

The Civilian Conservation Corps at Blooming Rose 1934-1938

by Terry Primas

The Roarin' Twenties came to a screeching halt in October of 1929. The stock market crashed, fortunes were lost, and unemployment skyrocketed. The Great Depression in the United States had begun.

When Franklin D. Roosevelt accepted the nomination of the Democratic Party in 1932, he promised "a new deal for the American people." By the time of President Roosevelt's inauguration in March of 1933, the Great Depression was at its lowest point. Banks had failed and farms were lost. One out of four workers had no employment.

The government's response, that "new deal", was to throw an alphabet soup of programs at the economic woes, creating the TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority), SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission), FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation), FHA (Federal Housing Administration), FCC (Federal Communications Commission), REA (Rural Electrification Agency), SSB (Social Security Board), and the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps). There were others.

These federal agencies and programs worked on their respective sectors of the economy. They were successful enough that all of the New Deal programs mentioned above are still with us more than seventy years later. All that is, except for the Civilian Conservation Corps. It probably had the most personal impact of the federal programs. The CCC lasted from 1933 until World World II, which depleted its ranks. It was the wartime economy that brought the country back to full employment.

The CCC

The Civilian Conservation Corps had as its main mission to engage unemployed youths in "simple work, not interfering with normal employment, and confining itself to forestry, the prevention of soil erosion, flood control ...[but] more important however, than the material gains, will be the moral and spiritual value of such work...We can eliminate to some extent at least the threat that enforced idleness brings to spiritual and moral stability." With these words, President Roosevelt set the direction for the CCC, with a goal of temporarily employing 250,000 men by the early summer of 1933.

These young men, who came to be called "boys", were between 18 and 25 years old, unemployed, and unmarried. It was required that their families be on relief of some kind. The boys enrolled for a period of sixth months. A boy could re-enlist for additional sixth month terms, up to a maximum of two years. He was expected to work

a 40 hour week, reside at the camp, and obey all of the camp rules. In return, a boy was paid \$30 a month, a dollar a day. Of this monthly salary, \$25 was sent home to the boy's family. The remaining \$5 was for use at the camp canteen, personal needs, and an occasional a trip to town.

Another type of enrollee was soon authorized. This group was designated as "LEM" or "Local Experienced Men". The Forest Service, which planned and supervised most of the camp projects, could not handle the flood of boys. The LEM, who were older and experienced in woodcraft and building, supervised the work crews. Camps were established in other parts of the country for Native Americans and veterans of World War I.

This had more impact on a family then than it might seem today. Not only did it provide cash to the family but it reduced by one the number that needed to be fed and clothed. The government provided room and board to the enrollee. Just as important to the government, it also kept an idle youth off the street - or gravel road.

The major effort of the CCC in Missouri went into soil conservation and forestry work. This included reforestation, gully bank sloping, seeding eroded lands, and terracing. Several state parks were developed. More than

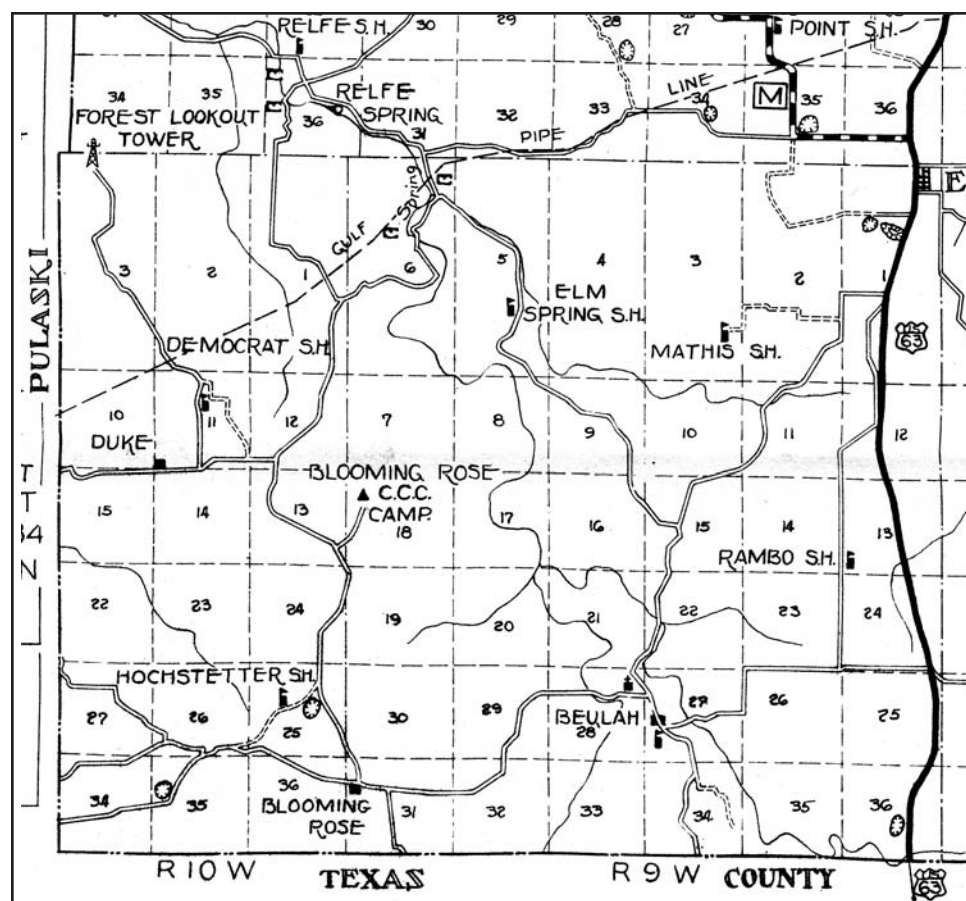
102,000 young men from the state were enrolled in camps that averaged 41 each year and a financial obligation of more than \$71,900,000.

Camps were sprinkled throughout most of Missouri. In 1938, there were about 37 main camps in the state, with 13 of the camps in counties adjacent to the Mississippi River. Fifteen camps were located in the interior Missouri Ozarks.

Blooming Rose

In our south central Missouri area, a CCC camp was located in southwestern Phelps County, near Duke. It was named Blooming Rose, after a small community situated a few miles to the southeast. Its official designation was U. S. F. S. Camp F-9, Company 1732. As particular projects in this rather large area were developed, side camps were sometimes established. This cut down the long travel time from the main camp. Side camps were established in Roby, Palace, and north of Licking, all in Texas County. There was also a camp on Fort Leonard Wood.

Camps were continually established and disbanded, as projects were started or were completed. Enrollees were then reassigned to other camps where numbers were down due to expired terms of enrollment. Fifty-six boys were brought by truck from Camp 3756, located six miles from Cabool, to



The location of Blooming Rose CCC Camp in the southwest corner of Phelps County, adjacent to Pulaski and Texas. It is from the 1935 Phelps County Tourist Map, the production of which was a WPA project.



CCC arm patch
Courtesy of John Bradbury.

Blooming Rose in October of 1935 when that camp was closed. They were just in time for the Anniversary Celebration of Camp 1732 at Blooming Rose.

More than one thousand guests attended the Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, October 18, 1935. Entertainment began with boxing matches between men from Blooming Rose and the camp at Bunker. After the fights, a barbecue was held at the picnic park. After a picture show, a round dance was held in the mess hall to the music of the St. Louis Night Owls. Fred Clark's Orchestra provided music for the concurrent square dance in the recreational building. Revelers called it a night at 1:30 a.m.

Camp 1732 came into being at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, in May of 1933. The 200 original enrollees were from St. Louis and Southeast Missouri. After physical and disciplinary training, the group was transferred to a camp site at Shady, Arkansas, 15 miles west of Mena in the Ouichita Mountains. They constructed their camp and carried out a program of road building and telephone line construction for 16 months. The camp was abandoned in October of 1934 and, after a brief stay at Jefferson Barracks, Camp 1732 was transferred to the Blooming Rose area.

Camp administration and policy was carried out by Army officers. Camps designated as F(orest) had a Project Superintendent assigned by the Forest Service. For example, the 1937 Official Annual lists three First Lieutenants as Army Officers and five Forestry Technical Personnel as the professionals in charge of operations.

The Commanding Officer and the Project Superintendent planned the work for the camp. The Forest Service area in which Camp 1732 was located comprised 450,000 acres. A priority activity was fire patrol.

Little is known about the projects and accomplishments at Blooming Rose during that first year of 1935. Apparently, some preparatory work on the camp had been done by the Forest Service in 1934 in anticipation of the arrival of Camp 1732. However, it was primarily up to the boys to turn the scrub oak ridge into a functioning

Our government had a three fold purpose in establishing CCC camps throughout the nation providing opportunities for almost a half million men and boys who are now enrolled for CCC duty. This three fold purpose was first to give relief in the form of food, clothing and money; second, to afford opportunity for training for better citizenship; and, third, to provide manpower in the great work of conservation of our forests, soil, etc. It is well that we reflect upon these purposes and see how we measure up to our government's expectation. Every man in our company is fed, clothed and housed in a very satisfactory manner. We are at work six hours daily in an effort to properly care for the forests in our camp area...Are you going to be satisfied to work six hours per day and to receive your thirty dollars per month together with food, clothing and shelter? Or will you seek to make the most of your educational opportunities?

The Oak Tree, September 1935

work camp. By October of 1935, nine barracks were providing shelter, the smallest having 25 occupants.

In keeping with the mission of fire control, a fire tower was constructed about four miles north of the community of Duke. The tower was reached

by a rough wagon road called Dogwood Trail. The boys graded and otherwise improved this access to the fire tower and, with a later extension, it became the southern end of County Highway J. The men on duty at the Duke tower were housed in a tent. No doubt, they were looking forward to the completion of permanent buildings. The Forest Service plans called for quarters for the men on watch, a garage, and a rest house.

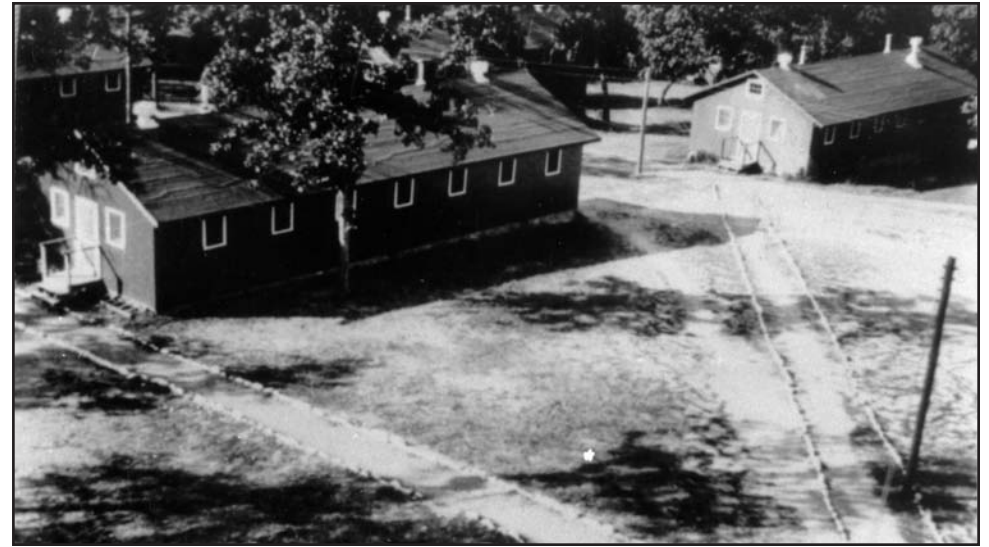
Fire control necessitated towers and fire trails. One such early trail, Project 361, ran from near the hamlet of Clementine northwest for three miles, skirting Slaughter Sink.

The year 1935 also brought a scare. One of the enrollees from Licking contracted cerebro-spinal meningitis. He was sent to the Station Hospital at Jefferson Barracks. A strict quarantine was imposed on the men who had contact with the stricken enrollees while the rest had limited contact with outsiders. No more cases occurred.

"Plenty rushing" work in 1936

The winter brought snow, temperatures at 14 degrees below zero, and a much appreciated light plant.

Early spring of the year brought an unusual number of fires. The worst day of the fire season in 1935 saw "an astounding number of seven fires" on



A view of several of the nine barracks buildings with the completed rock outlined sidewalks. Courtesy Western Historical Manuscript Collection—Rolla.

March 15. In 1936, there was an average of eight calls a day in March, with as many as twenty in one day. At one time, every man in camp was fighting fires.

Another permanent steel tower, called Knotwell, was erected three miles west of Newburg. The location was on a high bluff which cut off the approach from Newburg. A road was constructed from the south to the site of the tower.

Many improvements were planned to spruce up the camp: a fish pond, parking lot, swimming pool, and fin-

ished sidewalks. The editor of *The Oak Tree*, the camp newsletter, asserted that "we feel sure that all of the members of this company will cooperate to the fullest extent in making this camp the "show" camp of the District. It has the natural lay-out, trees, a rolling terrain and picturesque surroundings. All it needs is a little labor and some systematic planning and work."

The Blooming Rose boys, in addition to local projects, were running projects at side camps at Licking, Rolla, and Palace.

At Licking, work was "plenty rush-

Meeks

Greg Warren

Country Corner Accounting

Stadium Restaurant

Smith Turley Law
Office

Dianne Linenbringer



ing." Work was started on a new dwelling house to be occupied by the Nursery Superintendent and his family. The enrollees were helping to establish the State Nursery and its tree transplanting program. A water system was completed in March. Two million pine and locust trees were baled and sent to camps in the surrounding territory to be transplanted. It was the duty of an enrollee called Miller, Jr. to keep the birds from eating the pine seeds by shooting them.

However, turkeys were not among the birds being shot. The newsletter editor remarked upon the excitement caused in the camp at Blooming Rose

when a wild turkey hen was spotted near camp, possibly nesting nearby. Turkeys were seldom seen in the 1930s. Snakes, on the other hand, were common in the camp. No less than fifty copperheads were killed in and around the camp during April and May.

Midyear saw the completion of a new building for educational purposes. A new educational adviser and assistant for Company 1732 joined the staff. The newsletter published a motivational editorial about the educational program.

A camp educational report in April revealed that only eighteen enrollees had completed high school and that

more than fifty per cent of the men had not completed the eighth grade. The average age of the men in camp was just over 21. Few men had participated in General Forestry, Road Construction, and Safety courses previously offered to leaders, truck drivers, and machine operators.

The new educational team proposed an ambitious list of new course offerings. Whether it was due to the exhortations in the newsletter or the larger and varied range of subjects, enrollment in courses certainly picked up.



At left is the Roby Fire Tower on Highway 17 in Texas County. It is typical of the towers the CCC built. However, it seems the Roby tower predates Blooming Rose and may have been constructed by the Forest Service prior to 1934. The house and garage above serves the Roby Tower. It was built by the boys from Blooming Rose and was typical of the quarters built at the towers they constructed near Duke, Newburg, Fairview, and Licking. Photos by Terry Primas.

**Education Program
July, 1936**

- Archaeology
- Blacksmithing
- Bookkeeping
- Agriculture (Poultry)
- General Surveying
- Cooking
- Photography
- Glee Club
- First Aid
- Radio
- Forestry
- Safety
- Algebra
- Correspondence Course
- Journalism
- Typewriting
- Auto Mechanics
- Picture Show Operation
- Penmanship

George Berry

Bales Construction

Rocky Top Kennel

Tracie and Linda Storie

Shelden Plumbing
and Electric

Roger Harrison



This is a view along the main road of the camp. The large building in the background is the Forest Service Quarters. The Forest Service and the Army operated the CCC camps. Courtesy of Western Historical Manuscript Collection—Rolla.

A chicken raising project began (Agriculture) with the purchase of 200 baby chicks. The class hoped to show that chickens could be raised at a profit in the Ozark region. (Tyson must have been watching.) Four typewriters were acquired and scheduled for use among twelve students. In June, the twelve men in the Radio Class erected two 40 foot aerial towers, one on the Officers' Quarters and the other on the Hospital. An aerial stretched 107 feet between these two points. The transmitter was located in the Officers' Quarters.

Ninety-five books were delivered from the CCC's traveling library. Readership jumped in May with more than a hundred books read and almost as many magazines. Four daily newspapers were available, also.

Although the towns in Pulaski and Phelps began getting telephone service as early as 1905 (see "News of 1905"), the rural areas in the Blooming Rose neighborhood were left out of the modernization. (In fact, electricity didn't come to Duke until the early 1950s.) A telephone line from Big Piney Lookout to Rolla was completed which was 35 miles in length. The men set 1454 telephone poles.

Enrollees were constantly coming and going to other camps. Between May 14-19, 29 rookies arrived in camp, which brought the company strength to 201. However, 20 men left for California on May 20. The new boys enrolled in May were:

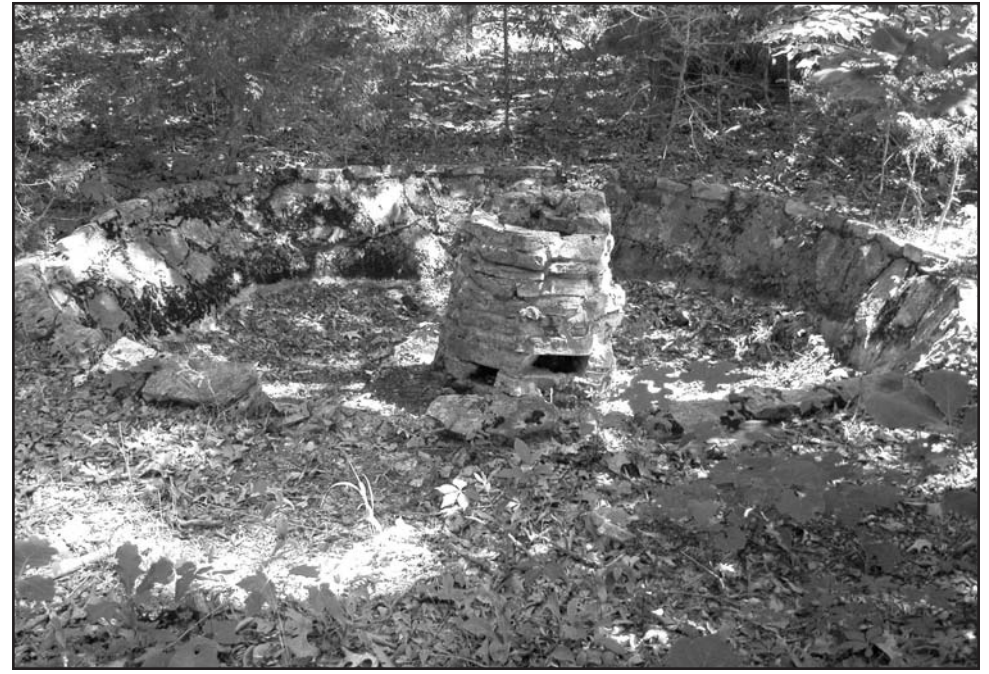
Leslie Bales, Waynesville
Ellis Davis, Dixon
Redus Dearduff, Crocker
Beauford Doolin, Waynesville
Lowell Duncan, Crocker
James P. Farley, Newburg
Vernon L. Fue, St. James
Otto Hill, Waynesville
Morgan Johns, Crocker
Harold Kimmel, Crocker
Edwin S. Martin, Crocker

Homer Payne, Crocker
Earl Porter, Crocker
Eugene Stough, Rolla
Donald G. Witcher, Rolla
Allen J. Williams, Rolla
Willard J. Withers, Dixon
Claude L. Bell, Newburg
Arthur Paul, Newburg
Eugene Rigsby, Waynesville
Kermit Rinck, Rolla
Homer Williams, Waynesville
Thomas Turner, Rolla
James Sanders, Waynesville
Claude Brown, Bessie
Arthur Helm, Waynesville
Orville Wallace, Waynesville
Elmer Massey, Palace
Orville Soper, St. James

There are more than a few names in that list recognizable to longtime residents of Pulaski and Phelps counties. The "rookies", as they were called, assembled to hear a lecture given by



Although it looks more like a boiler, this was the Blooming Rose Barber Shop. Being clean cut was important in camps. The Barber Shop was located in the middle of the camp, along the main road. Forgetting a haircut was not likely. Barracks Number 2 is in the background. Courtesy of Western Historical Manuscript Collection—Rolla.



Longtime enrollee Berry Wyman's dream finally came true. He had, for a long time, had his heart set on a fish pond for the camp, whether to fish in or just look at was not certain. In May of 1936, Berry finished his fish pond near the Recreation Hall. It is 16 feet in diameter and three feet deep. Today, it holds only dead oak leaves. Photo by Terry Primas.

the meaning of the three C's, as applied to life in the CCC camp: Cleanliness, Courtesy, and Coordination. On quite a few occasions throughout the summer, those men who exemplified the three C's were treated to a frolic in the swimming hole. The boys were loaded into a truck and taken to the gravel bar just below Ross Bridge, which was dubbed Big Piney Beach. An experienced life saver was on hand to look after the sinkers.

Interest in area streams was not confined to swimming. The Forest Service initiated a fish census program. They stationed Donald Witcher, a recent enrollee, just north of Ross Bridge to determine fish yield on the Big Piney, keeping track of the kind, number, and size of fish taken from the stream at that point. Stream surveys were also underway on Little Piney and Mill Creek. This work was in line with the effort being made to improve the local fisheries. A crew of enrollees stocked 30,000 large and small mouth bass in the Little Piney and Spring Creek.

Road work continued as a priority

the Commanding Officer, Lieut. Trowbridge. He lectured the new men on

To appreciate the impact of the CCC on the economy, the following statistics for 1936 might be illuminating.

1. More than 500,000 men saw service for an average of eight months.
2. CCC board bill for the year was \$69,000,000.
3. More than \$154,000,000 was spent for enrollee allowances
4. Shelter cost in the CCC was \$21,000,000
5. Clothing cost for the CCC was \$42,000,000
6. Pay to officers, foremen, and advisors amounted to \$86,000,000
7. 70,000,000 pounds of wool was used to clothe and cover the CCC.
8. The laundry bill was \$4,000,000.
9. It took 2, 250,000 pounds of food perday to feed the CCC.
10. 839 deaths and 501 accidental deaths occurred in the CCC.
(This death rate is lower than the regular army.)
11. Total operating cost for 1936 was \$494,000,000

and the results are still with us, providing short cuts in the rural area and access to large tracts of the National Forest. A major road project was to construct a road from the "Y" in camp to the farm and market road to Edgar Springs. This was called the Spring Creek Road.

Constructing a bridge to span the creek proved to be too difficult an undertaking. Inspectors closed down construction of the bridge. After months of effort, plans were revised and concrete slabs on rock piers were constructed just above the streambed. The road allowed much quicker access to the Knotwell Tower but, most importantly, it shortened the distance to Rolla by ten miles. No longer did the trucks have to swing in a southerly direction through Blooming Rose and Beulah to get to Rolla but could take a more direct northeasterly route.



The native stone chimney of the Recreation Hall still stands amid the foundations and rock work at the isolated site of Blooming Rose. Photo by Terry Primas.

Enrollees were allowed out of camp on occasion to visit town and participate in local activities. They eagerly did so, mostly for the chance to mingle with the local girls. Edgar Brown, Ross Mathews, Charles Barite, Raleigh Hays, Robert Wilson, Harry Hendricks, and Donald Whitcher attended the "Cake Walk" given at Hopewell School in September. They reported having a good time. Seven enrollees attended the dance and fights at Duke that month. The boys reported that the fights were unusually interesting since they were fights between rival women. They say that none of the men fought but understood that this was a change in the type of battle at Duke.

Work continued on improving the camp through the fall of 1936. A tennis court, soft ball diamond, horseshoe

ground, and basketball court were in the works.

The Archaeology Class visited several caves east of Edgar Springs. It was remarked that the caves showed signs of many visits of parties who had evidently carried away or destroyed much material "which might have served a good purpose in the study of the tribes which once lived in this section." After his lament, the reporter then listed the items the class brought back: two bone awls, several large pieces of broken pottery, and arrowheads. These were added to the collection in the Library, which already included an axe, many arrowheads, and a "fine collection" of Indian relics donated by Charles Kimery.

Enrollees in October and November included Marshall Storie, Archie Firestine, Perry Birdsong, Chester Cox, Lloyd Tucker, Elmer Salveter, and Harvey and William Rouse. This brought the company strength up to 158 men.

As the year came to a close, the Palace Transient Camp started the construction of the Fairview Tower. A total of 1,750,000 seedlings were taken from the Nursery in the Fall. The boys collected 30 tons of leaves for mulch. In the month of November, 946,000 short leaf pine seedlings were taken from the Nursery at Licking and replanted in the forests of Missouri. The local boys planted 190 bushels of white oak acorns and 30,000 one year old short leaf pine.

A successful dance was held early in December. A large number of girls from Rolla (brought by truck) and sur-

rounding territory were in attendance. Altman and Doolin dispensed free coffee in the Mess Hall.

Continuation of the CCC was always a concern of the men involved. A nationwide poll, conducted by the American Institute of Public Opinion,

confirmed that the CCC was an exceedingly popular New Deal program. When asked "Are you in favor of continuing the CCC?", 82 percent of the respondents said "Yes", while only 18 percent were

opposed to continuing the program. The poll revealed that all political parties were in favor of the program.

In June of 1936, Federal CCC Director Robert Fechner had announced that

authorization for enrollment of an additional 51, 871 men had been passed, which produced a total authorized strength of 350,000. The total junior enrollment was 325,000, along with 25,000 men enrolled in war veteran companies. The twelve CCC Forestry Camps in Missouri, which furnished employment to almost 2000 youths, was assured for the foreseeable future.

Blooming Rose - 1937

During the third winter of Company 1732 at Blooming Rose, continued attention was paid to the improvement of the camp. A large stone fireplace was completed in the Recreation Hall. The lower walls were painted with black enamel and trimmed in red. The upper walls and ceilings were painted with aluminum paint.

The long winter evenings were passed by checker tournaments and



the new rage in camp, pinochle. Gloomy weather tends to depress morale so the officers organized a Better Barracks Contest.

With travel to town probably hampered, sales at the Camp Exchange were brisk. Each camp had a small store where "necessaries" were sold. A scrupulous inventory was kept and sales reported. The profit was put back into the betterment of camp life for the boys.

Exchange sales for February were reported as: 3061 candy bars; 54 packages of razor blades; 72 bars of soap; 86 tubes of toothpaste; 267 cans of tobacco; 673 sacks of tobacco; 76 bottles of hair oil; 90 packages of chewing gum; 40 tubes of shaving cream; 360 bottles of beer; and a considerable supply of shoe polish, cough drops, cookies, towels, shirts, and shaving lotion.

Enrollment in classes was also strong. There were 115 boys taking at least one class. The most popular were Auto Mechanics, Agriculture, Typewriting, and Blacksmithing.

The Spring Dance was eagerly anticipated. Special invitations were sent and a large crowd was anticipated. Ladies were admitted free and outside men charged 25 cents. Of course, the enrollees were not charged admission. The glee was apparent in the words of the editor of the newsletter when he wrote, "Girls, girls, and still more girls is what we expect for recreation trucks will gather up loads of girls both in Waynesville and in Rolla." New enrollees Wade A. Helton, Elvin E. Keeney, and Everett Spittler were just in time for the fun.

Two new towers were finished and manned in April; one in Texas County and the other at Tribune, which was located at what is now Fort Leonard Wood. In April, that brought the number of towers manned by the boys at Blooming Rose to seven. They were Piney, Knotwell, Bloodland, King's Sink, Bald Ridge, and the two new towers. The tower at Fairview was not yet completed. However, by year's end, the fire tower at Bald Ridge was abandoned. Bald Ridge was called a "Crow's Nest". It was built in the top of a high tree and was one of the first towers in the area. The territory was covered by the Texas and Roby Towers.

The enrollees continued their efforts at reforestation. By the end of April, they had planted 63,320 pine trees on a little over 97 acres. The Licking Nursery distributed a total of 3,462,350 tree seedlings of fourteen different species to eight parks and organizations.

In the fall, the Forest Service Ranger dwelling was completed by Company 1732. This turned into quite a complex. The craftsmanship is excellent with the use of cut limestone, not the native rock work found in the buildings at the camp. Elsewhere, buildings were frame with lapboard siding.

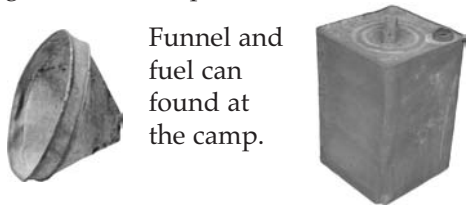


Camp 1732 boys working on the Evening Shade to Cookville road in southern Pulaski County. Courtesy of Western Historical Manuscript Collection—Rolla.

The complex grew to four buildings which include the Ranger residence, office, and two garages. When all of the work was completed is not known. The site now is the location of the Rolla Tourism Bureau.

Projects by other nearby camps included rock work, dams, and shelters at Meramec State Park, Montauk State Park, and Bennett Springs State Park. The rock guard wall on the old Route 66 curve near Devil's Elbow was another project.

After four years in existence, FDR's program of "simple work" had affected home and landscape throughout the country: supplied 2 million jobs; 360 million dollars sent home; 3,800,000 man days fighting forest fires; 3000 lookout towers constructed; 87,000 miles of roads and trails built; 45,000 miles of telephone line erected; 2,700,000 acres of timber improved; and 700,000 acres of park and camp grounds developed.



Funnel and fuel can found at the camp.



Rolla Ranger Station constructed by the Blooming Rose boys. Clockwise from top: Ranger dwelling; vehicle service building; Station Office. Not pictured is the large vehicle garage. Photos by Terry Primas



Ft. Wood Auto Salvage

Bill Farnham Thank You

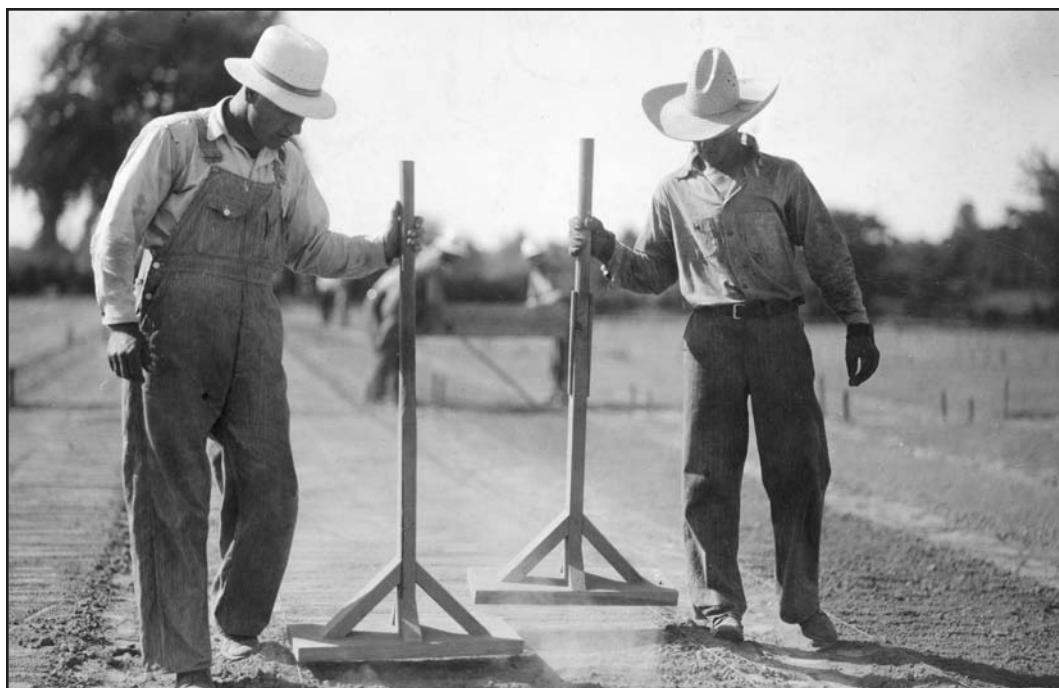
Newcomb Hardware



Top left: Blooming Rose side camp at nursery site, 1937.

Row 2: Nursery office in foreground; garage on left; nurseryman's quarters and garage in center background; part of the pine cone shed is visible on right. Row 3: (left) CCC enrollee crew and WPA crew; (right) lifting shortleaf pine stock from seed beds. Row 4: Tamping soil.

Pictures courtesy of The George O. White State Forest Nursery, Missouri Department of Conservation.



A Growing Legacy

The George O. White Nursery

The CCC Camp at Blooming Rose did many public works projects: building fire towers, banking to retard soil erosion, and planting trees is the short list. One of the most enduring projects started by the CCC is the George O. White State Forest Nursery.

In 1934, a Forest Service employee inspected some property north of Licking for nursery use. The Forest Service bought two tracts of this land totaling 40 acres in 1935 for \$2360, averaging \$59 per acre.

Using CCC and WPA labor, the nursery was started. The camp included two barracks, a kitchen and mess hall, and a small building that served as the exchange. The boys built a nursery office, nurseryman's residence, shop and warehouse, deep well, overhead irrigation system, pumphouse, cold storage, oil house, cone storage shed, and a refrigerated seed storage building.

When the CCC was discontinued in 1942, the nursery was closed and leased for farm crop production. The nursery was reopened after the war and the Missouri Department of Conservation took over operation, adding land through the years. Total acreage now is 754.

In 1990, the 400 millionth tree was distributed from the nursery. Today's production averages about 10 million plants each year. In recent years, 70 different species of trees, shrubs and prairie plants have been grown. Each year, over 13,000 orders are filled.

That first Forest Service inspector was George O. White. He became the first State Forester of Missouri. When he retired in 1960, the nursery was renamed and dedicated in his honor.

The George O. White State Forest Nursery is the only state nursery. It began with the sweat of the boys at Camp 1732 Blooming Rose. The nursery is located about three miles north of Licking on State Highway CC.

1938

Work continued on improving the camp. A new room was added to the Canteen. An addition was built onto the Education Building to house a darkroom for the new and popular photography class. A floral planting program resulted in a profusion of blooms at Blooming Rose in the spring and early summer. Twenty-one species were planted, ranging from asters to zinnias. Roses were not among them.

The continually improving educational program reflected strong leadership and the interests of the enrollees. In addition to the standbys such as Auto Mechanics, Typing, and Road Construction, new courses were added: Photography, Foreman Training, Teacher Training, Leathercraft, and Journalism. The radio class now had its own broadcast station, W. U. F. L. Three enrollees received eighth grade diplomas. Twenty-one students were taking a correspondence course from the University of North Dakota in Camp Study. Zane Grey novels were the most popular books in the traveling library.

"...may the legacy of the CCC be forever remembered."

Construction projects were numerous. Road construction continued with truck trail 31, which tied into the Beulah Road about one-half of a mile east of Blooming Rose and ran southwest to the Slabtown Bridge (Phelps County Road AT today.) A double shift was working on Paddy Creek Bridge for truck Trail 321. A new series of projects built five ridge ponds around Duke and Blooming Rose. The Houston telephone line was under construction.

Recreation was not ignored. A softball tournament among the nine barracks was organized. Those interested in hardball played on the baseball team that challenged camps at Competition, Success, and Newburg. A reported for the camp newsletter, probably displaying prose skills learned in Journalism class, described the June dance.

To the syncopation of Bob Smith's Swingsters of the Rolla School of Mines, 30 couples dance the light fantastic in the Mess Hall. At the same time, an even one hun-

dred old and young, male and female, fat and slim, picked them up and layed them down to Hank Hanks, rhythm band for square dancing exclusively. The "Rec and Mess Halls" were beautifully decorated. The dancing continued 'till 12:30 and it was the opinion of the majority that a good time was had by all." (The Oak Tree, June 24, 1938.)

Apparently, the only sour note of the night was struck on the way to the dance. Everett Spitler was driving a truck loaded with girls from Rolla and hit a mule.

The Fairview fire tower had been completed and no new towers were in the works. However, approval was received to build additional facilities at the Roby Tower. A garage and cistern were to be added to the watch cabin already built. It was remarked that the site would be beautiful. This oldest tower in Missouri was first manned by Palmer Russell, making him the first towerman in Missouri.

In October, representatives of the Rural Electrification Administration visited the local communities. This caused the newsletter editor to wax poetic.

The promoters of the Rural Electrification Project have been canvassing all prospective customers south and west of Edgar Springs, including Company 1732. To have lights that will stay lit. To have lights that you can read by. To have lights in case that you have to take a short walk durin gthe night and want to peruse the library (outhouse). A million stars for a light. (The Oak Tree, October 14, 1938.)

Resources about the activities at Blooming Rose after 1938 have not been found. It surely lasted until the end of the CCC era.

The end of that era began in late summer of 1941. The economy was much improved and employment was up. The number of new recruits dwindled. There were 900 camps with less than 200,000 enrollees. The Corps was popular with Congress, there had been no scandals, and the results were worthwhile. However, after Pearl Harbor, Congress had other priorities. A

joint congressional committee took a hard look at all government programs to determine which ones were essential to the war effort. Its findings recommended that the CCC be abolished by July 1, 1942.

There never was an official termination of the program. Congress simply didn't fund it. Instead, they appropriated \$8 million to liquidate the agency.

The country got its money's worth. The Armed Forces inherited at least a half million men who knew the rigors and ways of camp life. They had experienced Army discipline in the CCC. Isolated farm work had given way to teamwork.

Those to whom we spoke had a tone not of nostalgia but almost that of reverence. Participation had helped them and their families through lean times.

The editor of *The Oak Tree* often extolled the industry of the boys and, in one issue, intoned "may the legacy of the CCC be forever remembered." Those with the memories are fading but the legacy is around us in our forests, fish hatcheries, and state parks. Many of the young do not know who toiled on those projects. It may take a movie or a mini-series to put the achievements of the boys back into our collective cultural memory.

It Was Personal, Too

Listing a string of statistics does not tell of the individual impact of the CCC. Phillip Sheldon, owner of Sheldon's Market in Devil's Elbow, was an enrollee and expressed his admiration for President Roosevelt.

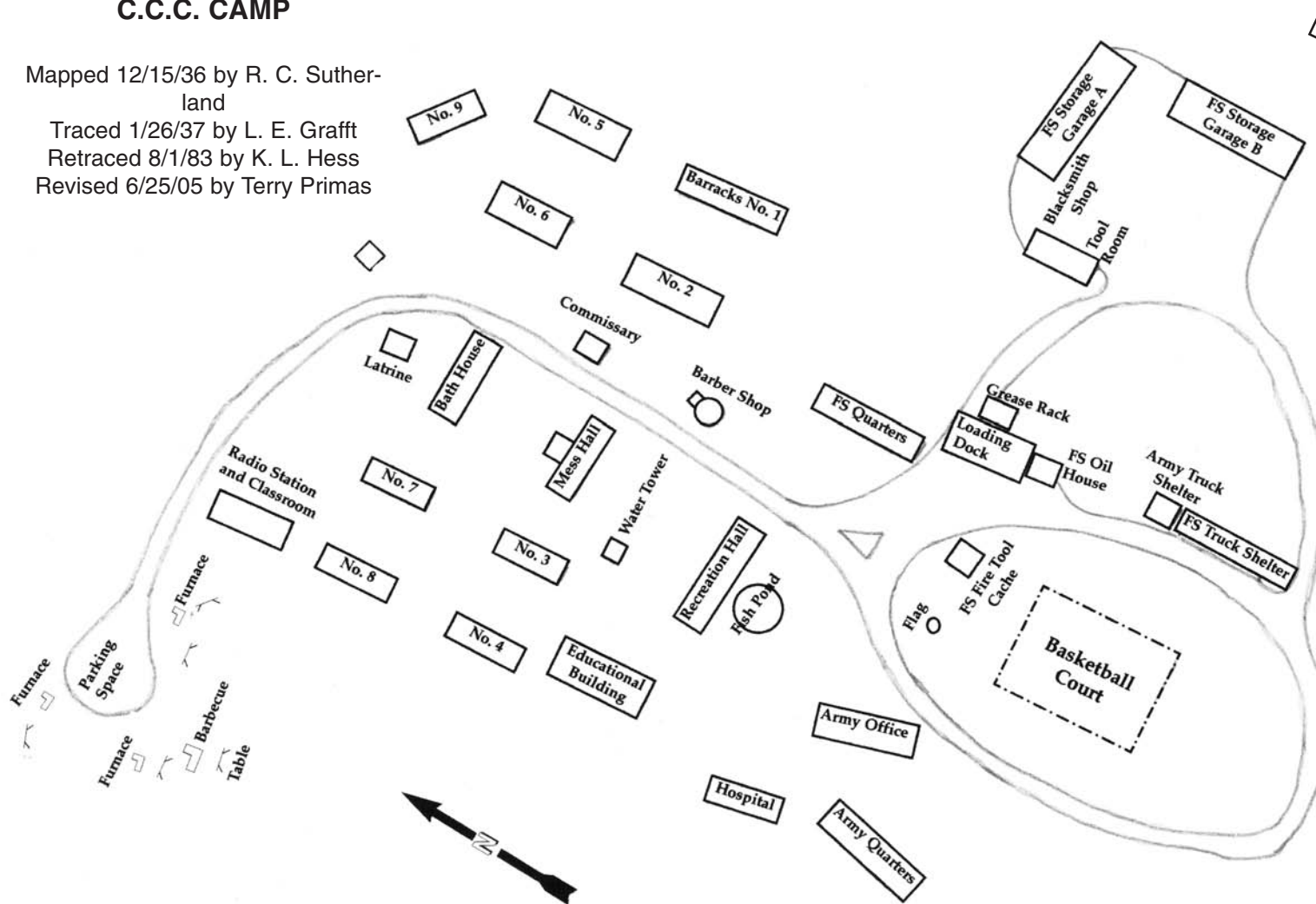
"I loved that man. He probably kept me out of jail. You could do two things, work or steal, and there was no work so I did what I had to do. I went into the CCC. The original pay was thirty dollars but after I was in awhile, I went into operating a dozer and I got six dollars a month more. That six dollars was all mine. They sent thirty dollars home. The camp was pretty crude. It was out by the airport on Fort Leonard Wood. Later on, when the CCC camp was done away with, they put a POW camp there. The buildings were long green wood buildings. At the time I was there, there were 83 boys in the camp."

When Bill Ryno of Duke was asked how he felt about going into the CCC, he replied,

"I'm glad I did. It was my first experience away from home. I would have never got that far on my own. As I look back now, I would have probably acted a little bit different than what I did but it was a good experience. So many young boys like myself, we didn't have a job. The only jobs there was if you were lucky enough. When I came back out in '41, I went to work for a farmer down here for a dollar a day and my room and board and a horse to ride. I felt like I was lucky to get that and I worked for a month doing that, I guess, helped put a trough in and all that. Things then began to open up at Fort Leonard Wood. I didn't get on in '41 but in '42 I did. I went to work over on the artillery range. Part of the CCs were still over there and we had to cut all the timber, I mean nothing over two feet off the ground, from Bloodland to Palace, all over Cookville."

**F-9
BLOOMING ROSE
C.C.C. CAMP**

Mapped 12/15/36 by R. C. Sutherland
Traced 1/26/37 by L. E. Grafft
Retraced 8/1/83 by K. L. Hess
Revised 6/25/05 by Terry Primas



Powder House

This map of Blooming Rose shows the placement of buildings and the main camp road in 1937. The site is no longer easily accessible by road. The camp was located southeast of the junctions of Highways J and K near Duke. Many of the building foundations still exist, along with a large stone barbecue grill structure (8 feet long) and one smaller one.

At full strength, the camp had about 200 enrollees plus supervisory staff from the Army and Forest Service. Their forest and conservation projects were carried out in parts of three counties: Phelps, Pulaski, and Texas.

The map was found in the Forest Service Collection held by the Western Historical Manuscript Collection at the University of Rolla. Bill Ryno, who lived in a hollow nearby, provided clues to the location of the Powder House, which was not on the original map.



One of the local young men who took the discipline of the CCC into the Army and World War II was Les Bales of Waynesville. Sgt. Bales is front row center holding his son Jimmie, who was the mascot of the 2nd Platoon, Troop B at Fort Riley, Kansas (September 24, 1945). Courtesy of Jim and Dickie Bales.

Not Only Flowers Bloomed

Alvin Willbanks was from Koshkonong, Missouri. He was in the CCC at Blooming Rose and was stationed at the Roby Tower as part of the fire watch. Clemmy Manes lived with her family near Elder Spring, which was not far from the tower. Some people who owned a tavern near Roby and the tower had built a dance place outside.

"My father", Clemmy said, "he was a violin player and my brother played the guitar. They played at the dance hall and got paid for it. I didn't go nowhere unless my parents were with me at that time. I went with them so that's why I was at the [square]dance and that's where I met Alvin but he never did dance to amount to anything. We [the family] went like every Saturday night for awhile and we just got to talkin' then. This went on for several years and we got married in 1936.

They first lived at Evening Shade and then moved to a place near Beulah, in Phelps County. The house was just a couple of miles from the Blooming Rose Camp. Alvin died in 1980 but Clemmy still lives near Beulah.

Sources

Interviewees for this article were **Bill Ryno**, Duke; **Phillip Sheldon**, Devil's Elbow; and **Clemmie Willbanks**, Beulah.

Stan Cohen, *The Tree Army: A Pictorial History of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942* (Missoula, Montana: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 2001) provides an overall history of the CCC.

Of particular use were approximately 35 issues of *The Oak Tree*, the Blooming Rose Camp newsletter, spanning the years 1935-1938. Also, the 1937 *Official Annual* of Area Six provides information on the forming of company 1732. These resources were found at the CCC Museum and Research Center, National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni (NACCCA) Headquarters located at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, MO. The Center's web site also served up an excellent brief history, "Roosevelt's Tree Army". NACCCA's web site is <http://www.ccalumni.org>. Our thanks to the staff and, especially, to Donna Broome for help in locating materials about Blooming Rose.

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