

Civilian Conservation Corps.

High School (Adapt as Needed)
Prepared by the Lumber Heritage Region

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Examine the factors that led to the creation and end of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Analyze the organization of and work performed by the program(s) to better understand the lasting impact on the region/country today.

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. Identify the events that led to the creation and end of the CCC program.
2. Evaluate the organization of the CCC program. Analyze and describe what would be different by today's Civil Rights Standards.
3. Evaluate and describe the impact of the CCC program on the country and the region.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Either have the prompts listed for students to choose from or teams will need to be randomly assigned/selected.
2. Internet access or other resources for research

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LL010LtBm1s>
2. https://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=1738650&DocName=PennsylvaniaCCCCamp_Map.pdf
3. 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.
4. <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/outdoorcorps/pages/default.aspx>
5. <https://corpsnetwork.org/moving-forward-initiative-the-african-american-experience-in-the-civilian-conservation-corps/>

6. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilian_Conservation_Corps
7. <https://paparksandforests.org/look-back-to-see-the-way-forward/>
8. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/0f7d5926864c45e48552b9ac525dad7a>

ACTIVITY

1. **Read the CCC Story and answer the corresponding questions.**
2. **If this, then that...**

Students will work in small groups. Each group will draw a prompt that will ask them to research and evaluate the impact of an event (or lack thereof) and how that may influence the resulting history we are familiar with today.

Suggested Prompts:

- Consider what the world/region would be like if the CCC program had not existed. Analyze and explain how this might have influenced other historical events differently.
- Consider a scenario where WWII had not ended the program in 1942 (for the sake of simplicity - we will assume that there was peace in Europe during this time period and America would not have had reason to go to war). Analyze and explain how your group would expect the CCC program to continue (and/or end) and how this could have changed the overall impact/legacy.
- Consider the legal factors that caused segregation and other forms of discrimination in the CCC program (note* today we recognize instances of discrimination that formerly were not legally considered discriminatory). If the CCC program was established today, might that program be like? Consider what aspects may be the same and what would likely be different. What kind of work would be done?
- If the early logging industry had not left this region and other parts of the country in economic and environmental distress, do you think the CCC program would have been as successful? What made this work a good fit? What other work could have potentially been done? Explain your reasoning.

ASSESSMENT

Steps to check for student understanding

1. Student groups will present their conclusions to the class and answer/discuss as prompted.
 - a. Questions to encourage student sharing:
 - i. Ask the audience if they agree or disagree with the presenting group's conclusions (encourage them to explain their reasoning)
 - ii. Ask the presenters if their group members were conflicted before their final conclusion was presented and to explain how they worked through this, if so.

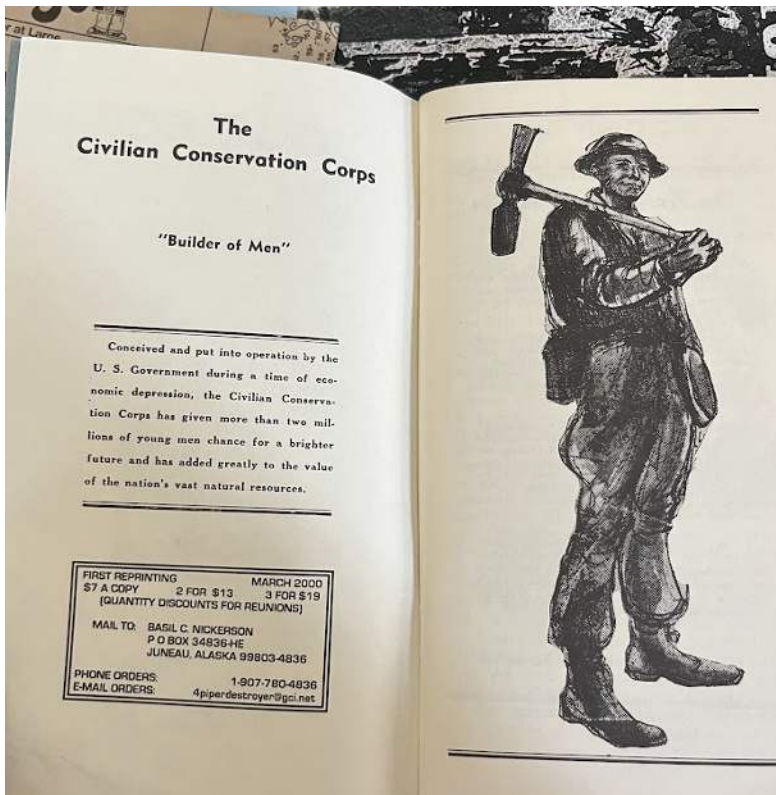
The Civilian Conservation Corps.

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 Pennsylvania, once covered with forests, had been extensively clear cut to supply a growing and industrious nation; leaving behind a barren landscape. 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 his colleagues set out to create a solution. Among these colleagues included General Gifford Pinchot of Pennsylvania with the influence of "Pennsylvania's Father of Forestry" Joseph Trimble Rothrock. A very successful part of the "New Deal" solution was the creation of a program known as the Civilian Conservation Corps. (CCCs).



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; earning the nickname "Roosevelt's Tree Army" due to the incredible amount of trees planted (over 60 million in PA and over 3 billion throughout the US) by about 3 million men. In addition to planting trees, enrollees worked to improve forest health like wildfire fighting and prevention, soil erosion control, and flood relief. They built infrastructure still used today including roads, bridges, recreational sites and facilities like campgrounds, buildings, picnic areas, and swimming pools. Pennsylvania had the second highest number of camps (~ 151). Many camps were on sites that once were part of logging or sawmill operations and now are state and national forests and parks. The LHR includes over half of Pennsylvania's CCC camp sites.

While the program was created for men ages 17-25, an additional division for veterans (mostly of WWI) was established as well. An enrollment period was a minimum of 6 months and on average the enrollees would gain 40 pounds while at the camps.

It was written into the organization of the CCC program that racial discrimination was prohibited.

However, at the time, racial segregation was not legally considered discriminatory, and the camps were segregated. While pay was the same in all camps, there were limited opportunities for black leadership and often less than equitable training and educational opportunities.

Today, there is still often less recognition of the camps and contributions made by black CCC enrollees, but this is something many seek to rectify.

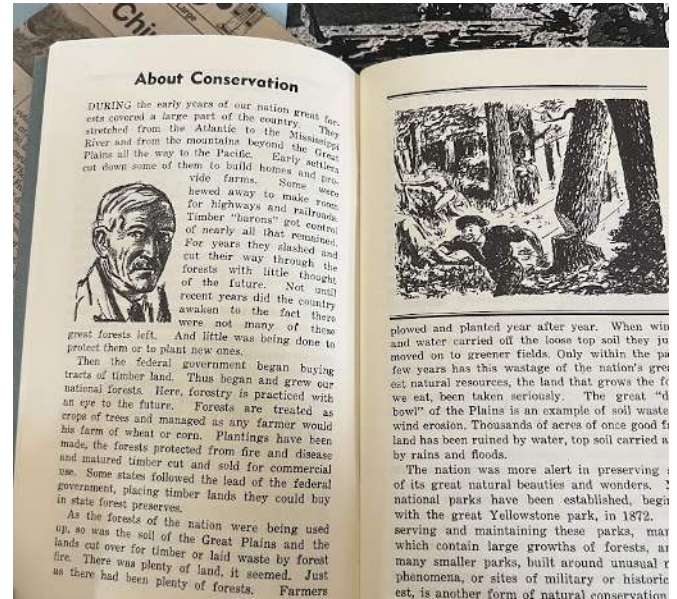
Women were prohibited from joining the CCC program, but Eleanor Roosevelt managed to implement a women's version of the CCCs, sometimes referred to as the "She She She" program which differed from the CCC program in a few ways. The women were limited mostly to domestic training and less support for the program cut it short. It lasted from 1933-1936 and benefitted over 8,500 women.

There was also a separate program for Indigenous Americans which came to be known as the CCC-ID (Civilian Conservation Corps Indian Division) which created a faction focused on federally recognized reservations and tribal lands.

The CCC program lasted nearly a decade and provided millions of men with jobs, training, education, and 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.

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. Their training and education also largely came from foresters and army, who were involved in overseeing the camp and their duties. The camps provided regular meals and on average, CCC enrollees gained about 40 pounds during their enrollment (minimum 6 months).

Upon America's entry into the second World War, many of the CCC enrollees were already well-trained, and called upon to serve in the military effort. Some of the abandoned CCC camps became Prisoner of War camps. With this new national focus, the CCC program ended in 1942, but the legacy continues to this day.



Questions about the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Name _____ Date _____

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

1. What were two 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 ended the CCC program? _____

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

8. The CCC was not to discriminate based on race. Did they accomplish this by today's standards?

9. CCC camps were often placed over old logging sites, based on what you know, why do you think this occurred?

10. List two reasons a young man might have wanted to join the CCC program.
