sumter Daily Item* (Sumter, South Carolina), 26 July 1935, 31 July 1935, 12 November 1935; *District I, Fourth Corps Area Annual 1938*, 36-39; CCC files, Poinsett State Park, Forestry Commission, SCDAH. This notation was also found on an application for camps at Table Rock State Park.

³⁴"Narrative Report for Poinsett State Park SP-3, March 31, 1936," National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 123, Entry 41; CCC files, Poinsett State Park, SCDAH.

and federal authorities at the time recognized the necessity of providing parks and recreational facilities for the state's African-Americans. Racially based segregation was mandated by law in 1930s South Carolina, but the Forestry Commission desired to reach the African-American population, which reached 45 percent of total population in the state during that decade and to provide parks for blacks' enjoyment. "Colored areas" were in the plans for Hunting Island and Greenwood, although both parks were still in the development stages, and segregated recreational areas had been developed at the Sand Hills project, administered by the Soil Conservation Service. The SCS had also developed a similar recreational area for African-Americans, known as Mill Creek, at the Poinsett Land Use Project, adjacent to Poinsett State Park.

Although the State Forestry Commission continually asked for additional funding to increase the number of state parks available for African-Americans, the state legislature seemed even less enthusiastic about funding black park facilities. In addition, the Forest Commission often used what little funding was available for state parks for maintaining and improving white facilities rather than acquiring or developing additional facilities for

blacks.³⁵ These limited provisions provided a small opening to African-American participation in the state park system, and the Forestry Commission provided six segregated areas for African-Americans through the 1950s. South Carolina's state parks integrated in the mid-1960s, after protracted legal challenges.³⁶

Although Fechner and Roosevelt chose not to challenge the accepted segregated society of the American South in the 1930s, African-Americans did benefit in limited ways from the New Deal, and the Civilian Conservation Corps was no exception. At least one South Carolina historian has argued that the New Deal experience taught the state's African-American population valuable lessons in "determination, unity, and ingenuity" that later led to the

³⁵ "Civilian Conservation Corps Camps in the State of South Carolina, 1933-1942," Research Files, State Historic Preservation Office, SCDAH; National Park Service, *A Study of the Park and Recreation Problem of the United States*, (Washington, DC: GPO, 1941), 67-68; South Carolina State Planning Board, "Parks and Recreational Areas of South Carolina," Bulletin No. 7, (Columbia: South Carolina State Planning Board, 1941), 86. A study of the segregated state park system and the fight for integration of the state parks is Stephen Lewis Cox, "The History of Negro State Parks in South Carolina: 1940-1963," M. A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1992.

³⁶ Cox, "History of Negro State Parks," 80-109; *The State* (Columbia, SC) 15 July 2001.

state's movement toward desegregation in the 1950s.³⁷

Another has noted that while "New Deal programs invariably discriminated against black Carolinians. . . . the New Deal was a mixed blessing for [them]," ultimately perpetuating a system of inequity for the state's African-Americans while at the same time ensuring that the relief programs of the New Deal, including the CCC, extended to the state's blacks.³⁸ A more recent study of the New Deal in South Carolina echoes the "mixed blessing" sentiment, but argues that the New Deal in South Carolina provided opportunities for the state's African-American population that otherwise would have remained closed. According to Jack Hayes, "the New Deal fostered activism, organization, and political awareness among black Carolinians," and that while the gains for African-Americans were not immediate during the Depression decade, the New Deal "spawned hope" for the South Carolina's blacks.³⁹

At first praised for successes in providing jobs for blacks, then castigated for not doing more to enhance the

³⁷Edwin D. Hoffman, "The Genesis of the Modern Movement for Equal Rights in South Carolina, 1930-1939," *Journal of Negro History* 44 (October 1959), 346, 353.

³⁸Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 246.

³⁹Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 158, 183.

quality and equality of life for African-Americans, the CCC and the New Deal should be recognized as successful but limited programs that helped numerous African-Americans but failed to reach later goals of desegregation and equal treatment, and should be judged in context with the times.

In South Carolina, more than any other Southern state, a number of young African-American men participated in the CCC, finding jobs, room, and board when their options were even more limited than their white counterparts. Although not immune to the pervasive racism that permeated Southern society, these young men received vital job training and an income for their families, and in most cases, their work garnered praise from their superior officers. Regardless of the limitations of the program, for those young African-American men who participated in the CCC, the program provided them with opportunities they most likely would not have found otherwise, especially in the highly segregated South. In addition to providing jobs for many young African-American men, the CCC, through its work in the establishment of South Carolina's State Park system, institutionalized recreational opportunities for all South Carolinians, both white and black.

CHAPTER SIX

BUILDING OPPORTUNITY: TOURISM, FORESTRY, AND STATE PARKS

Prior to 1934, South Carolina had no state parks.

Although the state's Forestry Commission had made plans for the development of state parks as early as 1931, land for parks was only to be obtained "when areas are made available through gifts," and by the early 1930s, no land gifts had been made to the state for park development.¹ The advent of the Civilian Conservation Corps answered a large question regarding the labor and resources required to build state parks, and enticed both local governments and private citizens to find land to donate for these parks.

State park development in the United States largely dates to 1921, when several dozen conservation-minded individuals, led by National Park Service director Stephen Mather, met in Des Moines, Iowa, and founded the National Conference on State Parks. At the time of this meeting, twenty-nine states had no parks, and seven others had only

¹South Carolina Forestry Commission, *Report of the State Commission of Forestry for the Year July 1, 1930 to June 30, 1931*, 83 [hereafter cited as SCFC Report (1930-1931)], SCDAH.

one park. The activists found these numbers appalling and at their National Conference on State Parks proclaimed that outdoor recreation was a basic human need. The group announced that its purpose was

to urge upon our governments, local, county, state, and national, the acquisition of additional land and water areas suitable for recreation, for the study of natural history and its scientific aspects, and the preservation of wild life, as a form of the conservation of our natural resources; until there shall be public parks, forests, and preserves within easy access of all the citizens of every state and territory of the United States.²

This first meeting of the national conference established lofty goals for the states, and Mather promised the assistance of the National Park Service (NPS) in meeting these goals. NPS recommended six types of park development to the states, and through the decade of the 1920s, some progress was made in a handful of states where leaders in engineering, park planning and landscape architecture focused attention, including the work of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. in California.

²Quoted in Freeman Tilden, *State Parks: Their Meaning in American Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 3-5. See also John Henneberger, "State Park Beginnings," *The George Wright Forum* 17 (2000), 18-19.

A second national conference provided additional impetus to the creation of state parks when, in 1924, President Calvin Coolidge convened the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation. Sponsored by the National Recreation Association (NRA), the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation assembled twenty-eight national organizations and several state organizations, which pointed to the growing need for recreational areas for Americans, both adults and children. As leisure time grew, either through federally mandated shorter work weeks, child labor laws, or free time gained through unemployment, state and federal governments searched to provide structured activities for adults and children to fill their non-working hours. Coolidge's conference emphasized the creation of a cooperative association of national, state, and local recreation groups to form national policy regarding recreation.³

By the early 1930s, a few states, primarily in the midwest, had established strong state park systems. Then, recreation and park development took center stage in

³Cutler, *Public Landscape*, 8-28; Henneberger, 18-19. See also Stacy L. Weber, "Vision and Reality: TVA's Recreation Demonstration Program, 1933-1942" (M.A. thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 2002), 9-26.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's ambitious goals for a New Deal in America. New Deal programs such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and more indirectly, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), marked the first time the federal government took a fiscal interest in the recreational needs of its citizens, through the establishment of city parks and playgrounds with controlled and structured play areas and the establishment of additional national parks and new state parks. While the WPA focused on direct recreational facilities such as playgrounds and athletic fields, for the most part, and especially in South Carolina, state parks were a product of the Civilian Conservation Corps.⁴

As viewed by reformers, state parks provided an ideal cure for several different ills spawned by the Great Depression. Through the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the creation of state parks would provide work for many young men who had no other job prospects, and would pump much needed additional dollars into the local economy through the purchase of provisions for the CCC enrollees and materials needed in CCC camps. The state park would also provide cheap outlets for the growing number of

⁴Tilden, *State Parks*, 11-16; Cutler, *Public Landscape*, 8-28, 64-66. See also Dwight F. Rettie, *Our National Park System: Caring for America's Greatest Natural and Historic Treasures* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 6.

Americans interested in tourism, while providing structured camping and recreational facilities for those travelers.

Motor tourism was an expanding business in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Historian Warren James Belasco has noted that "prior to World War II, Americans used their cars primarily for recreational purposes," and autocamping provided a vacation alternative for middle-class Americans. Between 1910 and 1920, car ownership in America increased sixteen-fold; over eight million cars were registered in 1920. In six years, car ownership doubled again; by 1926, 19.2 million cars were being driven along American roads.⁵

These American car owners discovered that one way to "get away from it all" was to pack the car and drive. Sleeping in the car, or in a makeshift tent pitched next to the car, were viable alternatives to spending money in high-class hotels, and autocamping appealed to not only the lower and middle class but also to the adventurous elite, who praised the concept in travel journals and magazine columns. In the 1910s, these motor tourists camped wherever it was convenient: by the side of the road, in a

⁵Warren James Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), 3-8, 72, 106.

farmer's field, near an orchard or stream, or in a schoolyard. But by the 1920s, as car ownership and the number of motor tourists increased so did the need to better monitor the campers' activities. Rather than camping wherever, whenever, autocampers needed specific sites at which to camp, lending a sense of security to both the surrounding community and the campers themselves.⁶

This burgeoning group of potential consumers also drove the newly expanding tourism industry. Municipal governments and business owners banded together to provide free campsites for motor tourists, seeing a single solution to both the problems and the possibilities that tourist-campers offered. Businessmen and Chambers of Commerce assisted communities in setting up municipal camps and drew boosters from other civic organizations. When hotel owners complained that municipal campsites threatened their business, campground operators and other local businessmen disagreed. They argued that this new group of tourists would not stay in hotels, anyway, and that as potential customers of other businesses, their needs should be met. Waterloo, Wisconsin, established the first free municipal

⁶ Ibid., 3-8, 76-79; John A. Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 158-59.

campground in 1920. The typical small-town camp offered potable water, privies, electric lights, wood or gas stoves, a central kitchen facility, a lounge or clubhouse, bathing or shower facilities, and laundry tubs. Belasco notes that the free campground "was the first roadside institution designed to balance public order, private profit, and tourist comfort."⁷

The free municipal tourist campsites catered both to families in search of "freedom" and impoverished travelers and hoboes, whose presence discouraged family camping. In addition, maintenance costs quickly forced towns to abandon their free camps in favor of collecting fees for cars and people, while at the same time attracting more desirable types of campers. This new method of making money attracted entrepreneurs, and by 1925, the campground industry was born, with some privately owned campsites even providing cabins for those travelers who desired more privacy. By 1930, imposed fees, registration requirements, time limits for camping, and police supervision replaced the free municipal campground. The attitude of local governmental authorities operating campgrounds later

⁷Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 78. See also Jakle, *The Tourist*, 158-59.

influenced state and national parks in setting up their controlled camping areas.⁸ Seeing the benefits to the local economy a state park could provide them, the citizens and local government in Cheraw, South Carolina, banded together in pursuit of South Carolina's first state park, along Highway 1, one of the state's busiest highways.

As tourist courts and campsites opened at places along major thoroughfares, Americans with moderate incomes could find places for recreation and enjoyment. These low-rent shelters represented, in the words of landscape architectural historian Phoebe Cutler, "the democratization of summer vacation."⁹ The lure of these tourists of more modest means also meant additional dollars to local communities who could boast about the added value of a state park in their vicinity. Many communities around the country, as in Cheraw, soon worked together to support state parks in their region, echoing the sentiments of the municipal campground boosters.

Automobile tourism in South Carolina followed a similar path in the early twentieth century, although

⁸Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 4, 76; Jakle, *The Tourist*, 158-60.

⁹Cutler, *Public Landscape*, 65.

tourism in the state had an older history. Aiken and Camden had attracted "horse people" and other wealthy Yankees who came for extended visits since the 1880s. These towns and others, especially those along U.S. Highway 1, provided stops for later "snowbirds" traveling to Florida, as well. Charleston had promoted itself as a tourist destination since at least 1912. Entrepreneurs there built the Fort Sumter Hotel on city-donated land in 1923; the Francis Marion Hotel followed the next year. Developers such as Greenville mill owner John T. Woodside built tourist hotels in Myrtle Beach and elsewhere along the coast during the 1920s. By 1929, approximately forty-seven thousand tourists, most from out-of-state, visited Charleston annually, although this number declined sharply during the Depression.¹⁰

As the Depression deepened in the early part of the 1930s, travel and tourism opportunities for most families dwindled, but gas was cheap, as were roadside camp accommodations. Autocamping provided a vacation outlet that most Americans could still afford. The rise in travelers and campers, many of whom were accustomed to staying in

¹⁰Edgar, *South Carolina*, 491-93; Fraser, *Charleston!*, 354-386.

more posh surroundings, in turn caused a rise in standards for roadside accommodations. Contemporary tourism trade journals noted "one of the few oases of the depression, this business has thrived on hard times and limited purchasing power."¹¹ South Carolinians viewed tourism as a profitable business even during the Depression decade; the Columbia Chamber of Commerce investigated the possibility of building horseracing tracks and horse-jumping courses in 1934 in an attempt to "get some excellent people to winter at Columbia," as they had traditionally wintered in Aiken and Camden.¹²

In Depression-era South Carolina, the numbers of the state's residents who could afford recreational opportunities for their families dwindled. The South Carolina Forestry Commission recognized the opportunity state parks would present to alleviate the "social dislocation" present in South Carolina. State parks would provide "areas where families can find rest and relaxation... where they can absorb the principles of

¹¹Quoted in Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 144.

¹²Clarence Buxton to William Lykes, Columbia [SC] Chamber of Commerce, [1934], Columbia, SC Chamber of Commerce records, Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia [hereafter USC].

forest conservation."¹³ Following the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1933, and the CCC's work in the national park system, state officials began to see the wisdom of putting young men to work creating parks and recreational areas for residents and tourists alike. Through the newly established program, the state's young unemployed men could find employment while at the same time creating additional recreational places for South Carolina residents and encouraging tourists from outside the state to spend time there. In 1934, the South Carolina legislature gave the South Carolina Commission of Forestry the responsibility for the creation and maintenance of a state park system, following the donation of over 700 acres to the state for a park by the citizens of Chesterfield County. Soon after, a camp of 200 CCC enrollees was at work near Cheraw, creating Cheraw State Park.¹⁴

Beginning with the work at the park near Cheraw, the Civilian Conservation Corps provided the genesis of the state park system in South Carolina. Using CCC labor,

¹³SCFC, *Report (1931-32)*, 26, SCDAH.

¹⁴South Carolina *Acts and Resolutions* 1933, Act 350; Robin Copp, "The Civilian Conservation Corps and South Carolina, (unpublished paper in CCC Research Files, State Historic Preservation Office, SCDAH, 1985), 8-9.

industrial skills provided by local experienced men (LEMs), and professional assistance from the National Park Service, the Civilian Conservation Corps built 16 state parks and six wayside parks between 1934 and 1942 in South Carolina.¹⁵ From the original CCC parks, the South Carolina park system has grown to over forty-five state parks, showcasing the state's natural and historical treasures to residents and tourists alike. The original parks highlighted the beauty of the various regions of the state, provided camping and recreational opportunities for residents and tourists, and created both a model and an institutional framework for the continued development of additional parks.

Unlike state and national parks in other areas, South Carolina's original state parks developed primarily on lands that had been overworked and denuded to the point that they were unusable for farming, South Carolina's most profitable enterprise. By 1934, eight million acres of the state's nineteen million acres had been farmed and overworked so badly that they were declared otherwise

¹⁵South Carolina Federal Writers' Project, *South Carolina State Parks*, American Guide Series, Work Project Administration, (Columbia: South Carolina State Forest Service, 1940), 6, 42. The CCC developed six wayside parks in South Carolina under the Recreational Demonstration program; one of these is now Colleton State Park.

destroyed.¹⁶ While some parks were developed on land highly prized for its scenic beauty and natural state, many of South Carolina's parks were developed on land that seemingly had no other use and was being reclaimed to provide recreational facilities for the state's residents. Land reclamation, as well as recreation, was one of the major goals of South Carolina's state park program. Some state parks, such as Aiken and Cheraw, were constructed at "entry points" into the state, from the north and west. Other South Carolina state parks highlighted the state's natural and historical features, and made use of land not suitable for farming, from the Native American sacred site at Table Rock in the mountainous upstate to the beaches at Myrtle Beach, Edisto, and Hunting Island.

The work throughout the 1930s of the Civilian Conservation Corps in South Carolina's state parks undoubtedly changed the public landscape of the state. In addition to clearing overgrowth, planting seedling trees and kudzu, and building roads and bridges, the CCC constructed hiking and nature trails, campsites, swimming pools, amphitheaters, dams and lakes, buildings of all sizes (from lodges to cabins), and smaller but important

¹⁶Edgar, *South Carolina*, 449.

recreational structures such as water fountains, fireplaces, and picnic tables. Although highly touted as presenting South Carolina's best natural areas, these early state parks were, for the most part, created landscapes, strictly guided by National Park Service guidelines.

In response to the rapid development of parks across the nation as a result of Emergency Conservation Work, the National Park Service published *Park Structures and Facilities* in 1935, to serve as a textbook for the training of CCC workers and to provide a handbook for design and construction of "safe, convenient, and beneficial" structures for parks. *Park Structures and Facilities* became so popular for work in national and state parks that it was expanded into a three-volume edition in 1938, called *Park and Recreation Structures*.¹⁷ Although park structures demonstrated some variety in style and construction, depending upon the area in which they were built, most CCC-built state and national park buildings bear a strong resemblance to one another and have all been classified as

¹⁷Albert H. Good, *Park and Recreation Structures*, 3 vols. (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1938. Reprint, Boulder, CO: Graybooks, 1990); McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 429-30.

"NPS rustic architecture" or, less formally, "parkitecture."

Albert Good, the author/editor of both works, defined "rustic" as an architectural style that "through the use of native materials in proper scale... gives the feeling of having been executed by pioneer craftsmen with limited hand tools. It thus achieves sympathy with natural surrounds and the past."¹⁸ This new architectural style developed out of the English Arts and Crafts movement popularized by John Ruskin and William Morris, and "Americanized with a hearty dose of Crockett and Boone."¹⁹ This evolving style respected manual labor and individual work, and several authors and practitioners advocated the unity of the natural and built environments, most notably throughout the advent of the Prairie School and famed American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. However rustic the exterior designs,

¹⁸ Albert Good, *Park Structures and Facilities*, (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1935), 3-4.

¹⁹ Cutler, *Public Landscape*, 79-80. Phoebe Cutler also draws on the parallels between "Government Rustic" architectural sensibilities if not architectural style in the state parks of the 1930s and architectural designs of Frank Lloyd Wright during the same period, demonstrating that stylistic characteristics were not limited to public recreational facilities in state and national parks: "[T]he Chicago renegade and the Government Rustic designers shared a ground-hugging regard for nature." See Cutler, *Public Landscape*, 78-79.

Government Rustic married the past with the present in embracing modern conveniences such as running water and electricity.²⁰

Good and the NPS advocated the use of native materials, not because of their innate "nativeness," but because of their character-creating features. The use of locally available natural materials like wood and stone meant that construction material would be easily accessible and that the local experienced men would likely be skilled in handling these materials. As Cutler states, "A fusion of nostalgia and economics propagated Government Rustic."²¹ In addition, using "pioneer" methods and materials as Good advocated provided additional opportunities for manual labor for the CCC boys. Why use machines or machine-made products when hand tools and manual labor could employ so many more young men? The CCC enrollees received a vocational education through their work, even if the construction practices they learned were quickly disappearing in favor of mass production. "Rustic" described both the style as well as the construction

²⁰Ibid. See also Ruth D. Nichols, "The Civilian Conservation Corps and Tennessee State Parks: 1933-1942," (M. A. thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 1994), 29-38.

²¹Cutler, *Public Landscape*, 77.

techniques NPS practiced throughout the country in the decade of the 1930s.

According to architectural historian Linda Flint McClelland, Albert Good did not approve of the word "rustic" in defining the architectural style being practiced in state and national parks of the 1930s and hoped that a better term would evolve. But the rustic style as practiced by the architects of the National Park Service and their counterparts in state parks had evolved from already established forms in the national parks, as seen in the 1903 Old Faithful Inn; the New Deal "rustic" style was not new to the NPS. Despite the style's antecedents and Good's misgivings about the word, the term "rustic" (also "Government Rustic" or "NPS Rustic") has come to be the identifying stylistic term when discussing park architecture, especially as practiced by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.²²

In the East particularly, other federal agencies, including the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the Resettlement Administration (RA), the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Tennessee Valley

²²McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 434; Cutler, *Public Landscape*, 90-91.

Authority (TVA), and the United States Forestry Service (USFS), banded together to alter the landscape with the assistance of labor provided by the Civilian Conservation Corps. In South Carolina, these cooperative efforts are best seen in the development of state forests and especially in the development of Recreation Demonstration Areas, in conjunction with the state parks.

The majority of Civilian Conservation Corps camps fell under the jurisdiction of the USFS, and forest protection was the primary objective of these CCC camps. Protective measures undertaken included forest fire prevention and disease and insect control in national and state forests. Fire prevention measures taken included the stringing telephone lines to provide a method of communication regarding hazardous conditions and the building of trails, roads, and fire towers in order to provide protection. Forest Service CCC camps also conducted forest improvement activities, including timber-type surveys, seedling nurseries, and reforestation. Other types of ground-cover projects included the planting of kudzu, an activity that changed the landscape throughout the southeast.²³

²³Otis, et al., *The Forest Service and the CCC*, 10.

Although the Forest Service controlled the largest number of work projects for the CCC nationally, in Forest Service Region 8, or the Southern Region, only about half of CCC projects were forestry related. The National Park Service and the Tennessee Valley Authority supervised the majority of Region 8's projects. In South Carolina, the Forest Service worked on four National Forests and two Purchase Units, including the Sumter National Forest, the Francis Marion National Forest, the South Carolina portion of the Nantahala National Forest (now part of the Sumter National Forest in Oconee County), and the Wambaw National Forest (now part of the Francis Marion National Forest in Charleston County).²⁴

The United States government purchased the lands comprising the Enoree Purchase Unit in Newberry County and the Long Cane Purchase Unit near Bradley in 1933; these lands became part of the Sumter National Forest in 1936. These lands were former cotton farms that had been eroded through continuous use for over one hundred years. As the lands had declined in profitable cultivation, they had been used for hardwood and pine production, which accelerated the depletion of the land. By the mid-1920s, much of the

²⁴Ibid., 51-52.

land that had been used for farming had been abandoned. The federal programs allowing for lumber companies and other owners of non-productive land to sell their lands for CCC and federal use helped meet Roosevelt's objectives of environmental employment. In the Enoree and Long Cane Purchase Units, the CCC built firetowers, roads, nurseries, a fish hatchery, and trails; many of these features are still present.²⁵

Joseph Kircher, Regional Forest Director for Region 8, also established a unique fire control program for subsistence farmers in South Carolina. Kircher offered small farmers a salary and farmland adjacent to lookout towers in exchange for helping take care of the land and operating the towers. Farmers had to qualify by having previous farming experience, livestock, and dependents. The CCC assisted with this program by constructing the fire towers and roads, and by providing labor for construction of outbuildings on the newly acquired parcels of land.²⁶

²⁵Ibid., 51-52; James Bates, "Long Cane/Enoree History," available on-line at <<http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms/welcome/piedmont.htm>>, accessed 31 July 2001.

²⁶Otis, et al., *The Forest Service and the CCC*, 53.

Forestry work also provided a good deal of usable vocational education for CCC enrollees. By 1936, 15,000 young men had worked in state and national forests and on privately held forest lands, primarily in fire control and prevention but also in reforestation, thinning, and land improvement activities. Their interest in forestry work, and their foresight in seeing that forestry could become a career, led the South Carolina State Commission of Forestry and State Forester H. A. Smith to publish a book for use in educational classes on the fundamentals of forestry. Topics studied included types of trees in South Carolina, forestry economics, forest management, and reforestation.²⁷ Forestry activities were one of the most important areas where vocational education immediately improved the work of the CCC.

Roosevelt's twin goals for the Civilian Conservation Corps were to put to good use America's marginalized land and youth. In addition, the development of recreational facilities on otherwise submarginal land provided opportunities that many Americans could not have obtained elsewhere due to their financial situations. The

²⁷D. Y. Lenhart, *The South Carolina Civilian Conservation Corps Forester*, (Columbia, SC: State Commission of Forestry, 1936), 1-36.

development of Recreational Demonstration Areas met all of these needs successfully. By 1938, over ten thousand people had received employment through the FERA, the WPA, or the CCC in relation to RDA development, and over 352,800 acres of land had been placed under development. Visitation numbers in the completed areas in 1937 topped one million days of daytime use, and one hundred thousand days of use by overnight campers.²⁸

Recreational Demonstration Areas were developed as model campgrounds for the poor, handicapped, and otherwise underprivileged segments of the American population. Originally a project of the Resettlement Agency and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the National Park Service quickly became involved, as did the Civilian Conservation Corps. Across the country, 46 RDAs were created in 18 states, mostly east of the Mississippi River. Four types of RDAs were developed: vacation areas, waysides (developed only in Virginia and South Carolina), land added to existing national parks and monuments, and development of recreational areas adjacent to state scenic areas. The NPS quickly warmed to the RDA project, and Director Arno Cammerer described the RDAs in 1937 as

²⁸MCCLELLAND, *Building the National Parks*, 417.

a unique form of land use increasingly valuable to the American people, affording outlets for out-of-door recreation accessible to congested populations, and retiring from agricultural use unarable lands of no economic worth.²⁹

After development, RDAs were to be turned over to the states, and 29 of them became state parks. Other RDAs became waysides along the Blue Ridge Parkway or joined existing national parks or monuments. Two original RDAs remain in the national park system; one is Prince William Forest Park in Virginia. The other, Catoctin Mountain Park in Maryland, later became the presidential retreat now known as Camp David. In South Carolina, RDAs developed at Cheraw and at Kings Mountain are now part of the state park system. Six wayside RDAs were also developed in South Carolina; one of these is now Colleton State Park.³⁰

²⁹Quoted in Harlan D. Unrau and G. Frank Williss, *Administrative History: Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s* (Denver: NPS Denver Service Center, 1983), np.; available on-line at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/on-line_books/unrau-williss/adhi.htm>, accessed 8 August 2001.

³⁰Rettie, *Our National Park System*, 6, 54; Cutler, *Public Landscape*, 70-71, 157; McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 328, 415-17. The development of the RDAs at Cheraw, Kings Mountain, and Colleton Wayside will be discussed in following chapters.

The National Park Service had just undertaken the care of several of the nation's most historic sites during the Hoover administration, including the development of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and Colonial National Monument. With the advent of a variety of New Deal programs that influenced NPS work nation-wide, these new initiatives changed the face of NPS, transforming the agency from a primarily environmental agency to one also concerned with historic preservation and with the recreational activities of Americans. The passage of the Historic Sites Act in 1935 provided for an increased official governmental role in historic preservation, administered by NPS. New Deal programs such as the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and of course Emergency Conservation Work and the Civilian Conservation Corps, provided much needed funds and manpower to NPS. This infusion of funds and labor allowed NPS to carry out projects that had been previously planned but postponed due to lack of funding, as well as giving them additional projects in the area of state and local park developments across the nation.³¹

³¹Unrau and Williss, *Administrative History: Expansion*

The activities of the Civilian Conservation Corps in South Carolina provided many new opportunities for a variety of South Carolinians, not just the CCC enrollees. The Forestry Service reclaimed and improved marginal land and provided impoverished farmers with alternative places to farm and new jobs in fire prevention. Tourists and travelers found new places to camp; tourist-related business increased in communities near state and national forests, parks, and RDAs. Young men received jobs, a place to live, and an education. Nowhere in South Carolina are these benefits more evident than in the development of the first state parks, which formed the infrastructure for the State Park system that continues to contribute to South Carolina tourism. As the previous chapters have demonstrated the impact that South Carolina's CCC had on the young men who enrolled and worked in the program, the following chapters will demonstrate the impact of the program on the landscape of the state, and how the remaining buildings, trails, and structures of the earliest state parks can be used as reminders of the impact of the Great Depression and the legacy of the New Deal and the Civilian Conservation Corps in South Carolina.

of NPS in the 1930s.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONSERVATION AND COMMEMORATION: SOUTH CAROLINA'S RECREATIONAL DEMONSTRATION AREAS, CHERAW, COLLETON, AND KINGS MOUNTAIN

While the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps was primarily responsible for the physical construction of South Carolina's state parks, its work also allowed the National Park Service to use its experience in park planning to reclaim submarginal lands for park areas through a program known as recreational demonstration areas, or RDAs. These RDAs represent the ideas and ideals of the New Deal's emphasis on outdoor recreation, especially extended to the economically disadvantaged population. NPS planners and New Deal idealists believed that cooperative recreation (where groups of people found organized recreational activities) and the exposure to nature and the outdoors could better American lives, both physically and psychologically. Based on these beliefs, state parks and recreational demonstration areas were often designed to bring people together in the outdoors, with communal recreation areas such as large picnic shelters,

playing fields, bathhouses, swimming facilities, and group camping areas.¹

NPS officials hoped that these proposed recreational areas would meet different needs. Architectural historian Linda McClellan has identified four areas in which NPS sought to develop RDAs: 1500-2000 acres located near major population centers; 20 -50 acres along principal highways where motorists could rest and picnic in the outdoors; extensions to national parks and monuments developed for recreation; and extensions to state parks or scenic areas for recreational use.² By 1936, 46 projects had begun in 24 states. South Carolina was the only state to have two RDAs, including a new park near Cheraw, South Carolina, and one adjacent to the national military park at Kings Mountain. In addition to these two RDAs, NPS also established prototype wayside parks in Virginia and South Carolina. The larger RDAs proved more popular, and only thirteen wayside parks were established, including six in

¹Cutler, *Public Landscape*, 70-75. See also Tilden, *The State Parks*, 3-16.

²Linda Flint McClellan, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 414-415.

South Carolina. The wayside established near Colleton, South Carolina, became Colleton State Park.³

With the creation of Emergency Conservation Work in South Carolina in 1933, citizens of the state quickly saw the benefits of putting young men to work in their communities. Although particularly hard-hit by the Depression, the Pee Dee region in northeast South Carolina immediately responded to the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Believing that the creation of a state park would attract tourists to the area and provide much-needed economic relief in the form of government contracts with local merchants and suppliers, the citizens of Cheraw and Chesterfield County partnered to raise funds for

³For general discussion of the Recreational Demonstration Area program, see McClellan, 414-20. An introduction to the South Carolina RDAs is found in Robert A. Waller, "The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Emergence of South Carolina's State Park System, 1933-1942," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 104 (April 2003), 113-16. It is interesting to note that Waller refers to these areas as Recreational Development Areas, and McClellan uses the term interchangeably. NPS materials use the term "Recreational Demonstration Area". For an excellent introduction of the Federal Recreation Areas in South Carolina at the end of the New Deal period of development, see South Carolina State Planning Board, *Parks and Recreational Areas of South Carolina*, Bulletin No. 7, (Columbia: South Carolina State Planning Board, 1941), 75-86.

purchasing land for the construction of a state park near Cheraw.

In January 1934, Larry Sharpe, a landscape architect with the National Park Service, met with L. C. Wannamaker, a Cheraw attorney, about the possibilities of developing land near Cheraw as a park. Wannamaker took Sharpe to a location near U. S. Highway 1, believing that it would be the most likely area in the region for park development. According to Wannamaker, Sharpe "fell in love" with what became Cheraw State Park and advocated that Wannamaker seek approval for development of a park at this location.⁴

The federal government permitted Emergency Conservation Work only on federally owned land or on land owned by other agencies cooperating with the federal government, not on private land. In January 1934, ECW Director Robert Fechner wrote South Carolina Governor Burnet Maybank outlining this policy:

no projects shall be undertaken in lands or interests in lands, other than those belonging to or under the jurisdiction of the United States, unless adequate provisions are made by the cooperating agencies (State

⁴South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Historical Services Division, "Cheraw State Park Survey Report," 1991, 5. As the first state park begun in South Carolina, Cheraw is the best documented of the Civilian Conservation Corps state park projects in South Carolina.

Forestry) for the maintenance, operation, and utilization of such projects after completion.⁵

In order to use CCC enrollees to develop a state park in Chesterfield County, the state had to acquire the land. State Forester H. A. Smith visited Cheraw to assess the feasibility of building a park on the land that Wannamaker had shown to Sharpe, but he was less impressed than Sharpe had been and stated that he felt the area did not have enough population to warrant the creation of a state park.⁶ Not easily discouraged, Wannamaker and several other Cheraw businessmen met in February with H. L. Tilghman and B. S. Meeks, the chair and vice-chair of the South Carolina State Forestry Commission in hopes of promoting their proposed state park. Tilghman suggested that the Cheraw citizens set up a commission to raise money and provide some maintenance for the land until Washington approved the project. Five Cheraw citizens were appointed to the Park Commission: W. P. Smith (who was also the President of the Cheraw Kiwanis Club), Dr. G. A. Bunch, H. L. Powe, Mrs. H.

⁵Robert Fechner to Burnet R. Maybank, 14 January 1939. Maybank Papers, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

⁶"Cheraw State Park Survey Report", 5.

H. Anderson, and Mrs. Edwin Malloy, wife of the owner of the Cheraw Yarn Mills.⁷

State Forester Smith had cited the area's population among his concerns regarding a state park in Chesterfield County. Chesterfield County's population was 34,000 in the 1930 census, and the six-county Pee Dee region had a population of only 221,400, a mere 13 percent of the total state population. What the Cheraw population lacked in numbers, it made up for with enthusiasm. Undaunted, the citizens of Cheraw began a fund-raising drive to raise money to purchase the land to donate to the state for the purpose of developing a state park. Under the leadership of Wannamaker and J. H. Ramseur, over \$5,300 was raised in less than a month's time. Even Cheraw schoolchildren joined the effort, with nickel and dime contributions placed on deposit with a local bank. When presented with such obvious interest in a state park from the local people, State Forester Smith relented and gave his approval for the potential development of a state park at Cheraw.

⁷H. L. Tilghman to H. A. Smith, 19 February 1934; L. C. Wannamaker to H. L. Tilghman, 20 February 1934; H. A. Smith to H. L. Tilghman, 20 February 1934; Tilghman to H. A. Smith 22 February 1934, all Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC Files, Box 3, SCDAH.

The Cheraw citizens' group paid \$5,160 for 705.55 acres of land just south of U. S. Highway 1 and immediately donated the land to the South Carolina Forestry Commission for the creation of a recreation and forest demonstration area.⁸ Wannamaker sent the State Forester the deed dated March 22, 1934, for the land, with a list of all the donors for the purchase. Wannamaker recognized the historic nature of this donation and asked Smith to "file this list in your records so that it may be available as a matter of private or historical interest at any future time."⁹ Later that week, Smith and a forestry commissioner visited Cheraw and walked the land. Smith was quoted in *The State* newspaper as saying that the land "lends itself to a small park very nicely."¹⁰

An application for a Civilian Conservation Corps camp at Cheraw was submitted to the ECW Richmond office on 9

⁸Census data from <http://www.census.gov/population/cencounts/sc190090.txt>, accessed 9 November 2001.
Affidavit concerning finances and land purchases, 12 February 1934, signed by L .C. Wannamaker and notarized by H. A. McLeod, Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC files, box 3, SCDAH.

⁹L.C. Wannamaker to H.A. Smith, 23 March 1934, Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC files, box 3, SCDAH. A copy of the deed and the list of donors is not included with this letter in the archival records.

¹⁰*The State* (Columbia, SC), 28 March 1934.

February 1934. ECW Director Robert Fechner approved the state park project for CCC work in mid-March, with initial authorization for South Carolina Camp SP-1 for six months.¹¹ That May, the local newspaper trumpeted that the park on "US 1, probably the most widely traveled roadway in the state, will bring thousands of visitors from all sections of the country . . . and will establish Cheraw as the 'Gateway City' of South Carolina."¹²

State Forester Smith began correspondence with the Commanding Officer at Fort Moultrie, Colonel F. F. Jewett, regarding the moving of CCC enrollees to the Cheraw area for development of South Carolina's first state park. After revisiting the Cheraw site, Smith expressed his concerns over the limited acreage and the evidently unwritten policy of ECW to clear-cut areas where it intended to set up camps. Smith asked Jewett to refrain from sending enrollees to Cheraw until further notice from the Forestry Commission and asked Jewett to "drop a letter" to the commanding officer reinforcing the concerns about

¹¹Application for Camp Cherokee, SP-1 at Cheraw, 9 February 1934, and H.E. Weatherwax (ECW District Officer) to H.A. Smith (State Forester), 15 March 1934, both Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC files, box 4, SCDAH.

¹²*Cheraw Chronicle*, 31 May 1934

the possible damage to the park environment through the "promiscuous cutting of trees." Smith also asked Jewett to investigate the possibilities of constructing buildings for the CCC camp that could be used for park purposes after the camp was disbanded. Jewett responded to Smith:

We will do nothing toward moving the company into that area until you further inform us as to your desires in this matter. When the Company moves in the Commanding Officer will be given explicit instructions relative to his saving all the trees near the camp site. We understood that the camp at Chesterfield was to be occupied for a period of at least a year and were planning on wooden constructions. If however, it will only be for six months, we will probably have to make a tent camp out of it, constructing only a mess hall.¹³

CCC Company 445 moved to Cheraw in June 1934 to begin work on a CCC camp site (which they named Camp Cherokee) and on a state park. Authorized for a six month period, the enrollees found themselves residents of a tent camp, which apparently did not satisfy some of their hopes. Company 445, made up entirely of young, white, South Carolina residents, had been organized in May 1933 at Fort Moultrie, near Charleston, and had served most of the first year at Fort Moultrie with three months near Conway. Evidently, the

¹³H. A. Smith to F. F. Jewett, 21 March 1934, and Jewett to Smith, 23 March 1934, both Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC files, box 4, SCDAH.

enrollees had liked their proximity to the Atlantic Coast and did not like what they saw on their first impressions of the Cheraw site, for the 1936 yearbook states that

When the members of the Company arrived at the present Camp site, they like all other new enrollees, were a little downhearted. The life was naturally new to them. But they have found out in the meantime that life is swell at Camp. It has given them rugged bodies and has stimulated and developed beneficial interests.¹⁴

At first, the camp was authorized for only a six-month stay, which was then extended for another six months. In the fall of 1935, the federal government decided to purchase an additional 6,800 acres of land adjacent to the state park for development as a Recreational Demonstration Area (RDA). With this added land and a much larger project, the CCC camp was given a longer authorization, and the enrollees erected more permanent camp buildings, including four barracks, a dining hall, a recreation hall, and officers' and NPS supervisors' quarters. According to Jack Wilson, a Cheraw teenager in the 1930s, the CCC camp had a "very military appearance, with typical barracks, white-washed rocks outlining paths and roads, everything

¹⁴CCC Annual District I, 1936 (Army-Navy Publishing, 1936), 31.

extremely neat and orderly."¹⁵ The camp and park project at Cheraw set the standard for other similar projects throughout the state.

The CCC camp at Cheraw ran much like other CCC camps. In addition to the daily work projects, educational and recreational opportunities were available to the enrollees. Frank Damon, an enrollee who quickly rose to the rank of Leader and served as the company clerk, remembers playing tennis, going swimming and serving as the editor of the camp newspaper. According to Damon, the Education Advisor "taught the enrollees to read and write as quite of few of them could do neither." Enrollees organized a baseball team and held dances in the recreation hall. In addition, the enrollees maintained cordial relationships with the Cheraw citizens. Damon remembers that "we were invited to the homes of the local people for dinner quite often and to parties at their houses."¹⁶ *The Cherokean*, Company 445's camp newsletter, bears out this relationship. An editorial in the 10 June 1935 issue (written by editor Frank Damon) states:

¹⁵Jack Wilson, quoted in Copp, "CCC in SC," 10.

¹⁶Frank A. Damon to the author, 13 March 2000. Letter in author's collection.

To my way of thinking, there has always existed a very close relationship between the people of Cheraw and Camp Cherokee We appreciate this much more than we are able to say or even show We are all glad that there exists between the people of Cheraw and Camp Cherokee such a close relationship. We all hope that it will grow stronger and closer as time goes by.¹⁷

Evidently, the enthusiasm with which the Cheraw citizens had pursued a CCC camp and state park was extended to the enrollees building the park, and the relations between the CCC enrollees and the local people were quite good. The local citizens were delighted that their efforts in obtaining a park had been successful, and for the most part, these CCC enrollees were native white South Carolinians or from elsewhere in the Southeast and were for the most part considered locals.

After the CCC enrollees set up their campsite, they began construction on the state park facilities. In his 1933-1934 annual report, the State Forester was able to report that a small lake for bathing and boating, picnic shelters, and an administration building were under construction, as well as various roads, trails, and landscaping projects around the CCC camp and the park.

¹⁷The Cherokean, CCC Camp Newsletters, SCHS.

Smith also had received a letter from Wannamaker, who continued his interest in the park project, giving the Forestry Commission "permission to make any plantings desired by you on our lands opposite Cheraw State Park for highway beautification purposes" and promising that these areas would be maintained by the property owners.¹⁸

In September 1934, the ECW district office in Richmond approved drawings and estimates for a picnic grouping at Cheraw consisting of one shelter with benches, nine tables, and five outdoor fireplaces. The Dogwood Picnic Shelter (Fig. 1) at Cheraw State Park is the oldest CCC-constructed building in the South Carolina state park system, and remains one of the premier examples of CCC construction in the state parks. ECW officials viewed this picnic shelter as an early success; the District Office requested photographs, negatives, and blueprints of the shelter for inclusion in a booklet being produced on park structures in Washington. The Dogwood Shelter and Barbecue Pit opened formally to the public on 18 May 1935, with a barbecue supper for NPS personnel, other state park superintendents, and prominent local residents, including Wannamaker. Other

¹⁸SCFC Report (1933-34), SCDAH; L. C. Wannamaker and Ethel Pegues to H. A. Smith, 23 August 1934, Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC files, SCDAH.

Cheraw CCC projects completed in 1934 included the tables and outdoor fireplaces mentioned above, a public campground, two latrines, and an earthen dam to raise the level of Lake Cherokee, a seven-acre lake that had been a pond on the property. The CCC men added a diving platform and board to enhance their swimming opportunities. Locals who came to swim at Lake Cherokee also used the diving board and platform. By the spring of 1935, the CCC camp newspaper reported that churches, Sunday School classes, and groups from the local high school were using the park for cookouts and picnics, as well as for hiking, swimming, and other recreational activities.¹⁹

¹⁹The Cherokean (20 May 1935), CCC camp newsletters, SCHS; E. H. Hutchinson, (Superintendent, Cheraw State Forest Park) to H. A. Smith, 20 September 1934, Smith to H. E. Weatherwax (ECW District Officer, Richmond, VA), 22 September 1934, Weatherwax to Smith, 27 September 1934, Weatherwax to Smith, 13 February 1935, all Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC files, box 4, SCDAH. See also "Cheraw State Park Survey Report," 6, and The State (Columbia, SC), 8 July 1934.



Fig. 1. Dogwood Picnic Shelter, Cheraw State Park. Photograph courtesy of South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

The federal government acquired an additional 6,800 acres of land immediately adjacent to Cheraw State Park in the summer of 1935 under the submarginal land program for development as a Recreational Demonstration Area (RDA). The land was owned primarily by Hancock Insurance Company and Atlantic Life Insurance Company; tenant farmers occupied and farmed the land. The creation of the Recreational Demonstration Area displaced some one hundred and sixty people in twenty-nine families. The Resettlement Administration relocated these families and the WPA razed their houses and other farm buildings. "Several hundred"

WPA workers joined the CCC enrollees in the development of the Recreational Demonstration Area. In August 1935, the local CCC company received word that the RDA projects would begin, and by November, construction of a 1300-foot wide dam and the 300-acre Lake Juniper had started, utilizing both CCC and WPA labor at the RDA.²⁰

The Cherokean, Camp Cherokee's newsletter, reported that the dam would be made of 2,600 cubic yards of concrete, reinforced with 104,000 pounds of steel, and that the construction would take approximately a year to complete and would be "something to be proud of in the years to come."²¹ Although developed under the auspices of the federal government, unlike other federal projects viewed as a part of the NPS system, the Cheraw was considered from its beginnings to be a part of Cheraw State Park, and the land was leased to the South Carolina State

²⁰*The Cherokean* (30 August, 12 November 1935 and 7 April 1936), CCC camp newsletters, SCHS; "Cheraw State Park Survey Report," 7-13; South Carolina Forestry Commission, Photography File, CCC files, Box 3, SCDAH; SCFC Report (1934-1935), 34; SCFC Report (1935-1936), 72; SCFC Report (1943-1944), 63-64; "Master Plan Report: Cheraw State Park and Cheraw Recreational Area," South Carolina Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC files, box 3, SCDAH.

²¹*The Cherokean* (30 August 1935), CCC camp newsletters, SCHS.

Forestry Commission for operations until it was turned over to the state in 1944.²²

The WPA workers were drawn from otherwise unemployed or underemployed men from around the area, including the towns of Society Hill, Chesterfield, and Pee Dee, and north to the North Carolina state line, as well as from the immediate Cheraw vicinity. Unlike the CCC enrollees who lived, worked, and played together, the WPA workers trucked into the area each day and only remained there during working hours, returning to their homes and families each night. It does not appear that the WPA and CCC enrollees fraternized together, and WPA workers left very few records of their work and life, especially when compared to those left by the CCC through their yearbooks, camp newspapers, and reunions. Cheraw's CCC workers did note that the WPA workers, under the direction of a Mr. Plumer, made "great headway" in the clearing of the land that became the lake. Although federal records indicate that the WPA was heavily involved with the development of the RDA, historians at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History concluded that while these records provide a clear indication of the funding sources for these projects through the Federal

²²SCFC Report (1934-1935), 34; SCFC Report (1935-1936), 72; SCFC Report (1943-1944), 63-64, all SCDAH.

Emergency Relief Administration rather than Emergency Conservation Work, the bulk of the actual work itself was most likely conducted by the CCC rather than WPA workers.²³

Other projects conducted throughout 1935, 1936, and 1937 at the Cheraw RDA in conjunction with Cheraw State Park included the clearing of land for two group camps, the construction of a caretaker's house, the development of a fish hatchery, and the construction of the group camps. The caretaker's house was the first major building constructed at Cheraw (fig. 2). The caretaker's house is a one-and-one-half story building, with a side-gable roof and two dormer windows in the gable. The house has a one-story side-gable addition. Log construction over a stone basement foundation gives the house a rustic feel. CCC workers used standardized National Park Service designs, coupled with locally available materials to give the residence a South Carolina character. Enrollees quarried stone from local quarries for the foundation, and cypress and yellow pine, obtained from the Lake Juniper

²³The Cherokean (7 April 1936), CCC camp newsletters, SCHS; Frank Brown, Dan Elswick, and Tommy Sims, "The Establishment and Development of South Carolina State Parks," unpublished report in research files, Historical Services Division, SCDAH.

excavations, were used for the framing and siding of the building (fig. 3). In accordance with the ECW commitment to manual labor, the roofing shingles were hand-riven cypress shingles. The NPS, obviously pleased with the effort of the South Carolina CCC in the execution of its standardized designs, expressed to local officials that the caretaker's house "makes a very impressive showing". The State Commission of Forestry reported in 1942 that the superintendents' houses at all the parks "were designed and constructed in keeping with the atmosphere of a State Park, yet the point of rusticity was not carried so far that comfort and usefulness were sacrificed," and pointed out that the homes had modern conveniences, being "equipped with running water, bathrooms, and lights."²⁴ In South Carolina's state parks, as throughout many of the other states, "rusticity" combined with the conveniences of the modern age, creating a new, identifiable, American architectural style.²⁵

²⁴ R. A. Walker (Assistant State Forester) to E. H. Hutchinson, 31 July 1935, South Carolina Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC files, box 4, SCDAH; SCFC, Report (1942-1943), 72, SCDAH.

²⁵For a discussion of how Government Rustic architecture combined both a longing for the nation's past with an appreciation with the conveniences of modernity, see Stacy L. Weber, "Vision and Reality: TVA's Recreation



Fig. 2. Caretaker's House, Cheraw State Park. Photograph courtesy of South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

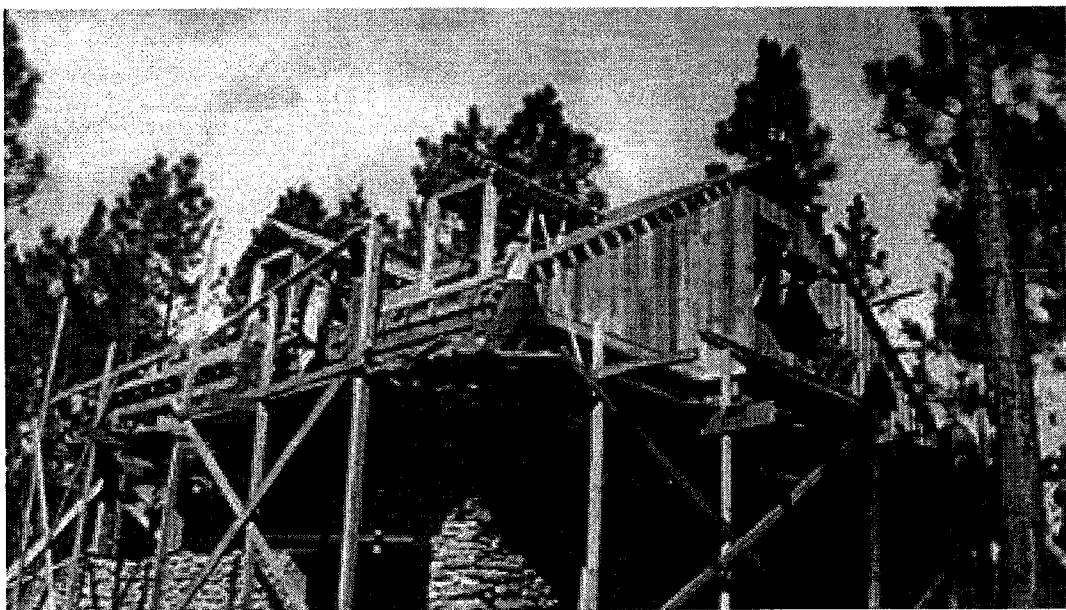


Fig. 3. Construction of Caretaker's House, Cheraw State Park, c1935. Photograph courtesy of South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Demonstration Program, 1933-1942," (M.A. thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 2002).

While the houses met NPS expectations, the development and construction of the fish hatchery project created some controversy among the National Park Service and state forestry officials associated with Cheraw. Dr. J.E. Bost, Director of Fish Culture for the South Carolina Department of Game and Fish, advocated the hatchery, as it would provide a means of stocking the two lakes at Cheraw as well as other lakes and streams in the area. The NPS worried that a fish hatchery would take much-needed funding away from the development of recreational areas. Bost worked out a deal with the Forestry Commission and NPS, by which the Department of Game and Fish would provide the money for materials, but the WPA and CCC workers at Cheraw would provide the manpower for construction of a warden's house and nineteen fish-rearing pools and two supply lakes. Construction began in the spring of 1937 with labor supplied by the WPA. CCC enrollees took over the work at the fish hatchery in June, constructing twelve rearing pools, the most of any South Carolina state park. They did not complete construction of the hatchery and warden's house until the summer of 1941. Two years later, the

Forestry Commission deeded the 206 acres that make up the fish hatchery to the US Fish and Wildlife Service.²⁶

The two group camps -- Camp Forest and Camp Juniper -- were designed to serve organized clubs and groups, such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H Clubs, churches, and others. Built to National Park Service specifications, the group areas contained unit camps of several cabins laid out in a circular fashion around a central administration building, dining hall, infirmary, and bathhouse (figs. 4-8). CCC workers also constructed furniture for use in the cabins and recreational buildings. The camps were located at some distance from the lakefront in order that swimming and water activities would take place only with supervision. Originally Camp Forest was designed to accommodate 120 campers, while Camp Juniper initially would serve approximately sixty. By summer 1937, Camp Forest was practically completed. The CCC began construction of Camp Juniper in early 1938; however, budget restrictions dictated that the buildings at Camp Juniper would be simpler than those at Camp Forest. The changes called for

²⁶"Cheraw State Park Survey Report," 9; SCFC, Report (1941-1942), 119; SCFC, Report (1943-1944), 63. The state parks at Aiken, Table Rock, Lee, and Poinsett also had fish-rearing pools.

included the "elimination of all porches [and] a radical simplification of all framing details."²⁷ The extant buildings at the group camps bear out this distinction; Camp Forest's buildings are more detailed and finished in appearance, while Camp Juniper's are much more rustic and modest, without porches (see figs. 6 and 7).

²⁷"Cheraw State Park Survey Report," 8-9; E. M. Lisle (NPS Regional Officer) to P. R. Plummer (Project Manager), 8 August 1937, South Carolina State Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC files, box 3, SCDAH.



Fig. 4. Dining Hall at Camp Forest Group Camp, Cheraw State Park. Photograph courtesy South Carolina Department of Archives and History.



Fig. 5. Interior, Dining Hall at Camp Forest Group Camp, Cheraw State Park. Photograph courtesy South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

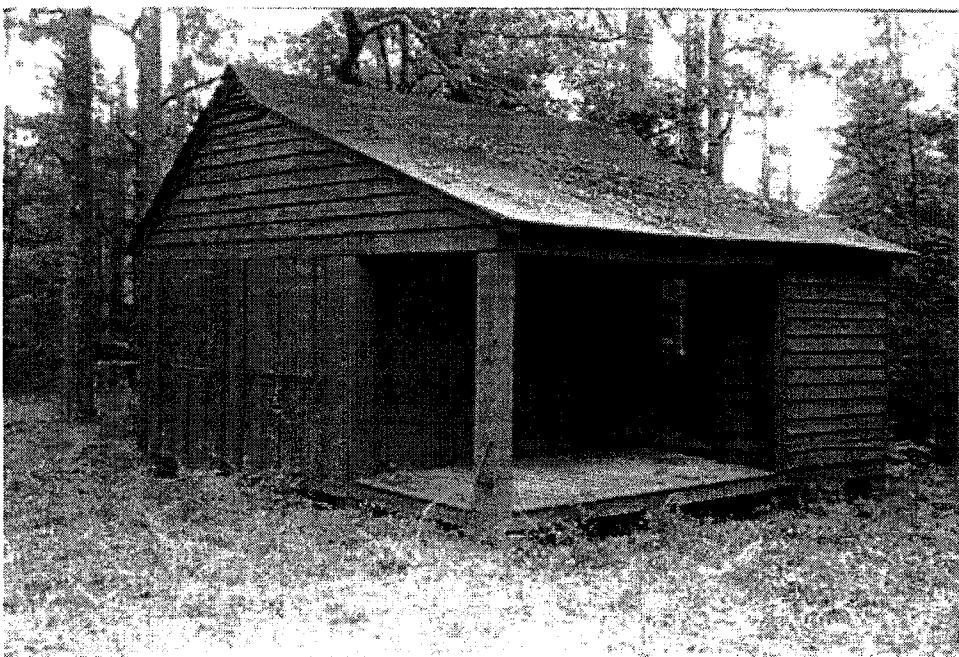


Fig. 6. Cabin at Camp Forest Group Camp, Cheraw State Park. Photograph courtesy of South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

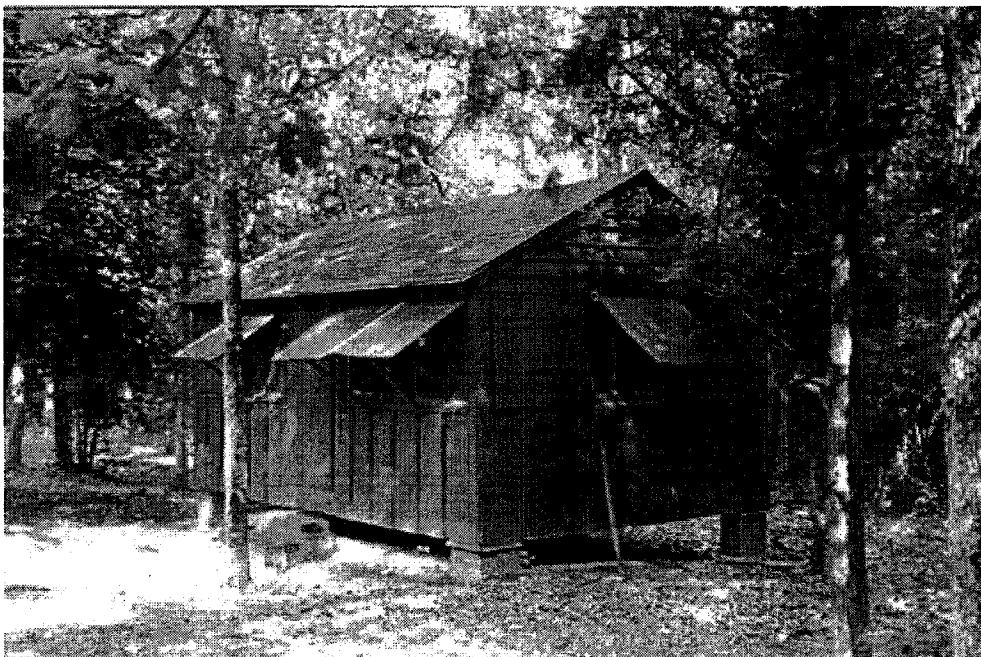


Fig. 7. Cabin at Camp Juniper Group Camp, Cheraw State Park. Photograph courtesy of South Carolina Department of Archives and History.



Fig. 8. Lodge and Dining Hall, Camp Juniper Group Camp, Cheraw State Park. Photograph courtesy of South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Camp Forest opened in July 1937, and the Forestry Commission boasted some 700 campers per week in August 1937. Camp Juniper opened in May 1939. The State Forest Service administered the camps' operation from the beginning. The group camps provided camping facilities for a variety of non-profit groups, primarily made up of children. The State Forest Service employed a camp director, a dietician and cooks, a lifeguard, a first aid attendant or nurse, and other camp helpers. The sponsoring organizations provided their own leaders and programming; however, these organizations often asked State Forestry personnel to provide programs both at camps and for local

groups. Shortly after the opening of Camp Juniper in May, the group camps were closed during July and August 1939 due to outbreaks of "infantile paralysis" in North and South Carolina. In the summers of 1942 and 1943, the recreational programs in the group camps faltered again, evidently in part due to gasoline rationing and the difficulty in obtaining transportation for the campers. However, servicemen stationed in the area during the early 1940s made good use of Cheraw's recreational facilities, including using the lake for swimming and diving.²⁸

After completing the majority of the construction projects, the CCC turned to returning the land to its "natural state" in April 1938. The Federal Government had purchased over 6000 acres for the construction of the Recreational Demonstration Area; most of this land was unfit for further farming production. However, South Carolinians had used this land for farming, primarily of cotton, timber, and tobacco, for decades. The Resettlement Administration had moved the farm families from these submarginal lands, and their houses and other farm

²⁸Work Projects Administration, Federal Writers' Program, *South Carolina State Parks* (Columbia: South Carolina State Forest Service, 1940), 29; SCFC, *Report (1937-1938)*, 7; SCFC, *Report (1941-1942)*, 91; SCFC, *Report (1942-1943)*, 73-74; SCFC, *Report (1943-1944)*, 68, SCDAH.

buildings had been abandoned. During the park building activities of the mid-1930s, the CCC and WPA had used the empty buildings for storage facilities and the farm roads as access to worksites. The CCC razed the abandoned houses, barns, and outbuildings, and harrowed and planted old roadbeds in an attempt to "obliterate all signs of mankind," a project that was completed by the fall of 1939.²⁹

While attempting to erase man-made buildings at the RDA, the CCC and the National Park Service increased the presence of mankind in the Public Use Area throughout 1939. The recreation building, an amphitheater, a picnic shelter, and a boat dock were among the largest of the construction projects completed in 1939. Cheraw State Park officially opened that July (although a polio outbreak caused the park to close almost immediately).³⁰

Another construction project undertaken in 1940 caused a great deal of controversy among the locals, the State

²⁹"Cheraw State Park Survey Report," 9-10; South Carolina Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC files, box 4, SCDAH.

³⁰SCFC, *Report (1939-1940)*, 98; "Cheraw State Park Survey Report," 10; South Carolina Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC files, Box 4, SCDAH.

Forestry Commission, and the National Park Service. Local businessmen, who wished to increase the income opportunities generated by tourism to their state park and recreational area, wanted to attract more tourists through the construction of family cabins such as those being built in other state parks in nearby resort areas, such as those at Myrtle Beach State Park in Horry County, South Carolina, and in North Carolina. The South Carolina Forestry Commission objected to this idea, believing that Cheraw State Park attracted primarily residents of the Pee Dee region who would use the park primarily as daytime visitors, and that there was no reason to provide overnight accommodations other than camping. In addition, the Forestry Commission argued, the majority of the users of Cheraw State Park was of lower income, and could not afford the rental fees that cabins would require. L. C. Wannamaker, who had been the driving force behind the purchase and donation of the land for the state park, appealed directly to the National Park Service, who directed the State Forestry Commission and the CCC to construct eight cabins to accommodate families. The cabins are frame construction, similar to the other structures at Cheraw, and feature a cross-gabled roof, paired and triple

6/6 windows and a screened porch (fig. 9). The CCC had completed the family cabins by the summer of 1941, signaling the end of CCC work at Cheraw State Park. The CCC camp officially closed in October of that same year.³¹

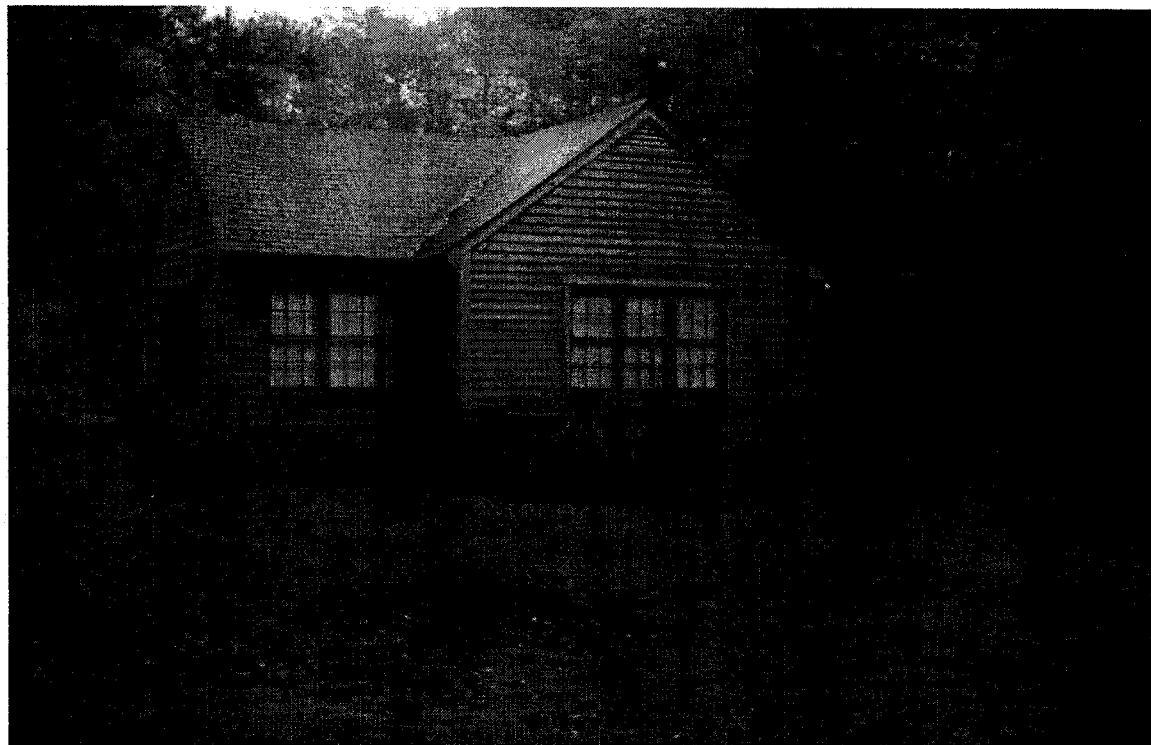


Fig. 9. Family Cabin, Cheraw State Park. Photograph by the author.

During the earliest years of its operation, Cheraw State Park and RDA were extremely successful. In 1941, the State Forestry Commission reported that Cheraw had the

³¹"Cheraw State Park Survey Report," 10-11; SCFC Report (1941-42), 87-88; South Carolina Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC files, box 4, SCDAH.

second highest attendance of South Carolina's sixteen state parks, hosting over 156,000 guests. The controversial family cabins were proving to be extremely popular, as were the cabins in four other parks. The Cheraw community continued to support the operation of the park, as they had its creation, as is evidenced by the fact that the local government agreed to underwrite the operating funds in order to keep the parks open, after the South Carolina General Assembly appropriated no funds for the operation of the park bathhouses in 1941.³²

Although the development of a recreational area and state park were the primary goals of the work of the CCC at Cheraw, other CCC-related activity included reforestation and fire control. Due to over-harvesting and fires, over 1600 acres in the RDA had been denuded. Timber-type surveys were undertaken to determine what types of trees and shrubbery grew in the area. These surveys revealed a large variety of trees and shrubs, including several species of pine, poplar, black locust, and walnut, as well as species of oak, fruit trees, flowering trees such as dogwood, and several shrubs, including holly, honeysuckle, jasmine, trumpet vine, and sand myrtle. Over 1600 acres in

³²SCFC Report (1941-1942), 87-94, SCDAH.

the RDA were reforested with a variety of pine, poplar, black locust, and walnut trees. In addition to reforestation efforts, the CCC also undertook a fire prevention program in cooperation with the Sandhill Agricultural Demonstration Project, adjacent to the park and RDA. The CCC enrollees at Cheraw received training in fire prevention and fire protection, and were given full responsibility for fire protection in the area, as there was "no plan of organized [fire] control in this county." In addition to planning for fire towers and stringing telephone lines, the CCC constructed over nine miles of "fire motor ways" and installed fire tool boxes and fire pumps.³³ Although not directly related to the recreational work at Cheraw, these CCC efforts at fire prevention reinforced the goals of reforestation and conservation that President Roosevelt had set out for the Civilian Conservation Corps at the beginning of his administration.

The development of Cheraw State Park and the Recreational Demonstration Area provides a good example of the state park development undertaken by the Civilian Conservation Corps in South Carolina. Due to the interest

³³"Cheraw Recreational Demonstration Area Supplement Master Plan Report for 1940," South Carolina Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC Files, box 3, SCDAH.

and financial contributions of the citizens of Cheraw, Cheraw State Park has the distinction of being the first state park begun in the state. The shelters, barbecue pits, cabins, group camps, lakes, roads, and trails that the CCC built still stand in testimony to the lives and work of the CCC enrollees who made SP-1 their home for several years. Of the 118 CCC-constructed structures erected at Cheraw in the 1930s, over 100 still stand, and most are still in use. Through the work of CCC Company 445, the WPA, and with the support of NPS, the State Forestry Commission, and the local citizenry, the park developed at Cheraw provided the impetus for the development of other parks and the state park system in South Carolina.

Cheraw State Park is an example of the type of park developed under the National Park Service's RDA program, and its development parallels the development of the state park system in South Carolina. The first park established in the state, in March 1934, Cheraw State Park was one of the last of the New Deal-era parks to open to the public, in July 1939 (although the Recreational Demonstration Area had opened earlier, for limited use). Although Cheraw did not meet the "major population center" provision, the

proactive stance taken by Cheraw locals attracted NPS officials, and when the local committee purchased and donated over 700 acres of land, setting up a CCC camp quickly followed. Shortly after starting the state park, the federal government moved to acquire the 6800 additional acres of submarginal farming land as an extension to the state park for recreational use. Thus Cheraw State Park met two of the four priority areas as identified by Linda McClellan, and became an example for the development of other parks throughout the state.

Another area of development, waysides along principal highways, is also present in South Carolina's state park system at Colleton State Park. Some of the most unique CCC-constructed developments in South Carolina during the 1930s were the waysides. Developed under the auspices of the National Park Service, NPS and the states planned that the waysides, like the Recreational Demonstration Areas, would eventually become a part of the state park system. NPS developed six wayside parks on major thoroughfares in South Carolina, ranging from thirty to sixty acres.

The Park Service planned for the waysides to serve the growing population of American autocampers, providing a rest stop on major federal highways for travelers. Unlike

the state parks and RDAs, waysides were designed as rest stops, not destination points, and provided only bare necessities for travelers, such as water fountains, picnic tables, some with shelters, and bathroom facilities. Some waysides also provided housing for superintendents. NPS officials gave some care in choosing the sites for waysides, choosing to locate them in areas with scenic overlooks or where short trails could provide a place for travelers to stretch their legs. However, the larger RDAs proved to be more popular, and NPS only developed thirteen waysides, seven in Virginia and six in South Carolina.³⁴

In 1935, NPS asked the South Carolina Forest Service to recommend locations throughout the state for the Resettlement Administration to purchase in small acreage. The State Forest Service recommended twelve sites of between twenty and sixty acres, including sites in the counties of Greenville, Greenwood, Aiken, Colleton, Kershaw, Cherokee, Marlboro, and Georgetown Counties. In the fall of 1935 the Resettlement Administration purchased six tracts in Greenville, Greenwood, Aiken, Colleton, Kershaw, and Georgetown counties, ranging in size from twenty-nine to sixty-two acres. The Resettlement

³⁴McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 376-79, 415-16.

Administration later turned the property over to the National Park Service in early 1936. Work began on the Greenville and Greenwood areas by the summer of 1936, with the understanding that after completion, the Waysides would be turned over to the State Forestry Commission, under whose jurisdiction the state parks in South Carolina fell. Four of the six Waysides were fully developed (Greenville, Greenwood, Kershaw, and Colleton), and the State Forestry Commission began leasing them from NPS on June 1, 1940.³⁵ The National Park Service turned five of the six developed wayside over to the State Forestry Commission by June 1942. No real park development had occurred at Georgetown Wayside and it was transferred to another branch of the federal government for "military purposes."³⁶

The Colleton Wayside, near Walterboro, was one such South Carolina wayside. The approximately 35 acres in Colleton County lie near the intersection of US Highway 15 and State Highway 65 (and within a mile of Interstate 95) along the banks of the Edisto River. Colleton Wayside provides a good example of the layout of the other waysides

³⁵ SCFC Report (1935-36), 72, SCDAH; SC State Planning Board, "Parks and Recreational Areas," 76-77.

³⁶ SCFC Report (1941-42), 86, SCDAH. See also SC State Planning Board, "Parks and Recreational Areas," 65, 76.

in the state, and includes parking areas, water fountains, grills, picnic tables, two picnic shelters (fig. 10), one enclosed shelter, and bathroom facilities. Colleton Wayside also features a scenic walking trail leading to the banks of the Edisto River. These facilities were all constructed by the CCC, likely Companies 1428 or 5468, both of which were stationed in Colleton County in the mid-1930s.

Of the six waysides developed in South Carolina, Colleton is the only extant wayside, and is now known as Colleton State Park. Other waysides were incorporated into nearby existing state parks, or turned over to other state departments, including as right-of-way for projects of the South Carolina Department of Transportation.³⁷ Colleton State Park is the only remaining evidence of the NPS wayside development in the state, and is acknowledged as the seventeenth state park developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in South Carolina, although it did not gain "state park" status until much later.

³⁷SCFC Report (1939-40), 99, SCDAH; Albert Hester, Historian, South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, correspondence with author, 8 June 2002.

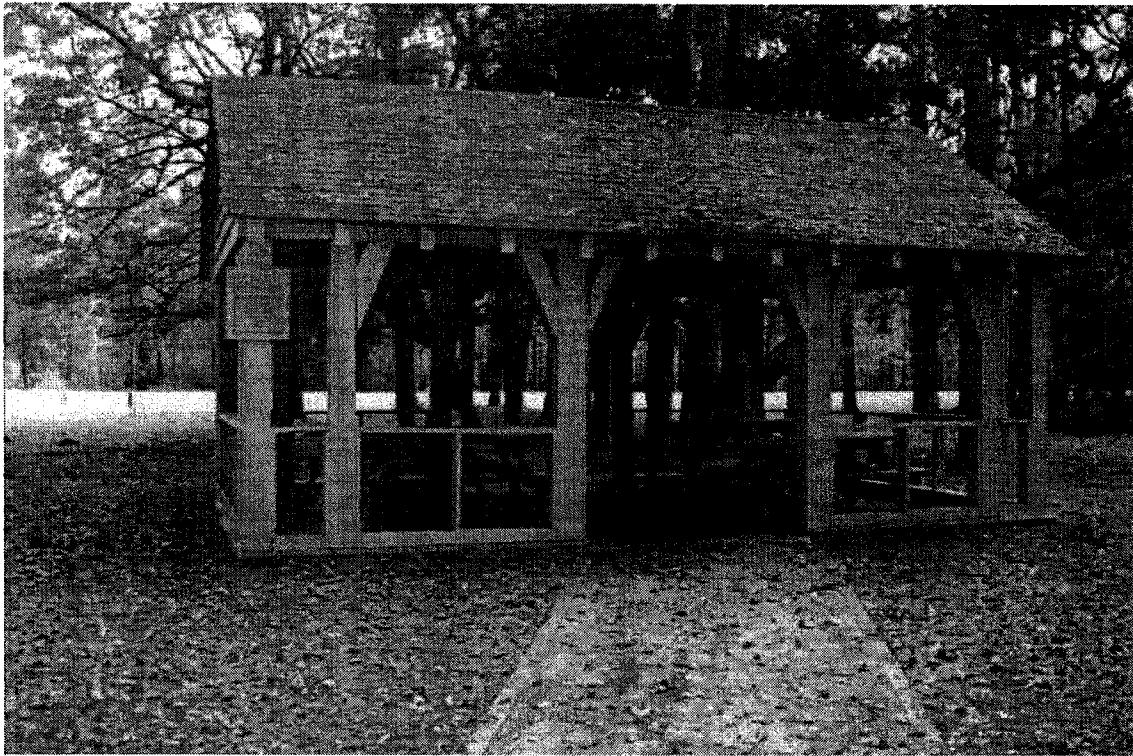


Fig. 10. CCC Picnic Shelter, Colleton State Park.
Photograph by the author.

The final type of Recreational Demonstration Area was developed adjacent to existing national parks, for the recreational opportunities for those who were visiting the park. In York, South Carolina, Kings Mountain National Military Park had become a part of the national parks system in 1931. In August 1933, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 6166, transferring all historic sites, military battlefields, and monuments from control of the

Department of Agriculture and the War Department to the National Park Service.³⁸

Kings Mountain National Military Park is the site of perhaps the most important military engagement in the South during the Revolutionary War. In October 1780, a group of Patriots from the backcountry of present-day Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina banded together to oppose Loyalist troops assisting the British Army advancing northwest from Charleston after Charleston fell to the British in May. These opposing forces met at Kings Mountain, just south of the North Carolina border, where Major Patrick Ferguson commanded the Loyalist troops, while the Patriot militia was organized under Isaac Shelby and John Sevier, from western North Carolina (now Tennessee), and South Carolinian John Williams, among others. While Ferguson and his men camped and fortified the top of the ridge of Kings Mountain on 7 October 1780, the Patriots

³⁸Robert W. Blythe, Maureen A. Carroll, and Steven H. Moffson, *Kings Mountain National Military Park: Historic Resource Study* (Atlanta: Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, 1995), 95. Other national monuments and national parks in South Carolina transferred to NPS include Castle Pinckney National Monument in Charleston, declared a national monument in 1924, and Cowpens National Battlefield Site near Spartanburg, established as a National Battlefield in 1929. See SC State Planning Board, "Parks and Recreational Areas," 77-79.

surrounded them on all sides and then attacked at about three o'clock that afternoon. Ferguson refused to surrender even when his second-in-command pleaded that further resistance was futile. After Ferguson fell mortally wounded, the Loyalists raised the white flag of surrender. Rather than taking the remaining Loyalists prisoners, however, the Patriots shouted "Tarleton's Quarter," in memory of fellow Patriots who had been killed rather than imprisoned in earlier battles with British and Loyalist troops. Although several Patriot officers tried to prevent the slaughter, over three hundred Loyalists were killed or wounded before the militiamen fell back and imprisoned another six hundred.³⁹

With the defeat of Ferguson's troops at Kings Mountain, the remainder of the British troops in the South were forced to halt their march through South and North Carolina, and withdraw to a defensive position in South

³⁹Robert W. Blythe, Maureen A. Carroll, and Steven H. Moffson, "Kings Mountain National Military Park," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1994), 8/31 - 8/34. For an early, complete account of the Battle of Kings Mountain, see Lyman Draper, *King's Mountain and Its Heroes: History of the Battle of King's Mountain* (Cincinnati, OH: Peter G. Thomson, 1881; reprint, Nashville, TN: Blue and Gray Press, 1971), especially pages 236-309.

Carolina for the winter of 1780-1781. Meanwhile, Patriot forces throughout the Carolinas, revitalized by the victory of the "Over-Mountain Men" at Kings Mountain, began the task of re-taking Carolina towns that had fallen to the British, including Camden and Ninety-Six. Although the British forces in the newly united United States did not surrender for another year following the Battle of Kings Mountain, this battle was the effective turning point of the war in the South. It led to a revitalization of the Patriot movement in the South and along the East Coast and eventually to the surrender of the British forces at Yorktown, Virginia, on 19 October 1781.⁴⁰

Although the Battle of Kings Mountain was a significant military event during the American Revolution, very little commemorative action marked the site in the decades following the Revolutionary War. Commemorative efforts at Kings Mountain began in 1810, when a group of Revolutionary veterans gathered in Abingdon, Virginia, to remember their service as Patriots. In 1815, Dr. William McLean of North Carolina returned to Kings Mountain and erected a tablet to honor fallen comrades which also

⁴⁰Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson, "Kings Mountain NMP," NRHP, 8/40 - 8/41.

memorialized Patrick Ferguson, marking the first actual commemorative monument erected at Kings Mountain. This event drew only a few participants, due in part to the difficulties in reaching Kings Mountain. These difficulties were lessened in the early 1850s with the construction of the Charlotte & South Carolina Railroad, which included a link from Yorkville to Chester. In October 1855, a celebration marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Kings Mountain drew over 15,000 participants, including local spectators, military companies, and Masons.⁴¹

Although a few veterans' organizations had formed after the Revolution, only the Society of the Cincinnati flourished, and its membership was limited to the elite who had served as officers. For the most part, veterans' organizations did not organize until after the Civil War, when the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) organized in Illinois in 1866, followed by the United Confederate Veterans (UCV), women's auxiliaries, and hereditary societies such as the Sons of the Revolution (SR), Colonial Dames, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), and

⁴¹Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson, "Kings Mountain NMP," NRHP, 8/49 - 8/51.

the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), all which had formed by 1894. These veterans' organizations, women's auxiliaries, and heredity societies focused their efforts on commemorative activities to mark historic battlefields and other important historical sites, and in the South, these sites were associated primarily with the Civil War. They also pressured the federal and state governments to purchase land for cemeteries and for battlefield preservation. In large part because of the efforts of these highly influential groups, Congress passed legislation to survey, preserve, and mark domestic battlefields in 1926, which included provisions to honor the battlefields associated with the American Revolution.⁴²

Following the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Kings Mountain, citizens of Yorkville, South Carolina, and Kings Mountain, North Carolina, organized a committee in 1879 to begin preparations for the centennial celebration. The Kings Mountain Centennial Association (KMCA) organized on July 25, 1879, with delegates from North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia attending. The KMCA resolved to "celebrate the battle's

⁴²Ibid., 8/42 - 8/48; Ronald F. Lee, *The Origin and Evolution of the National Military Park Idea* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Office of Park Historic Preservation, 1973), 11, 17-19.

centennial and to purchase a suitable monument."⁴³ In addition to private donations, the states of North Carolina and South Carolina contributed \$1500 and \$1000 respectively to the KMCA in early 1880, and the KMCA purchased thirty-nine and a half acres of battlefield land from local farmers. In October 1880, three days of celebration commenced, called Reunion Day, Military Day, and Centennial Day. Four young women, representing the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, unveiled a new granite monument, known as the "Centennial Monument," commemorating participants in the battle, accompanied by special songs, poems, and fireworks. The Centennial Monument is a twenty-eight foot high, gray granite shaft on an eighteen foot square base, surrounded by four tablets explaining the significance of the battle and dedicating the monument "to the patriotic Americans who participated in the Battle of Kings Mountain." The following year, in 1881, Lyman Draper of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin published *King's Mountain and Its Heroes: History of the Battle of King's Mountain, October 7th, 1780.* Although a great deal of attention was paid to Kings

⁴³Quoted in Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson, "Kings Mountain NMP", 8/51.

Mountain in 1880-1881, Kings Mountain received so few visitors in the ensuing years that a journalist entitled an 1893 travel piece in the *Magazine of American History*, "A Battlefield That Is Seldom Visited -- King's Mountain." The KMCA for the most part had disbanded in the years following the centennial celebration, and in 1899 transferred their ownership of the battlefield property to the Kings Mountain Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), which formed the Kings Mountain Centennial Battlefield Association (KMCBA) to administer the property.⁴⁴

The KMBCA (known by 1930 as the Kings Mountain Battleground Association [KMBA]) used their influence with state leaders in North and South Carolina to pressure Congress to agree to erect a monument on the battlefield, and for the federal government to acquire the almost forty acres owned by the KMBCA in 1906. The federal government authorized a monument in 1906 and erected it in 1909, accompanied by a celebration that attracted over 8,000 spectators, including the governors of Georgia, North

⁴⁴Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson, "Kings Mountain NMP", 8/52 - 8/53, 8/61; Draper, *King's Mountain and Its Heroes*; Robert Shackleton, "A Battlefield That Is Seldom Visited — King's Mountain," *Magazine of American History* 30 (July-August 1893): 38-46.

Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, and the president of Wofford College. No representatives of the federal government, attended, which indicated the lack of interest of the federal government in the battlefield property. Located near the spot where Patrick Ferguson surrendered to the Patriots, the US Monument was designed by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White, and cost approximately \$25,000. This monument is much larger than the Centennial Monument, eighty-three feet high, and is white, rather than gray, granite. Bronze tablets adorn the base, detail the significance of the battle, list the commanders of both forces and those killed in the battle, and dedicate the monument to the Patriots who participated in the battle. A year after the construction of the US monument, the War Department transferred the battlefield property back to the KMCBA, stating that the battlefield lacked distinctiveness and that the War Department would not commit itself to creating a national military park. Undaunted, the KMCBA resumed care of the battlefield. Its members maintained the site, erected additional markers, and continued to ask Congress to establish a national military park at Kings Mountain. The KMCBA also protected and maintained the existing markers, including the McLean

marker, which had been vandalized, by enclosing them with wrought-iron fencing. In addition to their continued maintenance of the property, the KMCBA also began planning for the sesquicentennial celebration of the Battle of Kings Mountain, to be held in October 1930.⁴⁵

While the federal government previously had been uninterested in the establishment of Kings Mountain as a national military park, President Herbert Hoover attended the sesquicentennial celebration and addressed the seventy-five thousand people who attended on 7 October 1930. Like previous commemorative celebrations, the sesquicentennial featured songs and poems written especially for the occasion. Federal officials and even a representative of the British government joined local and state dignitaries. New commemorative markers, including a new memorial for Ferguson's grave were erected. An allegorical pageant highlighted the sesquicentennial celebration. The DAR erected a marker shortly after the sesquicentennial to mark the spot where President Hoover stood while giving his speech.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson, "Kings Mountain NMP," NRHP, 8/53 - 8/55, 8/64 - 8/65.

⁴⁶Ibid., 8/55.

While plans for the sesquicentennial had been made, Congressional representatives from both North and South Carolina continued their work to ensure that Kings Mountain became a part of the national military park system under the War Department. Hoover's participation in the celebration was a less-than-subtle indication that the federal government would soon add the battlefield to the War Department's responsibility. Although Dwight Davis, Secretary of the War Department, did not feel that Kings Mountain warranted federal protection, Congress established Kings Mountain National Military Park on 3 March 1931, with President Hoover's approval. Congress appropriated \$225,000 for additional land acquisition and park development, although it appears that the War Department made little use of this money and no additional land was acquired, and no additional monuments or structures were erected.⁴⁷

⁴⁷Ibid., 8/56, 8/83. Conversely, the Revolutionary War Battlefield at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, received a great deal of commemorative attention at the local level, including the erection of a monument as early as 1799. However, Lexington and Concord did not become a National Historical Park until 1959, when Congress established Minute Man National Historical Park. The North Bridge at Concord is still owned locally but is managed by the National Park Service. See Edward Tabor Linenthal,

In 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 6166, which transferred all battlefields and historic sites administered by the War Department and the Department of Agriculture to the National Park Service. This Executive Order included the approximately forty acres of Kings Mountain Battlefield Park that had been donated by the Kings Mountain Battlefield Association. NPS appointed the Kings Mountain Battlefield Commission, which optioned some 1000 acres of land by November 1933.⁴⁸ President Roosevelt's Executive Order transferred ownership of the Kings Mountain Battlefield land from one federal agency to another, but other Roosevelt programs would greatly impact thousands of acres of battlefield and surrounding lands. The programs of the Public Works Administration (PWA), Emergency Conservation Work (ECW), and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) would dramatically change the Kings Mountain landscape in only a few years with the development of both the national military park and the adjacent Kings Mountain Recreational Demonstration Area, which became Kings Mountain State Park.

Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 11-51.

⁴⁸Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson, "Kings Mountatin NMP", 8-83; Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson, *Kings Mountain NMP HRS*, 95.

Additional appropriations for land acquisition and development originally came through the Public Works Administration (PWA) in 1934 and the National Park Service developed a planning document that would eventually incorporate over ten thousand acres of surrounding land. NPS made arrangements to develop an additional Recreational Demonstration Area near the Kings Mountain National Military Park through CCC work. In the three years following Executive Order 6166, NPS concentrated its work at Kings Mountain on land acquisition, beginning actual construction on the RDA in 1936, and new construction at the national military park in 1937.⁴⁹

Local citizens overwhelmingly supported the arrival of the CCC in York County. In May 1935, the community learned that one Soil Conservation Service and two Parks camps would be stationed in their county. Commanding officers met with city officials and businessmen to discuss the needs of the camps, and how the camp location would benefit the community. Colonel Walter K. Dunn, commanding officer of District "I", told the community leaders that it was their duty to welcome these men and make them feel at home.

⁴⁹Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson, Kings Mountain NMP HRS, 96-97.

It appears that the local citizens followed these instructions, and more than 2000 people attended a welcoming reception for the first young men to set up permanent camp near Clover for work at Kings Mountain in July 1935.⁵⁰

The Recreational Demonstration Area at Kings Mountain developed similarly to that at Cheraw, with a man-made lake, two group camps, residences, and picnic shelters. The National Park Service developed and administered the RDAs at Cheraw and Kings Mountain, but the majority of the work at the RDAs and at the national military park during the 1930s was performed by the men of the Civilian Conservation Corps. While the State of South Carolina's Forestry Commission developed a state park in conjunction with the Cheraw RDA, the State had very little connection with the park development in York and Cherokee Counties until the 1940s, other than operating the group camps beginning in 1938.⁵¹ However, state officials recognized that the federal government expected to turn the RDA over

⁵⁰Rock Hill Evening Herald (Rock Hill, SC), 21 May 1935, 22 May 1935, 29 May 1935, 26 July 1935.

⁵¹SCFC Report (1936-1937), 49, SCDAH; SC State Planning Board, "Parks and Recreation Areas", 79.

to the state after its development, and accordingly, made plans for future operations of the Recreational Demonstration Area as a state park.

In 1936, the National Park Service drew up plans for the RDA's Administration building, now used by the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism as the state park headquarters (fig. 11). The original 1936 plans called for a small one-story vernacular building, reminiscent of the early architecture of the upper Carolina region. Park officials deemed these plans too small, and additional plans were drawn up in 1937. The new plans called for a one-and-a-half story symmetrical Colonial Revival building with an ell, a style chosen to reflect the historic significance of the park as well as being a popular American architectural style in the 1930s. NPS planned to use the building to house offices, public restrooms, and a museum; the basement of the building originally housed restrooms for African-American visitors to the park. The exterior of this building is symmetrical, and features three dormer 6/6 windows, with the central entry is flanked by two 6/9 windows on each side. This building features a full front porch, and is of stone construction with an interior stone chimney. The interior

of the building also reflects the Colonial Revival style, complete with panel doors, chair rails, and reproduction Colonial-style light fixtures.⁵²

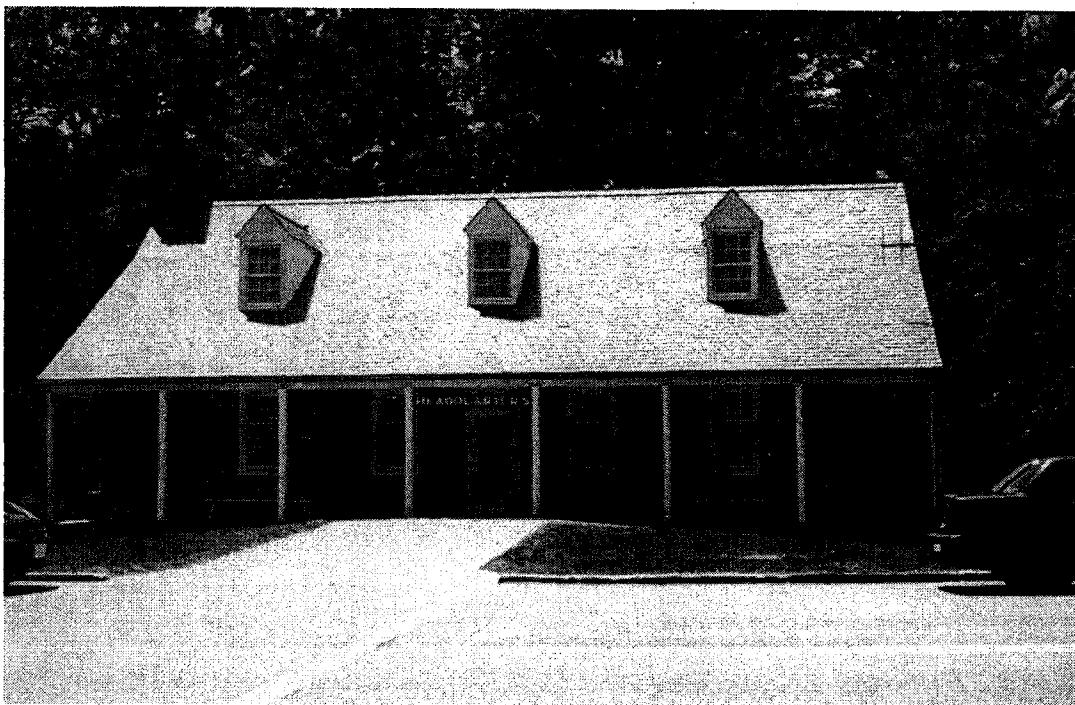


Fig. 11. Administration Building, Kings Mountain Military Park. Photograph by the author.

NPS provided additional Colonial Revival plans for the Superintendent's Residence in 1940 (fig. 12). The CCC began construction of the residence in September 1940, and completed the exterior of the building by November 1941. Following the entry of the United States into World War II

⁵² Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson, *Kings Mountain NMP HRS*, 101-02.

and the disbanding of the CCC camps, the interior of the building was not finished until the mid 1940s. Like the Administration Building, the Superintendent's Residence is a one-and-a-half story Colonial Revival building with an ell, which in this case houses a garage in the basement portion of the ell. The Superintendent's Residence has three bays on the first floor; the front entrance features a panel door with pilasters and a six-light transom flanked on either side with 6/9 windows. Unlike the Administration Building, the Superintendent's Residence does not have a front porch. Three 6/6 dormer windows in the gable roof and a gable-end chimney are the other main features of this frame structure.⁵³ Both the Administration Building and the Superintendent's residence are listed as contributing properties in the Kings Mountain National Military Park National Register Historic District (listed 1995), and remain part of the national park.

⁵³Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson, *Kings Mountain NMP HRS*, 103-05.

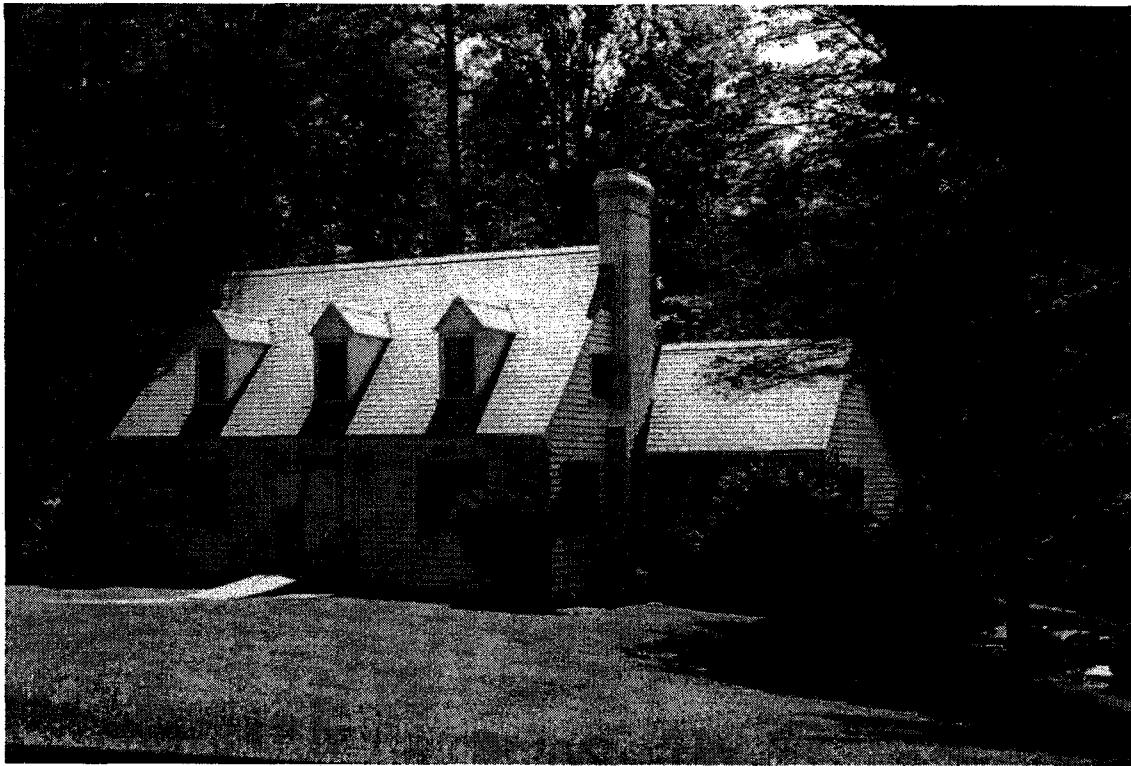


Fig. 12. Superintendent's Residence, Kings Mountain Military Park. Photograph by the author.

In addition to the construction work at Kings Mountain, CCC enrollees found themselves doing a variety of work, as did most enrollees. The young men worked foresters, truck drivers, cooks, mechanics, medical aids, masons, landscapers, among a plethora of other occupations. One position at Kings Mountain was fairly unique, however. After building the "Visitor's House," two CCC boys were

housed there on weekends, and served as interpretative guides for the battlefield.⁵⁴

Other CCC-constructed buildings still exist in the part of the Recreational Demonstration Area that was turned over to the state in 1942, including an elaborate stone bathhouse, picnic shelters, cabins, and numerous other structures such as water fountains, walls, roads, and trails. Although most of the shelters and other buildings that the CCC built at Kings Mountain are very similar to the picnic shelters and other structures at other South Carolina state parks, one picnic shelter at the RDA is unique. Shelter One (now identified as KM-S1) features an enclosed end made of log, rather than frame as in many of the other enclosed shelters (fig. 13). While the CCC and NPS tried to use natural materials as much as possible, they also tried to invoke the history of the area, and the log structure at Kings Mountain State Park supposedly reminds visitors of the log cabins that were home to the Overmountain Men of the Carolinas who fought for the Patriots at Kings Mountain. The log shelter also features

⁵⁴Scott Winthrop, "The CCC Remembered in Upstate South Carolina: Bethany and Mountain Rest," unpublished paper in Kings Mountain State Park files, SCDAH.

a stone chimney in the enclosed end, with a stone fireplace and brick-lined firebox (fig. 14).



Fig. 13. Shelter One, Kings Mountain State Park.
Photograph by the author.



Fig. 14. Interior, Shelter One, Kings Mountain State Park.
Photograph by the author.

The period of CCC construction at Kings Mountain coincided with the National Park Service's work at the National Military Park, and the South Carolina State Forestry Commission had very little input in the development of the Recreational Demonstration Area, other than the awareness that it would eventually fall under their jurisdiction once the federal government deeded the land to the state. However, as the CCC completed the recreational facilities at the RDA, the Forestry Commission administered these facilities as at other state parks, and

Kings Mountain hosted the first Park Training Institute for state park employees as well as a week-long School for the Conservation of Natural Resources for South Carolina clubwomen, both in 1940.⁵⁵

The federal presence in South Carolina's parks was essential in laying the foundation for a state park system within the state. The National Park Service, the Resettlement Administration, the Works Progress Administration, and the Civilian Conservation Corps worked together to create the Recreational Demonstration Area at Cheraw, which became the first park developed in South Carolina. In turn, the State Forestry Commission worked with and learned from these federal agencies to plan for and develop a larger park system, utilizing labor provided by the young men of the Civilian Conservation Corps. These federal agencies worked together to obtain and improve several thousands of acres of land in South Carolina for the purposes of recreation of residents and tourists alike. The waysides at Colleton and elsewhere, and the new recreational facilities at Kings Mountain attracted tourists, while putting to use lands that not usable for farming, and put to work hundreds of young men through the

⁵⁵SCFC Report (1939-1940), 88-90, 105-106, SCDAH.

work of the CCC. The state's Forestry Commission watched, commented, and learned from the NPS, and utilizing many of the same resources, developed South Carolina's state park system.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FORESTRY WORK AND STATE PARK DEVELOPMENT: THE SOUTH CAROLINA FORESTRY COMMISSION AND THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

After President Roosevelt proposed Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) in March 1933, the State Foresters met in Washington to learn the terms of the program and how it might benefit the forestry programs in the individual states. Congress limited ECW work to national and state forest areas, and at the time of this initial meeting, there were no state or national forest lands in South Carolina. Members of the South Carolina Forestry Commission (established 1927) and the State Forester returned to Washington to garner federal support in the acquisition of state forests within South Carolina. Organizations throughout the state, including Chambers of Commerce, women's clubs, and other civic organizations lobbied for a release of the stringent requirements for appropriate land upon which to base conservation and forestry projects. The federal government agreed that it was in the best interest of the nation to provide fire control assistance to private landowners, and extended

Emergency Conservation Work to land where other associations existed to protect the land.¹ Although other federal agencies, such as Agriculture and the Soil Conservation Service, utilized Civilian Conservation Corps workers and funding from Emergency Conservation Work, the majority of Civilian Conservation Corps work in South Carolina, including state park development, was performed through the state Forest Service.

The first work conducted by the Civilian Conservation Corps in South Carolina related to fire prevention and fire protection through the construction of fire towers and the stringing of telephone line throughout the coastal areas of South Carolina. The State Forest Service adopted a policy of constructing fire towers upon donated ten-acre tracts, along with small houses for the man who would work in the tower. According to the State Forest Service, this initial work would be undertaken without any expense to the state, while costing ECW over \$150,000. This initial proposal for Emergency Conservation Work in South Carolina was approved in Washington, and sixteen Civilian Conservation Corps camps were established in South Carolina in 1933, primarily for work related to fire prevention and protection under

¹SCFC Report (1932-1933), 28, SCDAH; Shofner, "Roosevelt's 'Tree Army'", 440.

the auspices of the South Carolina Forest Service. While lauding the work of the commissioners and the State Forester, H. A. Smith, in securing these initial camps, the first report of the State Forestry Commission dealing with Emergency Conservation Work in South Carolina lamented that "[I]t is to be regretted, however, that she does not have the State Forest areas upon which real forestry can be practiced through the use of these camps."²

The Unemployment Relief Councils set up throughout the state, selected the young men for work at the Civilian Conservation Corps, and over eight thousand applications were on file by mid-April 1933. In mid-May, Columbia's *The State* newspaper reported that five hundred South Carolinians had been sent to Fort Benning, Georgia, for induction, and another eleven hundred were at Fort Moultrie, near Charleston. Following induction, for the most part, the South Carolina men selected stayed in the state for their work projects, even though the State predicted that "it is doubtful whether there will be any projects in this state," in part due to the lack of state forests or state parks.³ By the end of the first three

²SCFC Report (1932-1933), 29, SCDAH.

months of ECW, some 3500 young men were working in South Carolina, with supervisory personnel numbering one hundred sixty. The Annual Report of the Forestry Commission also listed 144 Chevrolet trucks which had been supplied for the transportation and work of the CCC men, along with orders in excess of one thousand dollars for small tools and equipment, which "in every case orders were placed with local stores," thus contributing to the local economies within the state.⁴ By the end of June 1933, ECW in South Carolina had been judged a success, as is evidenced by the applications for fifty-six additional camps throughout the state. The Forestry Commission enthusiastically concluded their annual report with high praise for the work and the boys of the Civilian Conservation Corps:

No report on the Emergency Conservation Project would be complete without a word as to the humanitarian side of the project. Thirty-five hundred boys are in the forests of South Carolina working for the preservation of one of our greatest natural resources. They are performing all of the things that are necessary directly or indirectly for the protection of woods. They have come from town and country, from factory, office and school. They came unused to manual labor - ignorant of forest values - many even with contempt for contact with the soil. Some were undernourished and many were unversed in the

³The State (Columbia, SC), 23 April 1933, 17 May 1933, 18 May 1933, 21 May 1933.

⁴SCFC Report (1932-1933), 29, SCDAH.

ordinary regard rules of health. Those boys today have a different attitude in regard to forest land. They have learned the joys of actual labor, of construction, of accomplishment. They are no longer afraid of manual labor, and where contact with the soil is necessary to achieve results, that contact is made. Almost without exception the boys have broadened out physically and mentally and they will return to their homes with a different viewpoint toward our greatest natural resource.⁵

Statements like these demonstrate that during the course of CCC work, officials realized the impact that the work was having not only changing the landscape and providing recreational opportunities for the state's residents, but that impact upon the lives of the young enrollees as well.

Although the State Forestry Commission obviously understood the importance of what the Civilian Conservation Corps and Emergency Conservation Work offered for the State of South Carolina as well as the young men of the state, this high praise for the program failed to reach the ears of the state legislature, who failed to appropriate funding for the creation of state forests or state parks, although the legislature added the development and operation of state parks to the responsibilities of the State Forest Service. During the first year of ECW projects in South

⁵Ibid., 31.

Carolina, the federal government allowed for work to be conducted on private lands within forest protective associations, with an initial investment of over five million dollars in the state. However, the federal government required the states to match funding, and South Carolina's inability or unwillingness to meet this matching requirement meant the loss of five Civilian Conservation Corps camps in the second year of the program.

In their report to the General Assembly, the State Forestry Commission pointed out that the annual appropriations for Forestry had never been more than \$13,000, and that the value of the fire towers and housing constructed through ECW in the previous year exceeded the entire appropriations for forestry work in the state since the organization of the state's forestry commission. In addition to federal expenditures in the state, private landowners in the coastal counties spent over \$14,000 on state forestry projects during the fiscal year, again, more than the state's expenditure for forestry in the entire state. The Commission's report drew attention to the opportunities that ECW offered for expansion of the state's forestry program, and stated "[t]he time has come for South Carolina to place its forestry organization upon a sound

financial basis" and that "unless additional funds are made available by the State. . . no request can be made for new Civilian Conservation Corps camps and it is extremely doubtful if we will be able to retain the one we have."⁶

In spite of the lack of financial support of the state for forestry projects, the Civilian Conservation Corps and the State Forest Service accomplished a great deal during the first full year of ECW in South Carolina. Educational programming across the state, included forestry schools for "farm boys," a training program for vocational teachers, and films and lectures by James D. Graham, a nationally known forestry expert, in the state's CCC camps. Fire prevention and protection programs were extended as well, especially due to the severe fire season in 1933-34, when CCC camps engaged in fire fighting across the state. ECW projects included improvements to the fire towers, houses, and farms constructed in the previous year. The Commission concluded detailing the fire protection program by stating "what could easily have been one of the most severe fire seasons in the history of South Carolina was prevented very

⁶SCFC Report (1933-1934), 7-8, 10, SCDAH.

largely due to the presence of the Civilian Conservation Corps camps and the wholehearted cooperation of the boys."⁷

Although most South Carolina CCC workers during the first year were involved in forestry projects such as fire prevention, the biggest achievement for ECW in South Carolina during the first full year was the establishment of the state park system in the state. During the first fiscal year (July 1933-June 1934), the Forest Service made plans for parks on property in Aiken, Chesterfield, Sumter, Horry, and Dorchester Counties. The Forest Service made additional plans to acquire park property along the southern coast, in the upstate mountains, in Chester County, and in the central northern part of the state, in order to establish a state park accessible to every citizen of South Carolina within a fifty-mile drive. The Commission proudly highlighted the fact that while New York State had spent in excess of fifty million dollars acquiring and developing state park lands, "the South Carolina system has not cost South Carolina one cent."⁸ ECW's state park program in South Carolina provided for the establishment of

⁷Ibid., 16-17, 20.

⁸Ibid., 25-26.

the state's first state park, and created a framework in which parks could be obtained, built, and administered.

Even without a strong financial commitment on the part of the State, ECW and CCC work in South Carolina provided a solid foundation for the state's parks program.

The early CCC work at the Cheraw Recreational Demonstration Area inspired other communities to seek development of state park lands in their areas. State Forester H.A. Smith visited Aiken County in the early summer of 1933 to locate a CCC camp in the county to work on forestry projects, and the camp was established at Montmorenci by the end of June 1933, under the direction of R. D. Clowe. After Aiken County purchased 867 acres of land along the banks of the Edisto River from four property owners in the summer of 1934 for a little over \$4000, and donated the land to the state for Aiken State Park, CCC Company 1438 began work on state park projects in October 1934. The county government hoped that the purchase and donation of this land for state park development would spur the federal government to purchase additional land for the development of a Recreational Demonstration Area, like that at Cheraw, and identified an additional 25,000 acres of land that could be secured at reasonable prices for its

creation. The federal government never purchased additional land in Aiken County, although the state purchased an additional 200 acres in 1954.⁹

The work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in South Carolina continued in fiscal year 1934-1935, with the addition of new camps to assist in both forestry work and state park work. While other camps in South Carolina worked under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture and the Soil Conservation Service, most of the camps in the state fell under the jurisdiction of the State Forest Service for forestry work and state park work. The growth of forestry work in South Carolina required an additional twelve camps being approved in 1935, in addition to the eighteen camps already working in forestry or park related projects in the state. The importance and extent of the work of the State Forest Service evidently reached the legislature, as they appropriated additional funds to hire two new Assistant State Foresters to better administer the fire protection and state parks programs. Throughout the year, the educational programs from the previous year

⁹Aiken Standard and South Carolina Gazette, 13 August 1934; The State (Columbia, SC), 4 August 1934; Aiken State Park Files, South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (hereinafter cited as SC PRT).

continued, showing increasing interest at forestry schools, and enlarged educational programming in forestry in the CCC camps. The Forestry Service, through CCC participants, created forestry exhibits throughout the fall of 1934 at thirteen county fairs and at the state fair in Columbia. By the end of the fiscal year, exhibits had been scheduled for the fall of 1935 in nineteen counties and again at the state fair. Forest Service personnel gave over fifty talks throughout the state to civic groups, and State Forester Smith gave radio talks broadcast from WIS in Columbia, WBT in Charlotte, North Carolina, and a nation-wide broadcast on the state's newly established State Park system from Washington, DC. The Forestry Commission also sponsored a series of essay contests and poster contests for schools in the counties with fire protection systems or forest associations, as well as distributing thirty-eight thousand pieces of forestry educational literature in schools across the state. The Forest Service carried its educational mission through to its state park work, as well, hoping that by exposing Carolina schoolchildren to "the great outdoors," that an environmental ethic would be inculcated "into the minds of our younger generation," for, in the

words of the State Forester, "[h]e that loves a tree will protect a tree."¹⁰

The year 1934-1935 may have been one of the most important to the fledging state park program, as eight state parks were under construction by the end of the fiscal year. These parks included Cheraw, Givhans Ferry, Poinsett, Myrtle Beach, Table Rock, Aiken, Edisto Beach, and Chester. In addition to these parks, the Forest Service made plans for recently acquired land on Paris Mountain, at Kings Mountain, and in Lee and Oconee Counties. By 1934-1935, the Forestry Commission had established a written policy for state park recreational areas for which the CCC provided the funds and labor. The Forestry Commission's Annual Report for 1934-1935 included paragraphs detailing the work that had been completed at each park.¹¹

State park land in 1935 totaled over twenty-five thousand acres, all donated by private citizens, organizations, or county governments. The federal government provided the money and labor for park

¹⁰SCFC Report (1934-1935), 13-15, 33, SCDAH.

¹¹Ibid., 31-39.

development, primarily through the work of the CCC, with assistance from the National Park Service and the National Forest Service. The Forestry Commission recognized early on that the state Forest Service would be responsible for the administration and operation of the parks. The Commission proposed to raise money for park operation through the sale of concessions and for rental fees of camping sites and cabins; revenue predictions were so optimistic that the Commission also proposed to return 50 percent of any profits above actual expenses to the local school system in the county in which the park was located.¹²

In August 1934, Sumter County residents purchased a little over 1,000 acres of land, which was donated to the county for the purpose of the development of a recreational area and game refuge. The county government donated the land to the state for a state park, and in late 1934, CCC Company 421 began work on Poinsett State Park, named for South Carolina native Joel Roberts Poinsett. Poinsett was a true renaissance man, a naturalist, architect, engineer, and statesman, including Secretary of War under President Martin Van Buren, who has become immortalized in the flower

¹²Ibid. See also SC State Planning Board, "Parks and Recreational Areas", 31.

bearing his name, the poinsettia. Poinsett is buried at the Church of the Holy Cross in Statesburg, just down the road from the entrance to the state park.¹³

After setting up camp facilities, the CCC began a road-building project in November 1934, and clearing ten acres of land for a lake in December 1934, along with footpaths, parking areas, and foundations for park buildings (fig. 15). By the summer of 1935, the CCC had completed exterior work on the caretaker's house, the lake spillways, a picnic shelter, and various footpaths, bridges, and landscaping projects. Foundations had been laid for the bathhouse and lodge, and the CCC boys and some members of the public were already swimming in the lake, although it had not yet been completely filled, leading to a few near-drownings and resulting heroics by CCC

¹³ Stephen W. Skelton, "Poinsett State Park: National Register Nomination Preliminary Research," unpublished paper in research files, Historical Services Division, SCDAH. An interesting description of Poinsett State Park is found in Tilden, *The State Parks*, 242-45, however, Tilden spends less time in describing the park's facilities or natural resources than in highlighting the career of Joel Poinsett.

enrollees. Red bud and longleaf pine nurseries had also been established on parkland.¹⁴

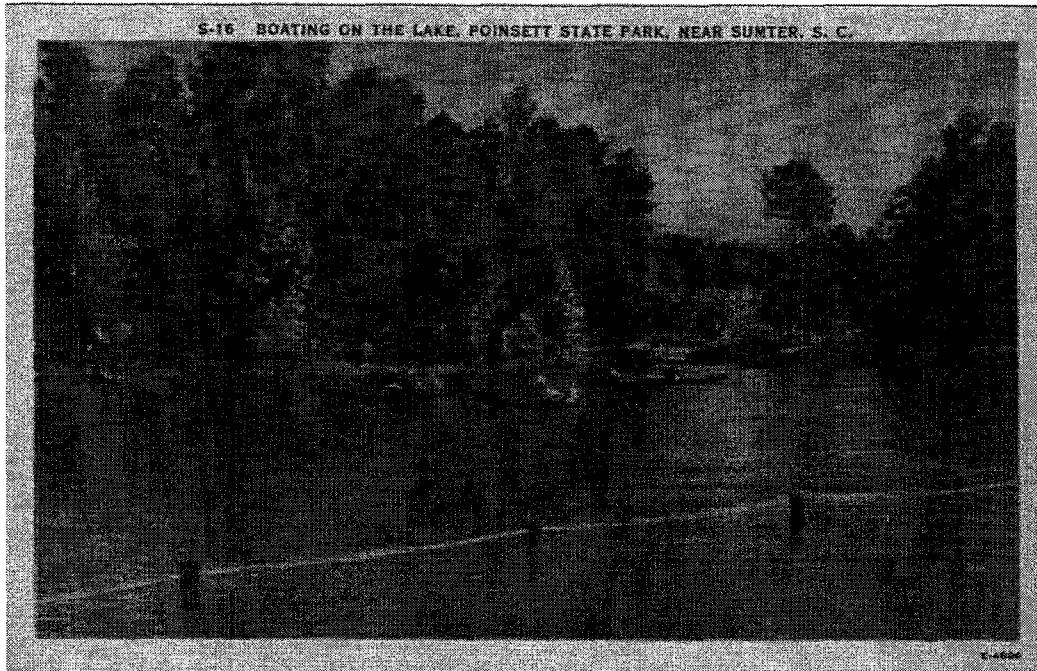


Fig. 15. Postcard, Poinsett State Park, c1950. Author's collection.

The architectural projects at Poinsett made good use of native materials, highlighting the local coquina rock in the picnic shelter and bathhouse construction. The CCC administration gave careful consideration to the appearance

¹⁴ "Narrative Reports for Poinsett State Park, December 1, 1934 - June 1, 1935" National Archives, Record Group 79, Entry 41, Box 123; Skelton, "Poinsett State Park," 11-14; Poinsett State Park Files, SC PRT; *Poinsett Pointers* (29 April 1935, 20 May 1935, 10 June 1935), CCC camp newsletters, SCHS; 1936 *District I Annual* (Baton Rouge: Army and Navy Publishing Company, 1936), 69, at SC PRT.

of the buildings, especially the bathhouse and the caretaker's residence, as is evidenced by the correspondence between C. G. Mackintosh, the Regional Inspector, and H. E. Weatherwax, the Regional Officer in Richmond, Virginia, during the summer of 1935, when interior details at the bathhouse and exterior details at the caretaker's residence kept both projects from being completed. The bathhouse, as originally constructed, served as a multi-purpose building, containing a concession area, a kitchen and dining room, and a loggia, in addition to shower, dressing, and restroom facilities. Original plans called for the interior of the dining room to be covered with wood siding, although Superintendent J.S.H. Clarkson suggested leaving the interior stonework exposed, highlighting the use of the native coquina rock. This space has now been converted to office space and a nature museum for Poinsett State Park. Another architectural concern during the summer of 1935 was the exterior of the caretaker's house. Although the CCC had finished the construction of the house by the end of June 1935, several details, including the question of painting or whitewashing the cypress weatherboards and the brick used in construction of the foundation and chimneys. Regional

Officer Weatherwax responded that in his opinion, the cypress weatherboarding should remain unpainted and allow to weather naturally, to a "delightful tone," and recommended the painting of trim work in gray to match the weatherboards, while painting the brickwork in the foundation and chimneys white, brown, or red, "mainly because the color of the brick used is not very attractive and because there is a difference in the brick used in the foundation and in the chimneys."¹⁵ Similar correspondence regarding finish work and aesthetics for other projects at Poinsett is found throughout 1935 and 1936 in project files for picnic shelters, where working shutters were added to a shelter once constructed to "add to the architectural appearance of the structure...and [provide] protection to persons who seek shelter in the building during windblown rainstorms."¹⁶ These examples of aesthetic concern at Poinsett demonstrate the care and thought that went into

¹⁵C. G. Mackintosh, Regional Inspector to H. E. Weatherwax, Regional Officer, Richmond, VA, 29 June 1935, H.E. Weatherwax to C.G. Mackintosh, 2 July 1935, Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC Files, Poinsett State Park, SCDAH; Skelton, "Poinsett State Park," 14-15.

¹⁶H.E. Weatherwax to State Park ECW, Washington, DC, 18 June 1935, Forestry Commission, CCC files, Poinsett State Park, SCDAH.

the architectural elements in the state parks constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

As noted earlier, work at Poinsett State Park was not without controversy during late 1935. In July, George Buell visited Sumter to inform the town leaders that the CCC camp would be moved and that the work at Poinsett would either be completed by a "Negro CCC camp", or the camp itself would be abandoned and the work halted. County commissioners, city councilmen, and other town leaders discussed these options with Buell, Forestry officials, and even Senator Byrnes, expressing their desire to retain the white CCC camp and their opposition to its replacement with African-Americans. Despite these objections, Company 421 was transferred to Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Superintendent J. S. H. Clarkson was transferred to Kings Mountain, and Landscape Architect Norman House received a promotion to superintendent at Table Rock. Company 421 held a dance at Poinsett in honor of Clarkson in late July, and invited members of the community to attend. Clarkson left Poinsett on 3 August 1935, and Company 421 left two weeks later.¹⁷

¹⁷Sumter Daily Item, 22 July 1935, 23 July 1935, 26 July 1935; "Narrative Report for Poinsett State Park No. 3,

F. H. Murray replaced Clarkson as Project Superintendent at Poinsett, and Company 4475, made up of African-Americans, arrived on 5 September. Following a two-week conditioning period, during which time enrollees' work was evaluated for skilled positions, Company 4475 began work surfacing park roads and filling in the borrow pit, where rock for the spillway and other structures had been obtained. In addition, they completed the caretaker's house. In October, the African-American company finished their road surfacing and borrow pit obliteration projects, and working with LEM carpenters, finished a shelter, the caretaker's garage, and did additional work on the bathhouse. Although Superintendent Murray bragged that the African-American enrollees were "good workers" and that they worked efficiently, the community was dissatisfied with their presence. Company 4475 was transferred to the new state park land at Chester, South Carolina, on 7 November 1935 after only two months at Poinsett. Work at Poinsett ceased for about two months, until veterans' Company 2413 replaced Company 4473 in February 1936, working primarily on landscaping projects, finishing

August 1st-October 1st, 1935," National Archives, Record Group 79, Entry 41, Box 123; Poinsett State Park Files, SC PRT.

structures that had been left incomplete, and building two overnight cabins. By the time of the park's official opening in summer 1937, park facilities included the dam and lake, bathhouse and beach area, caretaker's residence, barn, and garage, picnic areas and two shelters, and two one-bedroom cabins for overnight camping. Poinsett State Park officially opened in the summer of 1937, becoming the second state park open to the public.¹⁸

With an established methodology for the creation of state parks in South Carolina, new Assistant State Foresters in charge of ECW and state parks, and with funding and labor provided by the federal government through the CCC, South Carolina quickly extended its state park system. Governor Olin Johnston appointed L.C. Wannamaker of Cheraw to the State Commission of Forestry, due in part to his dedication to the foundation of Cheraw State Park, and Wannamaker's influence pushed the momentum in state park work. The State Forestry Commission obtained no additional land for new state parks during the fiscal

¹⁸"Narrative Report for Poinsett State Park SP-3, October 1st to Nov. 6, 1935," and "Narrative Report for Poinsett State Park, March 31, 1936," both National Archives, Record Group 79, Entry 41, Box 123. See also Poinsett State Park files, SC PRT.

year, but stayed busy working on lands that had already been obtained. Besides working on improvements at the already existing parks, and beginning work on the four parks planned for in the 1934-35 Annual Report, a new Wayside Park program was begun in South Carolina during the 1935-36 fiscal year. While the State Forestry Commission recommended possible sites for the location of waysides and approved NPS plans for developments within the state, NPS obtained the land and supervised the construction projects.

In addition to the new waysides and the Recreational Demonstration Areas, nine CCC camps worked on state park projects throughout the state, and during the fiscal year, over \$258,000 in funds had been expended on state park work in South Carolina, exclusive of federal funding that paid, clothed, and housed the CCC workers. The Forestry Commission again demonstrated its pride in the work that had been done in the state parks by giving each park project a full paragraph in the Annual Report detailing the type of work that had been finished or was underway at each individual park, including the construction of fourteen cabins, ten shelters, three residences, and the completion of the bathhouses at Myrtle Beach, Givhans Ferry, Paris Mountain, and Poinsett. The work at Givhans Ferry had been

completed to such an extent that the CCC camp had been moved to another project, and a side camp from the company at Edisto Beach came in to complete the unfinished work there. Other indications of the parks' progress are the interest demonstrated by citizens of the state as well as requests from outside the state for details and articles to be printed in travel and outdoor magazines.¹⁹

In addition to the state park work undertaken in 1935-36, the CCC participated in other types of forestry work under the direction of the State Forest Service, including the development of state forests in Aiken, Oconee, Greenville, and Lee Counties, and timber type surveys in all counties in which a CCC camp was located. The State Forestry Commission also published a booklet, *The South Carolina Civilian Conservation Corps Forester*, for use in developing a forestry course through the CCC educational program. The Commission also established a Central Warehouse near Camden, a concrete pipe plant in Sumter County, and a Central Repair Shop for heavy equipment, at Sumter. CCC enrollees staffed these facilities and received valuable vocational training in mechanics and pipe

¹⁹SCFC Report (1935-1936), 70-76, SCDAH.

construction.²⁰ While the CCC performed a variety of valuable work under the administration of the Forestry Commission, the annual reports continually regard the state park work as the most important to the general public, and spend most of the space allotted in detailing the work at the state parks.

From the beginning of state park work in South Carolina, State Forestry officials desired the construction of a state park in the mountainous areas of the upcountry. In December 1934, several local organizations in Greenville met regarding the watershed property at Paris Mountain, which had been preserved to provide reservoirs for the City of Greenville. At this meeting, the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the Water Commission, and the local Park Commission agreed to donate 1,100 acres to the state, with the stipulation that the land be used for the development of a state park. The state officially acquired the land in April 1935, and CCC Camp Palmetto began work on the state park in the fall.²¹

²⁰Ibid., 62-63; *Sumter Daily Item* (20 April 1935); Lenhart, *The South Carolina Civilian Conservation Corps Forester*, iii.

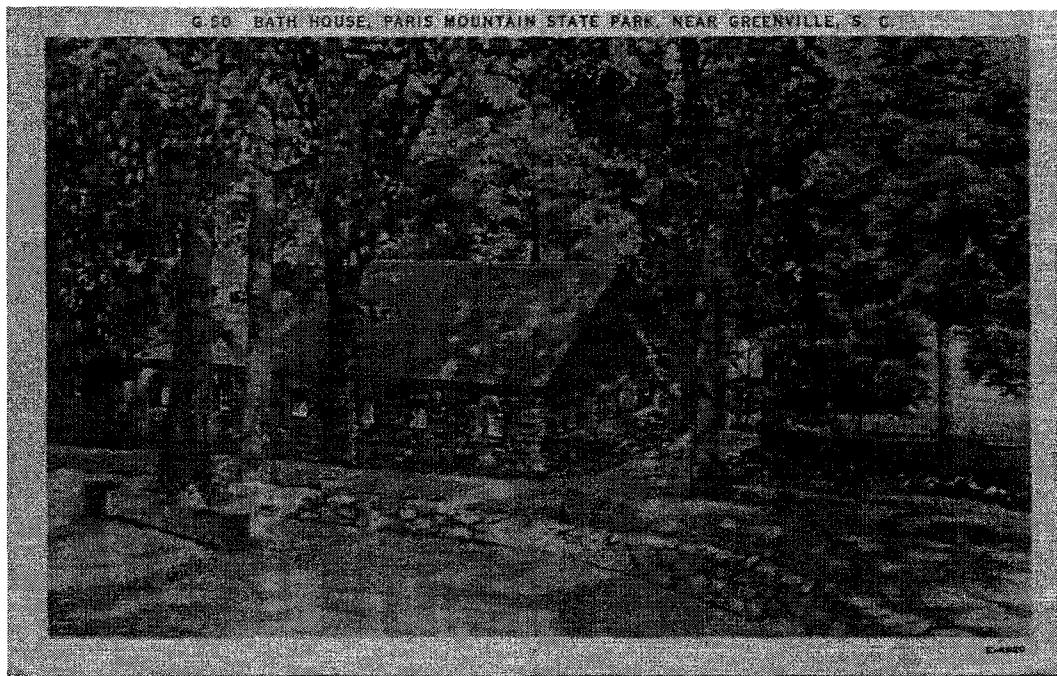


Fig. 16. Postcard, Bathhouse, Paris Mountain State Park.
Author's Collection.

By the end of the year, the CCC had constructed a stone bathhouse (fig. 16), an athletic field, a picnic area, a parking area, and two miles of unpaved road. The reservoirs formerly impounded by the use of the area as a watershed were used as lakes and swimming areas within the state park, while a fourth reservoir, outside the park boundaries, continued to be used as a water source for

²¹Albert Hester, "Paris Mountain State Park Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, SCDAH, 1998, 8/11; Archie Vernon Huff, Jr., *Greenville: The History of the City and County in the South Carolina Piedmont* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 346-47.

nearby Greenville.²² The bathhouse is located beside Lake Placid, one of the three lakes constructed from the reservoirs. A rectangular frame building, it is covered in rough rubble masonry with a gable roof. A shed roof extension with stone pillars covers a front porch running the full length of the lakeside elevation. A few alterations have occurred to the building including the addition of a concession area on the west and a low stone wall on the porch. However, these additions echo the rustic style of the bathhouse, and the building retains a high degree of integrity (fig. 16).

²²Hester, "Paris Mountain State Park Historic District," 8/11.

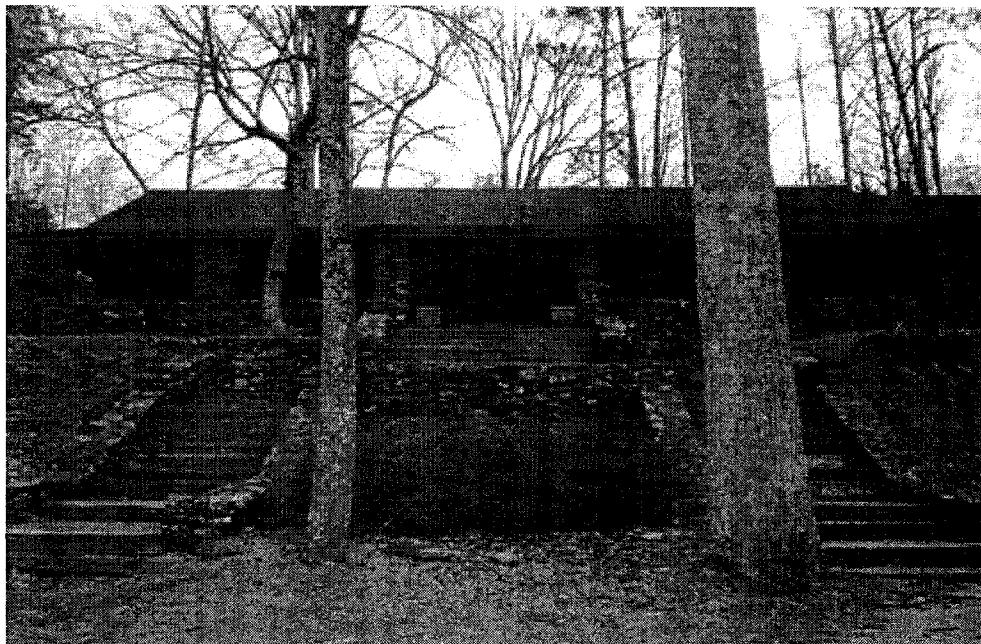


Fig. 17. Bathhouse, Paris Mountain State Park. Photograph courtesy of South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

While the work proceeded rapidly at Paris Mountain, it evidently did not please everyone, as evidenced by a report from the Regional Inspector, C. G. Mackintosh, to the Regional Office in Richmond, which was forwarded to Conrad Wirth in Washington. This report details an inspection which Mackintosh conducted in January 1936, "without use of official car or uniform," in which he labeled "the whole scheme [at Paris Mountain] a gigantic fiasco."²³ It appears that while Mackintosh acknowledges that the land at Paris

²³C. G. Mackintosh to H. E. Weatherwax, 16 January 1936, and attached report; H. E. Weatherwax to Conrad Wirth, 18 January 1936, National Archives, Record Group 79, Inspection Reports, Entry 64, Box 2.

Mountain is desirable for park development, he felt that the park should have been left in a more natural state rather than developed primarily for recreational use. In Mackintosh's opinion, the masonry construction at the bathhouse "would not be pleasing to the author of *Park Structures.*"²⁴ Mackintosh's report took four pages to sum up his opinion of the failings of the work at Paris Mountain, concluding with his recommendation that "this area be taken over yesterday for development as a Metropolitan or Municipal County Park and that the Third Regional Office technical staff be promptly dispatched there to determine a policy and program for halting the gross misuse of Federal Funds."²⁵ Regardless of Mackintosh's misgivings regarding the early proceedings at Paris Mountain State Park, the CCC and State Forest Service continued to develop the area as a state park.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.



Fig. 18. Picnic Shelter #1, Paris Mountain State Park. Photograph courtesy South Carolina Department Archives and History.

Similarly to the desire to promote cooperative recreation at the recreational demonstration areas at Cheraw and Kings Mountain, park development at Paris Mountain included facilities for larger groups. CCC construction continued through 1940, including four additional picnic shelters (fig. 18), the superintendent's house, an amphitheater (1940), and a group camp known as Camp Buckhorn (1936-1937). Camp Buckhorn, situated northwest of Lake Buckhorn, consists of a lodge, staff cabin, nine camper cabins, a latrine, a fire ring/council circle, and a parking area. The lodge is a T-shaped

building with cross-gabled roof and three porches, covered in board-and-batten siding, over a partial basement foundation of rubble stone construction (fig. 19). The south elevation, facing the lake, has a shed-roof porch supported by rubble piers. The staff cabin is located near the lodge, and is a one-story square frame building on rubble piers. The camper cabins are physically separated from the lodge and staff cabin by a small creek, and all nine are square frame buildings on stone foundations. Two of the camper cabins have exterior stone chimneys. Detailing at the lodge, staff cabin, and camper cabins have similar decorative elements, such as craftsman style exposed rafters and heavy porch posts and rails. Originally roofed with hand-riven wooden shingles, the roofs have all been replaced with composition shingles. Paris Mountain is currently one of only three state parks in South Carolina listed on the National Register of Historic Places for their association with the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps.²⁶

²⁶SC State Planning Board, "Parks and Recreation Areas," 62-66; Hester, "Paris Mountain State Park Historic District," 7/7-7/8. The other two parks listed on the National Register of Historic Places are the previously mentioned Table Rock State Park and Oconee State Park, which will be discussed in the next chapter.



Fig. 19. Lodge, Camp Buckhorn, Paris Mountain State Park. Photograph courtesy South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

The work completed at several of the state parks throughout the early years of CCC work in South Carolina demonstrate a high attention to detail in recreational and park planning as well as to the architectural details in the individual structures. The state followed the federal government's lead in developing its recreational facilities at the state parks, and in doing so, created a foundation for a growing state park system. Although the majority of the New Deal state park land was acquired in the early

years of the CCC program, it was the last half of the decade that saw the greatest period of construction and public usage in South Carolina's new state parks.

CHAPTER NINE

SOUTH CAROLINA'S "BREATHING SPACES:" OPENING AND OPERATING THE STATE PARKS DURING THE NEW DEAL DECADE

Franklin Roosevelt's goals of conservation, recreation, and economic benefits through the Civilian Conservation Corps became firmly entrenched in the rhetoric of the South Carolina Forestry Commission by mid-decade. Construction and development of several state parks and the federal recreation areas was well underway. For the most part, the latter half of the 1930s saw the Forestry Commission learning to operate the state parks, while at the same time continuing their growth and beginning acquisition and construction at others. During the last half of the 1930s, state park administration in South Carolina became institutionalized, with the formal founding of the Division of State Parks under the state Forestry Commission.

By the mid 1930s, the Forestry Commission demonstrated a strong environmental and preservation ethic, and highlighted the creation, maintenance, and use of state parks as a laudable method of reaching President

Roosevelt's goals. Their 1936-37 annual report to the state General Assembly warned that South Carolina was "rapidly losing her beautiful scenic spots," and that through the State Parks, it would be possible to "save the pieces...for ourselves and posterity," while at the same time doing "much work in 'human conservation'": "[State parks] will provide 'breathing spaces' from crowded cities; our people will learn to know and love the freedom of the great out of doors."¹ The annual report also highlighted the educational possibilities of state parks, including teaching children the value of "Nature" and a love for the open air that would in turn create healthy minds and bodies, and for providing a camp atmosphere for children who could not otherwise afford it. Perhaps most importantly, the Forestry Commission offered a definition of a state park:

A State Park may be defined as an area of land possessing unusual natural beauty, historical interest, educational value, or recreational importance, which has been acquired by the State,

¹SCFC Report (1936-1937), 47, SCDAH. For a discussion of the evolution of the South Carolina parks management plans, see also South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, "A Historic Management Perspective of the South Carolina State Parks System," (Columbia: SC PRT, [1988?]).

developed, and to be preserved forever for the use of the people in securing wholesome recreation and education.²

This definition would assist the Forestry Commission in choosing areas of land to be developed, and guide their development for several years to come. The early state parks focused primarily on land reclamation, recreation, and the preservation of natural landscapes, and to a lesser extent, education. The mention of the preservation of historical sites paved the way for the development of later state historical parks.

While state park work appears to have been the main focus of the work of the Forest Service in the mid-1930s, eight other CCC camps worked with Forestry in fire prevention and development of the state forests and on approved privately owned land. These camps constructed truck trails, fire towers, houses for the towermen, and connected the tower stations with telephone lines, in addition to forestry work such as seed collection, nursery operation, and timber type surveys. Forestry camps also participated in recreational construction, much like that

²SCFC Report (1936-1937), 48, SCDAH. Phoebe Cutler explores the linkages between outdoor recreation and the reclamation of both land and people in her *Public Landscape of the New Deal*, 8-28, in a chapter titled "The New Deal and the New Play."

of the state park camps, in that they built dams, bath and boat houses, picnic shelters, and cabins in the state forests in Greenville, Oconee, Aiken, and Lee Counties. In spring 1937, the Central Warehouse was moved from Camden to Sumter, near the site of the Central Repair Shop and the concrete pipe plant, consolidating much of the support work for all of the state's CCC camps.³ The Forest Service acknowledged the important contributions of the CCC to its work in general forestry projects, including timber type surveys and fire prevention, but devoted only nine pages of its 30-plus page annual report to these activities, choosing to focus most of the report on the exciting developments in the state parks.

By June 30, 1937, the Forest Service, in cooperation with the Civilian Conservation Corps, the National Park Service, and the United States Forest Service, had developed approximately 13,000 acres in the state parks, not to mention the 17,000 acres under federal ownership in the Wayside parks and the Recreational Demonstration Areas at Cheraw and Kings Mountain. Seven CCC camps worked on eight of the state parks (work at Aiken and Givhans Ferry

³SCFC Report (1936-1937), 71-73, SCDAH.

had been almost completed at this time, with side camps providing additional support, and the Forestry camp at Lee State Forest worked on recreational development at the state park there), with other camps assigned to the RDAs at Cheraw and Kings Mountain.⁴

Although the Forestry Commission lauded the work of the CCC and the assistance of the federal government in the development and creation of the state park system, the Commission worried publicly about its ability to properly maintain, equip, and staff the state parks after the cessation of CCC work at the park sites. While the federal government provided the money with which to build park facilities, the state would have to commit funds to maintenance, staff, and supplies. The financial statement showed that while the state had expended over \$20,000 (in addition to federal funding) during the fiscal year, only about \$4000.00 had been received from cabin rentals, concessions, dressing room fees, bathing suit rentals, and other revenue-generating activities. However, the Commission justified this expense by explaining that a

⁴SCFC Report (1936-1937), 55-58, 65-69, SCDAH; Lee State Park files, SC PRT.

great deal of the cost was initial set-up fees, such as the purchase of towels and bathing suits for the bathhouses, and equipping the vacation cabins with appliances, furniture, and cooking utensils. The Commission reminded the State General Assembly that the CCC would not always be available to provide maintenance for the state parks, nor would they provide permanent caretakers: "These things are the responsibility of the State, and to secure the greatest gain from the parks, the maintenance and operation must be of a high standard."⁵

By mid-decade, the fledging state park program had blossomed into a popular recreational program around the state. The Forestry Commission boasted that a state park was within seventy-five miles of any South Carolina resident (although they had made no provisions for the 40 percent of the state's residents who were African-American), and that the recreational activities offered were free for the most part, providing wholesome outdoor activities for rich and poor alike. During the twelve weeks that Myrtle Beach, Poinsett, and Aiken were officially opened during the summer of 1936, park staff

⁵ SCFC Report (1936-1937), 61-64, SCDAH.

recorded attendance of almost 50,000, with over 42,000 guests visiting Myrtle Beach alone. The Forestry Commission hoped to use these numbers to highlight the importance of the new state park system both to the State and to its general public, and to convince the state's General Assembly to increase funding for the maintenance and further development of the state parks when Civilian Conservation Corps funding and labor would no longer be available.⁶

Among the many accomplishments of the CCC in South Carolina's state parks during this fiscal year were the completion of two bathhouses, 39 cabins, nine shelters, seven water fountains, 21 camp fireplaces, 29 acres of landscaping (not including the over 600 acres of "vista cutting for effect"), and eight acres of camp or picnic ground development, not to mention the more mundane (and more difficult to quantify) work of fire prevention, seed collection, weed eradication, and general emergency work. While a great amount of work was completed at the twelve parks in 1936-1937, the most important item of interest in state park development came on July 1, 1936, when Myrtle

⁶Ibid., 48-49; 58-59.

Beach State Park officially opened to the public, marking the first official opening of any of South Carolina's state parks. By June 1, 1937, six state parks had opened: Myrtle Beach, Poinsett, Aiken, Givhans Ferry, Oconee, and Paris Mountain. Governor Olin D. Johnston and Senator Ben T. Leppard, along with official representatives of the National Park Service, the Federal Forest Service, and the State Forestry Commission spoke at formal dedication ceremonies at Myrtle Beach on June 17, 1937.⁷

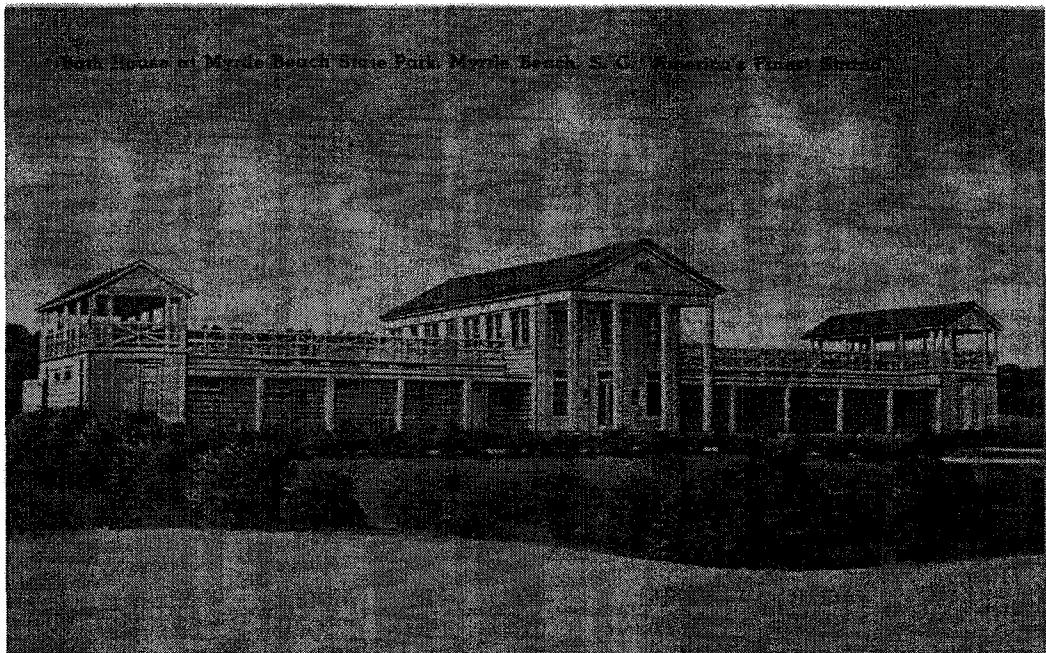


Fig. 20. Postcard, Bathhouse, Myrtle Beach State Park, c1940. Author's collection.

⁷ Ibid., 55-58, 65-69

On July 1, 1936, Myrtle Beach State Park became the first state park in South Carolina to officially open to the public. The Myrtle Beach Farms Corporation donated the land for the state park in August 1934, and the CCC began moved to the site in November 1934. By its opening in 1936, the state's first state park boasted a swimming beach, picnic area, playgrounds, and a large bathhouse, boardwalk, and pavilion (fig. 20). The Forestry Commission did not feel that the park was completed; however, enough structures were finished to allow the public to officially use the park, even though the public had been "unofficially" using Myrtle Beach's recreational facilities, as was the case in the other state parks under development. The Forestry Commission hoped that by opening Myrtle Beach, along with Poinsett (on August 5), and Aiken (on August 19), in the summer of 1936, that it would provide valuable experience in the actual operation of state park facilities. At Myrtle Beach, the Forest Service employed a Recreational Director, five lifeguards, a concessions operator, a bathhouse manager, a policeman, and two "colored attendants" to serve the white park visitors. South Carolina's first state park vacation cabins were also under construction at Myrtle Beach, and this experiment

proved immediately popular, as did the first state park trailer camp, which provided water and electrical hook-ups for autocampers. The innovative trailer camp was quickly copied at other popular state parks such as Poinsett, the second state park officially opened to the public.⁸

Oconee State Park, near Walhalla in the northwestern corner of the state, opened to the public in June 1937. Two years earlier, Oconee County had donated 1,165 acres of the land for the purpose of state park development, with the stipulation that if the use of the land changed, its title would revert back to the county. Almost immediately, CCC Company 3449 moved in, establishing Camp S-75 on July 16, 1935. Among their first projects, other than camp construction, was the creation of a dam and lake for swimming, and a bathhouse. By the time of the park's opening in June 1937, Oconee boasted two man-made lakes, a bathhouse, three parking areas, two picnic shelters, and roads and hiking trails (fig. 21).⁹

⁸SCFC Report (1936-1937), 56-57, SCDAH; SC Federal Writers' Project, *South Carolina State Parks*, 9; Tilden, *State Parks*, 233-36; SC State Planning Board, "Parks and Recreational Areas", 62. A hurricane destroyed the massive bathhouse and pavilion complex in the 1960s.

⁹Kevin Allen, "Oconee State Park," National Register



Fig. 21. Postcard, Oconee State Park, c1950. Author's collection.

One of the first buildings constructed at Oconee, the bathhouse is constructed of rough-cut ashlar stone, quarried from nearby Stumphouse Mountain. A piazza faces the lake, with a hipped roof supported by paired square timbers (replaced in kind in the late 1940s). A gabled roof on the east side of the building covers a flagstone surface that originally served as a covered boat dock and leads to the dam spillway. Two picnic shelters sit on the northwest shore of the lake. Shelter One is a large structure, sited on a slope above the lake, and featuring a

of Historic Places Registration Form, SCDAH, 2004, 25-26;
Oconee State Park files, SC PRT.

large stone centrally-located fireplace (fig. 22). The gable roof is supported by chestnut log posts; its original wood shake shingles were replaced with composition shingles c1950. In contrast to Shelter One, Shelter Two is a smaller structure, covering only one picnic table, and features a gable roof with rough-cut ashlar stonework support pillars over a poured concrete foundation. Three sides of the shelter have a low stone wall (fig. 23).¹⁰



Fig. 22. Shelter One, Oconee State Park. Photograph courtesy of South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

¹⁰Allen, "Oconee State Park," NR Form, 13-14.



Fig. 23. Shelter Two, Oconee State Park. Photograph courtesy of South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Oconee State Park has twenty cabins, best described as variations of the theme of rustic park architecture, and a relatively large number of family camping cabins as compared with many of the other state parks. CCC Company 3449 began construction of the first six cabins in 1935, and they were completed by the park's opening in June 1937. Located north of the lake, each of these cabins has two bedrooms and one bath, but vary slightly from one story to one-and-one-half story, and two of the six (Cabins 4 and 6) feature a T shaped plan rather than the rectangular plan common to the other four. All six cabins are situated on stone rubblework foundations, but siding varies from board

and batten siding (Cabins 1, 3, and 4) to log chinked with concrete (Cabins 2, 5, and 6) (fig. 24).



Fig. 24. Cabin #2, Oconee State Park. Photograph courtesy of South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Cabins 7-13 were constructed by Company 439 in 1938 southeast of the lake. These cabins were all constructed as one bedroom cabins, and are more uniform than the first group. Cabin 8 was enlarged in the 1960s for staff housing at the park, and the other five cabins in this group have been altered with the enclosure of a portion of their full porches to provide an extra bedroom. However, for the most part these cabins retain their integrity and are consistent with CCC design and construction. Company 439 also built the final group of cabins, in 1939-1940. These cabins are

also located southeast of the lake in a wooded area, with porches overlooking the lake. Cabin 14 is an L-shaped one-story cabin, with board-and-batten siding on a stone rubble foundation. Cabins 15, 17, and 19 are built to the same design and are rectangular, one-and-a-half story buildings, with board-and-batten siding on stone rubble foundations, with full front porches facing the lake. Cabins 16, 18, and 20 are L-shaped one story cabins, with board-and-batten siding on stone rubble foundation piers, filled with concrete block (fig. 25). Half-porches are inset in the ell and face the lake. These cabins feature exterior rubble stone chimneys and stone rubblework steps leading from the porch. Including the cabins, Oconee State Park retains over sixty original CCC buildings and structures that contribute to its listing on the National Register of Historic Places.¹¹

¹¹Allen, "Oconee State Park," NR Form, 4-11; Oconee State Park Files, SC PRT.



Fig. 25. Cabin #18, Oconee State Park. Photograph courtesy of South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Fiscal year 1937-1938 marked the first full year of state park operation in South Carolina, and six state parks were in full operation by that year, including Myrtle Beach, Poinsett, Aiken, Givhans Ferry, Paris Mountain, and Oconee. Some facilities were available at Edisto Beach and Table Rock State Parks. The group camps at the Recreational Demonstration Area at Cheraw opened briefly in August 1937, and reopened along with the group camp at Kings Mountain in June 1938. In addition to the successful operation of these state parks, the Forestry Commission's Annual Report reported that four new parks had been added

to the system, including Barnwell State Park in Barnwell County, Sesquicentennial State Park in Richland County, Greenwood State Park in Greenwood County, and Hunting Island State Park in Beaufort County. By the end of the fiscal year, the Forestry Commission could report that CCC camps were already at work at Barnwell and Sesquicentennial, and camps were scheduled to arrive at Hunting Island and Greenwood in the late summer of 1938, being transferred from Edisto Beach and Poinsett State Parks, respectively.¹²

The CCC accomplished a great deal during fiscal 1937-1938, including the building of a dam and spillway, road, and fish-rearing ponds at Table Rock State park; a dam and spillway and group camp at Cheraw; a trailer camp at Myrtle Beach; completion of the bathhouse and construction of three vacation cabins at Edisto Beach; and completion of a trailer camp and three vacation cabins at Poinsett. These major construction projects were in addition to the other types of CCC construction projects and other work undertaken in the state parks. For example, the Forestry Commission recorded that the CCC constructed seventy picnic table-and-bench combinations, thirteen fireplaces, and

¹² SCFC Report (1937-1938), 63, 66-71, SCDAH.

three lodges in the parks, in addition to constructing over 12,000 square yards of parking spaces, and moving and planting over 90,000 trees and shrubs.¹³

State Parks saw a dramatic increase in visitors during the year, recording over 478,000 visitors in 1937-38, a dramatic increase over the previous year when only a few of the parks were open, and those for only a brief time. This large number of park users provided the Forestry Commission with a baseline by which to measure future park attendance. Visitors were not charged an entrance fee to the state parks, so funds were only generated by concessions and rental fees, and associated fees for the group camps. During the fiscal year, the parks generated slightly over \$13,200 in income, including almost \$4000 in cabin rentals and almost \$3000 in group camp rentals. The vacation cabins proved to be a success during the first full year of park operation, housing over 1600 people during the weeks the cabins were available for rental. The Forestry Commission made sure to note that of the thirty-eight vacation cabins that had been constructed, only thirty-one were available for public rental. Four of the other cabins were used to house park employees, and the remaining three

¹³Ibid., 67-69.

were not being used because of "lack of funds to equip them."¹⁴

Funding remained a priority theme of the Forestry Commission's annual report, especially related to the fledgling state park system, as it would throughout the years of CCC involvement with the parks and the Commission. The first pages of the annual report lamented the fact that a lack of state funds could cost the state CCC camps, and that much available labor was not being put to use because the state's appropriations were insufficient in funding more than one construction project per park per year. The Commission reported that for all activities (including forestry and fire prevention, as well as state parks), total expenditures during the fiscal year reached slightly over \$205,000, and that the General Assembly had appropriated only \$62,500 for the entire year. The rest of the expenses came from federal dollars and county money. In addition to the existing shortfall in state appropriations, which seems was an every year occurrence, the unprecedented use of the state parks created a larger

¹⁴Ibid., 71-73.

maintenance bill than previously had been anticipated.¹⁵

The financial woes of the State Forestry Commission, especially in the area of state park operation, would plague the park system throughout the years of CCC operation.

One of the new parks added to the state park system in 1937-38 was Sesquicentennial State Park in northeast Richland County. The state capital of Columbia celebrated its sesquicentennial anniversary in March 1936, complete with pageants, balls, parades, football games, concerts, and a commemorative legislative session where the members of the General Assembly appeared in period costume, including frock coats, knee breeches, and wigs. The Columbia Sesquicentennial Commission, led by State Senator James H. Hammond, financed the various festivities through the sale of commemorative coins marking the city's momentous anniversary.¹⁶

¹⁵Ibid., 8-9.

¹⁶James H. Hammond papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia (unprocessed); Moore, *Columbia and Richland County*, 366; Jane K. Simons, *A Guide to Columbia: South Carolina's Capital City* (Columbia: Columbia Sesquicentennial Commission, R.L. Bryan Company, 1939), 69.

At the end of the celebration year, an audit of the Sesquicentennial Commission's financial records revealed that a little over \$26,000 remained from the sale of the commemorative coins, and Senator Hammond discussed the disbursement of these funds with Columbia Mayor L.B. Owen through the spring of 1937. The Columbia Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution at the end of 1936 recommending that the Sesquicentennial Commission spend any leftover funds for "permanent and commemorative purposes," and Hammond and Owen discussed the possibilities of erecting historical markers throughout Columbia, the establishment of a botanical garden at the University of South Carolina, and the creation of a state or municipal park to mark the Sesquicentennial celebration. Hammond, Owen, the Commission, the Chamber, and the City Council agreed to the erection of fifty-two historical markers, primarily in downtown Columbia, explaining the significance of street names and sites of historical importance, expending some \$3,200 for this purpose. The Commission also made a \$6,000 donation to the University of South Carolina for the purpose of creating a botanical garden or

arboretum, and began investigating the possibility of purchasing property for the development of a park.¹⁷

With the examples of Myrtle Beach, Poinsett, and Table Rock already in place, the City of Columbia asked the State Forestry Commission to investigate appropriate sites in Richland County upon which a state park could be suitably developed according to the state and federal guidelines. The Forestry Commission identified two tracts upon which a state park could be developed in Richland County, the Messers Mill tract on Old Camden Road and the Dent property northeast of Columbia. After fully investigating both these possibilities, the City of Columbia purchased 1415.5 acres from the Dent family in August 1937 and donated the land to the state for the development of Sesquicentennial State Park.¹⁸

¹⁷ James H. Hammond to Mayor L. B. Owens of Columbia, 5 April 1937, Owens to Hammond, 7 April 1937, Hammond to Owens, 16 April 1937, Owens to Hammond, 2 June 1937, all Hammond Papers, Carliniana Library; Sesquicentennial State Park Files, SC PRT.

¹⁸ Ibid.; Moore, *Columbia and Richland County*, 366.



Fig. 26. Picnic shelter, Sesquicentennial State Park, Columbia. Photograph by the author.

CCC Camp 4469 had been established in June 1935 near the Richland/Kershaw County line along US Highway 1, near the Dent property chosen for Sesquicentennial State Park. This camp had been working on forestry projects in the Pontiac area, such as the fire tower located near the entrance of the state park. Following approval of the state park project, the enrollees immediately began work on the park, constructing a lake, bathhouse, picnic shelters (fig. 26) and a caretaker's residence. Work at

Sesquicentennial proceeded rapidly, and the park officially opened to the public in June 1940.¹⁹

By June 1939, the South Carolina Forestry Commission had acquired almost 22,000 acres of land under CCC development in fifteen state parks. In addition to the fifteen state parks, the CCC had been involved in the development of the Recreational Demonstration Areas, although under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, the State Forest Service operated these areas as state parks, and had an agreement with NPS that they would become a part of the state park system, along with six Wayside Parks that NPS had been developing since 1935. Seven of the twelve state parks under construction had opened by the beginning of the summer 1939, with two additional parks (Chester and Barnwell) scheduled to open in the late summer 1939.²⁰

¹⁹Sesquicentennial State Park files, SC PRT; Waller, "Happy Days," 56. During the building of Sesquicentennial, one enrollee, P. Washington Porter, found time to participate in a national play-writing contest sponsored by the national CCC newsletter *Happy Days*, and the Federal Writers' Project. Porter's tragedy, "Return to Death," won national honors, and Porter traveled from Pontiac to New York City to oversee the production of his work at the WPA Federal Theater.

²⁰SCFC Report (1938-1939), 79-82, SCDAH.

Although seven state parks all over the state had opened in 1936 and 1937 (Myrtle Beach, Poinsett, Aiken, Givhans Ferry, Oconee, Paris Mountain, and Edisto Beach), and the Recreational Demonstration Areas at Cheraw and Kings Mountain were both operational, the State Forest Service had undertaken very little in the way of publicity to lure additional visitors to the state parks. The Forest Service spent the first two years of parks operations learning how to establish and operate a system of parks, not on creating recreational or educational plans for visitors to the park. However, throughout the spring and summer of 1939, state park directors encouraged their employees to more fully engage the parks' visitors, by leading nature hikes, organizing recreational events and competitions, and providing instruction in swimming and diving, among other types of organized activities. The Recreational Division of the Works Progress Administration assisted state parks employees in this effort. The more proactive activity program was well received, and the

Forestry Commission reported "this program is considered as the greatest forward step for State Parks during the past fiscal year."²¹

The Forestry Commission did not begin any new parks during 1938-1939, but work progressed on all parks that had already been started. The State Forest Service considered that the initial park system was complete with the twelve established parks, with only a few planned additions: a park located near the lakes created by the Santee-Cooper Power Development in the mid-state; a smaller system of parks within the existing state parks for African-Americans; and a system of State Historical Monuments "to preserve places of state-wide historical interest throughout the State."²² Of these three additional goals, the Forest Service had moved to provide some day-use park access for African-Americans in segregated areas at Hunting Island State Park and at Greenwood State Park, as well as providing group camp facilities for blacks at the Sand Hills State Forest near Cheraw, and at Poinsett State Park,

²¹Ibid., 77-79.

²²Ibid., 82.

with plans to open at least one of these areas by the summer of 1940.²³

The State Forest Service and the National Park Service employed CCC camps in seven state parks during 1938-1939, at Cheraw (adjacent to the Cheraw RDA), Poinsett, Table Rock, Kings Mountain, Edisto Beach, Hunting Island, and Greenwood. The camp employed at Edisto Beach moved to Hunting Island State Park in July 1938, leaving a small side camp at Edisto Beach through September, and the CCC camp stationed at Kings Mountain also provided labor at Chester State Park. The State Forest Service in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service employed eight additional camps in a variety of forestry projects throughout the state, including timber type surveys, truck trail construction, and nursery work. Forestry camps also worked on the state parks at Aiken, Paris Mountain, Lee, Barnwell, Sesquicentennial, and Oconee.

Five hundred visitors attended the official opening of Table Rock State Park on April 4, 1938. Table Rock Mountain, for which the park was named, had long been a

²³Ibid.; Cox, "History of Negro State Parks in South Carolina," 19-22.

destination point in South Carolina (fig. 27). Located in the mountainous upstate, in Pickens County, Table Rock Mountain received its name from a Cherokee legend, in which the flat-topped mountain served as a table from the "Great Spirit" ate his meals, and was considered to be sacred to Native Americans. One of the first known written records of the area, an 1809 report on the boundary between North and South Carolina, refers to the mountain as "the Rock known by the name of Table Mountain."²⁴

²⁴Governor's Messages, 1809, General Assembly Papers, SCDAH; E. Thomas Sims and Julie Turner, "Table Rock State Park Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1989), 8/1-8/2. Freeman Tilden offers a brief sketch of Table Rock Mountain and the state park in his *The State Parks*, 460.



Fig. 27. Postcard, Table Rock Mountain. Author's collection.

By 1816, adventurous tourists began climbing Table Rock to study the flora and fauna and to appreciate the grand vista afforded at the summit. William Sutherland opened the twenty-room Table Rock Hotel in 1845 to accommodate visitors to the area. The hotel provided access to several of the routes up the mountain, including routes that could be taken by horseback, at least partway, but the majority of the access was by foot. Sutherland contracted with John Masters and Daniel Carroll to construct wooden steps mounted to iron pins to further ease the

journey up the mountain, and one visitor reported that there were approximately 130 of these steps.²⁵

Sutherland died in 1859, and the advent of the Civil War curtailed much of the tourist industry in upstate South Carolina. Stephen Keith reopened the Table Rock Hotel in the 1870s as a summer resort, and the family continued to operate the hotel, constructing another hotel in a new location on the mountain in about 1900. Although the area enjoyed a spurt of prosperity around the turn of the century, the Keith family abandoned the hotel operation in 1912.²⁶

In the early 1930s, with the state seeking to acquire land for CCC development of state parks, Table Rock Mountain received a great deal of attention. A survey by the National Park Service highlighted the former summer retreat as a desirable location for a state park, and in

²⁵Sims and Turner, "Table Rock State Park Historic District," 8/4. A detailed description of the climb up Table Rock during the early nineteenth century can be found in "Description of the Table Rock of South Carolina," printed in the *New England Galaxy*, 6 July 1827.

²⁶Sims and Turner, "Table Rock State Park Historic District," 8/4; "Master Plan Report for Table Rock State Park, Pickens County, South Carolina," (18 August 1939), Records of the Forestry Commission, Administration, CCC Files, Table Rock State Park, SCDAH.

the spring of 1935, the City of Greenville donated a little over 1,000 acres, including Table Rock Mountain and the slightly larger Pinnacle Mountain, to the state for the purposes of establishing a state park. Pickens County purchased additional acreage from private owners, and donated another 1,500 acres to the state that same year. The Civilian Conservation Corps quickly moved into the area to begin development of the state park, with two veterans' camps established in August 1935.²⁷

The World War I veterans enrolled in the CCC were not used to working in the mountainous terrain and the intensive labor involved in the creation of Table Rock State Park was evidently too difficult for the men. Two junior CCC camps (Companies 5465 and 5466, also known as SP-5 and SP-6) soon replaced the veteran camps in order to hasten the park's development. Camp SP-5 was charged with actual park construction, including trails, roads, and all park structures, while SP-6 constructed a concrete dam and spillway to create a 23-acre lake, known as Pinnacle Lake. The granite dam was designed to be scenic as well as functional, and may be viewed from an overlook, or from

²⁷Sims and Turner, "Table Rock State Park Historic District," 8/5-8/6.

below. A path and stone steps connect the two viewing places. SP-6 completed their dam and lake project in 1937, and the camp was disbanded in June of that year. Pinnacle Lake was stocked with over 245,000 rainbow trout in 1938, and opened for fishing in 1940.²⁸

SP-5 constructed a number of buildings and other structures, including a bathhouse, concessions building, eight cabins, picnic shelters, a trail shelter, fish-rearing pools, houses for the park superintendent and warden, and roads, numerous trails and overlooks. Local architects John W. Linley and Fred Ledbetter designed many of the buildings at Table Rock, with the approval of the NPS, and twenty Clemson architecture students participated in an architectural design contest for the park's built environment.²⁹

The premier building for Table Rock State Park is that of the lodge, an L-shaped building with a great hall on the main level, and a dining hall, sun porch, and kitchen in

²⁸Ibid., 8/6-8/7; *Pickens Sentinel* (Pickens, SC), 7 May 1936; *Greenville Piedmont* (Greenville, SC), 11 May 1938; "Master Plan Report for Table Rock State Park" and Forestry Commission, CCC files, Table Rock State Park, both SCDAH.

²⁹Sims and Turner, "Table Rock State Park Historic District," 8/7-8/10. See also *The State* (Columbia, SC) 27 March 1936 for winning drawings and results from the Clemson architectural competition.

the basement level. The hewn-log construction is situated in a hillside so as to give the façade a one-story appearance, over a granite foundation comprising a full basement with its own entrance, appearing as a two-story structure from the rear elevation (figs. 28-30). The lodge has a full front porch with timber rails and a shed roof, and the interior great hall features exposed log walls, a large stone fireplace, and exposed timber rafters. The lodge affords wonderful views of Table Rock Mountain and Pinnacle Mountain, and the Forestry Commission insured that the design of the rest of the state park's facilities did not detract from these vistas when viewed from the lodge. The CCC finished construction of the lodge in 1939, and the restaurant/dining hall opened in 1940.³⁰

³⁰Sims and Turner, "Table Rock State Park Historic District," 7/1, 8/9-8/10; SCFC, "Master Plan for Table Rock State Park."

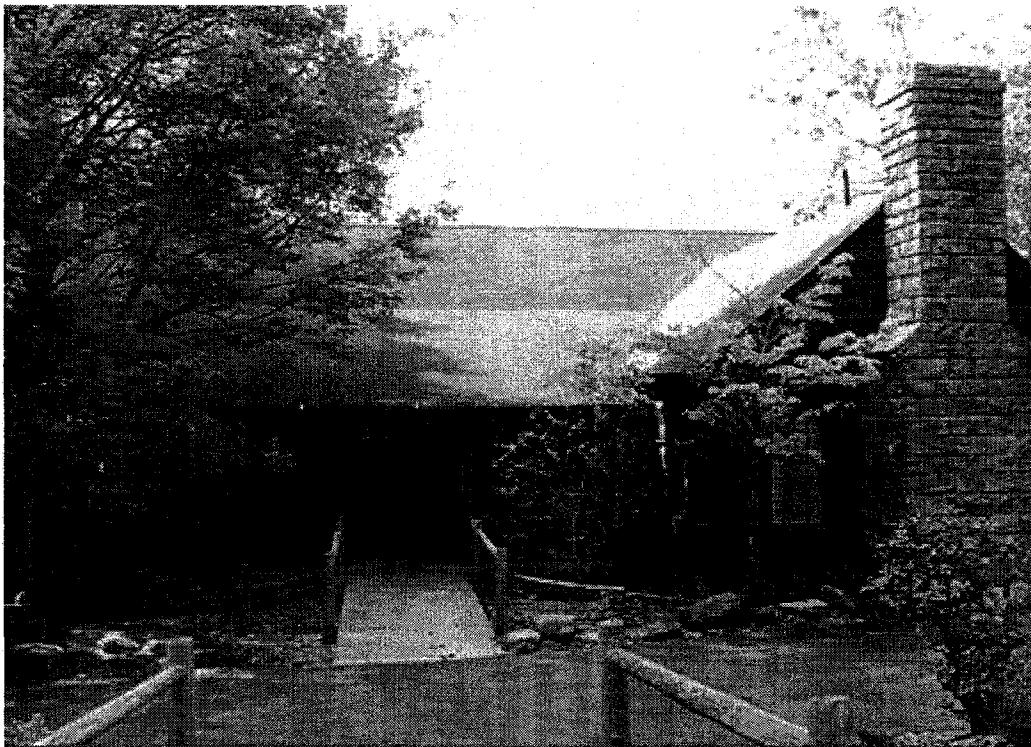


Fig. 28. Lodge at Table Rock State Park, Greenville.
Photograph courtesy of South Carolina Department of
Archives and History.

The CCC constructed other buildings at Table Rock, including a frame concession building along the north bank of Pinnacle Lake, picnic shelters, superintendent's house, warden's house, and seven cabins, along with fish-rearing pools and numerous trails and overlooks. Four of the cabins are of hewn log construction, and three feature board and batten siding, but all are one-story, rectangular plan, with a gable roof and stone foundation.

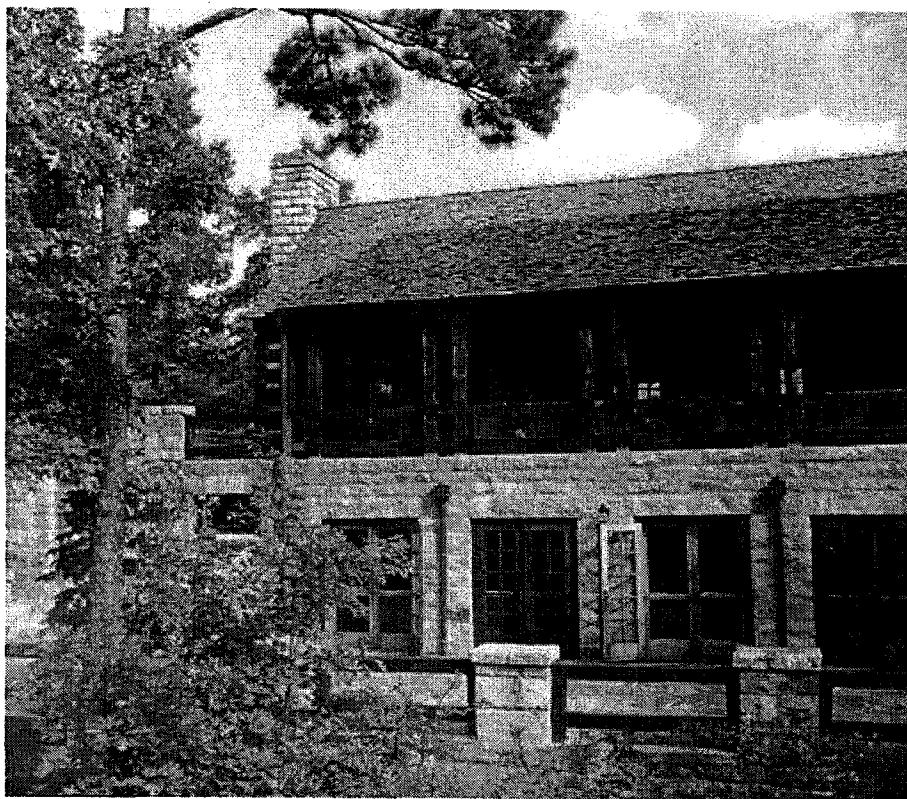


Fig. 29. Rear elevation of lodge, Table Rock State Park.
Photograph courtesy of South Carolina Department of
Archives and History.

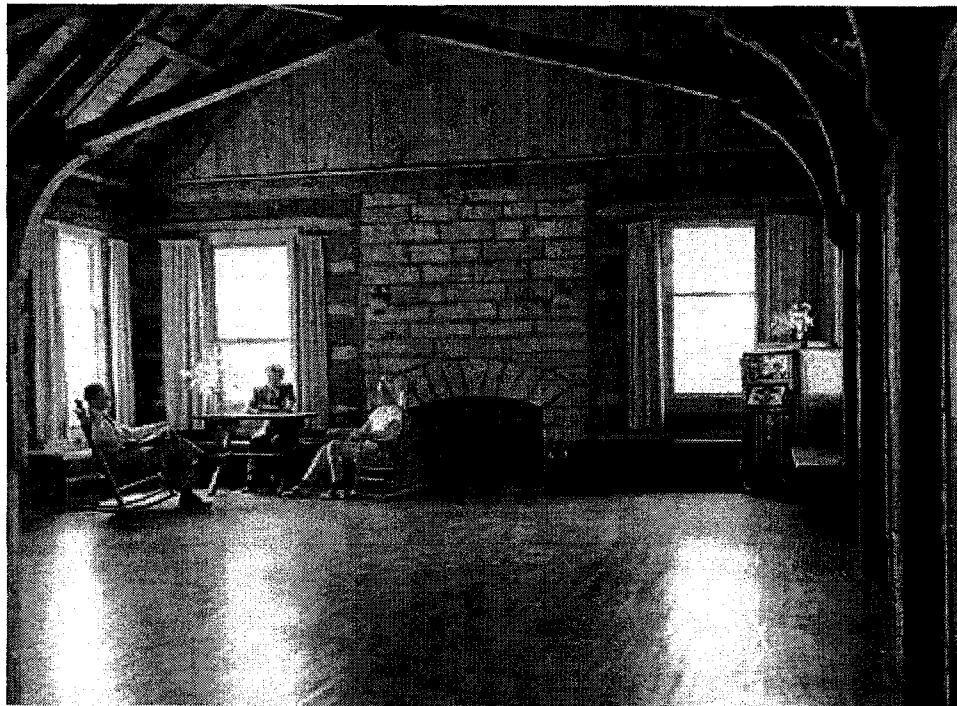


Fig. 30. Lodge interior, c1955, Table Rock State Park. Photograph courtesy South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Although the CCC finished construction of the lodge in 1939, other projects did not see completion prior to the disbandment of SP-5 in October 1941. The CCC finished work on buildings that had been started, such as the additions of doors or windows, but planned projects had to be abandoned, including a group camp, additional cabins, and riding stables.³¹ Although Table Rock State Park was not developed to the fullest potential envisioned by the State

³¹Sims and Turner, "Table Rock State Park Historic District," 8/11; SCFC, "Master Plan for Table Rock State Park."

Forestry Commission and the National Park Service, approximately forty of the CCC constructed buildings, trails, walls, and structures remain, and are listed as contributing elements in the National Register-listed Table Rock State Park Historic District.

The final years of Civilian Conservation Corps work in South Carolina were difficult ones for state park development in the state. However, the foundation for a system of state parks had been laid over the previous years. Throughout 1939-1940, eight CCC Forestry camps continued work on the state parks at Barnwell, Oconee, Sesquicentennial, Lee, and Paris Mountain, while conducting additional forestry work, such as timber type surveys, road construction, construction of fire towers and telephone lines, and nursery work. Camp P-70, stationed in Barnwell County, not only worked on Barnwell State Park, but also provided forestry work for the counties of Barnwell, Aiken, and Orangeburg, and even built a municipal swimming pool in Springfield. Five other CCC camps, working under the administration of the National Park Service, continued working on the parks at Cheraw, Greenwood, Hunting Island, Kings Mountain, and Table Rock.

Although the CCC and the Forestry Commission accomplished a great deal of work at the state parks, the Forestry Commission again felt compelled to warn the General Assembly that the state needed to appropriate additional funding for the continuation of the state park program. Although the CCC continued to provide labor for the development of the parks, very little funding had been provided for staff or maintenance, and the continuation of federal funding and cooperation for the work of the CCC was dependent upon the additional contributions of the State. The State Forester warned in his annual report that "unless funds are provided in the future, South Carolina will find her camps moving to other States who have signified their intention of supplying these necessary funds."³² In addition, the State Forester complained that his state park staff was woefully inadequate, totaling thirteen full-time employees devoted to state park work, including the nine park superintendents. Apparently, the State Forester envisioned a day in the near future when the Civilian Conservation Corps could no longer be relied upon to provide the labor necessary for the development of the state parks. His foresight would prove accurate.

³² SCFC Report (1939-1940), 91-92, 102-04, SCDAH.

Several noteworthy events affected the state parks during 1939-1940. Organized activity programs, begun in the previous year, were continued at several of the state parks, and Paris Mountain State Park hosted both a State Casting Tournament and a State Swimming Meet, while the State Archery Meet was held at Sesquicentennial State Park near Columbia, in addition to a variety of local tournaments being held at the various parks. Parks conducted field days and water pageants along with other community events, such as sings or folk dancing. Over 584,000 people visited the state parks during the year, more than any other year, and over twice as many visitors who had visited the parks in 1936-1937, despite the fact that a polio outbreak forced the closing of the group camps at Cheraw during July and August 1939.³³

Other than these public events, two educational events were held for the first time, including the Park Training Institute. The Park Training Institute at Kings Mountain brought together the nine park superintendents, the park personnel stationed in Columbia, and as many of the almost one hundred part-time summer personnel as could attend to introduce them to one another and to give them a basic

³³Ibid., 96-98, 106-07.

outline of the goals and objectives of the state park system. The Park Training Institute was so successful that the Forestry Commission reported that it would become an annual event. Kings Mountain also hosted the first Annual School for the Conservation of Natural Resources, sponsored by the State Forest Service, the State Garden Clubs, and the State Federated (Women's) Clubs. Thirty-one club women from around the state attended the week-long school, where they enjoyed the recreational opportunities of Kings Mountain and listened to a variety of lectures on conservation, forestry, and recreation, given by local speakers as well as guest lectures from the US Forest Service, the National Park Service, and professors from Clemson College and the University of South Carolina.³⁴

The State Park Employees Training Institute was held for a second year in May 1941, this time at Cheraw, to better educate both the permanent personnel as well as the summer employees in the State Park system. Use of the fourteen opened parks during 1940-1941 swelled to over 830,000, and included a count of over 24,000 out-of-state cars, requiring a greater number of summer employees to

³⁴Ibid., 88-90, 105-06.

work in the parks as lifeguards, nurses, cooks, bathhouse attendants, and concessions operators. The vacation cabins in the mountains and on the coast proved extremely popular throughout the summer months; over 5000 people spent at least a week in a state park cottage. In addition to the Training Institute for park employees, the School for the Conservation of Natural Resources was again held for South Carolina's clubwomen, and included a lecture on "The CCC, Its Purpose and Achievements."³⁵

Civilian Conservation Corps work in the state was limited during 1940-1941. Although the Forestry Commission operated eight camps during the fiscal year, four of these camps were abandoned by the end of the fiscal year, including the camps working on the state parks at Barnwell, Lee, and Paris Mountain, and low enrollment in some of the other camps often hampered the forestry work of those camps. The National Park Service operated five additional CCC camps, working at Cheraw, Greenwood, Hunting Island, Kings Mountain, and Table Rock. Fourteen of the sixteen state parks established in the state were open to the public in 1940-1941, and very little development work was

³⁵SCFC Report (1940-1941), 80-82, 94-98, SCDAH.

left for the CCC at the parks. No new parks were begun during that fiscal year, although the state legislature did appropriate funding for the purchase of land for a new state park along the Santee-Cooper lake. With appropriations of \$15,000 each from the state and from Orangeburg County, the Forestry Commission acquired over 2300 acres for the new Santee State Park in 1941.³⁶

The Forestry Commission included four recommendations in the 1940-1941 Annual Report; the first recommendation addressed the need for additional funding in five areas, including funds for maintenance, funds for development work to retain the CCC camps, the hiring of additional personnel both at the state office and at the parks, funding for more and better equipment at the parks, and funding for extending the recreational program offered to schoolchildren. The other recommendations addressed the need for a "system of recreational areas for colored people," the acquisition of areas of historical importance, and an increase in advertising the state parks both within South Carolina and in neighboring states.³⁷

³⁶Ibid., 87-101, 105; "History of South Carolina State Parks," (Columbia: SC PRT, 1992).

³⁷SCFC Report 1940-1941, 104-05.

Although the early history of the South Carolina state parks is an overall positive story, detailed throughout the Forestry Commissions annual reports, the parks certainly met with challenges, financial and otherwise. The southern coastal state parks at Edisto Beach and Hunting Island were both damaged in August 1940, when a hurricane struck the southern coast of the state. While Hunting Island sustained only limited damage, due primarily to the limited development of the site, the established park at Edisto was badly damaged. Three of the five vacation cabins were destroyed, while the other two sustained heavy damage, and several picnic shelters were destroyed or damaged. The Forestry Commission estimated the damage at Edisto Beach to be in excess of \$25,000. In 1941, the General Assembly appropriated \$6,000 for repairs at Edisto Beach State Park, allowing for the two damaged cabins to be repaired, and the picnic shelter on the beach to be rebuilt (fig. 30). The cabins were moved from their beach location slightly more inland, to provide a greater degree of protection from later storms (fig. 31). The CCC camp at Hunting Island repaired the damage at that park as one of their final projects, while further plans for development at Hunting

Island were put on hold "until after the war," according to the Forestry Commission's annual report.³⁸



Fig. 31. Postcard, Edisto Beach State Park, c1950.
Author's collection.

³⁸Ibid., 88; SCFC Report 1941-42, 84, 88-89.



Fig. 31. Cabin, Edisto Beach State Park. Photograph by the author.

During fiscal 1941-1942, the South Carolina Forestry Commission saw many changes, in great part due to the entry of the United States into war with Germany and Japan. Prior to the entry into the war, H.A. Smith, the State Forester, resigned his post to accept a position with the Tennessee Valley Authority in Alabama. Six foresters left South Carolina for better paying positions in other states, while five others enlisted in the armed forces following Pearl Harbor. The Civilian Conservation Corps camps in South Carolina, as in the rest of the country, were

disbanded, leaving behind unfinished projects at several of the state parks, including Cheraw, Table Rock, Hunting Island, Greenwood, Barnwell, and Kings Mountain. The Forestry Commission's continual lament for additional funding from the General Assembly, especially during the final years of CCC work, sounded more urgent as the federally funded labor pool disappeared:

Now that the only source for development work thus far provided has been cut off it is imperative that some plan for developing the parks be provided. The most serious situation in connection with the development work is the lack of funds to make the necessary surveys and planning.³⁹

Funding became an even greater issue during 1941-1942 when it became apparent that operating expenses of the parks would exceed estimates, due in part to the disbanding of the CCC camps and the additional maintenance on park buildings the State would be required to take on. In order to keep the bathhouses open through summer 1942, local governments agreed to underwrite the operating costs at Barnwell, Cheraw, Poinsett, Sesquicentennial, and Table Rock. Finally, the General Assembly authorized a special

³⁹SCFC Report (1941-1942), 10-11, 88, SCDAH.

appropriation of an additional \$14,000 in order to keep the parks open through the year.⁴⁰

While the United States' entry into the war affected staffing of the state parks, it also affected their use. While park usage again saw an increase, climbing to over one million visitors during 1941-1942, by the summer of 1942, it had become necessary to curtail park operation to day use only in six of the parks. The state parks also provided for new visitors, serving as bivouacs for enlisted men. The Forestry Commission estimated that 80 percent of visitors to Sesquicentennial State Park were soldiers, many from nearby Fort Jackson, and British soldiers used the group camps at Cheraw State Park while their ship was being repaired at Charleston. Selected state parks hosted military maneuvers, and the three coastal parks, Myrtle Beach, Edisto Beach, and Hunting Island, were garrisoned for military lookout stations.⁴¹

Of the goals and recommendations that had been set out in the previous year's annual report, in 1941-42 the

⁴⁰Ibid., 97.

⁴¹Ibid., 90-96; "A Historic Management Perspective of the South Carolina State Parks System," (Columbia: SC PRT, [1988?]).

Forestry Commission reported some progress on at least two recommendations. "Colored Areas" had been established in four areas of the state, including areas adjacent to Hunting Island State Park and Greenwood State Park (neither of which had officially opened), in the Sand Hills State Forest near Cheraw, and in the Poinsett State Forest near Poinsett State Park, but the activities allowed at these areas were limited primarily to picnicking and swimming, as there were no funds to allow for further developments of these areas. Plans had been made for two State Historical Monuments, including the General Sumter Burial Grounds in Poinsett County, which had been donated to the state and Eutaw Springs, which the Forestry Commission had approved for acquisition, but again, a lack of funding was cited as preventing the acquisition of this site. The Forestry Commission tried to convince the state legislature of the importance of preservation of the state's historic sites:

Each succeeding year brings to light other areas of historical significance in South Carolina. The existence of many areas of such nature are brought to our attention each succeeding year. Much of the historical material is being allowed to rot and decay because of improper care and maintenance. Funds are not available to carry on this very important work which deals with the record of the past history of South Carolina.⁴²

⁴²SCFC Report (1941-1942), 98-99, SCDAH.

While the Annual Reports of the Forestry Commission continually reported increased park visitation, and more recreational usage beyond swimming, picnicking, and camping, the tone of the reports could best be characterized as doubtfully optimistic. The Commission continued to report the growing numbers of park visitors and the variety of recreational opportunities available at the parks in hopes of convincing the state legislators that the new state parks were vital projects to provide to the citizens of South Carolina, and that provisions needed to be made for the African-American citizens of the state, who were, for the most part, excluded from the parks because of mandated segregation. The Commission also expressed interest in historic preservation through the identification and acquisition of the state's most historic sites. However, the tone of the annual reports in the late 1930s and early 1940s reveals a great deal of frustration that funding was not available for these important programs, and that the state park program underway was endangered for the same reason.

The contribution of the Civilian Conservation Corps from 1936 until the end of the CCC program is invaluable.

Although administered by the state through the Forestry Commission and its Division of State Parks, the CCC carried out the bulk of construction and maintenance work at the new and continually growing state parks. Throughout the period of CCC work in the South Carolina state parks, the Forestry Commission continually reminded the General Assembly of the estimated dollar value of the CCC labor, and that this work, paid for by the federal government, needed to be matched by the state government, to demonstrate that the state was interested in continuing this program. The looming war left much of the future of expanding the existing state park system in doubt, but a strong foundation had been laid through the CCC construction of sixteen state parks and six wayside areas in South Carolina.

CHAPTER TEN

LEARNING FROM THE PARKS: RESOURCES AND INTERPRETATION IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Like many of the other New Deal programs, the record of the Civilian Conservation Corps is mixed. The New Deal and the CCC provided opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Americans in a myriad of ways, from the most basic provisions of food and shelter to providing jobs and technical educations for the unemployed and destitute to providing career opportunities for unemployed professionals. Conversely, New Deal programs have been castigated for their shortcomings, especially in their failure to make equal provisions for African-Americans. The Civilian Conservation Corps is one of those programs that, in spite of its successes, has been soundly criticized in several areas, including its military overtones, the perceived shortcomings of its educational program, and the racial discrimination that echoed throughout the larger society in the 1930s. However, in spite of some of the most glaring oversights of the program, the achievements of the CCC deserve to be

celebrated and studied, as do the individual participants in the program throughout the 1930s. The CCC met President Roosevelt's dual goals of conservation of land and of men, and the results of the program and the larger successes of the New Deal can best be seen when studied at a more localized level than when viewing the program as a whole.

The legacy of the New Deal in South Carolina also includes shortcomings as well as accomplishments. The rural poor and textile workers saw only limited improvement through New Deal programs such as the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and the National Recovery Administration, but any improvement was better than none at all. Other New Deal programs in the state were burdened with bigotry, incompetence, or corruption at all levels. But the tangible evidence of the New Deal in South Carolina points to numerous successful programs that changed the landscape of the state while at the same time it improved the lives of the thousands of South Carolinians who received assistance through programs such as the Works Progress Administration, the Public Works Administration, and the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Participants and historians alike have lauded the Civilian Conservation Corps as one of the most successful

programs of the New Deal, both in terms of what the program provided for its enrollees and the long-term products they created. In addition to the short-term financial support and room and board provided at a time when many young men had few other options, and the vocational and educational opportunities that the enrollees received while serving, CCC participants often made use of their on-the-job training, either professionally or avocationally.

Architectural historian Phoebe Cutler cites one CCC alumni who patterned his residence in New Jersey after the state parks he helped create, complete with a lake and beach. Other participants at various levels of the program used the knowledge gained during their service to move into professional jobs as foresters, park rangers, or contractors, as well as using the militarily styled organizational structure of the CCC to ease the transition into military life in the Army or Navy, especially important during the war years of the 1940s.¹

CCC architecture, especially in state and national parks, also points to the success of the program. Many CCC-constructed buildings remain in state parks across the country, and many State Historic Preservation Offices have

¹Cutler, *Public Landscape*, 153-54.

documented these structures through surveys and by nomination and listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Texas architectural historians documented over four hundred extant CCC structures in Texas state parks during its 1983 celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the New Deal. One Texas state park, Bastrop State Park in Bastrop County, became a National Historic Landmark in 1997 due to the extent of the park's original development through the CCC program.² Other states, including Arkansas, Massachusetts, Tennessee, and Virginia have also listed some state parks on the National Register for their association with the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH) has recognized the value of the contributions of the Civilian Conservation Corps to the state, especially in the area of park development. SCDAH has also recognized the value of the program to the men of the state, and several programs have attempted to further document the work of the CCC boys in South Carolina and to use their work to teach South Carolinians of all ages about the Depression and New Deal in South Carolina. These innovative programs have included documenting several parks

²Steely, *Parks for Texas, 194-95; 199-200.*

in the statewide Survey of Historic Properties; the listing of three parks on the National Register of Historic Places; an educational packet of documents and photographs detailing the work of the CCC in the state for middle- and high-school students; a National History Day exhibit entry where middle-school students researched the lives and work of CCC enrollees, including interviews with some of the participants; and an exhibit and public program celebrating the work of the CCC and including reminiscences of former enrollees.

The Historical Services Division of SCDAH, working with the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SC PRT), has identified at least 377 buildings and structures related to the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the statewide survey program. In addition to these buildings are several man-made lakes, smaller structures such as water fountains and grills, and miles of park roads originally laid by the CCC. Of course, not all of the buildings have retained enough integrity to be considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, but a great many have. These surveys have resulted in three South Carolina state parks (Paris Mountain, Table Rock, and Oconee) being listed on the

National Register of Historic Places for their association with the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Poinsett State Park is eligible for listing, while other parks have individually eligible buildings or smaller districts within the state park boundary (such as the group camps at Cheraw State Park). Although listing on the National Register provides only a nominal degree of protection (from federal projects through the Section 106 process), researching and nominating these buildings and districts to the National Register has often resulted in a great deal of local publicity, and CCC alumni in the area are often consulted for both the nominations themselves and for newspaper stories, giving local residents access to New Deal history in their own backyards. In addition, these nominations more fully document the historical resources found within the parks.

The document packet prepared by the Education Service Area of SCDAH contains a brief explanation of the role of the Civilian Conservation Corps during the New Deal for both teachers and students, and provides exercises and assignments using photographs and documents, including maps, correspondence, memorandums, and various governmental forms to aid students in their use of primary documents for

historical research. The documents were drawn from files in the state archives and from the National Archives, and many of the exercises were based on educational activities at the National Archives. The project does more than teach students about the role of the CCC in their state, but also introduces them to primary document research and historical interpretation, engaging them in a study of the New Deal work program that was designed to reach young men who were close to their own age. Over eighty photographs of CCC work in state parks throughout South Carolina are included for the students to examine, along with a "photograph analysis worksheet," allowing the students to delve further into the historical events pictured than merely looking at pictures. Although the document packet has been out-of-print for several years, it is available on a CD-ROM, along with other document packets in other South Carolina subjects.³

SCDAH also sponsors the state level of the National History Day competition, and the state competition is held at the Archives and History building in Columbia. In 2000, two students from the Cheraw area entered the exhibit

³ [Robin Copp], *The Civilian Conservation Corps in South Carolina, 1933-1942*, Public Programs Document Packet 4, Columbia: SCDAH, 1990.

competition highlighting the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in building the state park at Cheraw, and they interviewed CCC alumni in Columbia and Charleston. Although the exhibit did not go on to the national competition, it did receive high marks from the competition's judges for the students' use of personal interviews and their research into how the New Deal and the CCC had impacted their local community.

When the Department of Archives and History moved into its new building on the outskirts of Columbia in 1998, one feature of the new building was a small exhibit hall, which has hosted rotating exhibits, complimented by on-line exhibits. In the spring of 2000, the exhibit topic was the Civilian Conservation Corps and South Carolina State Parks. Tara Mitchell Mielnik, then Outreach Coordinator at SCDAH, served as curator of the exhibit, and Tim Belshaw served as exhibit designer. In addition to researching the archival files in the state archives, and the various state parks files at the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT), the Outreach Coordinator spoke with some eighty alumni of the Civilian Conservation Corps living in South Carolina, and numerous relatives and friends who retained letters, books, and other memorabilia

which was included in the exhibit, along with documents, maps, blueprints, and photographs from the state archives and the state's Parks, Recreation and Tourism office.

The exhibit featured panels discussing the program in general, the daily life of CCC enrollees, the architecture and buildings of the state parks, and the experiences of African-Americans in South Carolina's CCC, while exhibiting documents including a membership card, certificates, various correspondence between local, state, and federal officials, as well as photographs of camps and projects and a variety of other memorabilia. An on-line exhibit on the SCDAH accompanied the exhibit, featuring several of the photographs on display. The exhibit featured an opening reception, with more than fifty CCC alumni and their families present. Albert Hester, historian with the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, gave a brief slide show on the importance of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the development of the park program in the state, and many enrollees gave vignettes of their life in the CCC and how it impacted their later lives. A common theme throughout the evening was that "the CCC was

the best thing that could have happened to me."⁴ The exhibit and program are a ground-breaking example of combining archival materials, oral history, material culture, and the built environment to provide public programming that examines the impact of the Civilian Conservation Corps on a state, local, and individual level.

While historians may continue to debate the true successes of the New Deal and the Civilian Conservation Corps, the men who served in South Carolina proudly point to the buildings, dams, roads, and trails in seventeen of the state parks, allowing their work to stand as testimony of their experiences seventy years ago. South Carolina's state park system has grown from those initial state parks, begun under the direction of the National Park Service and the South Carolina Forestry Commission, to a system of forty-seven parks, natural areas, recreational areas, and historic sites, administered under the South Carolina State Park System in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (PRT). The State Park Service and PRT are a direct outgrowth of the State Forestry Commission's work with the CCC in the establishment of a state park system, and PRT's

⁴The brochure and graphic panels from the exhibit are contained in the Appendix.

work in historic preservation, environmentalism, recreation, and tourism development are directly linked to the foundation of a state park system begun by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.⁵

The Civilian Conservation Corps was one of the most successful New Deal programs in South Carolina, providing hundreds of young men with employment, education, and basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter, all opportunities that were otherwise difficult to find in the depression years of the 1930s. While most of them only spent a few years in the CCC, even seventy years later these men still recall their CCC experience as one of the most valuable of their lives. And while many of them speak fondly of the projects they helped with, they point proudly to the tangible products of those projects, which still stand today. In South Carolina, the most significant of these projects are the seventeen state parks that the CCC built during the 1930s and that formed the nucleus of the state park system in South Carolina.

⁵The South Carolina State Parks website highlights the work and structures of the various parks constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps. See <http://www.discoversouthcarolina.com/stateparks/newvision.asp>, accessed 8 April 2003.

The seventeen CCC-constructed state parks all over the state provide a unique learning laboratory for a variety of subjects. Early in the life of the state park system, state forestry officials touted the parks as a place for adults and children alike to learn to appreciate nature, to study plants and animals, and learn about the state's historical treasures, while at the same time improving their physical health through outdoor recreational activities. Seventy years later, the parks still provide those opportunities, while also providing a place to study the remnants of one of the most successful programs of the New Deal in the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

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