

Civilian Conservation Corps.

Grades 7-8 (Adapt as Needed)

Prepared by the Lumber Heritage Region Educators

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Examine the Civilian Conservation Corps. program and what led to its creation and success. Consider the contributions of the program to the region, state, and country. Review the story of the Pepper Hill Fire and consider the impact of this tragedy.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

1. Geography
2. History
3. Environment & Ecology
4. Pennsylvania Core Standards for Reading/Writing in History and Social Studies
5. Connections & Conflict

OBJECTIVES

1. Students should be able to identify 3 contributions of the CCC program.
2. Students should be able to describe the significance of the Pepper Hill Fire tragedy.
3. Demonstrate how media can be used to build social and informational networks while being informative.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Materials for writing and illustration
2. *Optional - internet access*
If there is a class page, they may be able to design a “newsletter” in that format or other modern media formats if available

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

1. Local Historical Societies or PA Lumber Museum may have camp Newsletters students can view
2. https://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/PDFProvider.ashx?action=PDFStream&docID=1742263&chksum=&revision=0&docName=3_Pepper+Hill+Trail+System2013&nativeExt=pdf&PromptToSave=False&Size=1437398&ViewerMode=2&overlay=0#:~:text=To%20connect%20to%20Lick%20Island.of%20the%20Pepper%20Hill%20Fire.
3. <https://www.nwccg.gov/6mfs/day-in-history/pepper-hill-fire-pennsylvania-october-19-1938>

ACTIVITY

Students will learn about the CCC program and should be able to describe its significance.

1. Read the story of the CCC and answer the corresponding questions.
2. Have the students imagine that their class/grade is a CCC camp and they are enrollees. Individually or in small groups they should work to create their own version of a camp newsletter and schedule (this could be in the form of traditional or modern media).

They could use real-life scenarios or use their imagination for inclusion in the newsletter. *Note that camp newsletters should be generally uplifting and camaraderie is the focus*.

ASSESSMENT

Steps to check for student understanding

1. Students will present their Newsletters to the class. In addition to presenting their newsletter, students will also share with the class...
 - a. One thing they are glad they do not have to do in school that they would need to do as a CCC enrollee.
 - b. One thing they wish they did during or instead of school that CCC enrollees did.

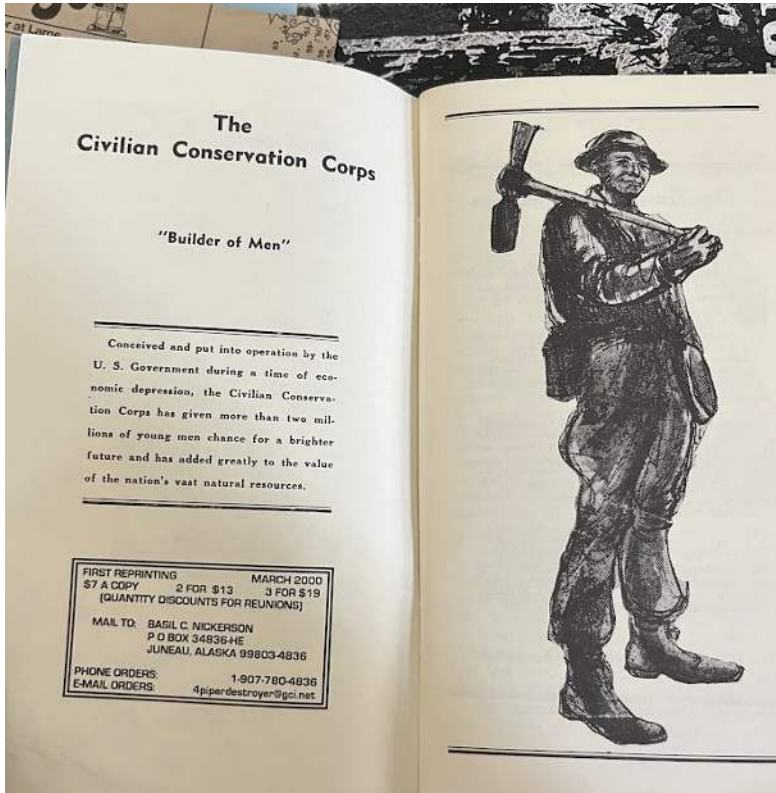
The Civilian Conservation Corps.

Throughout the 1800s and early 1900s, the logging industry practices in Pennsylvania and throughout forested areas of the country saw unprecedented destruction of the forests. The country had depleted its natural resources to sustain expansion and industrialization of the nation. By the 1920s, the land of Pennsylvania once covered with forests had seen most of those disappear. The wild region in North Central Pennsylvania (part of the Lumber Heritage Region - LHR) became known as the 'Pennsylvania Desert'.

In addition to extensive clear cutting, wildfires, flooding, and erosion debilitated the natural process of forest regrowth.

In 1929, the United States faced another problem as well. The stock market crash launched the United States into an era known as The Great Depression. Many banks, factories, and businesses closed and many people were left making very little or unemployed. Natural disasters and limited natural resources exacerbated the situation.

President Roosevelt and colleagues including Pennsylvania's Governor Pinchot created a solution they called the Civilian Conservation Corps. (CCC) program. The CCC program was established in 1933 in order to replenish and conserve the country's natural resources while providing young men with education, training, and income for their families.



It was very successful and even earned the nickname "Roosevelt's Tree Army" due to the incredible amount of trees planted (over 60 million in Pennsylvania and over 3 billion throughout the US) by about 3 million men. In addition to planting trees, these men performed many other tasks to improve forest health like wildfire fighting and prevention, soil erosion control, and flood relief. These men built camps and infrastructure still used today including roads, bridges, recreational sites and facilities including campgrounds, buildings, picnic areas, and swimming pools.

Pennsylvania had the second highest number of camps (~ 151). Many are now sites of state and national forests and parks. The LHR includes the area of over half of Pennsylvania's CCC camps. While the program was created for men ages 17-25, an additional division for veterans (mostly of WWI) was established as well.

It was written into the organization of the CCC program to prohibit racial discrimination, however at the time segregation was still legal and the

camps were segregated with black camps having more limited opportunities.

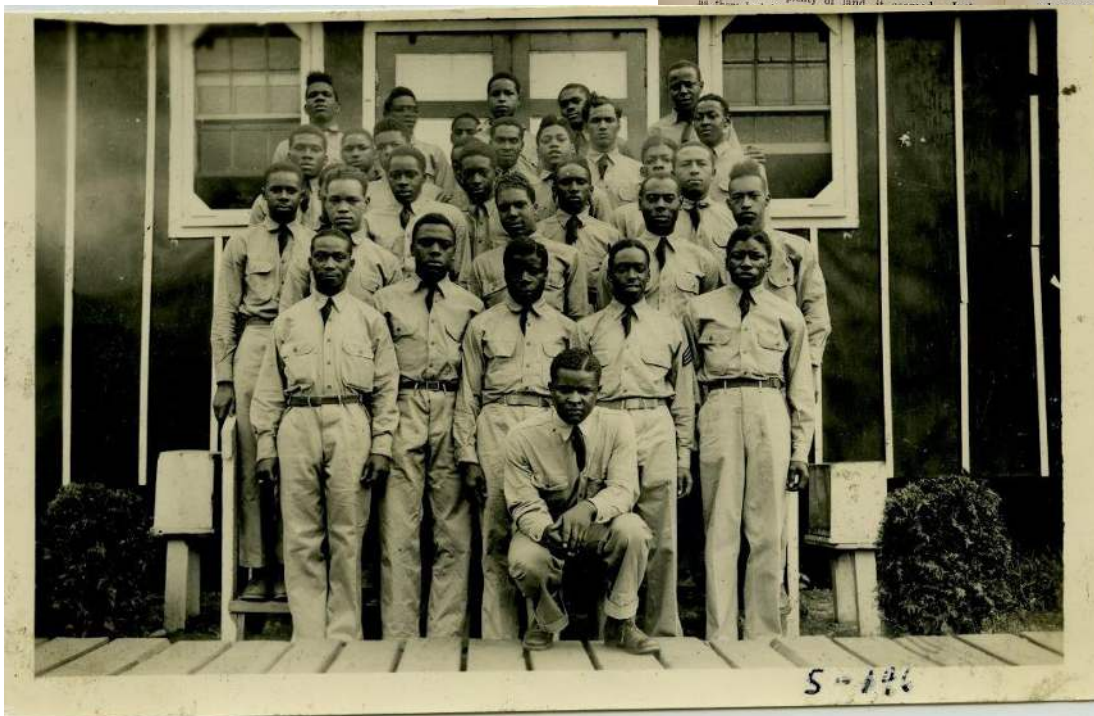
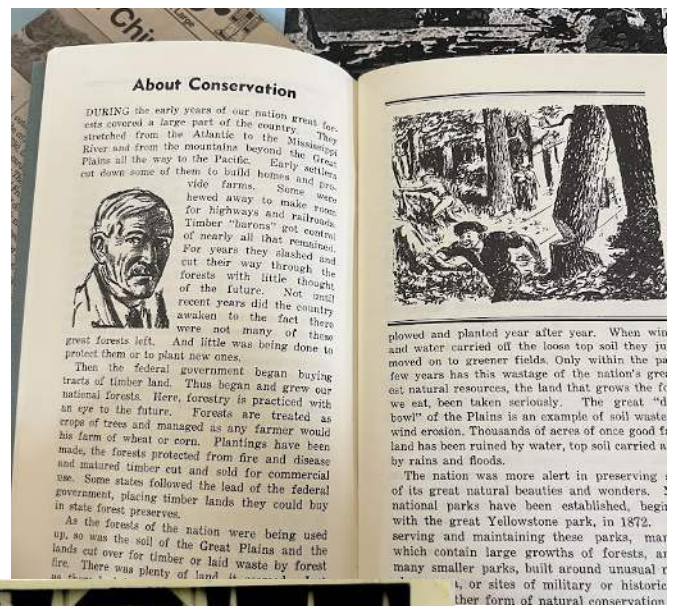
CCC enrollees had time for recreation and socialization each week. Many camps had sports teams, music, pool, or other forms of entertainment. There would also be a newsletter or newspaper published in many camps. These contained local news stories, fiction, poetry, art, and reported the work and recreational activities of the men. This activity also provided enrollees with hands-on education in English and Journalism.

Despite the many benefits to the program, there were still many hazards the CCC enrollees faced. The physical labor was often intense and fire-fighting efforts could be especially challenging. Unfortunately, as most of these men were young, inexperienced, and expected to learn on the job, tragedy struck in Cameron County Pennsylvania in 1938 when 8 men from the Hunts Run Camp (S-132) lost their lives in the Pepper Hill Fire.

Already exhausted from their efforts fighting a fire the previous day until 5:30 that morning, the Hunts Run crew was dispatched around noon to fight the fire at Pepper Hill.

Two crews worked to tackle the fire from different points, one crew being instructed to climb to the top of the mountain. This crew quickly became separated from each other as the exhausted boys climbed the steep slopes. Fire began to spread and overtook them, one group surviving by finding limited refuge on a large rock. Support from CCC members and citizens throughout Pennsylvania and the rest of the country poured in and the CCC members erected a memorial to them in Cameron County, known as "Memorial Springs". The peaceful memorial stands today along the CCC Memorial Highway in Cameron County and is a frequented picnic area. From this tragedy, training was developed and is used to train fire fighters today. The training has provided many firefighters with life-saving knowledge over the years.

The CCC program lasted nearly a decade, ending in 1942 as America's focus shifted to World War II. The program provided millions of men with jobs, training, education, and lasting camaraderie. The work done to reestablish the forests after unsustainable practices are still apparent today. Americans and Pennsylvanians regularly use recreational sites and infrastructure built by the CCCs.



Questions about the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Name _____ Date _____

Read the Story of the CCCs and answer the following questions.

1. What were the two main factors that led to the creation of the CCC program?

2. What was the nickname of the area of Pennsylvania now recognized as the Lumber Heritage Region in the 1920's? _____

3. What year was the CCC program started? _____

4. What year did the CCC program end? _____

5. List 3 things the CCCs worked on...

6. What major event marked the end of the CCC program?

7. What CCC tragedy occurred that led to a training still used for firefighters today?

8. Why do you think a young man (17-25) would have joined the CCCs? Give at least two reasons.

9. How do you think the LHR (North Central Pennsylvania) was impacted by the CCC efforts? Give examples.

10. If social media had existed during the time of the CCCs, do you think that it would have had an impact on enrollees? Describe the potential positives and negative effects of this impact. Please explain your answers.
