

The New Deal Arrives in Penn's Woods: The Beginnings of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Pennsylvania

“**I**T WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT.” The opening of Snoopy’s abortive novel works well as a description of the beginnings of many Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps in Pennsylvania in the late spring of 1933. On one such night, May 6, a company of two hundred Philadelphia men labored in a heavy rain setting up tents for their new home in the woods, Camp S-54, at Cowan’s Gap. Another group of men from Philadelphia, arriving in Hillsgrove in early May, had to cut down trees before trucks could deliver their tents to Camp S-96. Their first week was so rainy that the company had to buy dry firewood from local farmers in order to cook. Further west, a train carrying another company of CCC enrollees pulled into Philipsburg in the late afternoon of May 30. State foresters provided trucks to deliver the men to a wet field in the Moshannon State Forest, the site of Camp S-71. In a heavy downpour the men set to work clearing tree stumps and brush before they could put up a mess tent and enjoy a light meal. They then erected the army tents in which they spent a damp first night in the woods. A week later, on June 5, a train arrived at the Mifflinburg train station with a company of young men from various Pennsylvania towns. This company was luckier in that some local forestry workers had cleared their tent sites in advance of their arrival. But, after setting up about fifty tents, Camp S-67 was also hit with a thunderstorm and drenching rains.¹

¹ There are many accounts of the establishment of early CCC camps in Pennsylvania, including a video of early scenes from Camp S-51 in the Pennsylvania State Archives in Harrisburg. The anecdotes in this paragraph are from the following sources: Glenn Cordell, *The Cowan’s Gap CCC Camps of Fulton County, Pennsylvania* (McConnellsburg, PA, 2004); *Happy Days*, May 20, 1933; Catherine Wrye, “Philipsburg Remembrances,” *Philipsburg Daily Journal*, Feb. 19, 1983, clipping in Black Moshannon State Park files; Tony Shively, *The CCC Camps of Union County (1933–1942): Life and Work in the Civilian Conservation Corps* (Lewisburg, PA, 2002), 44.

Such soggy and dreary beginnings would not seem to bode well for this earliest work-relief program of the New Deal. As things turned out, however, nowhere else was President Franklin D. Roosevelt's new program received with greater enthusiasm and competency than in Penn's Woods. With the possible exception of California, no other state was as well prepared to utilize CCC labor effectively as was Pennsylvania. It had a vast amount of publicly owned forests in need of remedial work and plenty of experienced foresters to supervise that work. And the Depression, which had hit the state particularly hard, would ensure that there was plenty of labor available for conservation projects. Pennsylvania's Governor Gifford Pinchot reported that 12 percent of the nation's unemployed lived in his state and that two million Pennsylvanians received some kind of relief assistance.² When the political impact of the CCC on the state's Democratic Party is also taken into account, the Pennsylvania chapter of the CCC story is, arguably, its most important chapter.

The Pennsylvania CCC program, more than any other, combined features of eastern and western states. Although most eastern states had vast reservoirs of unemployed workers, much of the conservation work done by the CCC was in the more spacious National Parks and National Forests of the western states where labor was relatively scarce. Consequently, tens of thousands of men had to be transported across the country to match workers and work. Pennsylvania had an abundance of unemployed young men and ended up enrolling 184,916 of them for CCC camps, more than any state except New York. But unlike other eastern states, Pennsylvania was able to provide abundant conservation work on its own lands for the vast majority of its enrollees and ended up with 152 work camps over the nine-year life of the program, more than any state except California. Given the size of its program and the great variety of work done by Pennsylvania men, both in and out of state, there is no better microcosm in which to study the CCC than the Keystone State. And, adding interest to the story, Gifford Pinchot, one of the most important conservationists of the early twentieth century, was governor of Pennsylvania when the program was launched.

We might think of the CCC as an early "green" program since it placed unemployed young men in work camps in mostly woodsy and rural

² Gifford Pinchot memo to the White House, July 25, 1933, President's Personal File, 289, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, NY.

settings where they worked on projects aimed at conserving natural resources. The CCC utilized the labor of these young men in a variety of conservation activities in Pennsylvania, including planting trees, controlling erosion, building state park facilities, and restoring historic sites. The beauty and environmental health of large areas of the state still display the beneficial effects of that short-lived program. As a work-relief program, most of the young men's thirty-dollar-a-month pay was sent home to their families, who were often on relief. The CCC was one of the most popular and fondly remembered agencies created by the New Deal. Gallup polls generally found 80 percent approval rates for the CCC and over the years there have been occasional calls to restore the program or something like it. And yet scholarly literature on the CCC is somewhat sparse. John A. Salmond's administrative history of the organization, published in 1967, is based on a diligent culling of the extensive CCC sources in the National Archives and still remains the starting point for anyone interested in the creation and operation of the program. Several other authors have written more popular histories of the CCC, and Olen Coley Jr. has a thin study of African Americans in the corps.³ At the level of state operations scholarly literature is also meager. There are a few studies that attempt to provide illustrations of how the CCC worked in specific settings, but the most abundant writing on the CCC has been done on local camps, including reminiscent accounts by participants.⁴

In Pennsylvania there is a similar pattern in the literature. Although there are several studies of local CCC operations in the Keystone State,⁵

³ John A. Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933–1942: A New Deal Case Study* (Durham, NC, 1967). His book, however, aside from a short chapter on "A Day in the CCC," rarely leaves Washington, DC, and conveys little information on operations in the field or variations in the working out of formal policy procedures. Leslie Alexander Lacy, *The Soil Soldiers: The Civilian Conservation Corps in the Great Depression* (Radnor, PA, 1976); Stan Cohen, *The Tree Army: A Pictorial History of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933–1942* (Missoula, MN, 1980); Perry H. Merrill, *Roosevelt's Forest Army: A History of the Civilian Conservation Corps* (Montpelier, VT, 1981); Robert Allen Ermentrout, *Forgotten Men: The Civilian Conservation Corps* (Smithtown, NY, 1982); Olen Coley Jr., *The African-American Experience in the Civilian Conservation Corps* (Gainesville, FL, 1999).

⁴ Most notable is Richard Melzer, *Coming of Age in the Great Depression: The Civilian Conservation Corps Experience in New Mexico, 1933–1942* (Las Cruces, NM, 2000.) Also useful is the collection of hundreds of CCC enrollees' recollections, including over fifty Pennsylvanians, by M. Chester Nolte, ed., *The Civilian Conservation Corps: The Way We Remember It, 1933–1942* (Paducah, KY, 1990).

⁵ Shively, *CCC Camps of Union County*; Cordell, *Cowan's Gap CCC*; James E. Potts, *Civilian Conservation Corps, Bear Valley, 1933–1936* ([Chambersburg, PA], 1979); Larry N. Sypolt, *Fr. Necessity: Civilian Conservation Corps Camp SP-12* (Morgantown, WV, 1988). Michael J. Schultz

there has been only one academic study of the general program. Kenneth E. Hendrickson Jr. has written a brief overview of the CCC in Pennsylvania from beginning to end. His article is based primarily on the CCC records in the National Archives, supplemented by those of the Department of Public Assistance at the Pennsylvania State Archives. Though marred by a few inaccuracies on the numbers of camps, this study not only illustrates the administration of the CCC at the level of an important state, but also goes beyond bureaucratic matters and provides a generous sampling of stories from local newspapers.⁶ This present study, by contrast, focuses more narrowly on the initial establishment of CCC camps in Pennsylvania in the spring and summer of 1933 and illustrates the major contributions the state made in establishing the new program. It also attempts to convey an appreciation for the unprecedented achievements of those first months.

The Great Depression was deepening almost daily by the time Gifford Pinchot began his second term as governor in 1931, and, as a result, issues of relief for the unemployed came to dominate that term. In 1929 Pennsylvania had over seventeen thousand manufacturing establishments, second only to New York. By 1933 about five thousand of these were completely gone and many others were operating at low capacity, with devastating effects on employment levels. Pinchot reported in early 1933 that only about 40 percent of the state's workforce was fully employed, with about 30 percent employed no more than half-time and another 30 percent, or 1.5 million people, had no jobs at all.⁷ Among young workers under twenty-four, the unemployment numbers were often double the general figure. African Americans, traditionally "the last hired and first fired," were also among the hardest hit. In Pittsburgh the black unemployment rate was nearly 50 percent, and 43 percent of black

has produced a video on the camps in the Allegheny National Forest, *The CCC: Its Time and Legacy* (Manitowoc, WI, 2001).

⁶ Kenneth E. Hendrickson Jr. "The Civilian Conservation Corps in Pennsylvania: A Case Study of a New Deal Relief Agency in Operation," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 100 (1976): 66–96. Hendrickson did not consult the important CCC materials at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library or the Gifford Pinchot Papers in the Library of Congress, nor did he make good use of the more limited records of the Pennsylvania Department of Forests and Waters. Consulting local camp histories and interviewing former CCC men would also have enriched the Pennsylvania flavor of the story. These, however, are relatively minor flaws in an important pioneering study.

⁷ Thomas H. Coode and John F. Bauman, eds., *People, Poverty, and Politics: Pennsylvania during the Great Depression* (Lewistown, PA, 1981), 14; Frances Perkins, *The Roosevelt I Knew* (New York, 1946), 183; Thomas C. Cochran, *Pennsylvania: A Bicentennial History* (New York, 1978), 294.

families were on the relief rolls. In Philadelphia black Americans constituted 13 percent of the city's population but about 33 percent of those on relief in 1932. However, relief assistance in the city, faced with unprecedented demand and reduced funds, provided only 20 percent of the income that relief efforts had provided on a per capita basis in 1928.⁸

Historically, relief for the indigent and needy in Pennsylvania had come from private charity groups and was given in kind. The state's 425 local boards of assistance also administered a small amount of public relief. When unemployment was relatively low, only the "unemployables"—the aged, the infirm, and the caregivers of dependent children—received public relief. Potential recipients would be investigated by caseworkers for worthiness and then provided supervised assistance in managing their meager resources.⁹

With the economic catastrophe of the 1930s, however, the numbers of people in need exploded and now included growing numbers of "employables." By 1932 two million of Pennsylvania's nine million people received some kind of relief, the highest totals in the country. The private charities in Philadelphia had tried some creative experiments in providing work relief that year but found it to be about three times more expensive to run than giving relief in kind and productively inefficient as well. Sherman Kingsley, the executive director of the Welfare Federation of Philadelphia, sniffed to Governor Pinchot that some of the unskilled people reporting to work relief projects did not even have "proper clothing."¹⁰

Although in 1931 Governor Pinchot had been able to prod the General Assembly into providing ten million dollars to the local county relief boards, he faced constitutional limits on spending as well as conservative opposition in the legislature to an expanded role for the state. His

⁸ Broadus Mitchell, *Depression Decade: From New Era through New Deal, 1929–1941* (New York, 1947), 99; Bruce M. Stave, "Pittsburgh and the New Deal," in *The New Deal*, ed. John Braeman, Robert H. Bremner, and David Brody (Columbus, OH, 1975), 2:390; Anthony J. Badger, *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933–40* (1989; Chicago, 2002), 22; Philip S. Klein and Ari Hoogenboom, *A History of Pennsylvania* (New York, [1973]), 407. African Americans comprised 4.5 percent of Pennsylvania's population in 1930, about half the national percentage of 9 percent. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Population* (Washington, DC, 1931), 1:1229.

⁹ Josephine Chapin Brown, *Public Relief, 1929–1939* (New York, 1940), 15; see also the "Report by Henry Francis to Harry Hopkins, March 28, 1933," in *In the Eye of the Great Depression: New Deal Reporters and the Agony of the American People*, ed. John F. Bauman and Thomas H. Coode (DeKalb, IL, 1988), 109.

¹⁰ Sherman Kingsley to Gifford Pinchot, July 23, 1932, Gifford Pinchot Papers, Library of Congress.

campaign promise of “taking farmers out of the mud” by paving rural roads, however, proved to be more popular with the legislature, and the Highway Department established some work camps to house some of the unemployed and homeless who were given temporary work in the winter of 1931.¹¹

The need for assistance was so great that by the summer of 1932 the Philadelphia Committee on Unemployment Relief, set up in 1930 to coordinate private charity assistance, had to disband when it ran out of funds to disburse—including the five million dollars in public funds granted to it by the city and the state. This collapse of relief in the city left some fifty-seven thousand families with no help at all, some reportedly living on dandelions. A similar organization in Pittsburgh, the Allegheny County Emergency Association, set up in 1931, also had to disband in 1932 for lack of resources.¹²

Because he faced such enormous economic problems and such staunch political opposition to spending state money on relief, Pinchot became the first governor in the country to call for federal assistance to the states for relief distribution and an early supporter of the CCC, which would send most of the thirty-dollar-a-month pay of the workers home to their families. Dorothy C. Kahn of the Philadelphia Relief Board expected savings of eighty thousand dollars a month because of these CCC allotments.¹³

Aside from needy people, Pennsylvania also had an abundance of needy forests. Although conditions had improved considerably since the turn of the century, not all was well in Penn's woods. There were still plenty of maintenance and improvement projects on publicly owned lands that could absorb much of the manpower the CCC would provide over the next nine years.¹⁴ In addition, even though the Depression had forced cuts in its operating budget, the Department of Forests and Waters, created by Pinchot in his first term as governor in 1923, was well staffed

¹¹ “Emergency Labor Camps in Pennsylvania,” *Monthly Labor Review* 34 (1932): 1289–91.

¹² Bonnie Fox Schwartz, “Unemployment Relief in Philadelphia, 1930–1932: A Study of the Depression's Impact on Voluntarism,” in *Hitting Home: The Great Depression in Town and Country*, ed. Bernard Sternsher (Chicago, 1970), 64; Jonathan Norton Leonard, *Three Years Down* (New York, 1939), 98.

¹³ Dorothy Kahn to W. Frank Persons, Apr. 14, 1933, Correspondence with State Selecting Agents, CCC Records, National Archives.

¹⁴ Thomas R. Cox et al., *This Well-Wooded Land: Americans and Their Forests from Colonial Times to the Present* (Lincoln, NB, 1985), 211; Lester A. DeCoster, *The Legacy of Penn's Woods: A History of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry* ([Harrisburg, PA], 1995), 91.

with trained foresters. Robert Y. Stuart, who had headed the department and was one of Pinchot's protégés, went on to become chief of the United States Forest Service and an important ally of President Roosevelt's in getting the CCC off the ground. Once Local Experienced Men (LEMs) were added to the CCC labor pool on April 22, 1933, the state could also draw on a large supply of unemployed men with forestry experience to serve as work foremen. Pennsylvania was thus well prepared to supervise the influx of unskilled labor the CCC would send to its forests and parks.¹⁵

In 1933 Pennsylvania had an abundance of land eligible for CCC work. The legislation creating the Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) program (the legal name of the agency until CCC became its official title in 1937) required all of the conservation work be done on publicly owned property, with only a few exceptions made for work on private lands when such work would be crucial for fire and flood prevention or for the treatment of tree disease.¹⁶ The ECW office in Washington constantly prodded state officials across the country to establish or expand their state parks or state forests. But in Pennsylvania the existing two million acres of publicly owned lands—the Allegheny National Forest, state forests, state parks, and state game lands—were sufficient to keep most of the state's CCC men occupied during the Depression decade.¹⁷

Aside from its important assistance to its relief and environmental problems, the CCC also contributed to the New Deal's revival of the state's moribund Democratic Party. Pennsylvania had been virtually a one-party state since the Civil War, and, even with unemployment soaring in the state after 1929, Republicans still managed to elect Pinchot in 1930, maintain its majorities in both houses of the state legislature, elect United States Senator David Reed in 1932, win twenty-three of the

¹⁵ The budget for state parks had been cut 45 percent. *Four Year Summary Report of the Department of Forests and Water, 1935-1938* ([Harrisburg, PA], 1938), 2; and "The CWA in Pennsylvania's State Parks," typescript report in Record Group 6, Department of Forests and Waters Records, Pennsylvania State Archives; Conrad Wirth of the National Parks Service wrote that Pennsylvania proved "fertile ground" for conservation work. *Parks, Politics, and the People* (Norman, OK, 1980), 16. LEMs were older men, sometimes married, who were not required to live in the camps.

¹⁶ Robert Y. Stuart to Louis Howe, Apr. 15, 1933, Official File, Agriculture, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library.

¹⁷ Gifford Pinchot to Robert Fechner, Dec. 29, 1933, Correspondence with Governors, CCC Records. Pinchot told Fechner that Pennsylvania had no need of adding to its state-owned holdings. Copy in Gifford Pinchot Papers.

state's thirty-four congressional seats, and carry the state for Hoover that same year. The Democrats in Pennsylvania had a difficult upward climb ahead of them.

A pivotal figure in this Democratic story is, curiously, the Republican Gifford Pinchot. As an old "Bull-Moose" Republican and an ardent conservationist, Pinchot's ideological orientation was very different from the laissez-faire conventional wisdom of the triumphal Republicans of the 1920s and closer to that of the two Roosevelts. Moreover, Pinchot and Franklin Roosevelt were linked by personal friendships. The friendship of their wives, Eleanor Roosevelt and Cornelia Bryce Pinchot, was even older, dating from their childhoods.

Pinchot formally remained a Republican in the 1930s and his relationship with Democrats proved complex and prickly. He welcomed Roosevelt's national policies on relief and appreciated the support the president urged on Democratic state legislators for his own program in 1933. He also cooperated with the Democratic State Committee in the early months of the CCC in helping it get foremen positions in the camps.¹⁸ When his term was nearing its end in 1934, he negotiated with state Democrats in the hopes of running for United States senator on a ticket with George H. Earle, the Democratic candidate for governor that year. These hopes were dashed, however, by a bitter dispute that erupted between Pinchot and Joseph F. Guffey, who coveted the seat for himself. Guffey's election to the Senate in 1934 effectively ended Pinchot's political career.¹⁹

Meanwhile, the New Deal's immediate impact on Pennsylvania's economy translated into unprecedented success for the Democrats in the 1934 elections. Thanks to its successful relief programs, including the CCC, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, and the Civil Works Administration, the Democrats not only succeeded in electing Guffey to the Senate, but George Earle became only the second Democratic governor since the Civil War. The stage was set for Pennsylvania's own "Little New Deal" in the middle years of the decade.

¹⁸ Duncan C. McCallum (Pinchot's secretary) to Secretary Zimmerman of Democratic State Committee, Aug. 3, 1933, and Aug. 7, 1933, Gifford Pinchot Papers.

¹⁹ Gifford Pinchot to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 13, 1933; and Pinchot to Roosevelt, Oct. 29, 1934, where Pinchot describes both Guffey and Earle as "unfit" for office, President's Personal File, 289. Pinchot's attempts to explain his behavior in 1934 met with little sympathy from Roosevelt, who gave him a lecture on the necessity of fighting for principles even when it involved working with people one disliked. Roosevelt to Pinchot, Nov. 9, 1934, Gifford Pinchot Papers; M. Nelson McGeary, *Gifford Pinchot, Forester-Politician* (Princeton, NJ, 1960), 434.

Roosevelt's New Deal had played the most important role in this revival of the state's Democrats, and the CCC was one of the most popular of its programs contributing to that revival.

The CCC is perhaps most impressive for the boldness of vision that inspired it. Starting almost from scratch, working marathon days, through weekends, around the normal demands of routine business, consuming bottomless urns of coffee, exhaling thickening clouds of cigarette smoke, disrupting family lives—thousands of public employees in hundreds of offices in Washington, DC, and across the country successfully placed 275,000 men in hastily built work camps in less than three months time. In the end, over the nine years of the program, the CCC put some 2.5 million men to work in over 4,500 camps across the country and in Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. No wonder when some of the central figures later looked back, they could scarcely believe what they had accomplished.²⁰

Tracing the origins of this idea of employing idle men in public works, specifically on conservation projects, is like looking for the sources of a mighty river in numerous feeder streams and rivulets. After the CCC was created, a small body of literature attempted to locate its *true* source in writers like Thomas Carlyle or William James or in labor camp projects in Europe or California. But whatever its putative sources may have been, in actuality the CCC was a program that Franklin Delano Roosevelt virtually willed into existence on his own.²¹

The creation of the CCC in early April 1933 produced intense interest and excitement throughout Pennsylvania. On April 3, before any specific plans had been set up in Washington, a crowd of two thousand hopeful young men, dressed in their Sunday bests, converged on the state employment bureau in downtown Philadelphia. The officials there had not yet received any instructions and had to send the disappointed young men home.²²

²⁰ Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 103. The closest parallel some of the CCC founders could think of was the mobilization of 181,000 soldiers in the first three months of World War I. Duncan Major to Robert Fechner, June 30, 1933, Louis M. Howe Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library.

²¹ Brief summaries of some of the ideas reputed to have influenced Roosevelt's CCC plans are in Edgar B. Nixon's compilation, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Conservation, 1911–1945* (Hyde Park, NY, 1957), 1:209–10, 353–54, and in Kenneth Holland and Frank Ernest Hill, *Youth in the CCC* (Washington, DC, 1942), 15–24.

²² "Big Crowds Here Seek Forest Jobs," *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Apr. 3, 1933, 1; "2,000 Idle Storm State Office for U.S. Forest Work," *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, Apr. 3, 1933, 1.

Even before the first policies were established by Roosevelt's executive order on April 5, the Labor Department began to lay down the eligibility requirements and procedures for enrollment. The department established recruiting quotas based on the population of the various states. Of Roosevelt's first announced goal of 250,000 in camps by July 1, Pennsylvania was initially given 19,500 places to fill. Later the recruitment of 1,950 veterans brought the state's first summer's total to 21,450.²³

As a first step, W. Frank Persons, appointed by Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins to head the selection process, called a start-up meeting in Washington on April 5, inviting relief officials from the seventeen largest eastern cities. Dorothy Kahn, director of the Philadelphia County Relief Board, represented Philadelphia at this meeting and George P. Mills, director of the Allegheny County Relief Board, represented Pittsburgh. In addition, Persons invited F. Richard Stilwell, field representative of the recently established State Emergency Relief Board, whom he had appointed state selector for Pennsylvania. Persons assigned preliminary quotas for each of these cities, three thousand for Philadelphia and nine hundred for Pittsburgh, and the officials returned home to begin setting up the selection process.²⁴ In the days that followed Stilwell meted out the remainder of the state's enrollee quota to the relief boards in the smaller towns. On May 26 Persons appointed two Veterans Administration officials, H. J. Crosson in Philadelphia and E. R. Bunke in Pittsburgh, as selectors for the 1,950 veterans in the state to be recruited.²⁵

After the relief boards were given their local quotas, they began to process applications from men in their area. Their instructions were to pick single men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five who were United States citizens and would agree to send most of their monthly pay home as allotments to their families.²⁶ They were also told to give priority in

²³ W. Frank Persons to state selectors, May 6, 1933, Documents Relating to the Organization and Operation of the CCC, CCC Records. *Annual Report of the Director of Emergency Conservation Work, 1933* (Washington, DC, [1934]), 19. The 1,300 LEMs added later were taken from the original 19,500 quota.

²⁴ W. Frank Persons, letter to *Time*, Apr. 17, 1933, Division of Selection, CCC Records.

²⁵ W. Frank Persons to all directors of selection, May 26, 1933, Correspondence with State Selecting Agents, CCC Records; Gen. Paul Malone to Adjutant General, June 13, 1933, General Administrative Files, Adjutant General Records, National Archives. Veterans had their own separate camps.

²⁶ There is some confusion on the amounts required. When the original policy decisions made on April 5 were made public, Director Robert Fechner announced that preference would be given to young men who were willing to allot "a substantial portion" of their pay to dependents. *New York*

their selections to young men whose families were receiving public relief assistance, though they did not always follow this advice.²⁷

Philadelphia sent off its first three thousand enrollees to army conditioning camps on April 7, described as "fine specimens, decidedly under par physically" but "eager to go." Among the first enrollees were Joe Wallace, age twenty-four, five foot two, ninety-eight pounds, and the sole support of his parents and sister, and John Phillips, one of seventeen children. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, by now assured of the nonmilitary character of the CCC, provided the young men with box lunches and went down to the train station to send them off.²⁸ In Pittsburgh relief officials had reviewed two thousand applications for their first nine hundred places.²⁹

Various motives drove these young men to leave home for a barracks existence. Intrafamily tensions, the need for extra income, and sometimes basic hunger were all part of the mix. Often it was a simple story of young men escaping idleness and seeking activity, structure, and adventure. As R. F. Hammett of the Forest Service pointed out, most of the young men coming into CCC camps in Pennsylvania from the larger cities had never

Times, Apr. 6, 1933, 6. Stilwell then told the county relief boards that recruits "must voluntarily" contribute twenty-five dollars as an allotment. Persons objected to this language and some flexibility was then allowed in the amounts promised. F. Richard Stilwell to County Emergency Relief Boards, Apr. 20, 1933, Correspondence with State Selecting Agents, CCC Records. By November Dorothy Kahn was reporting to Persons that in her area about 25 percent of the men were sending less than twenty dollars home. She thought preference should be given to applicants who promised more generous allotments, but Persons gave her no clear guidance. Dorothy Kahn to W. Frank Persons, Nov. 22, 1933, Correspondence with State Selecting Agents, CCC Records. Later, in March 1934, Eric Biddle, head of the State Emergency Relief Board, was informed by Person's office that the minimum allotment that recruits must promise was twenty-two dollars a month. Thelma B. Dade (Person's secretary) to Eric Biddle, Mar. 17, 1934, Correspondence with State Selecting Agents, CCC Records. Later, in 1937, twenty-two dollars became the standard allotment.

²⁷ F. Richard Stilwell to County Emergency Relief Board agents, Apr. 20, 1933, Correspondence with State Selecting Agents, CCC Records. The family of Robert Ward, an enrollee at Camp S-91 from 1933 to 1935, owned a dairy farm near Wellsboro and, although poor, was not receiving any assistance. Interview by author, Aug. 26, 2003. Neither was the family of Walter Joyce, also a member of S-91 in 1934, on relief. Joyce's father was unemployed, but an older sister was earning eighteen dollars a week in Ambridge. Interview by author, Aug. 11, 2003. Tom Frantz, with ambitions to be a forester, persistently begged the local welfare office to sign him up, even though his family was not on relief. Interview by author, Sept. 20, 2003. My own father, Joseph A. Speakman, who joined Camp S-119 in June 1933, was unemployed and living at home with his parents who were poor but not on relief.

²⁸ *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Apr. 7, 1933, 1; Dorothy Kahn to W. Frank Persons, Apr. 11, 1933, Correspondence with State Selecting Agents, CCC Records.

²⁹ *Pittsburgh Press*, Apr. 6, 1933, 21.

been on a mountain in their lives and “they had never seen the woods.”³⁰ On the other hand, there were some young men from rural parts of the state whose social horizons had been so narrow that they had never seen a black person in their lives until their CCC travels.³¹

As time went by and CCC men returned home with improved appearances and stories to tell of camp life (some of them undoubtedly true), other motives began inspiring new waves of recruits. James McEntee, the CCC’s second director, described the appeal of the CCC experience to young men:

They like to see their muscles grow strong, their backs, arms and faces tan from the outdoor work. In sharp contrast to the frail, oft-times undernourished lads who frequently are admitted to the Corps as rookies, are the husky, tanned youth who have been in the CCC for a time—confident young fellows who have learned what a job is and that they are capable of doing it.³²

Typically, after a young man was approved as a CCC recruit by his local relief board, he would report to one of the army’s collecting stations. In Pennsylvania these were located in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Altoona, Johnstown, Williamsport, Allentown, Easton, Pottsville, Reading, Butler, Erie, Greensburg, Uniontown, Wilkes-Barre, and Scranton.³³ He would have to make his own way there, sometimes a considerable distance from home for the men from small towns, and he was told to bring a small suitcase of clothing and personal effects. The first thirty enrollees from Lewistown were dismayed to learn that they would have to get to Harrisburg on their own the following day. The prospect of hitchhiking and spending a night “maybe in jail” did not, however, weaken their determination to sign up.³⁴

At the army office the new enrollee received a physical exam and, if he

³⁰ “The CCC and Our National Plan for American Forestry,” typescript of a radio address, Sept. 7, 1933, CCC Records. Enrollee Joseph Gorman of Co. 1378, Camp S-55 reported that before entering the CCC he “had never seen a mountain or forest.” Benefit Letters, 1935, CCC Records.

³¹ This was the case with Tom Frantz from the anthracite region around Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania. He saw black people for the first time in his life when he passed through Richmond on his way to a Virginia work camp. Interview by author, Sept. 20, 2003.

³² *Annual Report of the Director of the Civilian Conservation Corps for 1940* (Washington, DC, 1940), 5.

³³ See the lists in Louis M. Howe Papers.

³⁴ *Lewistown (PA) Sentinel*, June 11, 1971, 11, clipping in Greenwood Furnace State Park files.

passed, was sworn into the CCC and given a series of inoculation shots for typhoid and smallpox.³⁵ As a "Junior" enrollee, the army assumed responsibility for him and transported him to one of the military bases in his area that served as a conditioning camp. Here, the army outfitted the recruits with work clothing and fed them a healthier diet than many were accustomed to back home. Over the next week or two, recruits would spend their time in a physical program of calisthenics, performing light work around the camp, and getting used to the experience of camp life.³⁶ As time went on these conditioning camps were phased out and later classes of CCC men were received directly into the work camps.

Forts Meade, Hoyle, Howard, Washington, and the Holabird Quartermaster Depot in Maryland; Forts Myer, Humphreys, Monroe, Story, and Langley Field in Virginia; and the Carlisle Barracks in Pennsylvania served as the conditioning camps that received Pennsylvania men. Fort Meade took more of the Pennsylvania men than the others, especially those from Philadelphia.³⁷ Although Maryland's Aberdeen Proving Grounds were also nearby, that fort's commander warned off the adjutant general from sending any CCC men there. Not only was there sensitive research in weapons taking place on the grounds, but the base was full of dangerous explosive devices, a very unsuitable place in which to have large numbers of curious and active young men poking about.³⁸

In the conditioning camps, men faced problems of homesickness, bad reactions to inoculation shots, and occasional hostility from army recruits on base who were, fortunately for the CCC enrollees, relatively few in number after Depression cutbacks in personnel levels. Roosevelt had envisioned in his March 31 press conference that the CCC men would spend, at most, a week or two in the conditioning camps and then be moved quickly to the work camps. For that to happen, however, work projects had to be approved and camps established to receive them in the

³⁵ The shots did not prevent an outbreak of diphtheria in a camp near Bloomsburg in December 1933, which hospitalized four enrollees and resulted in the camp being quarantined and immunity shots given to the enrollees. *New York Times*, Dec. 8, 1933, 5. Camp S-109 at Beaver Valley was quarantined for German measles in 1934 and spinal meningitis in 1935. Potts, *Civilian Conservation Corps, Bear Valley*, 1979.

³⁶ "A Chance to Work in the Forests," *Bulletin* No. 1, U.S. Department of Labor, Apr. 12, 1933, Gifford Pinchot Papers. This was a pamphlet of questions and answers designed to let a new recruit know what the likely steps would be before he was sent to a work camp.

³⁷ The lists are in Louis M. Howe Papers; *First Report of the Director of ECW*, April 5, 1933–September 30, 1933 (Washington, DC, 1934), 25.

³⁸ Col. E. M. Shinkle to Commanding General, Third Corps, Apr. 19, 1933, General Administrative Files, Adjutant General Records.

states. By early May, due to the large numbers of CCC men arriving in camps daily and to delays in approving work projects, men were being kept in the army camps for more than two weeks and discipline problems developed at some of them.³⁹

The biggest problem was keeping the men busy after they completed the modest amount of training and work required. On April 27, Philadelphia's *Evening Bulletin* reported on some of the problems at Fort Meade, where an acute shortage of recreational equipment created "rising restlessness and homesickness" among the 3,200 enrollees, most of whom were from Philadelphia. Army enlisted men, who resented the thirty-dollar-a-month pay scale of the CCC men, aggressively and protectively claimed the limited athletic gear at the fort. Consequently, some young men, with nothing to do after their light duties, took to the roads, begged rides to towns, and became nuisances.⁴⁰ "Frantic," the fort's recreational officer issued calls for help from civic organizations in Philadelphia. When groups like the Playground Association responded with shipments of games and equipment for the camps, the same newspaper reported snidely on the "vacations" the men were enjoying.⁴¹

CCC administrators were acutely sensitive to any adverse publicity, and these problems in the conditioning camps threatened to bring discredit on the new program.⁴² The urgent task at the national and state levels was to line up conservation work projects, have them approved in Washington, and then to lay out camps in the vicinity of the projects. An emergency meeting of the CCC Advisory Council on May 12 succeeded in streamlining some of the bureaucratic and purchasing tangles that had held things up, and the president dropped his original insistence on approving every single work camp.

Pennsylvania was one of the more efficient states in moving men into work camps. This was in part because in 1923 the U.S. Forest Service had established a half million acres in western Pennsylvania as the Allegheny National Forest. This land was directly under the supervision of the Forest

³⁹ John J. Graham remembered being at Fort Meade for three weeks before being sent out to Camp ANF-1. "Memoir" in *Civilian Conservation Corps: 50th Anniversary, 1933-1983* (Harrisburg, PA, 1983), 19. Gen. Paul Malone kept pressing on Pinchot the vital importance of his forestry people preparing work projects. Malone to Pinchot, June 2, 1933, Gifford Pinchot Papers.

⁴⁰ *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Apr. 27, 1933, 1.

⁴¹ *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, May 9, 1933, 1.

⁴² W. Frank Persons to state selectors, May 1, 1933, Division of Selection Circular Letters, CCC Records.

Service and did not require as much coordination with state authorities.⁴³ Moreover, the service, under Forester Stuart, had developed a comprehensive plan of forestry projects just waiting for an influx of manpower the CCC was now about to provide.⁴⁴

The first camp established in Pennsylvania was in the Allegheny National Forest. Company #318, comprised of men who had been conditioned at Fort Monroe, Virginia, set up Camp ANF-1 near Marienville on April 24, 1933, making it the second CCC camp in the country after Camp Roosevelt in Virginia. The next three Pennsylvania camps established were also in the national forest. The companies of these camps had also been organized at Fort Monroe and their camps were all credited with the same starting date of April 24: Company #319 at ANF-2, near Heart's Content; Company #320 at ANF-3, near Dunkle Corner; and Company #321-C at ANF-5, on Sugar Run. The latter was the first "Colored" camp in Pennsylvania, the CCC following the "separate but equal" standard of the times, albeit with mixed results.⁴⁵ Nine of the first ninety-seven Pennsylvania camps, about 9 percent, were assigned to "Colored" companies, which was about double the percentage of the African American population of the state. On the other hand, the number of CCC slots open to black Pennsylvanians was never proportional to their need, and supervisory positions for African Americans in camps were always scarce.

The camps in Pennsylvania were all part of the army's Third Corps and were arranged into two large administrative districts: an Eastern District, No. 1, which included Pennsylvania east of the Susquehanna River, based in New Cumberland; and a Western District, No. 2, headquartered in Pittsburgh, which covered the camps in the rest of the state. In 1933 the Eastern District only supervised twenty-four of the ninety-seven work camps set up in the state, but by 1936 its area of jurisdiction

⁴³ The first fifty camps approved by Roosevelt and Fechner were all in national forests, including the first five Pennsylvania camps. *New York Times*, Apr. 12, 1933, 2.

⁴⁴ R. F. Hammett, "The CCC and Our National Plan for American Forestry," typescript of a radio address, Sept. 7, 1933, Entry File 188, Fish and Wildlife Records, National Archives.

⁴⁵ ANF-4 in Elk County was credited with a May 5 opening. War Department list of first ECW camps for Third Corps Area, Louis M. Howe Papers. An article in *Happy Days*, Apr. 9, 1938, 21, lists ten early Pennsylvania companies which were placed on state owned lands in May 1933 that were still in operation at their original sites five years later: #301 at Matson, S-80; #305 at Richmond Furnace, S-54; #306 at Loganton or Mill Hall, S-66; #307 at Old Forge or Waynesboro, S-70; #310 at Hyner, S-75; #328 at Cedar Run or Leetonia, S-90; #329 at Pine Grove Furnace, S-51; #331 at Clearfield, S-116; #366 at Elimsport, S-125; and #383 at La Porte or Forksville, S-95.

had grown to control about 60 percent of all the camps in Pennsylvania.⁴⁶ Pennsylvania also had the advantage of a well-organized Department of Forests and Waters, headed in 1933 by another Pinchot protégé, Lewis Staley. Staley's department was responsible for all state-owned lands and had plenty of work planned, much of which had been put off by the budget cuts caused by the Depression. Although the federal agencies had to approve the work done by the CCC on these state lands, Staley's personnel directly supervised the actual work in the state camps.⁴⁷

Staley had got the CCC off to a running start. He attended a meeting in Washington on April 6, called by Forester Stuart to begin coordinating work plans between the federal and state foresters. By the next day Staley had formally sent on fifty-four work project applications to CCC director Robert Fechner's office. These were approved by April 21, by which time Staley had a few dozen more in the pipeline, and by June 2 Fechner had approved a total of 97 work projects for Pennsylvania.⁴⁸ Only California had more camps that first year—171—and no other eastern state came close to Pennsylvania. Virginia had 48 and New York had 32.⁴⁹

Forest Service and National Park Service personnel working with state foresters decided the work to be done by state camps, but they had to consult with the army on camp locations. The army was experienced in setting up camps, paying attention to issues of safe water and sewage, ease of transportation, and suitability of terrain. In Pennsylvania the state's Department of Health would have to give final approval for the sites as safely habitable.⁵⁰

Other, sometimes idiosyncratic, factors occasionally had to be considered in locating camp sites. Staley sent a "heads-up" note to the

⁴⁶ *Civilian Conservation Corps Annual, 1936, District No. 1, Third Corps Area* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1936), 21. After 1936 the Eastern District was divided into four subdistricts, and the Western District into six subdistricts. *Happy Days*, Apr. 25, 1936, 11.

⁴⁷ Robert Fechner memo, Apr. 18, 1933, Official File. The U.S. Forest Service regional forester assigned to supervise Third Corps work was Joseph C. Kircher.

⁴⁸ *New York Times*, Apr. 5, 1933, 6. Duncan McCallum (Pinchot's secretary) to Lewis Staley, Apr. 7, 1933; and Staley to McCallum, Apr. 21, 1933, Gifford Pinchot Papers. See Guy McKinney to Louis Howe, May 12, 1933, Louis M. Howe Papers, for a list of those first fifty-four camps. See also, McKinney to Gen. Malone, June 2, 1933, General Administrative Files, Adjutant General Records.

⁴⁹ "With the Civilian Conservation Corps," *American Forests* 39 (1933): 302, 334; *First Report of the Director of ECW, 1933*, 26.

⁵⁰ *Galeton (PA) Leader-Dispatch* on April 27 reported on teams of Department of Forests and Waters, Department of Health, and army personnel scouring the area for suitable camp sites. Clipping in Potter County Historical Society.

commanding officer at Camp S-51 at Pine Grove Furnace in Cumberland County. He alerted the officer to the presence of Girl Scout and tourist camps in his area and urged him to make sure no embarrassing incidents occurred.⁵¹ Another potential problem in locating camp sites was raised by one of the field representatives of the state's Bureau of Mental Health. Field representative Florence Hackenbush warned Persons about the dangers presented by some of the indigenous inhabitants of the state. She alerted him to the fact that, with so many work camps being established in remote and isolated parts of Pennsylvania, the men were bound to come in contact with the "deteriorated and degenerative feeble-minded families" living in those parts. She was particularly fearful that the "loose women" in some of these areas might take advantage of the young men and abuse them. She singled out Potter County as a particularly dangerous area.⁵² More seriously, CCC administrators had to tread carefully around the occasional complaints that arose over the placement of African American camps.

Despite this frenetic pace of activity by Staley and his department in organizing work projects, the feeling in Washington in early May was that some of the Pennsylvania enrollees, like those from other eastern states, were going to have to be sent west. A small cadre of 337 Pennsylvania men was sent to Pocatello, Idaho, on May 8 and more were expected to follow.⁵³ It is impossible to be precise about the numbers of Pennsylvanians sent west because, except for Company #1301, which was sent to Greys River, Wyoming, most of the men sent out of state in this early period were distributed, in groups of about twenty, to various companies in camps in Idaho and Wyoming.⁵⁴ But, after the administrative logjam in Washington was broken on May 12, Staley was able to get enough work and camp sites approved to occupy the rest of Pennsylvania's

⁵¹ Lewis Staley to Lieutenant Hendrix, June 2, 1933, Gifford Pinchot Papers.

⁵² Florence Hackenbush to W. Frank Persons, June 19, 1933, Correspondence with State Selecting Agents, CCC Records.

⁵³ Fechner's office had produced a preliminary chart on April 22 showing which states had work or labor available. Pennsylvania was the only state where the two categories perfectly matched. Documents Relating to the Organization and Operation of the CCC, CCC Records. Gen. Paul Malone to Adjutant General, May 8, 1933, General Administrative Files, Adjutant General Records. Persons wrote to the Pennsylvania selectors on May 19 warning about the possibility of more of their enrollees being sent west. W. Frank Persons to state selectors, May 19, 1933, Division of Selection, CCC Records.

⁵⁴ Station and Strength Reports, Ninth Corps, Aug. 1933, CCC Records. This company returned to Pennsylvania in October to man a new Camp SP-3 near Pittsburgh.

enrollment quota, and, when the president's target date of July 1 came round, the vast majority of CCC men recruited in Pennsylvania were at work in camps in their home state. No more Pennsylvania men had to be sent west after May 24.⁵⁵ By the end of July 1933 there were eighty-nine CCC work camps established on state lands in Pennsylvania, one at Gettysburg Military Park, and seven in the Allegheny National Forest.⁵⁶ Director Fechner complimented Governor Pinchot on Pennsylvania's record, citing it as "one of the very best of our states in cooperating." Indeed, by late May he was pressing Pinchot to find camp locations in Pennsylvania to absorb some of the surplus men from nearby states. While this could not be managed, Fechner congratulated the Keystone State on setting up enough camps by early June to occupy almost the entirety of the state's enrollment quota.⁵⁷

These first CCC camps were usually tent sites in rustic and isolated settings. A student of the CCC educational program in 1934 provided a picturesque description of his search for remotely located camps that still rings familiar to contemporary seekers of old camp sites:

These little villages show on no map that can be purchased in a city shop. . . . I have ridden behind an Army chauffeur with a Corps Area map as his guide, and seen him hunt his camp for an hour. Only by questioning at country filling stations, by nosing up dirt roads, by guessing hazardly at rude forks can one stumble at last upon the more elusive of them.⁵⁸

Sturdier wooden structures began to replace the tents in the summer and fall of 1933, but today there are only a few of these CCC camp buildings left in Pennsylvania. The best preserved camp complex is that of S-70 in the Michaux State Forest, leased and admirably maintained since the 1940s by Methodist church groups. Parker Dam State Park has a well-

⁵⁵ Adjutant General to Gen. Paul Malone, May 24, 1933, General Administrative Files, Adjutant General Records. Fechner applauded Pinchot in providing enough camps for his "entire regular enrolment." Robert Fechner to Gifford Pinchot, June 5, 1933, Gifford Pinchot Papers. However, Persons reported 1,200 Pennsylvania men working out of state on June 30. W. Frank Persons to F. Richard Stilwell, June 30, 1933, Correspondence with State Selecting Agents, CCC Records. During the early summer seven Pennsylvania camps were filled with veterans. Advisory Council Minutes, June 30, 1933, CCC Records; *Forestry News Digest* (Oct. 1933): 1.

⁵⁶ *First Report of the Director of ECW*, 26.

⁵⁷ Robert Fechner to Gifford Pinchot, May 24, 1933; and Fechner to Pinchot, June 5, 1933, Gifford Pinchot Papers.

⁵⁸ Frank Ernest Hill, *The School in the Camps: The Educational Program of the Civilian Conservation Corps* (New York, 1935), 1.

preserved barracks building, which houses a CCC museum. Promised Land State Park also has a few utility buildings and an officers' quarters, which now houses an attractive display of CCC artifacts and memorabilia. Laurel Hill State Park claims to have more original CCC buildings than any other site.

But at most of the CCC camp sites today, curious or pious pilgrims, looking for places where CCC men, sometimes their ancestors, lived and worked, can find themselves driving on poorly marked gravel roads, traipsing through dark forests, or gazing at fields now devoted to playground equipment or junk piles. The camp site at Pine Grove Furnace in Cumberland County, for example, sits off the road in Michaux State Forest land. Intrepid visitors hiking through tangled underbrush will need a vivid imagination to recreate the camp life of the hundreds of young men who spent formative months of their lives there at Camp S-51. One can still see a few macadam patches off to the side of a trail, and the more adventurous can hike their way upstream to a dam and sluice channel built by the men. A small pond that served as a swimming hole does not look very inviting today but the inspired tourist might be able to close his or her eyes and conjure up ghostly images of young men splashing and frolicking after a hard day's work. Perhaps the most poignant relic of the CCC presence at Pine Grove Furnace is an intricately designed water fountain, now decrepit and unused, but that clearly was a work of skill and pride.

The creation of the CCC and the arrival of a CCC camp were, with very few exceptions, warmly welcomed by the Pennsylvania communities nearby.⁵⁹ Indeed, some communities were not content with only one camp in their vicinity but pleaded with Pinchot to set up more and complained when camps were shut down.⁶⁰ The camps brought increased business since the policy of the CCC was to make purchases in local areas whenever possible.⁶¹ These purchases of food, gasoline, and hardware

⁵⁹ Pinchot expressed his pleasure with the favorable reception camps were receiving throughout the state. Gifford Pinchot to Gen. Paul Malone, June 16, 1933, Gifford Pinchot Papers. Hendrickson's sampling of twenty newspapers throughout the state found that all but one (the intensely Republican *Philadelphia Inquirer*) applauded the establishment of the CCC. Hendrickson, "Civilian Conservation Corps in Pennsylvania," 69.

⁶⁰ Jere C. West of Bedford to Gifford Pinchot, June 5, 1933; and Ernest E. Harwood (Pinchot's secretary) to business leaders in Clarion, Apr. 14, 1934, Gifford Pinchot Papers.

⁶¹ Maj. John A. Porter, "The Enchanted Forest," *Quartermaster Review* (Mar.-Apr. 1934): 4-5. Camp S-107 records at the Michaux State Forest Office in Fayetteville, Pennsylvania, are replete with local business dealings.

profited locally depressed economies and even the five to eight dollars a month available to the two hundred men in camp to spend on weekends in town was appreciated. In return, local communities contributed recreation equipment, arranged sports competitions with their own local teams, and hosted weekend dances.⁶²

There seems to have been very little hostility, let alone violence, toward the new camps. Although the recent laying off of sixty employees in the Clearfield State Forest produced some grumbling when the CCC camp placed there seemed to be doing some of their old work, no violence ensued. Pinchot may have been very prescient in his forceful advocacy of the need for LEMs—Local Experienced Men—back in early April. Based on his knowledge of the history of woodsmen in Pennsylvania, he had warned that unemployed forest workers would resent the employment of outsiders in their neighborhoods and might resort to violence, especially arson.⁶³

In Philadelphia, far from any CCC camp, the program's immediate impact on local business was seen in the rush orders for tents and clothing that the quartermaster general placed that first spring. From May 15 to June 8 workers at the army's Quartermaster Corps were kept busy working seven days a week, with women reportedly working illegal night shifts, in the rush to meet the urgent CCC demand for equipment. The army had doubled the work force and was still straining to fill orders for 425,000 coats and 200,000 pairs of trousers. Some of the work involved altering sizes of army surplus gear to fit the smaller, often malnourished enrollees. In addition, the workers produced seventy-five tents a day.⁶⁴

Governor Pinchot expressed concern that widespread violations of Pennsylvania's factory laws were occurring. At first he was told that state laws did not apply on the federal properties, but after an investigation and the first rush of orders had been filled he was assured that the army was respecting all relevant standards and was cooperating with the state factory inspectors. By mid-June the workers on the army base were back to eight-hour days, forty-four-hour weeks, and mutually satisfactory arrangements had been negotiated with private subcontractors in the

⁶² The town of Emporium provided some early dances for Company #313 at Camp S-85, Sizerville, and transportation to Sunday church services. *Happy Days*, May 27, 1933, 5.

⁶³ W. Frank Persons to F. Richard Stilwell, June 30, 1933, Correspondence with State Selecting Agents, CCC Records; Gifford Pinchot to Louis Howe, Apr. 17, 1933, Official File, 268.

⁶⁴ Duncan Major memo to Robert Fechner, June 30, 1933, Reference File, CCC Records.

city.⁶⁵ Another violation of fair labor practices occurred when a Delaware company, paying substandard wages, provided the Quartermaster Depot in Philadelphia with fifteen thousand cots. This episode resulted in Fechner asserting his authority over CCC purchases of over \$2,500.⁶⁶

The level of activity involved in setting up and equipping all these camps in Pennsylvania in May and June 1933 is difficult to imagine and, perhaps, accounts for the relative scarcity of records on this initial period, especially from the Department of Forests and Waters. Pinchot reported Staley as "swamped" with work, with twenty-six work camps established on a single day, May 30.⁶⁷ Staley's deputy, John W. Keller, reflecting later on those feverish weeks, wondered "what we did with our time" before the ECW program began.⁶⁸

When President Roosevelt extended the CCC for another six-month period by an executive order on August 19, a new round of activity began, getting approval for new work projects and recruiting replacements for men whose terms had expired or who had not completed them. But it was much easier to expand operations than it had been to create them *ex nihilo*. By January 1934 Pennsylvania had 104 operating camps and had begun an organized plan of education.

"Well begun is half done" goes the old saw, and the establishment of the CCC on the strong foundations constructed in the spring of 1933 helped enable it to endure the full season of Depression. The CCC camps in Pennsylvania would expand and contract over the next eight years. Some would be shut down, sometimes to be reopened later; new ones would be erected; work projects would be completed, and new ones conceived. By the end, tens of thousands of young Pennsylvania men would have moved into camps, gained some weight as well as some work experience, and helped restore the health and beauty of "Penn's Woods." After their CCC tours those men moved out to embark on an amazing variety of life experiences. World War II would provide more dramatic episodes for many of them, but these were too often mingled with horror and

⁶⁵ Gifford Pinchot telegram to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 26, 1933; and Robert Fechner to Gifford Pinchot, June 9, 1933, President's Personal File, 289; Louis Howe to Gifford Pinchot, June 24, 1933, with a copy of the quartermaster's report of June 15, 1933, Official File, 25.

⁶⁶ Charles W. Johnson, "The Civilian Conservation Corps: The Role of the Army" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1968), 194–95.

⁶⁷ Gifford Pinchot to Gen. Paul Malone, June 16, 1933; and Malone to Pinchot, June 5, 1933, Gifford Pinchot Papers.

⁶⁸ Pennsylvania Department of Forests and Waters, *Service Letter*, July 6, 1933, Department of Forests and Waters Records, Pennsylvania State Archives.

tragedy. By contrast, CCC men often recalled the “happy days” they spent as part of “Roosevelt’s Tree Army” as the best period of their lives.⁶⁹

Viewed from a contemporary perspective, the CCC had some obvious limitations. The absence of women, the discrimination against African Americans, the heavy military stamp on the program, the uneven educational services—these are the obvious missteps that anybody promoting national service programs today would avoid. The CCC was a hastily constructed program designed to deal with an emergency situation of poverty and hopelessness. Its enduring legacy is its conservation and beautification work, and as a model of public service to a noble ideal.

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⁶⁹ This, perhaps hyperbolic, memory is frequently proffered in the reminiscences of the men interviewed by Nolte in *Civilian Conservation Corps*. Unfortunately we do not have comparable reminiscences from the many men who did not complete their tours and were discharged or went AWOL.