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The educational program of the Civilian Conservation Corps

James Ensign Britton

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THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
OF
THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

A Thesis
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
of
The University of Richmond

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

by
James Ensign Britton
June, 1958
APPROVAL SHEET

The undersigned, appointed by the Chairman of the Department of Education of the University of Richmond, have examined this thesis by

JAMES ENSIGN BRITTON, B. A.

Candidate for the degree Master of Science in Education, and hereby certify their approval of its acceptance.

Dr. Calvin H. Phippins
Dr. O. Kenneth Campbell
Mary J. Barbour
Dr. Edward F. Overton, Chairman

Date: Aug. 23, 1952

Dr. Wesley N. Laing
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Federal participation in American public school education began with the public school land grants of 1785. The succeeding years saw many extensions of federal aid to education, e.g., research conferences with state and local education officials with the purpose of bringing to their attention the problems of youth and to plan attacks on these problems, and publishing and distributing reports of educational accomplishments of states and localities. But, throughout this period, extending until 1933, the central government's relation to education was clear. Public education was regarded as a state prerogative. What broad controls the Federal Government exercised over certain of its funds were invariably channeled through state educational agencies. However, this traditional concept of the Federal Government's role in public education underwent a marked change, beginning in 1933 and lasting until 1943.¹

A. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It is the purpose of this study to present a broad survey of the growth and development of the Civilian Conservation Corps educational program; the extent of co-operation between federal and state educational officials; vocational placement of enrollees; and the nature of the guidance and counseling techniques employed by Civilian Conservation Corps education officials to discover the educational and vocational needs and abilities of enrollees in order to develop an educational program around these needs.

Importance of the study. When the Civilian Conservation Corps was established in April, 1933, both Congress and the President gave little or no attention to its educational implications. However, it was not long before the unique function of the Civilian Conservation Corps as an educational agency was realized. The depression had resulted in a serious problem of youth unemployment. Changes in agricultural and industrial conditions had combined to make this a problem of the first magnitude. Several million young men were out of school and had no employment. Many of them lacked any kind of training in occupational skills and previous employment experience. These needs were widely recognized and many communities moved to meet them. These
needs were most acute, however, at the depth of the de­
pression, just at the time when state and local public edu­
cational agencies were least able to expand their services
because of reduced revenues and curtailed budgets. Since
the Civilian Conservation Corps was a federal agency it
was able to provide a comprehensive educational program for
its enrollees.2

The success of the educational program was due in
large measure to the leadership of the United States Office
of Education and the Adjutant General's Office in the War
Department and to the co-operation of other departments--
Agriculture, Interior, Labor, and Veterans' Administration.
In addition, many other federal, state, and local educational
agencies co-operated in the expansion and operation of the
Civilian Conservation Corps educational program.3

Neither by statute nor Constitutional provision was
the Federal Government given power to control education in
the states. Indeed, by the Tenth Amendment to the Consti­
tution the founders of the United States implied this power
to the states, along with other powers not delegated to the
central government. In spite of these provisions, however,

2Ibid.
3Ibid.
for a period of nine years, there existed a federal education system, operating alongside that of the states and localities.

This thesis is by no means definitive. However, the writer expresses the desire that this information may help encourage further study in this phase of American education.
CHAPTER II

PURPOSES OF THE PROGRAM

A. GENERAL HISTORY

On April 5, 1933, a Government agency known as Emergency Conservation Work, was created in order to help alleviate the mounting problem of youth unemployment caused by the depression. The Civilian Conservation Corps was established twelve days later as a dependent work agency of Emergency Conservation Work. There were three reasons for the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps: (1) to provide employment, vocational training, and educational opportunities for jobless youths, (2) to make it possible for young men enrolled in the Civilian Conservation Corps to give financial aid to their dependent families, and (3) "to advance a nation-wide conservation program on forest, park, and farm lands."¹

By 1933, America had, through carelessness and waste, lost much of her natural resources. Perhaps one of the

outstanding contributions of the Civilian Conservation Corps was its bringing to the attention of the public the need for the conservation of natural resources, through a conservation program established and supported by federal, state and local governments.

The Civilian Conservation Corps eventually received an independent status when in 1937, it became the successor to the Emergency Conservation Work. It remained in this capacity until July 1, 1939, when it became a part of the Federal Security Agency, created by the President under the Reorganization Act of 1939.\(^2\)

The Reorganization Act creating the Federal Security Agency was passed in order to facilitate the eventual liquidation of the Civilian Conservation Corps. By the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 1943, final liquidation was almost completed. The closing of Civilian Conservation Corps camps was completed only after arrangements had been made to leave the work projects in the best possible condition. Other Civilian Conservation Corps equipment was transferred to the War Department, the Navy Department and other agencies. The educational program still remained under the

administration of the War Department, assisted by the Office of Education. During the last year of the educational program, the main endeavor was to provide a specific training program for the enrollee, which was not only based on his needs and abilities, but also, the needs of the nation.3

B. ACCOMPLISHEMENTS OF THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

One of the greatest accomplishments of the Civilian Conservation Corps, in the opinion of some people, was that it brought to the minds of the American people the need and value of a sound, active conservation program. The human resources were also strengthened through the educational opportunities and advantages resulting from the educational program of the Civilian Conservation Corps. For example, over 87,000 enrollees were taught to read and write.4

A further accomplishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps was the training the enrollees received in the use of heavy machinery of various types. When they left the Civilian Conservation Corps, some of the enrollees had little

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4Jennings, op. cit., p.5.
difficulty obtaining lucrative jobs with either private or government-sponsored construction firms. Many rural youths who had served in the Civilian Conservation Corps returned to the farm to continue soil conservation practices learned while in the Civilian Conservation Corps. The soil was regarded as the nation's chief natural resource, and early in the program the Federal Government and state agricultural officials, together with farm owners, were engaged in a concerted program, aimed at saving and conserving the soil.⁵

The work accomplishments of the Civilian Conservation Corps were many and varied—from ditches to large dams. However, this study is not concerned with the Civilian Conservation Corps as a public works agency. A final accomplishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps program was its bringing together the many divisions of the Federal Government and causing them to realize that the protection of natural resources was a problem common to all.⁶

In view of the data pertaining to the purposes of the Civilian Conservation Corps program, the writer detected


certain weaknesses in this agency's organization. Perhaps the most serious weakness of the organization was the fact that there was too much power delegated to the Director and not enough to the co-operating agencies. As time went on, the Director's office interfered with policies and procedures of the co-operating departments, without due regard to their established responsibilities. However, none of the weaknesses appeared serious enough to nullify the many overall beneficial results of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

C. SUMMARY

The Civilian Conservation Corps was first established as a dependent work agency under the supervision and control of Emergency Conservation Work. In 1937, the Civilian Conservation Corps became the successor to the Emergency Conservation Work. This independent status existed until 1939, when the Federal Security Agency was created and the Civilian Conservation Corps was placed under this agency's authority. The act creating the Federal Security Agency made provision for the eventual liquidation of the Civilian Conservation Corps. By the end of 1943, all organized

7Infra, p. 68-70.
Civilian Conservation Corps activities ended.

The Civilian Conservation Corps program made the cooperating agencies realize the wisdom of uniting in a program of saving the natural resources. It also brought the need for such a program to the minds of the American people. The educational program offered a wide selection of academic and vocational courses. Enrollees were given a chance to correct certain academic deficiencies. Training in the use of heavy equipment, and many other vocational opportunities were offered.
CHAPTER III

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION

A. DIRECTOR

The Civilian Conservation Corps was headed by a Director who had complete and final authority in the functioning of this agency, subject to such rules and regulations as might be prescribed by the President. Whenever real or fancied misunderstandings arose between the co-operating departments engaged in the Civilian Conservation Corps program, it was the duty of the Director to eliminate such differences and to use all of his authority to co-ordinate the efforts of these departments. During the nine-year period of the Civilian Conservation Corps, there was a total of two Directors, Robert Fechner, who served in this capacity for the first six years (1933-1939), and his successor, James J. McEntee, who served as Director until the end of the Civilian Conservation Corps. An Administrative Assistant Director had charge of the management of all activities authorized by the Director and conducted by the co-operating agencies. Responsibility for enforcing the Director's rules and regulations governing all activities of the co-operating
agencies was lodged with the Executive Assistant Director.¹

B. ADVISORY COUNCIL

There were four departments and one independent agency of the Federal Government that co-operated with the Director in the selection and enrollment of men, camp administration, and planning and supervision of work programs. (1) The Department of Labor was responsible for the selection of junior enrollees in the continental United States. The Department delegated this authority to a State Director of Selection in each state, who worked through units in counties, municipalities, and other political subdivisions of the state in an effort to obtain the names of qualified men who wished to enroll in the Civilian Conservation Corps. These state and local selection units were usually welfare agencies. In May, 1939, this power of enrollee selection and enrollment was transferred from the Department of Labor to the Office of the Director of the Civilian Conservation Corps. (2) The War Department was responsible for the physical examination, enrollment, transportation, organization, equipping, and conditioning of the enrollees. It provided them food,

clothing, shelter, medical care, and educational, religious, and recreational facilities. (3) The Department of Agriculture was responsible for Civilian Conservation Corps work projects. (4) The Department of the Interior was also responsible for the planning and supervision of work projects. (5) The Veterans' Administration was responsible for the selection and enrollment of veteran enrollees. This contingent was not to exceed ten per cent of the total authorized strength of the Civilian Conservation Corps. 2

Each of these agencies had a representative on the Civilian Conservation Corps Advisory Council. These representatives all conferred with the Director (who was the chairman of this Council) on all matters affecting Civilian Conservation Corps policies, activities, and programs. The Advisory Council never became a truly effective advisory body. The reason for this was said to be the failure of Congress and the President to establish a strong administrative office within each department which would provide necessary controls to insure adherence to the regulations that made the Civilian Conservation Corps a uniform organization. Each representative on the Advisory Council acted more as a coordinator than an administrative official. Consequently, the co-operating agencies lacked a definite hand in formulating

\[2 \text{Ibid., pp. 1-2}\]
policies affecting work programs in the areas under their
department's administrative controls. The Director had these
powers, thereby resulting in some degree of conflict and mis-
understanding between the various co-operating agencies and
the Director. 3

C. CAMP ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION

A standard 200-man Civilian Conservation Corps camp
was administered by an army officer and his staff. The camp
was organized in much the same manner as were the army camps.
The camp Commander had complete and final authority over his
camp. To assist the camp Commander and various members of
the supervisory staff, each camp had between twenty and twenty-
six rated men enrollees who filled key positions. These men
had demonstrated their leadership abilities and were recom-
mended by their work supervisors. 4

All Civilian Conservation Corps camps followed a set
pattern of physical arrangements—five wooden barracks (shel-
ter for the enrollees), mess hall, kitchen, recreation build-
ing, officers quarters, garage, infirmary, and headquarters.

3 Wirth, Civilian Conservation Corps Program of the
United States Department of the Interior, p. 5.

4 E. R. McKesson, A Handbook for Local Selection Agents
on CCC Camp Life in Virginia, (Virginia State Department of
All of these structures were located in an orderly arrangement, being identified to all by signs on the front and rear camp areas.⁵

Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees worked eight hours a day, five days per week, performing many kinds of work, most of which was devoted to the conservation of land, water, forests, parks, and wildlife. After work hours, the enrollee's time was his own. Each camp had an education building containing classrooms, shops, a reading room, and a library. The camp shops, garages, and other facilities of the Technical Services (Soil Conservation Service and Quartermaster General, for example) were available to the enrollees for vocational training when their day's work was completed.⁶

Each camp had a daily schedule of activities, which it was expected to follow. The enrollees were kept busy from reveille (6:00 a.m.) until taps (10:30 p.m.). Enrollees went to and from work in groups under their respective foremen. The enrollee was not permitted to leave camp at any time unless he first had the written approval of the camp commander.⁷

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⁵Ibid., p. 24.
⁷Ibid., pp. 15-20.
D. SUMMARY

The Civilian Conservation Corps was headed by a Director who had complete and final authority over Civilian Conservation Corps funds and activities (subject to Presidential approval). Robert Fechner was the first Director and served until his death in 1939. His successor was James J. McEntee, who remained as Director until the liquidation of the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1943.

There was a total of four major Federal departments and one agency that participated in the Civilian Conservation Corps program. These included the Agriculture and Interior Departments, which were in charge of actual work projects; the Labor Department, which selected enrollees between 17 and 23 years of age; the War Department, which fed, clothed, sheltered, and in general, was responsible for the physical and mental well-being of the enrollees; and the Veterans' Administration, which selected war veterans for camp enrollment.

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8In 1939 this power was transferred to the Director's office.
CHAPTER IV

THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM OF THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

ORIGIN AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE PROGRAM

Origin of the Program. The possibilities of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the field of education appeared in the early stages of this agency's development. A study of 183,000 enrollees revealed the fact that fifty per cent had not finished elementary school. Of these enrollees who had attended high school, there were fifteen per cent who had graduated as contrasted with thirty-one per cent non-graduates. One-half of one per cent had no schooling prior to entering the Civilian Conservation Corps. Three and two-tenths per cent had attended college (about two-tenths of one per cent were graduates—about three per cent were non-graduates). 1

A large number of these enrollees were anxious to receive further instruction in the elementary and high school subjects. Initial educational activities in the Civilian Conservation Corps were of an extremely informal nature. Generally, a camp would produce a small group of men who

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were interested in asking questions about their work or some other kind of work. The plan for an educational program received Presidential approval in 1933. The Army was given the responsibility of putting the program into effect and administering it. The program was put into operation during the winter of 1933-34. On March 31, 1934, there were 654 educational advisers working in the camps. It was the duty of the educational adviser to establish an educational program built around the needs, interests, abilities and educational and vocational background of the enrollees in his camp. As stated earlier, there existed a wide variation in the educational level of the enrollees and available camp facilities. Hence, no two camps had exactly the same educational programs.

The 1933 Handbook for Educational Advisers did much to clarify the issues of Civilian Conservation Corps education with the following statement:

The opportunity for education is offered to the members of the Civilian Conservation Corps. It is not mandatory. Company commanders will, however, point out the

advantages presented by the opportunity and will encourage the members of their command to do so.³

Thus, the educational program was not something to be forced upon the enrollee (unless he was an illiterate). However, the program was popular with the enrollees from the start. Of the 310,000 enrollees who served in the Civilian Conservation Corps during the first year of the program (1934), an estimated fifty-nine per cent participated in some phase of the educational program. Of the three million men who served in the Civilian Conservation Corps between 1933 and 1942, over ninety-one per cent availed themselves of the many opportunities and advantages offered by the program.⁴

Educational advisers were selected by the Office of Education and approved by the War Department. Regulations provided that each adviser be assigned an enrollee assistant. Provision was also made whereby the adviser would be able to draw upon the military and technical staff for instructional aid. At the same time, provision was made for limited funds and for certain recreational equipment. With such limited organization and equipment, the educational


advisers moved into the camps and, according to a statement of the Office of Education, "The greatest informal practical educational program ever undertaken by the Federal Government was begun."5

Although the Civilian Conservation Corps was primarily regarded as a work-relief organization for unemployed young men, veterans, and Indians, the educational possibilities of this agency were soon recognized. Before the end of the first complete year of the Civilian Conservation Corps (1934), nearly seven hundred educational advisers were setting up educational programs.6

In June, 1937, Congress materially changed the purposes of the Civilian Conservation Corps by providing that "there is hereby established the Civilian Conservation Corps ... for the purpose of providing employment as well as vocational training for youthful citizens of the United States who are unemployed...Provided that at least ten hours every week may be devoted to general educational and vocational training." Thus, the educational program of the Civilian Conservation Corps was finally given Congressional recognition as being one of the most important objectives of the

5 United States Senate, 77th Congress, 2nd Session, Document 216, op. cit., p. 85.
6 United States Senate, 75th Congress, 1st Session Public Law No. 163. (Approved June 28, 1939).
Civilian Conservation Corps.\(^7\)

**Philosophy of Civilian Conservation Corps Education.**

Beginning in late 1933, the philosophy underlying the Civilian Conservation Corps educational program quickly evolved the idea that the young men who enrolled in the Civilian Conservation Corps needed more than temporary employment. Those responsible for the administration of this program (primarily the War Department and the Office of Education) came to realize that the whole of camp life could and must be made to contribute to the over-all development of the enrollees. In 1934, Mr. Frank Persons (a Labor Department official during the Civilian Conservation Corps) expressed a clear concept of the philosophy of Civilian Conservation Corps education:

> It seems evident that the Civilian Conservation Corps has a real opportunity in broadening the concept and meaning of education. To set education apart from the whole of camp life as something which occurs at a particular time and place and only at that time and place would be to lose this opportunity. Periods of work and recreation and even casual relationships can become important means of acquiring adaptability and understanding and may be used for the increase of knowledge and skills. In this sense the entire camp can be a broad educational experience. The extent to which it will continue to become so depends to large degree... on the vision and energy of the supervisory personnel, from the highest administrative officials to and including all camp personnel in any leadership capacity.\(^8\)

\(^7\)Ibid.

\(^8\)United States Senate, *77th Congress, 2nd Session*, Document 216, op. cit., p. 73.
The basic underlying philosophy of the Civilian Conservation Corps program, therefore, was to return the enrollees to their communities as citizens better equipped mentally, physically, and morally for their duties, with a better knowledge of the government under which they lived. In attaining this primary objective, formal classes in vocational and general academic subjects were held. Full advantage of all Civilian Conservation Corps facilities was undertaken for the development of sound work habits, pride in accomplishment, respect for constitutional authority, and habits of orderly living. According to studies of numerous Government records and letters written by enrollees, the Civilian Conservation Corps program was successful in attaining these objectives.9

B. ADMINISTRATION AND OBJECTIVES

On December 7, 1933, the President approved an educational program for the Civilian Conservation Corps. Administration of the program rested with the War Department. Shortly after the program went into effect, the Director of the Civilian Conservation Corps requested that the Office of Education aid the War Department in an advisory capacity.

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It was specifically charged with the selection and appointment of educational advisers (subject to War Department approval) and responsibility of presenting to the Secretary of War recommendations on the outlines of instruction, teaching procedures, and other pertinent information. In addition to these two agencies were the various Technical Services (Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, National Park Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service) cooperating in the program. These bodies served in an advisory capacity in the planning and development of a sound educational program from which the enrollees could receive maximum educational values. State Departments of Education also co-operated in the program, but the educational program was chiefly a federal operation and remained so during the life of the Civilian Conservation Corps.10

Each camp had a committee on education, composed of the camp commander, project superintendent, and educational adviser. This committee planned a program for the individual camp which it felt would best meet the needs, interests, and abilities of the enrollees concerned. From a study of 973 educational advisers, it was discovered that seventy-four per cent had Bachelor's degrees, twenty-three per cent

had Master's degrees, and three per cent held Doctor's degrees. More than half of the advisers had majored in education and the social sciences during their college studies. Approximately sixty per cent had had previous teaching experience, twelve per cent had served as school administrators, while forty per cent had been in either business or industry. Thus it was that the teaching staff of a Civilian Conservation Corps camp was competent to meet the needs of the enrollees from illiterate to college level.11

The objectives of the Civilian Conservation Corps educational program were as follows: (1) To develop in each man his powers of self-expression, self-entertainment, and self-culture. (2) To develop (as far as possible) an understanding of the prevailing economic and social conditions in order that each enrollee would be able to cooperate intelligently in the improvement of these conditions. (3) To preserve and strengthen good habits of health and mental development. (4) To assist each enrollee to meet better his employment problems through vocational training and counseling when he leaves the Civilian Conservation Corps. (5) To develop an appreciation of nature and rural

The immediate steps taken to accomplish these objectives were:

(1) To eliminate illiteracy. In an average northern Civilian Conservation Corps Camp, there was an average of between three and five per cent illiterate enrollees. However, in Civilian Conservation Corps camps in Virginia, the percentage was much higher—from twenty to twenty-five per cent. Based upon studies of illiteracy in the Civilian Conservation Corps camps in Virginia, it would appear that the enrollees from the southern states were in greater need of the educational program than the enrollees in the northern states. Reports of twenty-four Pennsylvania companies of enrollees located in Virginia camps showed that a total of 132 enrollees (an average of five and one-half per cent per company) had less than five years of schooling. Of the forty-five white Virginia companies reporting, there were 1,568 enrollees (an average of approximately forty per cent per company) who had less than five years of schooling. Perhaps one reason for this difference in the average percentage of illiterate enrollees may be attributed to the fact that the Pennsylvania companies had no colored or veteran enrollees. Of the total 2,850 Virginia illiterate enrollees,

1,149 were colored junior enrollees and veterans, and 133 were illiterate white veterans. Of the forty white junior enrollee companies, there were 1,568 (an average of thirty-nine plus per company) who had less than five years of schooling. Dr. C. E. Ward, Assistant Third Corps Area Educational Adviser stated that as an Educational Adviser in both northern and southern camps, he had found the rate of illiteracy very scarce among the northern enrollees, but that the reverse was true with southern enrollees. In June, 1935, a similar study of this problem of illiteracy in the Civilian Conservation Corps was made by the Office of Education. Again, the educational disparity between northern and southern enrollees was indicated. Of the nine Army Corps Areas in the continental United States, the Fourth Corps Area, which embraced the southern states, had the largest number and proportion of illiterate enrollees—3,532 and six per cent, respectively. This was followed by the Third Army Corps, which embraced Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia, which had 1,018 and three per cent illiterate enrollees, respectively. More than fifty-one per cent of the illiterate enrollees were from rural areas; thirty per cent from small towns; and eighteen per cent from large cities. Seventy-eight per cent of the illiterate enrollees were under 25 years of age; five per cent between
26 and 35 years; and 17 per cent over 35 years.\(^{13}\)

(2) To raise the level of enrollees deficient in school subjects. By the end of 1941, eighth grade diplomas had been awarded to 125,233 enrollees, approximately 20,156 enrollees received high school diplomas, while 270 enrollees received their college degrees through the cooperation of schools and colleges respectively.

(3) To provide instruction on camp work jobs, such as heavy machinery operation, welding, blacksmithing, surveying, engineering, and construction. By the end of 1941, an estimated 2,177,946 (or seventy-two per cent) enrollees had received such instruction.

(4) To provide vocational training. This training was one of the major objectives of the educational program, and approximately fifty per cent of the educational activities were vocational. These courses included mechanics, carpentry, training in the use of all types of motorized equipment, and plane surveying. There were more than 150 types of work in which the Civilian Conservation Corps was engaged which were broken down into 300 jobs for vocational training purposes. By June 30, 1941, a total of 1,359,492 or forty-five per cent of all Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees had received such instruction.

enrollees had received vocational training.

(5) To provide training in constructive and worthwhile use of leisure time. Each Civilian Conservation Corps camp (as earlier stated) had a well-equipped educational building containing reading rooms, game rooms, classrooms, and library. One of the most important duties of the educational adviser was to show the enrollees how to make wise use of their leisure-time activities.

(6) To provide cultural and general education. Just a few of the many academic courses available were: spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, and history. Arrangements were made with many state and local school systems to take evening classes at a nearby school. By June 30, 1941, a total of thirty-six per cent of Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees had taken academic courses.14

T. G. Bennett, Educational Adviser for the Third Corps Area (Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia) summarizes the over-all objectives of the Civilian Conservation Corps as follows:

The development of a well-rounded personality; a general knowledge of everyday affairs; an appreciative understanding of the responsibilities belonging to human relationships; practical instruction in subject matter and skills and wiser use of leisure-time activities.

Thus, all of the objectives encompassed the same objective; namely, the over-all betterment of the enrollee so that when he left the Civilian Conservation Corps, he would return to his community as a useful citizen.15

C. ACADEMIC TRAINING

There were many academic courses open to enrollees: spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, English, government, and many others. All the courses were intended to help the enrollee finish elementary and high school. Classes were attended five days a week, between the hours of 6 and 9 p.m. Each enrollee had an opportunity to study any course he selected regardless of whether or not it was in camp or a nearby school. By special arrangement, correspondence courses were available to the enrollee at little or no cost. Also, his chosen course was supervised by several of the camp's teaching personnel.16

Classes were held in the camp educational building. By the end of 1941, a total of 101,125 enrollees had been taught how to read and write while 30,510 additional enrollees had either completed their elementary, high school, or college studies. Of the slightly more than 3,000,000 men who served in the Civilian Conservation Corps, an

15Ibid.

estimated ninety per cent participated in academic and vocational classes.\(^{17}\)

The interview between adviser and enrollee was the first stage in organizing an educational program around the latter's needs, interests, and vocational and educational background. This was an all-important step. If an instructional program was to be built around the needs of the enrollee, a complete study of the individual was therefore required. After determining the needs of the enrollees, the educational adviser drew upon the help of all officers, and technical workers in the camp, in the preparation of an educational program. Having mobilized these resources for educational purposes, the next step was that of organizing classes on a sound and interesting basis. Courses were outlined on a three-month basis (to correspond to the enrollment periods). All courses were blocked out by the committee on education. Plans were made for preparing the proper lesson divisions several weeks in advance. If the subject could not be completed in three months, then an advanced course of three additional months was planned. A small certificate of merit was awarded to enrollees who satisfactorily completed each unit of study.\(^{18}\)


\(^{18}\)Ibid.
Because the educational program was based upon enrollee needs, educational level, and camp facilities, no two camps had the same type of program. For example, twenty-five per cent of the Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees in the Seventh Corps Area (embracing the region just west of the Mississippi, from Minnesota, south through Arkansas) were high school graduates, whereas only eight per cent of the enrollees in the Fourth Corps Area had completed high school. The basic educational principle of each program was the same however; namely, to return the enrollees to their communities as better citizens. 19

In order to insure more effective teaching in every camp course, the advisers, in many camps developed special training for instructors, foremen, and enrollee educational assistants. The New England Corps Area Educational Adviser describes the nature of these special training courses as follows:

In the main, adviser-teacher get-togethers took place once each week. The adviser, having started the ball rolling with a few apt remarks, by way of confirming the general objectives of Civilian Conservation Corps educational programs, the floor is thrown open for a common pooling of experiences. Teacher after teacher takes advantage of the opportunity at this point, to get particular problems of his threshed out. A free give and take of critical comment ensues, and finally,

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a tentative solution of a hitherto vexatious snag has been worked out. Thus, another step has been taken in the direction of a more adequate educational program.20

In these training conferences, instructors were also shown how to keep the proper records of the enrollees' work. Daily records and merit rating systems served in many camps to stimulate initiative and persistence. Camp members were vitally interested in the progress of their development. The construction of a bulletin board bearing the names of enrollees, together with their educational and recreational activities, served in numerous camps as an effectual stimulus to educational work. In training the camp teacher, it was essential to point out to him the many ways in which he could reach his students more effectively and rouse his interest in those courses that he needed. Thus, through properly organizing and planning for education in the camp, the educational adviser realized that the over-all betterment of the enrollee was the chief objective. In organizing this program, educational advisers mobilized every resource of the Civilian Conservation Corps.21

The academic and vocational program in each camp was

20Oxley, loc. cit.

"The Educational Program in the CCC," Record Group 35, loc. cit.
under the over-all direction of the camp commander, who was charged with prescribing a balanced educational program for his camp, so organized and conducted as to supplement and take full advantage of the work projects and educational activities of the particular camp. In doing this, the commander was assisted and advised by the camp educational committees. From studies of camp life and interviews with former Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees, it would appear that the educational adviser and camp supervisory personnel were in actual charge of the program. The camp commander was usually so preoccupied with other camp activities, such as work projects, that he left the educational program, for the most part, in the hands of the camp educational advisers and other personnel. 22

The educational advisers received much co-operation from schools and colleges. Whenever and wherever possible, local school officials made their facilities available to the enrollees. The colleges and universities lent members of their faculty to come into the camps for lectures and other educational activities. The Director of the Civilian Conservation Corps announced to the press (January 13, 1941) that 126 colleges and universities had aided Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees by the scholastic year, 1940-41.

This aid included scholarships, remission of fees, part-time jobs, and similar types of assistance, thereby making it possible for 303 enrollees to continue their college studies. The great majority of these enrollees were honorably discharged from the Civilian Conservation Corps in order to devote their full time to their studies. Over 250 high schools and vocational training schools were also co-operating with Civilian Conservation Corps educational officials, not only by providing classrooms and shops, but also providing instructors for evening classes in the camps and nearby schools. At the start of 1941, over 7,500 enrollees were receiving scholastic or vocational instruction at nearby schools. The departments of education in forty-one states and the District of Columbia granted elementary, high school, and college credits for work done in the camps.23

D. VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Vocational training was considered one of the major objectives of the Civilian Conservation Corps educational program. An estimated forty-nine and five-tenths per cent of all educational activities were classified as having vocational objectives. Most of the enrollees had received little or no vocational preparation prior to their entry into the

23Jennings, op. cit., p. 7.
Civilian Conservation Corps. It was therefore necessary to train the enrollees for the jobs they were called upon to perform and to train them for jobs which they might secure upon their discharge from the Civilian Conservation Corps. In brief, this type of training may be defined as vocational training.  

Vocational training was voluntary and informal. Foremen gave practical instructions and demonstrations while the enrollees were actually at work. This was classified as on-the-job training. Volunteer teachers met evening classes. In some cases, a college or vocational school sent instructors into the camps on certain nights of the week. Subjects ranged through scores of occupations, the four most popular of which were: auto mechanics, camp cookery, forestry, and mechanical drawing.

In only a few schools throughout the country did young men have such an opportunity to "learn by doing" as was offered by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The work programs of each camp supplied unlimited possibilities for training the enrollee along practical lines. There were more than one hundred major types of work in which the

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Civilian Conservation Corps was engaged. These may be broken down into more than three hundred jobs for training purposes. As space does not permit a complete listing of these jobs, the writer presents five classifications of vocational training in the Civilian Conservation Corps:

(1) Training received while at work, such as truck and tractor driving, surveying, and road-bridge building.

(2) Related training given in camp classrooms after the work day was over. These courses included radio, photography, theory of surveying, forestry, soil conservation work, public grounds development, etc.

(3) Camp shops--here were taught such courses as welding, carpentry, and motor repairs.

(4) Nearby schools offered various vocational training opportunities for Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees. It must be stated again that no legal requirements were responsible for such co-operation between local school officials and Civilian Conservation Corps officials. Rather, it existed only at the pleasure of either or both parties and could be withdrawn at any time.

(5) Civilian Conservation Corps central repair shops--a limited number of enrollees who had shown special aptitudes were chosen for training in motor mechanics at these shops. All major repair and overhaul of Civilian Conservation Corps motorized equipment was performed at these shops. By the
end of the fiscal year, June 30, 1941, there were fifty-five central repair shops located throughout the country. 26

Vocational classes were held between the hours of 6 and 9 p.m. (except on Saturdays and Sundays). During the summer, many camps devoted an hour to classes on one or two mornings each week. Thus, field work and class work activities were closely integrated, thereby offering a well-rounded vocational training program. 27

In 1939, a study of the vocational curriculum revealed that 249 different vocational subjects were being taught in Civilian Conservation Corps camps. Over seventy per cent of the enrollees were enrolled in twenty-one major courses which included: bookkeeping, shorthand, typing, office practice, business management, electricity, housewiring, radio service, carpentry, masonry, cabinet making, general agricultural studies, soil conservation, forestry, auto mechanics, blacksmithing, welding, retail merchandising, surveying, drafting, telephone line work, plane surveying, and tractor operation and mechanics. This list reveals the richness of the vocational program and the many

26 Jennings, op. cit., p. 6.

opportunities offered the enrollees.\textsuperscript{28}

Job training soon became an integral part of vocational education. A report of the Department of Agriculture conducted in 1939 and covering 947 Department of Agriculture camps revealed an average of six technicians and foremen per camp who were giving more than eight hours of instruction per week training enrollees while the latter were actually on the job. This training included proper work habits, technical skills, manual dexterity, and an understanding of the reasons or purposes of the work. For these same 947 camps, an average of four technicians and foremen spent an average of four and one-half hours per week within the camps, conducting classes, each of which had an enrollment of twenty-five. Thus, class work and field work were integrated. Much time between individual enrollees and foremen was also devoted to a better understanding of the work. This was known as off-the-job training and was conducted on both the foreman's and enrollee's free time.\textsuperscript{29}

During 1941, the job training program was further intensified and expanded in line with the expressed needs


of national defense. One way in which this was accomplished was the enlargement of full-time schools and shops in an effort to train a larger number of Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees as auto mechanics, radio operators, cooks, and bakers. The demand for cooks and bakers in the armed forces at this time was so great that camps in the western section of the country lacked sufficient personnel in this area. Hence, it was necessary for the Civilian Conservation Corps to double its training program for cooks, bakers, and junior camp officers. In the fifty-five central repair shops, where Civilian Conservation Corps motorized equipment was repaired, an average of 500 enrollees was assigned to work alongside skilled mechanics. Before the end of 1941, a program was under way to construct classrooms at each of these repair shops. Vocational courses extended from three weeks to two months, with each of the Civilian Conservation Corps schools having a yearly enrollment of 1,100 enrollees. Thousands of these Civilian Conservation Corps-trained personnel played an important part in the defense efforts of the nation—either in the armed forces or defense industries.30

The Civilian Conservation Corps also established twenty-six radio schools and trained enrollees to become

radio operators and maintenance men at the rate of about 500 per year. Most of these enrollees found immediate use for their talents in the armed forces, Civilian Conservation Corps inter-camp communication staff, private radio industry, or as field operators in forest fires and other emergencies. The military forces were also benefited by the thirty-six subaltern schools which trained large numbers of young men for camp officer duties and by the sixteen Civilian Conservation Corps clerical schools which were turning out trained personnel to handle important administrative positions.31

This expansion of the regular vocational training program of the Civilian Conservation Corps was effected in co-operation with the Office of Education and local school authorities. By the end of 1941, a total of 266,759 enrollees had completed units of vocational training courses. The great majority of these enrollees entered the armed forces.32

That the quality of vocational education was excellent was evident, not only in the increasing demands for Civilian Conservation Corps-trained youth in the armed forces, but in industry as well. Concerning the ability of Civilian

31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
Conservation Corps-trained youth, W. T. Piper, President of Piper Aircraft Company, had this to say:

Up in my part of the country... the Civilian Conservation Corps had the idea of teaching a lot of welders. We have hired a good many of them and found them satisfactory. We have used a large number of Civilian Conservation Corps young men in our plant... It strikes me that the Civilian Conservation Corps has a set-up which can be of immense value to the whole aircraft industry.33

From a different branch of industry, here are two statements written by supervisors in the employ of Marshall Field and Company (merchandisers):

I appreciate this opportunity to state that a wonderful job has been done with these young men in the Civilian Conservation Corps. For rigid and willing adherence to orders, for educational and vocational training, these boys were not to be surpassed.

The outstanding quality which I observe in Civilian Conservation Corps boys in my group of workers is their confidence in themselves without any semblance of arrogance.34

These and many other business and industrial officials found in the Civilian Conservation Corps the medium of training they sought for their employees. It was basic work-training, combining proper work methods, industrial safety, good work attitudes, and mental and physical conditioning. Each Civilian Conservation Corps enrollee received actual on-the-job experience. He was taught the proper way to use all types of tools. He was trained to operate a truck,

33 ibid., p. 12.
34 ibid., p. 13.
tractor, or heavy motorized equipment. He was conditioned through hard work and daily calisthenics, along with good food, regular medical care, and regular living habits. The vocational training program of the Civilian Conservation Corps, developing to a higher degree the special skills learned by the enrollee, made employers anxious to hire Civilian Conservation Corps-trained men. Thus, the enrollee was prepared to return to his community in much better condition than when he had left to join the Civilian Conservation Corps. Moreover, he was taught a skill that would insure him chances for obtaining good employment.35

D. ARTS AND CRAFTS IN THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

Creative leisure-time activities. An unusual feature of the Civilian Conservation Corps educational program was the emphasis placed upon informal types of education, including arts and crafts, dramatics, debating, and music. All camps provided instruction in health, first aid, and safety. Officers, foremen, and instructors in most camps attended leadership-training and teacher-training classes. A total of 87,842 lectures (delivered in most part by teachers and professors of nearby schools and colleges) was presented in the camps in one year. Numerous educational films were also shown. For the enrollee who wanted

35Ibid.
to read, each camp had a well-equipped library. About forty per cent of the enrollees borrowed books dealing with many different topics—from fiction to science. Many camps also published a camp newspaper.36

By the end of 1936, there were approximately 425,000 enrollees (between seventeen and twenty-three years of age) living in Civilian Conservation Corps camps scattered throughout every state in America. Since many of these camps were isolated from even small towns, the men were unable to attend movies, dances, or other usual types of activity during the long winter evenings. Instead, they were forced to spend their leisure time in the camp buildings where they were more or less thrown on their own resources.37

In order to assist the enrollees to utilize their leisure time and to prepare themselves for larger opportunities while in camp, greater emphasis was placed on that phase of the educational program devoted to creative leisure-time activities. An important segment of the program dealt with the arts and crafts. They were introduced in the course of the first few months of the educational program in the New England States. The first craft introduced was


the making of rustic furniture. This required only a few tools and the wood was obtained from the nearby forests. The enrollees showed considerable interest and often equipped the recreation hall and other camp rooms with furniture of this type. In some instances, the enrollees were able to sell the furniture they made.38

Tools and a limited supply of leather were then sent into sixty New England camps so that leather work could be introduced. The results were gratifying, for the enrollees showed great interest and began making key containers, wallets, pocketbooks, belts, book covers, and brief cases. In addition to the available ordinary leather, some Boston firms made it possible for the enrollees to obtain (at a very reasonable rate) lizard, snake, alligator, and ostrich skins, thereby making the leather work more varied and attractive.39

The third craft to be introduced was metal work. Enrollees made ash trays, bracelets, letter-openers, bowls, lamps, and book ends. Copper, brass, pewter, aluminum, and wrought iron were the metals used most widely. Since tools and materials for this craft were rather expensive, metal work was not fully developed. Model making, wood carving, block printing, and weaving were also introduced into the camps, but, unfortunately, met with little

38Ibid.
39Ibid.
success. 40

Dramatics were especially helpful in raising the spirits of the men, many of whom had been depressed and demoralized from unemployment. A dramatic production utilized the artistic abilities of almost every man in camp. Such a production called for scenery preparation, music, costumes, and stage properties. One camp in Connecticut produced several plays and presented them to audiences in some of the larger cities of the state. 41

Besides having a therapeutic value, these activities provided pleasurable leisure-time activities for the enrollees. To assist enrollees to continue their work in the arts and crafts and dramas, the educational adviser provided the men with information on schools and other educational institutions where they could receive further instruction when their term of enlistment had expired. Thus, provision for the following up of leisure-time activities of the enrollees was provided in much the same manner as the follow-up services for the enrollees who took academic and vocational instruction. 42

All camps provided instruction in health, first aid, and safety. At all times, mental and physical hygiene were stressed in lectures delivered by camp medical authorities.

40 Ibid. 41 Ibid. 42 Ibid.
and other supervisory personnel. Upon entrance into the Civilian Conservation Corps, the enrollee was carefully examined by Army doctors. A study of 109,671 enrollees conducted by the Surgeon General's office revealed an average weight increase of eleven pounds. Another study by this office revealed the fact that in the average time of one year the enrollee spent in camp, the rural enrollees showed more of an increase than did urban enrollees, and that the colored enrollees gained more (nine pounds) than the white enrollees (six pounds).43

Safety programs were an important part of camp life. Weekly safety meetings were held and safety instruction was given while on the job. Various safety bulletins and posters were placed on the camp bulletin board and each enrollee was required to know camp safety regulations. All camp officials worked closely in the advancement of safety campaigning. No opportunity to advise and counsel enrollees on the subject of safety was neglected.44

A good example of the manner in which the higher educational institutions helped the enrollee to enjoy and make better use of his leisure-time activities was that

shown by the Extension Division of the University of Virginia to the enrollees of Camp 8, Sand Spring, Lyndhurst, Virginia. To those enrollees who were interested in art, the University of Virginia lent prints of some of the world's greatest masterpieces. In addition, visiting professors from this college delivered lectures of all types. A third example of the co-operation shown by the University of Virginia to this camp was the encouragement given to enrollees to organize a journalism class. Shortly after the establishment of this class, a camp newspaper was published.45

D. GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING IN THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

Vocational Guidance. Organized vocational guidance services (as used in the Civilian Conservation Corps) were of comparatively recent origin, dating back to the work of Frank Parsons in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1908. His book, "Choosing A Vocation," outlines the proper steps to take in choosing a vocation. The formula was simple—man analysis on the one hand, job analysis on the other, and the bringing of the two together in the interest of an intelligent

45 Joe Wade (ed.), The Spring Owl, 1:5, (Publication of the 351st Company, Camp 0, Lyndhurst, Virginia), August 29, 1934.
choice. Under the work of Parsons, the vocational guidance movement received formal recognition.46

Parsons knew what was needed, but when he went to the psychological laboratories for guidance and counseling techniques, he found that they had little to offer. It was not until after World War I that a vocational guidance movement developed. The work of the American Council on Education (beginning in 1923) stimulated tremendous interest in the work of measuring vocational interests, and encouraged experimentation in constructing adequate vocational information monographs, such as Crawford and Clement's "The Choice of an Occupation," and W. E. Parker's bibliography entitled "Books About Jobs."47

A newer approach to modern guidance was the clinical method, developed as the result of research efforts of applied psychologists, who, for the most part, were not concerned with the vocational guidance movement as such. Briefly, it was a study of the individual in relationship to occupational adjustments—his capacities, abilities, needs, interests, and character traits in relation to occupational requirements. It was an attempt to individualize


47 Ibid., p. 16.
vocational guidance service to meet specific life needs. This method was used by Civilian Conservation Corps educational officials, and with noteworthy success.48

Between 1933 and 1942, the concept of guidance held by many educators was that guidance was a method by which the educational program could be continuously and effectively reorganized. It was a method of determining the needs, interests, abilities, and opportunities of each individual. Guidance was scientific in its insistence that complete and authoritative information be obtained. Vocational guidance emphasized the human idea, insisting that this information be used in a personal, kindly, and understanding way.49

This concept of vocational guidance parallels that concept held by Civilian Conservation Corps educational officials. For example, Educational Advisor Stanley W. Parker (Company 174, Stafford Springs, Connecticut) defined vocational guidance as an effort "to place each man in the situation for which he is best fitted by ability, needs, interests, and educational and vocational background." Howard W. Oxley (Director, Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Education), emphasized the importance of vocational guidance

48 Ibid.

in meeting individual needs, interests, and skills.  

Guidance Efficacy. The efficiency of camp advisory services depended upon how well the adviser knew the enrollees to be served. He had to know their needs, desires, abilities, aptitudes, special talents, educational and vocational background, and all factors of a problem nature, such as health, work capacity, temperament, and social and non-social traits. From this description of guidance requirements, it is apparent that nearly everything that could be learned about the enrollee would help complete the picture which would permit educational advisers to guide the vocational development of the enrollee more effectively. In order to insure the effectiveness of the guidance program, the adviser used achievement tests, cumulative record cards, rating scales, aptitude tests, vocational interest tests, and personality measurements.

Another description of guidance requirements was that of Adviser J. L. Turnage (Company 380, Kennedy, Texas), who believed that the type of guidance requirements was one in which the individual was looked upon as a "case" for analysis, examination, evaluation, and final diagnosis, with

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51 Ibid.
advice given which amounted to nearly the same thing as a doctor's prescription, with the same reservation that just as one was not required to follow the doctor's advice or have his prescription filled, neither should the enrollee be obligated to follow the vocational counselor's advice if he was not convinced of its value. Most of the enrollees were quite sensitive about their weaknesses, and consequently, the adviser had to conduct the interview with the enrollee in such a manner as not to disparage the enrollee concerning his weaknesses. Yet, he had to obtain a clear picture of the needs, interests, and abilities of the enrollees in order to prepare an educational program from which they could derive the maximum values.

Guidance Procedure. Guidance procedure actually began with the selection and enrollment of enrollees. In general, the guidance program included an orientation phase (three days) to adjust the new enrollee to camp life; a systematic counseling program conducted by the educational adviser and other qualified members of the supervisory staff; the assignment of men to work and educational activities in

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52 Ibid.
accordance with their needs and abilities; a periodic evaluation of enrollee progress and an attempt to place the enrollees in jobs after they left the Civilian Conservation Corps and to follow them up in order to assist their readjustment.\textsuperscript{53}

During the first three days in his camp, the new enrollee had an opportunity to become acclimated to his new surroundings; to meet the supervisory personnel and other enrollees in order to have the functions of different departments explained; to learn to mix with other enrollees; to familiarize himself with camp rules and regulations, and, in general, to make observations that would help him in his adjustment to camp life. Whenever he had a question, he could go either to the educational adviser or to some member of the supervisory staff.\textsuperscript{54}

The work assigned to the men varied with the particular type of camp--Forest Service, National Park Service, Soil Conservation Service, etc. However, in a single camp there was a variety of jobs to which the enrollee could be assigned--such as tree planting, forest fire prevention, insect and tree disease control, timber marking and surveying, and many more such tasks. Insofar as possible, the adviser

\textsuperscript{53}Civilian Conservation Corps, \textit{Annual Report:} 1939, p. 46.

\textsuperscript{54}Virginia Department of Public Welfare, \textit{Annual Report:} 1942, p. 12.
helped the enrollee select one of these jobs which would be of maximum value to him. However, each enrollee was expected to learn how to use a pick ax and shovel.55

The educational progress of each enrollee was evaluated periodically (there was no set time). Records of each man's background, camp educational progress, and any other pertinent data were kept in the office of the educational adviser. The results of each interview, personal accomplishments of the enrollee, and other information on significant camp activities were recorded on the enrollee's cumulative confidential record. The Civilian Conservation Corps educational program as well as every other camp activity which benefited the enrollee was the result of a comprehensive guidance program constantly carried on with the enrollee, and whenever needed, by a member of the supervisory staff. The real measurement of the effectiveness of vocational guidance and counseling in the Civilian Conservation Corps, however, must be reflected in: the morale of the enrollees; the amount and quality of the work performed; the extent to which the enrollee attempted to better himself through participation in the educational program of

the Civilian Conservation Corps; and the extent to which the enrollees were able to secure employment upon their return to Civilian life.56

Sound work habits, the learning of a skill, nourishing food, medical care, and other dividends of the Civilian Conservation Corps increased the morale of the enrollees. As one employer said "...these (former Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees) are the best disciplined, most courteous men that have come into our plant...they are all workers."57 More than ninety-one per cent of all enrollees participated in an organized educational class or activity. As one example of the Civilian Conservation Corps work accomplishments, Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees were able to protect 25,000,000 acres of farm and range land against destruction by erosion. What did this mean to America? No nation could defend itself, or even exist for long, unless it had an abundant and continuing food supply. And no nation could produce its food unless it took care of its soils. The writer could find no accurate figures regarding the actual number of men obtaining employment upon discharge. The best estimates indicated that by 1941, out of every three men who were discharged from the Civilian Conservation

56Howard W. Oxley, "Education in Civilian Conservation Corps Camps," pp. 3-5.

Corps, two were employed within thirty days.\textsuperscript{58}

The educational advisers, and other members of the camp supervising staff who were responsible for the growth and development of a successful vocational guidance program, dealt with many earnest and eager young men. Realizing the fact that the depression had made many enrollees realize their educational and vocational weaknesses, the educational adviser and other members of the supervising staff spared no efforts to help enrollees find employment upon their return home. An accurate record system of the enrollee's camp progress, as well as the types of work for which he was best suited, was maintained. Before leaving the Civilian Conservation Corps, enrollees were encouraged to write letters to prospective employers back in their respective hometown communities in an effort to determine if work was available for them. In some cases, camp authorities also wrote to business firms and private enterprises, in an effort to seek job placement for the enrollee.\textsuperscript{59}

To assist in the work of satisfactorily helping enrollees adjust to community conditions and in helping them locate work, advisers in several Corps areas fostered the formation of community guidance and placement councils.

\textsuperscript{58}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{59}Howard W. Oxley, "Education in Civilian Conservation Corps Camps," \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 10-11.
In Buffalo, New York, for example, Civilian Conservation Corps educational advisers and local officials worked out a plan to reach more than 4,000 former Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees through follow-up programs. In Boston, a placement agency was initiated for enrollees. It was successful in helping many former enrollees find work. In Rhode Island, a state-wide study was made of the vocational needs of thousands of former Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees, with the ultimate aim of helping them find employment. In the Fifth Corps Area (with headquarters in Columbus, Ohio) the Corps Area Educational Adviser organized follow-up agencies in eleven counties of Ohio and in seven Indiana counties. In these areas, local officials of the State Employment Service worked closely with camp educational advisers in following up the activities of former Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees. An indication of the value of the vocational guidance program of the Civilian Conservation Corps may be found in the letters of former enrollees to their former educational advisers and other Civilian Conservation Corps officials. Space does not permit the presentation of all of these letters. However, the following letter is typical of those written by former enrollees:

The Civilian Conservation Corps has greatly changed the outlook on life that I had twenty months ago. I am no longer discouraged and easily beaten. I believe that
I can find a position when I leave camp and hold it as well as the man who is working next to me. The vocational guidance received in the Civilian Conservation Corps has given me self-confidence and new ambition to succeed.60

C. COUNSELING TECHNIQUES

Educational advisers sought to adapt counseling and guidance techniques to the particular needs of the individual camp situation. The technique of interviewing enrollees was one which received much careful attention. One educational adviser wrote that in his particular camp:

I feel it necessary to learn some specific details about the enrollee's section of the country from which I expect to be able to guide and direct the individual. This information can be obtained only when the individual is more or less unaware of what is wanted with such material.61

The interview served two purposes; to establish rapport with the enrollee and to permit the enrollee to do most of the talking.62

Adviser T. W. Coke wrote that, in order for the interview to be successful, "it must reveal some trait or

60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 Erickson and Hamrin, op. cit., pp. 34-36.
quality that may be of the most benefit to both the educational adviser and the enrollee." The enrollee should be encouraged to face frankly his problems and to react to whatever information the adviser was able to obtain. The latter's attitude toward this information was of the greatest importance to the educational and vocational guidance of the enrollee.

Sandford Sellus, Sixth Corps Area Adviser, gives a very good description of what constitutes successful counseling techniques:

There is no uniform procedure, but there are a few principles to be observed. The adviser should be a good listener and encourage the man to talk as much as possible. The adviser must not show immediate reaction to the enrollee's statements. Immediate approval or disapproval will tend to make him say what he thinks the adviser wants him to say rather than what he really thinks. A natural sympathetic interest in what he has to say is desired. The adviser should build on the man's interests and make suggestions that may be of help to him. A detailed report on the case should be made up after the interview.

Based upon the preceding and other replies of educational advisers, the following characteristics of successful counseling techniques were: (1) The educational adviser should attempt to establish rapport with the enrollee. (2) The adviser should continuously emphasize the positive

\[63^\text{Howard W. Oxley, loc. cit.}\]

\[64^\text{Howard W. Oxley, "Counseling and Guidance in the CCC," loc. cit.}\]
possibilities rather than negative faults of the enrollee.
(3) The adviser should assist the enrollee in his vocational planning, his preparation for a vocation, and in analyzing the results of tests and other sources of vocational insight.
(4) The adviser should stop at a logical, pre-planned (if possible) time and not be over-solicitous. (5) There should be a summing up of what has been said. The interview should not be left dangling, with much having been said and nothing accomplished. (6) The enrollee should go away with a definite program from which he could actually accomplish something, and (7) some conclusions should have been made, although everything proposed during the interview need not have been definitely decided. 65

F. SUMMARY

Initial educational activities in the Civilian Conservation Corps were of an extremely informal nature. Due to the fact that so many enrollees lacked sufficient educational and vocational experience to secure employment, and to the desire of many enrollees to continue their studies, a comprehensive educational program was approved by the President in 1933. The program was placed under the administration of the War Department, aided by the Office of Education, which served in an advisory capacity. On March 31,
1934, actual operation of the program began.

The educational program was supported and completely controlled by the Federal Government. However, the Federal Government and state educational systems co-operated during the entire program.

The development of an educational program from which the enrollees would be able to obtain maximum educational values, was the chief responsibility of each camp educational adviser. Due to varying educational levels and available camp facilities, no two camps had the same program. This program was prepared by the camp educational committee, composed of the educational adviser, camp commander, and the project superintendent. The educational program formulated by this committee was subject to the approval or disapproval of the camp commander.

Educational classes were held after work hours. Lesson topics were prepared in advance. Arrangements were often made to use the adjoining schools in the evenings for classes. More than ninety per cent of all enrollees participated in the educational program.

Vocational training was considered a major objective of the program and was chiefly concerned with teaching the enrollees a skill that would help them find employment when they returned to their home-town communities. As was the case with academic training, participation was not mandatory. The hours of study were similar to those of academic
courses.

An unusual feature of the educational program dealt with the arts and crafts, dramatics, and other creative leisure-time activities. The University of Virginia did much to help enrollees in nearby camps to make wiser use of their leisure time.

Guidance and counseling played an important role in the educational program. Each enrollee was interviewed and from this interview, the educational adviser prepared a program of instruction that would best meet the needs of the enrollees.
CHAPTER V

LAST YEARS OF THE PROGRAM

A. LIQUIDATION OF THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

Initial steps in the liquidation of the Civilian Conservation Corps began on July 2, 1942, and were nearly completed by the end of 1943. The accomplishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps liquidation proved very difficult due to the expansion of its program during the nine years of its existence and due to the fact that most of the key personnel had left or were constantly leaving for military service and other war services.¹

On February 5, 1942, there were thirty-six Civilian Conservation Corps Camps in Virginia—twenty-two white camps, twelve colored camps, and two camps for veterans. By July 1, 1942, there were less than half the number of camps than in the preceding year. On August 3, 1942, the last of these camps was closed, marking the end of all Civilian Conservation Corps activities in Virginia. It may be of interest to note that Virginia had the second largest number of camps in the United States, being surpassed only by North Carolina.

¹Wirth, Civilian Conservation Corps Program of the United States Department of the Interior, p. 1.
when the closing order was received.  

The closing of the Civilian Conservation Corps was characterized by the contraction of its former expanded and intensified educational program into the following four phases: (1) Basic training in which the enrollees were developing the physical strength, sound character, and maturity that was necessary to fit them either to enter the armed forces or secure a job in private employment. According to many military authorities, educators, and employers, this phase of the educational program was the keystone, and the indispensable contribution the Civilian Conservation Corps was rendering to the nation's young men; (2) On-the-job training was integrated with the actual work operations of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Most of this training was similar to that received by Army engineer troops—construction of roads, trails, and bridges, and many similar activities; (3) Vocational training—this included national defense training courses conducted in co-operation with state and local school systems. During 1942 alone, 266,759 enrollees completed units of vocational training courses. (4) The final phase of the Civilian Conservation Corps education and training program involved remedial work with

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academic deficiencies. During the last several years of the program (1940-42) greater emphasis was placed on remedial training. Military and defense efforts required large numbers of young men from the camps. As a consequence, the Civilian Conservation Corps enrolled a much younger group (largely from rural areas), with a lower educational level and less work experience than in previous years. That Civilian Conservation Corps, state and local educational authorities realized the need for remedial training may be attested by the fact that towards the end of the program, forty-seven states and the District of Columbia were co-operating in helping the enrollees remove their academic deficiencies.3

B. GENERAL SUMMARY

The Civilian Conservation Corps was first established as a dependent work agency under the Emergency Conservation Work organization. In 1937, the Civilian Conservation Corps was granted an independent status. All records of the Emergency Conservation Work organization were transferred to the Civilian Conservation Corps. The latter organization remained in this independent status until 1939, when it became a part of the newly-created Federal Security Agency, as a step in the eventual liquidation of the Civilian Conservation

The Civilian Conservation Corps was headed by a Director who had complete and final authority over Civilian Conservation Corps funds and operations (subject to Presidential approval). During the nine-year life of the Civilian Conservation Corps, there were two Directors, the first such official being Robert Fechner, who served in this capacity until his death in 1939, and James J. McEntee, who served as Director until the end of the program.

The Civilian Conservation Corps had an Advisory Council, composed of one representative from each of the following co-operating Federal subdivisions: Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior, Department of Labor, Department of War, and the Veterans' Administration.

The first two departments were in charge of the actual work projects; the Labor Department selected the young enrollees until 1939, when this function was transferred to the Office of the Director; the War Department looked after the enrollee's physical and mental well-being through the so-called "housekeeping functions"—providing food, clothing, shelter, educational, religious, and recreational opportunities, and medical attention. The War Department was responsible for paying the enrollees every month, handling their allotments, and providing transportation. The War Department was also charged with camp administration and
operation. To the Veterans' Administration was delegated the function of selecting the quota of veteran enrollees.

The Advisory Council was the theoretical advisory body of the Civilian Conservation Corps. However, its usefulness was quite often diminished as the result of Mr. Fechner's forceful personality.

The good food, guidance, outdoor work, and learning how to live with one another did much to better the morale of the enrollees, many of whom had been quite discouraged as a result of the depression. Learning how to handle heavy equipment proved to be of great value to the enrollees when it was time for them to leave the Civilian Conservation Corps and seek employment.

The growth of the educational and training program of the Civilian Conservation Corps was so remarkable that enrollee education and training were soon recognized as among the major objectives of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Initial educational activities in the camps were of an informal nature. Generally, a camp produced at least one small group of men who were interested in asking questions about, not only their own work, but other types of work as well. Usually the Army officers or work supervisory personnel would get these men together and answer their questions. However, this was not enough, and a plan for an amplified Civilian Conservation Corps educational program was
approved by the President on December 3, 1933. The entire program was placed under the administration of the War Department. A short period intervened until the Director of the Civilian Conservation Corps requested and secured the services of the United States Office of Education to aid the War Department in an advisory capacity. On March 31, 1934, the educational program began.

The educational program was not mandatory (except for illiterates) and yet, at the end of the first year, an estimated seventy per cent of all enrollees were taking part in some phase of this program. A vocational training program existed for the enrollee who wished to learn more about the equipment to be operated. For the enrollee who was deficient in academic courses, the camp offered academic courses, the nature of which ranged from simple to complex. Many thousands of enrollees finished either (or both, if that was the case) elementary or high school; some 270 enrollees received college degrees. In 1934, a total of 2,479 illiterates learned to read and write as contrasted with 11,697 illiterates who learned to read and write in 1941.4

Whenever the camp was near a public school, arrangements were made for the enrollees to take evening classes in that school. However, such co-operation existed at the

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4Civilian Conservation Corps, Annual Report: 1941, p. 11.
pleasure of either federal or state educational officials. There were no legal requirements. Most of the local school officials made their school plants and playgrounds available to the enrollees.

Colleges also co-operated by lending professors and offering extension courses which could be obtained by the enrollee at little or no cost. Scholarships were also awarded. By the end of 1941, over 126 colleges and universities were co-operating with Civilian Conservation Corps educational officials.5

C. CONCLUSIONS

Based upon a study of the data pertaining to the Civilian Conservation Corps, certain weaknesses were observed. These deficiencies and lack of effectiveness were due in large part to the following factors: (1) The superimposing of detailed procedures and supervision by the Civilian Conservation Corps Director’s office over those co-operating Federal departments charged with the operation of the Civilian Conservation Corps program, without due regard to the established responsibilities of these departments, and the already well-planned, tried, and established methods and procedures necessary to carry out these responsibilities. (2) The

5Jennings, "8 Years of CCC Operations, 1933 to 1941," pp. 6-7.
inability of the Advisory Council to function as a truly effective advisory body. (3) The use of two financial agencies—namely, the Treasury Department for regular functions, and the finance officer of the War Department for the Civilian Conservation Corps, caused unnecessary additional work. (4) The Director of the Civilian Conservation Corps assumed more administrative control of the camp programs and towards the end of the Civilian Conservation Corps he was interfering with the responsibilities of the departments in the management of their activities. This later became even more involved by superimposing the additional administrative controls of the Federal Security Agency. Their direct instructions, inquiries, or requests for information pertaining to the departmental responsibilities became more and more time-consuming and involved. These instructions added nothing beneficial to the already well-planned and operated organizations. (5) Many camp work projects could have been performed more economically with fewer than the standard 200-man camp. This was considered the smallest camp that could be used to justify the dual overhead cost. If more than 200 men were needed to perform a work project, the rest had to be a multiple of the 200-man unit, and by this rigid procedure much excessive overhaul resulted.

D. FURTHER STUDY NEEDED

Only a broad picture of the Civilian Conservation
Corps is presented in this thesis. It would require several theses to present a definitive study. Most of the sources used in this thesis are Government publications. Therefore, the careful researcher will be obliged to spend some time in Washington.

While in Washington, if the student consults the records of the National Archives and Library of Congress, he will find a wealth of material. To make these records more readily available for the use of Government officials, scholars, and investigators, the Archivist of the United States in 1941 directed the establishment of a systematic program to secure data. This includes provision for the compilation of preliminary checklists and inventories. After the material has been more carefully studied and arranged, they will be eventually replaced with final inventories. Since 1941, this program has been completed, and it is comparatively easy to find most of the records of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

In addition to the National Archives and Library of Congress, other sources include the records of each of the departments that co-operated in the operation of the Civilian Conservation Corps.
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VITA

James Ensign Britton was born January 31, 1928, in Cleveland, Ohio, the second of three sons. He attended elementary school in Cleveland, and Kress High School, in Kress, Texas. However, before he finished high school, he volunteered for the Air Force, serving for approximately two years, from 1945 to 1947. While in the Air Force, he completed his high school work by taking United States Armed Forces Institute courses.

In 1948, the writer entered Wayland College, in Plainview, Texas. The following year, he transferred to the University of Richmond (Virginia) and in 1951, he received the B. A. degree with a major in Education. He began graduate work in education and history at the same institution in the summer of 1953.

His first teaching position was at Reedville High School from 1951 until 1953. In the session 1953-54, he taught at Mariott High School, in King and Queen County, Virginia. From 1954 until 1957, he taught seventh grade at Highland Springs Elementary School in Henrico County, Virginia. Beginning with the session 1957-58, he has been appointed assistant principal of Tuckahoe Elementary School in Henrico County.

In June, 1949, the writer married Willie Mae Pitman, a registered nurse. They have no children.