

African-American Youth in the Program of the Civilian Conservation Corps in California, 1933-42

An Ambivalent Legacy

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Although the Great Depression of the 1930s affected all Americans, it struck some groups harder than others. Because of competition for jobs from large numbers of jobless workers, those without experience or a specific skill found it extremely difficult to find employment. Among the groups particularly hard hit were America's young people. President Franklin D. Roosevelt responded to this effect of the depression in March 1933 by creating the Civilian Conservation Corps. The CCC, aimed at the worst aspects of youth joblessness, bore Roosevelt's personal stamp of approval and support.

Scholars of the New Deal have never closely examined the experience of African-American youth in the CCC. Those few works that address the issue focus almost entirely on racial issues; they completely ignore the conservation contributions of African-American corpsmen. This study of those young men's work in protecting and maintaining the national forests of California fills a gap in the historical record and at the same time adds to our understanding of western history, African-American history, and American history in general.

In 1930 approximately one million young people in the United States were employable but unable to find work. By 1933, the worst unemployment year of the depression, the number was up to five million, representing over a third of the nation's known unemployed.¹

The CCC was created to employ young men between the ages of seventeen and twenty-three in paramilitary work camps, where they were to undertake various conservation projects.² Robert Fechner, vice-president of the American Federation of Labor, was chosen to head the CCC. Its advisory council included one representative from each of four government departments: War, Labor, Agriculture, and Interior.³ A vital component of the CCC operation was that camps were administered by the U.S. Army. Within seven weeks after President Roosevelt had signed the corps into law, the army had mobilized 310,000 men into 1,315 camps, "a mobilization more rapid and orderly than any in the Army's history."⁴

The Department of Labor, which was responsible for keeping up the strength of the camps by providing a regular flow of men, prescribed enrollment policies and eligibility requirements. A corpsman was to be employed in the CCC for no longer than eighteen months, and his monthly salary was thirty dollars, twenty-five dollars of which was sent home to his family. In addition, a corpsman received food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and educational and recreational opportunities.⁵ Various technical agencies, such as the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the California Department of Forestry, located suitable camps, selected work projects, and supervised the work performed on the various projects.⁶

The Depression and African-American Youth in California

Government jobs and work projects were the largest source of new employment for African-American Californians during the depression years. Unfortunately, little systematic information is available about the Great Depression's economic impact on California's African-American population. Certainly, however, that population was economically desperate during that time. By employing youth, the segment of the population hardest hit by unemployment, the CCC offered vital economic assistance to the African-American community.

In 1930 the total population of California was recorded as 5,677,251, of which 1.4 percent were African-American. In October 1933, it was estimated that 413,000 Californians were jobless.⁷ In its *Annual Report of 1931*, the National Urban League estimated that in the 106 major cities in the United States, which included Los Angeles, "the proportion of Negroes unemployed was 30 to 50 percent greater than for whites."⁸ In Los Angeles, African-Americans had the highest unemployment rate of any racial group.⁹ In a 27 July 1934 article, the *California*

Eagle, the state's largest African-American newspaper, noted that African-Americans in the city of Los Angeles had occupied close to eleven thousand janitorial or similar positions in 1920, whereas in 1934, with a population increase of twenty-two thousand, African-Americans held fewer than three thousand such jobs. Even those families not directly affected by unemployment were indirectly affected by the loss of revenue to the city's African-American community.¹⁰

The law establishing the CCC contained a provision that "no discrimination shall be made on account of race, color or creed."¹¹ Yet despite instructions from National Selection Director W. Frank Persons that enrollees be selected without regard to race,¹² corps administrators in many states refused to select a proportionate share of African-Americans. At the start of the program, African-American enrollment was restricted to less than 10 percent of the national corps total.¹³ By 1935 African-American participation had reached 10 percent, which might be considered equitable, insofar as it corresponded to the proportion of African-Americans in the total population counted in 1930. But as historian Nancy Weiss points out, it was "less than adequate when measured against the disproportionate relief needs of blacks."¹⁴

Camp Assignment

Initially African-American enrollees were assigned to CCC camps without regard to race. However, because of antipathy from local communities, racist attitudes in the U.S. Army, and the usual racial fears, African-American and white corpsmen were soon separated. In this decision, as one scholar has written, "President Roosevelt concurred."¹⁵ The policy announced in July 1935 ordered: "Complete segregation of white and colored enrollees is directed. 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. Colored companies will be employed

in their own states, except where located on a military post and then within their own Corps area."¹⁶ In the summer of 1935, Ninth Corps Area Headquarters (representing California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, and Washington) in San Francisco instructed all CCC districts in California with African-American corpsmen in integrated companies to transfer them for the "formation of five colored companies in California," effective 9 August 1935. The directive also stipulated that companies with African-American corpsmen transfer the proportional share of existing company funds to the new companies.¹⁷ Throughout the remaining seven years of the corps, racially segregated camps were the norm. In 1942, when the CCC was officially terminated, almost all of the African-American corpsmen in California had at one time been assigned to one of the all-African-American companies.

African-American CCC Companies in California: 1935-42

Four all-African-American CCC companies were established in southern California during the fall of 1935, two of which were in Los Angeles County. The two Los Angeles County companies spent the fall months constructing and maintaining forest service roads. Between 1935 and 1942 there were five African-American companies located throughout the state of California: Company 2922-C, F-157; Company 2923-C, F-164; Company 2924-C, F-140; Company 2925-C, P-295; and Company 2940-C, SP-4. Letters of designation identified both the type of camp and the agency administering it. CCC projects in California were divided into four major categories: state park camps (SP), national forest camps (F), state forest camps (P), and national park camps (NP). War Department army officers managed the day-to-day operations of the camps, coordinated by a state CCC director. A civilian projects superintendent assumed responsibility for the various work projects, which were administered through the U.S. Forest Service.¹⁸

Although most CCC companies in California, which averaged about 150 men each, performed a variety of tasks, some were assigned to special work projects—priority tasks that made major contributions to California and the overall status of CCC programs. For example, in March 1937 Camp Dalton Canyon, a white camp, was selected to manufacture concrete cribbing to be used on truck trails in the Angeles National Forest. A special CCC cribbing plant turned out between three and four thousand pieces of concrete, which were used on the Monroe, Big Dalton, and Saw-Pit-Monrovia truck trails. Some of the cribbing was sent to other camps to be used in the construction of trails.¹⁹ Company 1950, Camp Coldbrook, also a white company located in the Angeles National Forest, worked on the largest campground project in the state. During the fire season of 1936 the company's suppression crew, the so-called "Fighting Fifties," was dispatched to eight different forest fires and, for all of 1936, had more man-hours on fires than any other camp in the state.²⁰

Less well-known, but nevertheless important, were the duties performed by California's African-American CCC companies. In many forests, canyons, and parks of the state, African-American companies maintained and helped to construct major parks and campground facilities. Most of the CCC camps occupied by African-American companies in California can best be described as multipurpose facilities. Each camp had between two and six project superintendents; each superintendent had a crew assigned to a particular task such as fire suppression, construction of truck trails, and telephone lines, to mention but a few. Each camp performed different types of work projects; a project usually took about three weeks. Routine work done by African-American CCC companies in California included construction and maintenance of park roads, service-truck trails, fire breaks, and hiking trails.

The African-American CCC Companies at Work

Camp San Pablo Dam

Camp San Pablo Dam was located in the East Bay Municipal Utility District Recreation Area in Richmond, California. Work projects undertaken by Company 2940-C included construction and maintenance of park roads, development and maintenance of picnic ground facilities, fire hazard reduction, park beautification, long-range watershed protection, and the fighting of forest fires.¹ The average number of men enrolled in this and other camps at any one time was 150.

Camp La Cienega

Elsinore, California, was the site of Camp La Cienega, whose men worked in the Cleveland National Forest. The men of Company 2923-C carried out numerous and diversified assignments. Major work projects included pine beetle control and eradication and containing a wild elk herd within the Laguna Plateau Reserve. The company also fought many major forest fires, including the 1935 Malibu Mountain and Brown Mountain fires, both in the Angeles National Forest; the 1936 Cajon Canyon and Lake Arrowhead and Crestline fires, both in the San Bernardino National Forest; and the North Creek and Ramona fires, both in the Cleveland National Forest.²

Camp Castaic

Camp Castaic was one of the first CCC camps established in the Angeles National Forest. It was located in the forested area of Soledad Canyon, about fifteen miles northeast of the town of Saugus, California. Like the other African-American companies, Company 2924-C spent most of its time constructing and maintaining campgrounds.³

Camp Pine Valley

Camp Pine Valley was located in the Cleveland National Forest, about forty-five miles east of San Diego. The work projects undertaken by Company 2925-C consisted of maintaining and repairing Forest Service roads and truck trails, and the construction of fire breaks.⁴

Camp Topanga Canyon

Camp Topanga Canyon, a tent facility, was established in Topanga, California, nine miles south of the community of Canoga Park. This camp had been previously occupied by two out-of-state companies. Although Company 2925-C occupied this site for only a short period, it had to assign a crew to the task of making the camp livable. This crew was also on call for fire suppression.⁵

Camp Alta Loma

Camp Alta Loma was located five miles north of the community of Alta Loma, California. The regular activities of Company 2925-C were limited because the work crews were frequently called out to fight forest fires, and as a result the company accomplished little road maintenance.⁶

Camp Kenworthy

Camp Kenworthy was one of the first CCC camps established in the San Bernardino National Forest. Although the principal assigned work projects were construction and maintenance, the most time-consuming task was fire fighting. In the first few months on site, Company 2925-C spent more time fighting forest fires than on regular work projects. Major fires included the Lake Arrowhead and Crestline, Hewitt Ranch, Sawpit Canyon, Seeley Ranch, and San Servaine Canyon.⁷

Camp Piedra Blanca

The Santa Barbara National Forest (later renamed Los Padres National Forest) was the site of Camp Piedra Blanca. While assigned to Camp Piedra Blanca, Company 2925-C carried out erosion-control projects, including removing fire hazards, cleaning up flammable debris, and constructing drainage ditches and channels.⁸

Camp City Creek

At Camp City Creek, near Highland, California, Company 2922-C worked primarily on public campground development and maintenance. Company 2922-C spent only four months at City Creek, after which all 232 enrollees were transferred to other African-American companies in California. Although the reason for the massive transfer remains vague, and the available sources provide no firm verification, community resistance could have been the motivating factor in disbanding the company. Shortly after the disbandment of 2922-C in January 1936, a California white company was transferred in. Camp City Creek remained on the CCC roster until as late as August 1941, always occupied by a white company.⁹

1. *Civilian Conservation Corps, Work Projects Reports, California, 1933-42, RG 35, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as Work Reports, with specific camps cited where possible).*

2. *Civilian Conservation Corps, Camp Inspection Reports, California, 1933-42, RG 35, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as Inspection Reports, with specific camps cited where possible).* Donald Hobart to author, 11 August 1982. Hobart is currently a historical research analyst for the state of California. He is also the official historian of the National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni (NACCCA).

3. *This information was compiled from individual camp files, California, RG 35, National Archives, Washington, D.C.*

4. *Inspection Reports, Camp P-233, Jamul, California, 12 March 1941.*

5. *The enrollees who initially filled the CCC camps of California were mostly from other corps areas. This was because the numerous work projects in the public areas of California far exceeded the available manpower. Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky, representing the Fifth Corps Area, supplied the largest number of men. Inspection Reports, 1933-42.*

6. *Work Reports, Camp P-295, Alta Loma, California, 1933-36.*

7. *Hobart to author, 11 August 1982.*

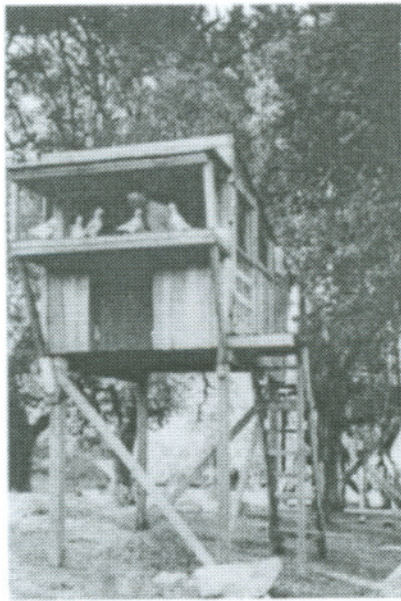
8. *Work Reports, Camp F-364, Wheeler Springs, California, 1937-40.*

9. *CCC District Roster Memorandum II, Headquarters, Los Angeles District; Inspection Reports, 1933-42.*

Although some of the African-American camps did only routine work, others were associated with specific projects. Such was the case in an area of the Cleveland National Forest. Working under foreman C. L. Hayes, Company 2923-C of Camp La Cienega gained prominence in fire suppression, using pigeons to transmit messages during fires.²¹ According to one former corpsman in the company, "None of the other companies in the district would take on this project. We wanted to be different."²² The company built the coops, raised the pigeons in the camp, and trained them to fly from fire areas to fire-suppression camps at times when other media of communication were impractical. Company 2923-C was the first company in the United States to use homing pigeons as messengers.²³

Another special project undertaken by an African-American company was the construction of a telephone line linking the Forest Service line at Descano with that of the state Division of Forestry at La Mesa, California. This project was begun under considerable handicap. The end of the enrollment period six months before had left the telephone construction crew of Company 2924-C with only three experienced men and a handful of rookies. Yet the company successfully completed the project, performing all of the work from start to finish, except for surveying.²⁴

African-American Company 2925-C both rebuilt and improved Camp Alta Loma, and also constructed the Deer Creek Flood Control Dam, located near the small community of Alta Loma, California. The corpsmen worked on the dam for months in winter conditions. The dam, known as the Deer Creek Flood Control Project, improved both recreation facilities and flood protection.²⁵ The performance of Company 2925-C was also commendable at Camp Kenworthy. Here, J. W. Salle, forestry superintendent, directed the work of constructing the first truck trails on Santa Rosa Mountain and Forbes Ranch, located in the San Bernardino National Forest. In spite of hazardous working conditions, the



One African-American CCC company used pigeons to transmit messages during fires. The company trained the pigeons to fly from fire areas to fire-suppression camps when other ways of communicating were impractical. Photo courtesy of National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni, St. Louis, Missouri.

work of these "trail blazers" was completed without a single reported injury.²⁶

Both white and African-American Civilian Conservation Corps companies made major contributions to the development, protection, and maintenance of California's national forests and parks. They completed important campground development and landscaping, and removed hazards from hundreds of miles of roads and trails. The CCC substantially reduced the forest acreage lost to fires in the state, leading to dramatic savings of timber and property. The president pointed out the benefits of the CCC to the nation generally and the nation's forests specifically in a 1938 message to Congress:

When in 1933 I asked the Congress to provide for the Civilian Conservation Corps I was convinced that forest lands offered one source for worthwhile work . . . for large numbers of our unemployed. Events of the past five years have indicated that my earlier conviction was well founded. In rebuilding and managing those lands, and in the many uses of them and their resources, there exists a major opportunity for new employment and for increasing the national wealth.²⁷

The CCC in California: The Corpsmen's Evaluation

The Civilian Conservation Corps experience benefited African-American participants in varied ways. In answering written survey and oral interview questions about their experiences years later, individual participants in the CCC testified to the program's benefits in three primary areas: employment, training, and character development.²⁸

Employment

The reason for founding the corps was, of course, to provide employment for needy youth. Former corpsmen cite the opportunity to work as clearly a major reason for joining the CCC. One CCC veteran who had been a squad leader remarked: "This was during an extreme depression in the country. No jobs were available and the money was needed to help support my mother."²⁹ A former truck operator recalled that "jobs were scarce at the time and the Three C's . . . helped my family in Fresno who needed it." "Times were extremely hard in California," declared an ex-Oklahoman, "and jobs were hard to find. I just had to have a job." A former dynamite handler commented: "I joined because of a lack of jobs. . . . One could earn his way."³⁰

Although most of the former corpsmen conceded that CCC paychecks immediately benefited them and their families, they did not all feel that employment in the corps was necessarily of lasting value. Some felt that the corps did not prepare them for their lifetime vocations. A respondent who had been assigned to kitchen duty recalled that after leaving the CCC, "I worked in a laundry starching shirts. . . . The CCC experience did not apply." A respondent who had four years of service commented: "I was a cook before I went into the CCC and being a cook in the Three C's was just another job." A retired construction worker and packing-house employee in Los Angeles felt that "the CCC did not help me at all when I looked for a job. . . . In fact, I didn't expect the work in the CCC to prepare me for employment once my CCC duty

was over." Another former kitchen worker in the corps, who later held such jobs as dishwasher, cotton picker, and waiter, noted that "I didn't learn anything that benefited me when I got out of the CCC. . . . I can say that the CCC in no way helped me to get a job." "The CCC did not prepare me for future employment," declared a respondent who had been a police detective with the Los Angeles Police Department after leaving the corps.³¹

But though many of the work projects of the CCC required only the simplest types of common labor, there were other things to be learned in the corps. Most of the respondents admitted that they had learned cooperation with fellow workers and supervisors, the proper care of equipment, the importance of hard work, and a responsible attitude toward a job.

Although there were some detractors, some of the respondents spoke of the CCC experience as a valuable asset in later years. One respondent who had learned to operate a truck in the CCC maintained that his experience as a driver was extremely important when he applied for a position with the City of Los Angeles in 1939. He recalls that "when I received a recommendation from my camp commander . . . and presented it to the city, I was hired." Another former truck operator in the corps, who also applied for a position with the City of Los Angeles upon discharge, commented that his work assignment as a driver was not a waste of time. In all respects, his experience prepared him for "a job driving a heavy-duty truck with the city for thirty-three years." He also pointed out that his experience as a truck operator was responsible for his assignment as a vehicle operator in the army during World War II. A retired teacher in San Diego, California, felt that his assignment as "an assistant to the Educational Advisor and a clerk in the Forestry Office was immensely beneficial when I was a student at San Diego Junior College."³²

Most of the respondents did not think of the CCC as a conservation program. Although they had fought fires, planted trees, built and main-

tained roads, none of the former corpsmen indicated that the work projects afforded them a view on the "outdoor life" or the conservation of natural resources. Indeed, the training they received in the corps did not influence any of those interviewed to pursue careers in conservation-related areas. In recalling the forestry work he did in the CCC in California, a former fire fighter and dynamite handler remarked: "We were just city kids doing a job that was required."³³ This seems to be the consensus view of the respondents.

Overall, although CCC veterans had mixed opinions about job training they received in the corps, most of them considered their work experience in the corps to be valuable. The CCC not only provided direct and immediate financial benefits, it enhanced future work attitudes and habits.

Training

The CCC program provided a type of formal education, which was conducted during off-duty hours on a strictly voluntary basis. The general purpose of the educational program was to enable the participant to improve himself so that he might be more employable once his service in the corps was over. Although many respondents said that the formal instruction had been informative, they also said that it had little long-term benefit. In fact, of those interviewed who had taken courses, only one thought that the CCC educational program had lasting value. He asserted that courses in conservation, photography, and especially library administration were of considerable value when he applied for a position in the San Diego school system.

But overall, the respondents did not consider the educational program to be of much benefit. One respondent remarked that although he had enjoyed the course in radio operation, it was of little value as far as developing skills necessary for entrance into the job market. A respondent who had taken such courses as law, public speaking, and American history said: "They were informative and enjoyable, . . . but how many Negroes in the 1930s got jobs in public speaking and law?"

Another remarked: "The course in first aid training did very little for me as far as providing a skill. . . . I never expected it to be [helpful]."³⁴

Character Development

Former corpsmen interviewed thought that the most important aspect of their CCC experience had been its effect on the development of character. Respondents spoke with respect of the corps' contribution to self-discipline, maturity, and ability to get along and cooperate with others. The following remarks represent a consensus opinion.

A former truck driver at Camp Piedra Blanca commented: "It was a chance to grow up and helped much in later life." A mess sergeant with four years in the corps recalled: "The CCC was a good place to be. . . . It taught me discipline and how to get along with others." Still another truck driver felt that his service in the CCC "was definitely responsible for my career, having taught me discipline and the incentive to try different things." A respondent who had performed a variety of tasks in the corps recalled that his experience as a fire fighter taught him "what real danger was. . . . It also helped me to mature and . . . to cooperate and get along with others." A former kitchen worker remarked: "I enjoyed the CCC because it taught discipline, self-reliance, maturity, and quite a few other things that I wouldn't have known otherwise."³⁵

Indeed, the chief benefit of the CCC seems to be that it developed character. Corpsmen left the service with a newfound sense of responsibility, a knowledge of how to associate and cooperate with others from different backgrounds, and a belief in the value of discipline. In fostering future vocational preparedness, the CCC was less than satisfactory; but as a builder of character, the corps was uniquely successful for its time.

Conclusion

Although the CCC was aimed at the worst aspects of the depression, it was never more than a short-term and inadequate solution. How could such a program be so admired by its former participants? Why did African-

American former corpsmen so appreciate a program that never challenged the racially discriminatory practices of its time?

In the first place, times were hard in the 1930s, and enrollees were well aware of the bleak alternatives to CCC employment. The opportunity of corps employment was especially important to African-American youth because the depression had combined with traditional racial practices to their particular disadvantage. Since African-Americans were often in dire economic straits, the direct benefits of the CCC were extremely attractive.

Second, and equally important, the CCC provided some lasting personal benefits. The corps experience taught both discipline and interpersonal skills—how to live and work with others. As one former corpsman at Camp Piedra Blanca noted: "I didn't know of anyone who got a dishonorable discharge, because we all wanted to be in the CCC."³⁶

Again, direct testimonials provide the best explanation of why most looked on the corps experience so favorably. An enrollee who was in the CCC from July 1934 to July 1935 at Camp Digger Butte, near Manton, California, said: "The CCC taught me to be patient. Everything wasn't black and white, [or] cut and dr[iefed]. . . . The sports activities such as basketball and baseball against other fellows and local communities taught me good sportsmanship." Another respondent who had worked in the forestry office at Camp La Cienega said: "I really needed help. . . . I was in junior college at the time. . . . My family needed the money and the CCC was a great help." "I really needed a job making money because jobs were scarce," wrote a former corpsman who had been stationed at Camps Bouquet Canyon and Piedra Blanca. "My service in the CCC was extremely educational. I met all kinds of people." A respondent from a family of fifteen said: "I really needed a job at the time.

My twenty-five dollars from the CCC went to my mother and she used every bit of it. The CCC was a good thing." "When I joined the Three C's in 1935," declared a former fire fighter at Camp San Pablo Dam, "times were hard here in Los Angeles; I had no money and no job. The Three C's gave me food, clothing, and shelter. The CCC was great."³⁷

By and large, the only complaints by African-American former corpsmen concerned the occasional derogatory racial jokes and remarks made by army officers and Forest Service personnel. One former enrollee recalled that at Camp Piedra Blanca the army chaplain "told a racist joke and called one enrollee a 'nigger'; but the Chaplain cried and apologized." Another respondent who had served in the Sequoia National Forest noted that on one occasion an army officer from Texas "jokingly" referred to him as "nigger boy." "At Camp Bouquet Canyon blacks were subjected to numerous racial remarks," said a respondent from Los Angeles. Overall, however, all the respondents felt that despite the occasional racial slurs, the corps was a good experience. "We had some good officers as well as a few who were not so good."³⁸

Interviewees had different opinions about segregation in the CCC. Some disliked it; others thought it to be the best for all concerned. One respondent who had served at various camps throughout California remarked that at Camp Tuna Canyon "blacks were put in a separate barracks. This camp was very desirable." "I never liked segregation," explained a Louisiana native, but "everything in America was segregated, so it wasn't any different in the CCC." A former corpsman who served briefly in Utah stated that African-Americans were assigned to one barracks and whites to another. "We didn't like being segregated, but we expected that sort of thing in Utah." "After I got out of the CCC I couldn't understand why they segregated," remarked an enrollee who had joined the corps in July 1934, but "at the time it didn't bother me because I had put the CCC experience behind."³⁹ A respondent who had

served in the corps before its segregation indicated that he was "surprised to hear of segregation in the CCC. I can't understand the need for it. . . . I lived and socialized with whites and so did other blacks."⁴⁰

In any case, the testimonials of the respondents make it apparent that the program did have a beneficial effect, at least in the state of California. Although the CCC failed to provide the enrollees with specific skills to enhance their long-term employability, it did succeed in developing healthy attitudes, renewed spirits, self-esteem, and the ability to get along and cooperate with neighbors and fellow countrymen.

But we need to recognize that the Civilian Conservation Corps was a short-term and insufficient solution for the overall problems of African-American youth in the America of the 1930s. Given that the majority of corpsmen hailed from the cities, the majority of corps assignments (e.g., tree planting, erosion control, forest development) must have seemed artificial and impractical—or at the very least, to have little relevance to their past and future lives. The enrollee was, as historian John Salmond has noted, discharged to his "home community physically greatly improved, probably more alert mentally, but with no new skills which would enable him to function more effectively in that community."⁴¹

In short, the CCC was simply too narrowly focused to meet the multiplicity of problems confronting African-American youths in the 1930s. A wider-ranging program of vocational education rather than work relief would have been vastly preferable. In the CCC, corpsmen gained no long-term job training. Once their corps duty was over, they returned home without new skills that would qualify them as workers in an increasingly industrial and technological world. Beyond that, these men's attitudes toward nature, or even the sense that they needed to have an attitude toward nature, was apparently completely unaffected by their experience in the CCC. This failure, critical then, remains a failure of many environmental organizations today. ▲

Notes

1. Paul Webbink, "Unemployment in the United States, 1930-1940," *Papers and Proceedings of the American Economic Association* 30 (February 1941): 248-72.
2. S-598, 73d Cong., 1st sess., 28 March 1933; *Congressional Record*, 73d Cong., 1st sess., 31 March 1933, 172, pt. 1:929-36, 1012-13.
3. *The CCC: What It Is and What It Does* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939), pp. 1-3; John A. Salmund, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942: A New Deal Case Study* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1967), pp. 27-30; Charles P. Harper, *The Administration of the Civilian Conservation Corps* (Clarksburg, West Virginia: Clarksburg Publishing Co., 1939), pp. 30-32.
4. Maurice Matloff, *American Military History* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1973), p. 413.
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7. California State Civil Works Administration, *Summary Report, 27 November 1933-29 March 1934*, p. 33, cited by Frances Cahn and Valeska Bary, *Welfare Activities of Federal, State, and Local Government in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1935), p. 49; U.S. Department of Commerce, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population*, vol. 2, *General Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), pp. 52, 69; Federal Emergency Relief Administration, *Unemployment Relief Census, October 1933*, Report no. 1, *United States Summary* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), pp. 94-112.
8. *Annual Report of the National Urban League, 1931* (New York, 1932), pp. 10-11, cited by James A. Fisher, "A History of the Political and Social Development of the Black Community in California, 1850-1950" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1972), p. 226.
9. U.S. Department of Commerce, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Unemployment*, vol. 1, *Unemployment Returns by Classes* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931), p. 143; Lawrence B. deGraff, "Negro Migration to Los Angeles, 1930-1950" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1962), p. 79; Rudolph Lapp, *Afro-Americans in California* (San Francisco, California: Boyd and Fraser, 1979), p. 40.
10. *Los Angeles California Eagle*, 27 July 1934.
11. S-598, 73d Cong., 1st sess., 28 March 1933; *Congressional Record*, 73d Cong., 1st sess., 31 March 1933, 77, pt. 1:929-36, 1012-1013; Calvin W. Gower, "The Struggle of Blacks for Leadership Positions in the Civilian Conservation Corps: 1933-1942," *The Journal of Negro History* 61 (April 1976): 131; Edgar B. Nixon, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Conservation: 1911-1945* (Hyde Park, New York: Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, 1957), 1:147.
12. Charles Johnson, "The Army, the Negro and the Civilian Conservation Corps: 1933-1942," *Military Affairs* 36 (October 1972): 87; Salmund, *The Civilian Conservation Corps*, p. 27.
13. Leslie Fishel, "The Negro in the New Deal Era," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 48 (Winter 1964): 115; Frank Friedel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: Launching the New Deal* (Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown, 1973), p. 266.
14. Nancy J. Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln: Black Politics in the Age of FDR* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 55.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
16. Robert Fechner to Dayton Jones, California Selection Director, 16 July 1935, Correspondence of the Director, RG 35, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
17. CCC Selection Division, Policy: Negro, General—Negro Question, California, 1933-42, RG 35, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
18. Civilian Conservation Corps, Correspondence of the Division of Research and Statistics, 11 October 1940, RG 35, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
19. "Civilian Conservation Corps," *Los Angeles District News-Courier*, 15 March 1937 (hereafter cited as *News-Courier*).
20. *News-Courier*, 1 April 1937.
21. CCC *Official Annual*, Los Angeles, California, CCC District, 1 February 1938, Ninth Corps, CCC (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: District Advertising Company, 1938), p. 89.
22. Robert D'Hue, interview with author, San Diego, California, 3 August 1985. Unless otherwise noted, all transcripts of interviews and copies of personal letters are in the possession of the author.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *News-Courier*, 1 July 1938.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*
27. See *Congressional Record*, 75th Cong., 3d sess., 14 March 1938, 83, pt. 3:3321 for President Roosevelt's message to Congress recommending a study of the forestland problem.
28. To obtain information about the African-American experience in the CCC program in California, letters and questionnaires were sent to former enrollees or family members and others who had personal recollections of the participants. Follow-up interviews were also conducted. Of the twenty-six people who responded, thirteen were former African-American corpsmen and thirteen were family members or other CCC veterans. Questions asked, both in the survey and in interviews, included the following: "Was your service in the CCC a waste of time?" "How were you and other African-American CCC members treated by nearby communities?" "What was your first job after leaving the CCC?" "Did your CCC service help you get your first job?" "What did you learn from the CCC experience?"
29. Algy F. Landry to author, 27 June 1985.
30. All interviews cited are with the author. William Nelson interview, Los Angeles, California, 9 July 1985; Willie Stovall interview, Los Angeles, California, 9 July 1985; Norman Moore interview, Los Angeles, California, 10 July 1985.
31. James F. Humphrey to author, 11 May 1985; Walter Jacobs interview, Los Angeles, California, 9 July 1985; Stovall interview, 9 July 1985; Walter Jacobs interview, 9 July 1985; Landry to author, 27 June 1985. Other enrollees had similar comments.
32. Nelson interview, 9 July 1985; Claude Pierce interview, Los Angeles, California, 10 July 1985; D'Hue interview, 3 August 1985.
33. Moore interview, 10 July 1985.
34. *Ibid.*; Humphrey to author, 11 May 1985; Pierce interview, 10 July 1985; Moore interview, 10 July 1985.
35. Pierce interview, 10 July 1985; Walter Jacobs interview, 9 July 1985; Nelson interview, 9 July 1985; Stovall interview, 9 July 1985; Cleveland Jacobs interview, 9 July 1985.
36. Pierce interview, 10 July 1985.
37. Moore interview, 10 July 1985; D'Hue interview, 3 August 1985; Humphrey to author, 11 May 1985; Pierce interview, 10 July 1985; Stovall interview, 9 July 1985.
38. Pierce interview, 10 July 1985; Nelson interview, 9 July 1985; Humphrey to author, 11 May 1985.
39. Humphrey to author, 11 May 1985; Pierce interview, 10 July 1985; Stovall interview, 9 July 1985; Moore interview, 10 July 1985.
40. Nelson interview, 9 July 1985.
41. John A. Salmund, "The New Deal and Youth," in *Essays Presented to William P. Morrell*, ed. G. A. Wood and P. S. O'Connor (Dunedin, New Zealand: Otago University Press, 1973), p. 144.