



Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

A New Deal for Texas State Parks



Welcome to a New Deal for Texas Parks - an online exhibit and education center for teachers and students of Texas history. Flip through the pages of the ebook to explore how individuals, communities and landscapes in Texas were impacted by the New Deal Era. Discover how the Civilian Conservation Corps constructed many of the state parks we enjoy today. Explore a variety of primary source documents such as photographs, oral histories, letters and music that help tell this American story through the eyes of Texas.

As you experience the ebook, we invite you to create a keepsake of your own. Look for the "My Keepsake Guide" at the beginning of each chapter. This page will be your guide as you engage in learning more from the primary sources throughout the site. In the end, you will create a keepsake of your own.

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Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1: Depression and Relief

Introduction

During the Great Depression, Americans and people across the world suffered along with the economy. One in four Americans lost their jobs and those who had jobs often had to work for less money. Farmers, already affected by the Depression, faced a terrible drought. Many people were angry, afraid or hopeless.

The election of 1932 was a referendum on how to fight the Great Depression. Americans elected Franklin Roosevelt to the Presidency.

On his inauguration day, Roosevelt pledged himself to a "new deal for the American people," and began to set up



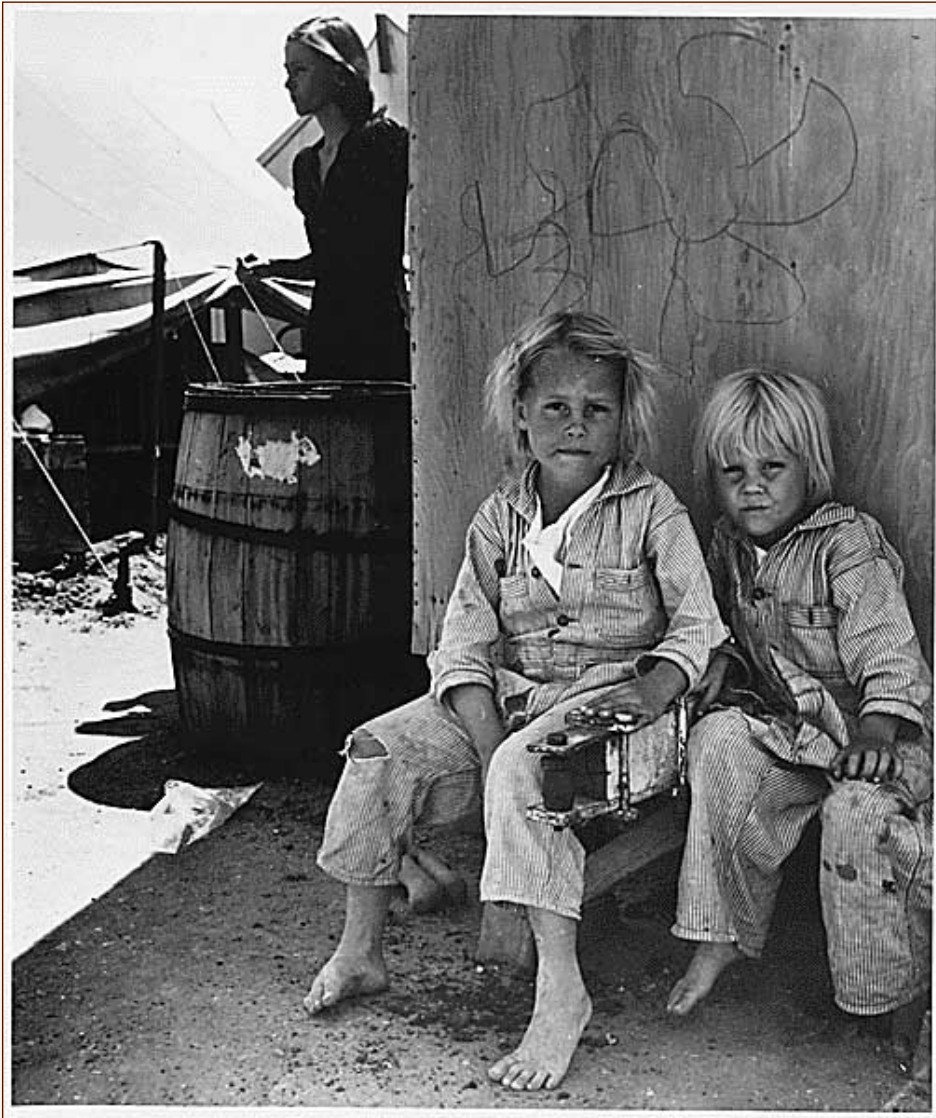
Many Americans hoped that FDR could help them to begin to recover from the Depression.

FDR and Farmer en route to Warm Springs, GA (Oct. 23, 1932). Photo courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library Digital Archives

many relief and make-work programs.

While some were worried about the costs of so much government aid, New Deal programs such as the CCC were popular with most Americans at the time.

► Download ["My Keepsake" guide for Chapter 1.](#)



Many children of the Great Depression lacked basic necessities like proper shoes, clothing and food.

Edison, Kern County, California. Children of young migratory parents. They originally lived in Texas," 04/11/1940 by Dorothea Lange. Photo courtesy of National Archives, 521786

Depression in Texas

In the early years following the stock market crash of 1929, Texans remained optimistic about their economic situation. Some state industries did well, and Texans felt shielded from the far-away effects of the Depression.

Eventually, Texas suffered the effects of the economic downturn along with the rest of the nation. Texas' oil industry provided some jobs, but most people worked in the struggling ranching and agriculture industries.

Compounding the economic crisis the country was facing, a severe drought known as the Dust Bowl devastated the Great Plains and parts of Texas. Many Texas families migrated west to Arizona, New Mexico and California in search of work picking peas or cotton.

As the Great Depression and Dust Bowl worsened, Texas - both its land and its people - needed help. Could the coming presidential election of 1932 be the hope that Texas and the rest of the United States were looking for?

- [Click here to hear the song, "Dark was the Night, Cold was the Ground" by Blind Willie Johnson.](#)



The drought, wind erosion and severe dust storms of the Dust Bowl forced many Texans to leave their homes in search of work.

Dust storm approaching Stratford, TX, April 18, 1935. Part of Dust Bowl surveying in Texas. Photo courtesy of NOAA George E. Marsh Album, theb1365, NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS) Collection

Election of 1932



FDR campaign button.

Photo courtesy of the America Votes online exhibit. Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University Library.

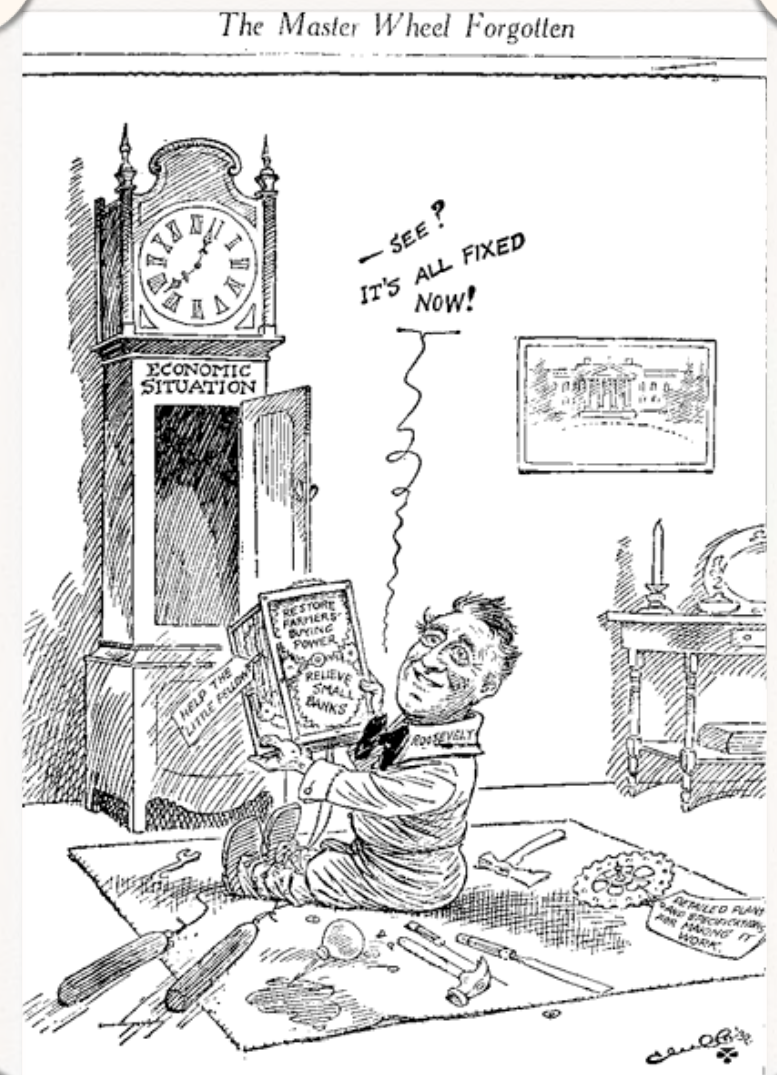
In the midst of the Great Depression, many Americans hoped that the presidential election of 1932 would be the catalyst for great change.

Republican president Herbert Hoover ran against Democrat and New York governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the 1932 race.

Both candidates campaigned across the country and, on November 8, 1932, Franklin Roosevelt and running mate Texan John Nance Garner won in a landslide victory. In fact, the Roosevelt/Garner ticket received 88.6 percent of the Texas vote.

Click on a button to listen to audio clips:

- ▶ ["Happy Days are Here Again"](#)
- ▶ [Audio clip of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Democratic Convention speech](#)



Some people were unsure that FDR's "tinkering" with the country's economic situation could solve the nation's problems.

Political Cartoon featured in the Utica Dispatch by Clubb. Photo courtesy of the Basil O'Connor Collection

Election of 1932 Photo Gallery

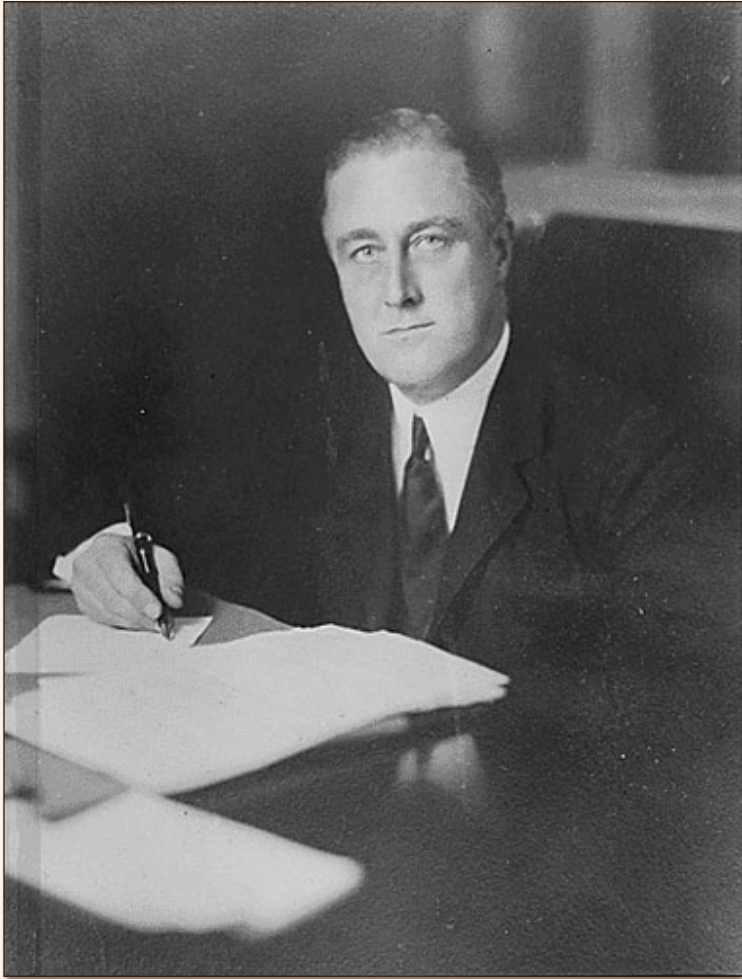


Hopeful voters came out to support Franklin Roosevelt and Texan John Nance Garner as they campaigned across the country.

Garner and FDR on campaign trail in Peekskill, NY 08/14/1932. Photo courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library Digital Archives

New Deal or No Deal

Franklin Roosevelt pledged a New Deal to America to fight and recover from the Great Depression.



FDR vowed that America would see change within the first one hundred days of his presidency.

FDR at desk, 1933. Photo courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Digital Archives.

Great Depression.

However, he faced a daunting task - one fourth of the workforce was unemployed; industrial and agricultural businesses were in jeopardy; and two million Americans were homeless.

Americans were ready for immediate change, and after his inauguration on March 4, 1933 President Roosevelt vowed that Americans would see change within the first one hundred days of his presidency.

A number of programs began during this time that provided relief to bankers, businesses and farmers.

While the New Deal was popular with many Americans, it represented big change in the role of the government and was not universally accepted. Many believed that that New Deal spending was reckless and its "socialist" experiments were taking the country down a dangerous road.



[Click to view film reel about President Roosevelt's inauguration.](#)



No photo credit info available



There was no guarantee that New Deal programs would solve the country's economic problems, but many took a chance on FDR and hoped that programs like the CCC, WPA and NRA would help.

Political Cartoon - "Hope" March 1933. Photo courtesy of the Basil O'Connor Collection



FDR's New Deal was not widely accepted. Many felt that they were being dealt a bad hand and that the government was experimenting in Socialism.

Political Cartoon "Let's Leave Out the Joker" by Cowan in the Boston Transcript, 1933. Photo courtesy of the Basil O'Connor Collection.

Alphabet Soup

President Roosevelt quickly established many government programs in the New Deal to combat the Depression.

Known to many as "alphabet agencies," FDR's programs addressed many of the country's industrial, agricultural and employment issues. Many of the New Deal programs came in the form of federal work relief.

One of the most popular and successful New Deal work programs was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC provided work for young men through building parks and conserving natural resources.

For enrollees, programs like the CCC offered work to support themselves and their families. For communities, like many in Texas, the CCC provided much-needed infrastructure, boosted economies and built public parks for recreation.



Programs like the Works Progress Administration (WPA) provided a variety of opportunities for laborers and professionals alike. Architects designed post offices and schools, artists painted murals in public buildings, and labors built bridges and roads.

"Work Pays America! Prosperity" by Vera Bock, c. 1936-1941, WPA Federal Art Project. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, WPA Poster Collection, POS-WPA-NY.B635, no. 12



The CCC was a young man's opportunity for work, play, study and health. Enlistees had to be between the ages of 18 and 25. They worked 40 hours a week and were paid \$30 a month with \$25 going back home to support their families.

"A young man's opportunity for work, play, study & health" by Albert Bender, 1941 - WPA Federal Art Project. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, WPA Poster Collection, POS-WPA-ILL.B46, no. 1

WASHINGTON, D.C. SAT. 11:00 AM
JANUARY 5, 1934



Promotional Video for the National Recovery Administration (NRA)
produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in 1933
and featuring Jimmy Durante.

FDR's New Deal did not provide a cure-all for the country's ailments. Instead, over 30 agencies were established to address specific needs.

Political Cartoon. Photo courtesy of the Basil O'Connor Collection



With over 30 new agencies, many had trouble keeping track of all of the New Deal's "Alphabet Agencies."

Political cartoon of FDR and Albert Einstein. Photo courtesy of the Basil O'Connor Collection.

Chapter 2: Nature Lovers, Texas Parks and Public Lands

Introduction

In the early 1900s, Americans began to experience the great outdoors in a new way. They hopped into their cars and traveled down newly-built roads to get back to nature. Camping, hiking and picnicking became popular activities for these nature lovers.

The United States established national parks. States everywhere saved their own treasures that people could enjoy. Texas wanted to establish its own parks but faced many political and financial challenges.

It was only with FDR's New Deal that Texas had the opportunity to build a statewide system of parks.

► Download "[My Keepsake](#)" [guide, Chapter 2.](#)"



Enjoying the scenery at Brackenridge Park in San Antonio, girl scouts Mary Bailey and Vivian Vieweger relax in front of their tent in 1926.

*The San Antonio Light Collection, The UT Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio, L-0621-D.
Gift of the Hearst Corporation.*

Land and Conservation

By the late 1800s, America had grown “from sea to shining sea.” A few people, like naturalist John Muir, worried that as Americans plowed fields, chopped down trees and built cities – they might also destroy valuable resources and spoil the most beautiful places on earth.

President Teddy Roosevelt listened to the “conservationists” and started the National Park System to preserve special places for everyone to enjoy.



Decades later, President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs helped Texas preserve its own special places.



National parks like Yellowstone and Yosemite became wildly popular & tourists from coast-to-coast came to marvel in the natural wonder. There were so many visitors to these new parks that the government encouraged states to establish their own parks to accommodate the growing interest in the outdoors.

Tourists Horseback riding in Yosemite, ca 1890-1910. Photo courtesy of Denver Public Library.

President Teddy Roosevelt and naturalist John Muir take in the spectacular view at Glacier Point in the Yosemite Valley circa 1906.

Photo courtesy of Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-107389

Good Roads Lead Back to Nature

Texans, like the rest of America, enjoyed a newfound freedom to travel as the automobile became available and affordable to many. Imagine being able to hop in your car and travel to places in a few hours that used to take days in a wagon.

Newly-built roads led people to beautiful nature spots where they reconnected with the outdoors. These nature lovers enjoyed picnicking, hiking and camping.

Some towns built their own camping sites for visitors, but with many new roads planned for Texas they couldn't keep up with the demand.



This 1917 map shows a proposed system of roads for Texas that will take nature lovers to the most beautiful places in Texas.

Map Showing Proposed System of State Highways/1917, #6254, Map collection. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library & Archives Commission.



Unlike train travel, traveling by car allowed tourists to interact with the outdoors rather than simply watching the landscape pass. Tourists now had the freedom to stop, explore & interact with the nature in a new and intimate way.

"Kodak, as you go" Kodak advertisement from 1917. Photo courtesy of the Advertising Ephemera Collection - Database #K0265, Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, & Special Collections Library

AMERICAN MOTORIST



Outdoor cooking became a popular activity among campers. Here, Eloise Ohlem cooks a meal at Brackenridge Park Tourist Camp in San Antonio, 1926.

Photo courtesy of the The San Antonio Light Collection, The UT Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio, L-0618-B. Gift of the Hearst Corporation.

With the rise of the automobile came a new traveling culture. Auto clubs formed and many published magazines and newsletters all about the automobile, traveling and camping.

"Under the Canvas on the Road" article featured in the American Motorist, February 1926. Courtesy of Library of Congress, TL1 .A47.

Governor Neff and the Texas State Parks Board



Governor Neff was so invested in establishing state parks for Texas that he and his family donated over 250 acres of land for park development. This donation later became Mother Neff State Park.

Photo courtesy of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Texas Governor Pat Neff was the first Texas governor to campaign by automobile and knew firsthand about the need for roadside camping in Texas. Unlike other states, Texas had no public land to develop into parks for its people.

In 1923, Governor Neff and the Texas Legislature created the Texas State Parks Board. The board was a group of people who volunteered their time to travel around Texas to ask people to donate land for roadside parks.

At first, the Legislature did not give the Board the power to buy land or the money to develop donated land. By the time the Great Depression hit, only a few parks were established and strained government spending stopped any further development.



Since women showed they could raise money and awareness for historic places like the Alamo, both men and women from all over Texas served on the Texas State Parks Board.

The 1st State Parks Board, 1924. Left to right: David E. Colp, Phoebe Warner, Pat Neff, Mrs. W.C. Martin, Bob Hubbard, Mrs. James Waelder, & Hobert Key. Photo courtesy of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Chapter 3:

Building Parks, Building Communities

Introduction

Both President Franklin Roosevelt and Texas Governor Pat Neff had a vision of public lands for the enjoyment of the people. The Civilian Conservation Corps work relief program made that dream a reality by building parks in Texas.

Boys desperate to help themselves and their families in a time of great need were put to work. While earning a good wage and building self-esteem, the CCC boys improved communities along the way by bolstering local economies and giving people a treasure in their community.

Today, the parks built by the CCC continue in this legacy by providing recreation opportunities for local Texans and tourists while fostering a distinct sense of local pride.

► Download ["My Keepsake" guide for Chapter 3.](#)



A cartoon of the period shows CCC boys hard at work building parks and the eager public rushing in to enjoy a new beauty spot.

Photo courtesy of Texas State Library and Archives Commission

Building Parks

The CCC built over 30 parks for Texas. Each park was designed to have a specific look that was inspired by its natural surroundings.

Rustic cottages, picnic shelters and other structures were constructed of

natural materials. Locally quarried stone and hand-hewn logs made the buildings blend into the natural landscape.

Building the parks was time-consuming and labor intensive. Even though high-tech machinery was available, the enlistees were trained in traditional



Fort Parker was one of the many African-American CCC camps. Many African-American enlistees in the South, including Texas, were segregated in their own camps. Racial discrimination was prohibited in the CCC, but CCC Director Robert Fechner did not consider segregation discrimination.

CCC enlistees at Fort Parker. Photo courtesy of the National Archives, Denver.

building methods using old-fashioned hand tools that created buildings that were built to last.

Today, you can visit these parks to enjoy the natural beauty of Texas and to experience history through the CCC architecture.



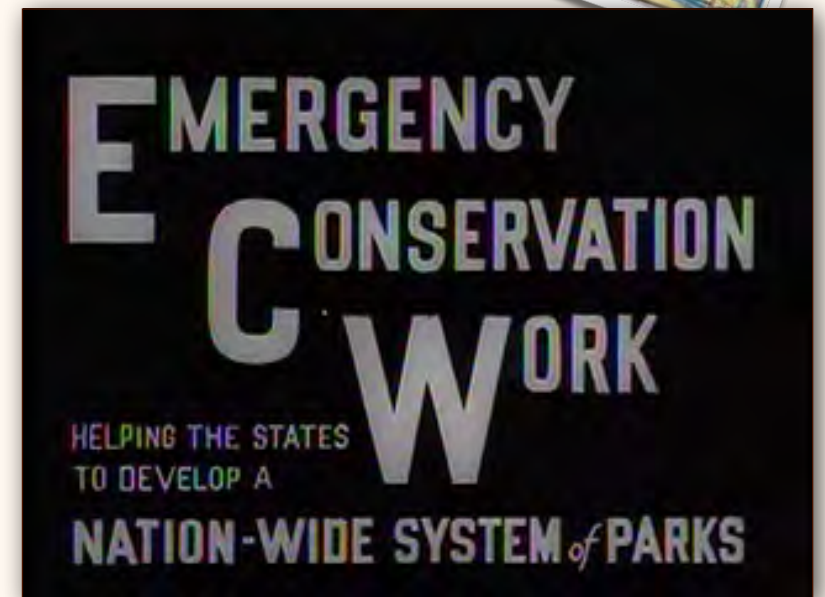
Many CCC boys had little experience in construction and their safety was important. This instruction manual from Cleburne State park taught CCC enlistees the correct and incorrect way to use hand tools like axes and saws.

"Hand Tools" Training manual for course taught at Cleburne SP, Cover image. Photo courtesy of National Archives, Denver



CCC enlistees used local materials to ensure that buildings complimented its natural surroundings like this look-out shelter at Davis Mountains State Park.

Photograph of overlook shelter at Davis Mountains State Park. TPWD Photo



"A Nation-wide System of Parks" which, from minutes 10:30 – the end, shows the nature of CCC work in park building and also features Texas parks and CCC boys working at them.

*Produced in 1939.
Video courtesy of the National Archives.*

Building Communities

The CCC camps strengthened local and distant communities alike.

Large-scale building projects created a great need for local goods and services. Local communities happily responded and provided crucial supplies and experience. Area spots like movie theaters, bars and dance halls offered leisure activities for newly paid enlistees.

The economies of the boys' hometowns improved too because each boy was required to send a large portion of their earnings home.

The CCC boys, their families and local communities got much needed financial assistance that improved their lives greatly.



"I went in for a certain - was my father's wish. Because this CC camp helped the whole community. All the grocery stores and everything else profited from it because if it hadn't been for the CC camp, a lot of people, I don't know, they'd just starved to death." - Ezekiel Rhodes, Oral History, Fort Parker Group.

TPWD Photo.



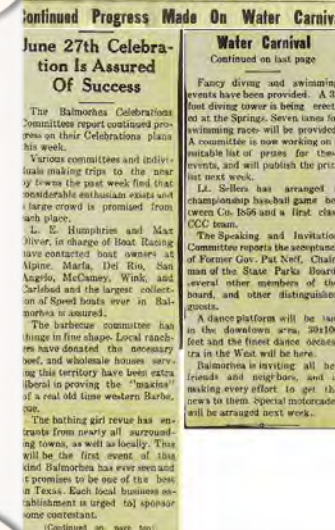
The CCC also provided jobs for local residents. Local experts, known as Local Experienced Men (LEM) were hired to assist in construction and training because of their knowledge of a specific skill such as masonry or blacksmithing.

Local Experienced Men (LEM) shows proper tool handling. Photo courtesy of the National Archives, Denver.



Even though women were not allowed to participate in the Civilian Conservation Corps, its presence in their communities often benefited women through job creation. Some local ladies even met future husbands through CCC.

"We Get the Job Done" Caddo Lake CCC Camp. TPWD Photo



Grand opening celebrations like the one at Balmorhea State Park lifted people's spirits and brought much-needed money into communities.

June 18, 1936 - Newspaper article about Balmorhea grand opening. Photo courtesy of the JD and Louise Sellers Family Collection.

Building Texas Tourism

The Civilian Conservation Corps built many of Texas' parks. Long after the CCC camps disbanded and the perils of the Great Depression faded, the legacy of the CCC and Texas Parks continues today.

For over 70 years Texans have visited state parks to get back to nature, play in the water and gather with family and friends. The parks built by the CCC continue to support local communities by providing jobs and encouraging tourism.

Take a trip today to experience the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corp and add your own memories to the scrapbook of Texas State Parks.



The grand opening of Balmorhea State Park was only the beginning of something special. Today, families and friends still gather here to celebrate and relax.

Grand opening flyer for Balmorhea State Park. Photo Courtesy of JD and Louise Sellers Family Collection.



Since the CCC built parks for Texas, people have enjoyed the outdoors in Texas Parks. Activities like hiking, camping and outdoor grilling continue to be favorite activities. *TPWD Photo.*



CCC parks and architecture are something to write home about!

A vintage postcard from Abilene State Park. TPWD Photo.



CCC-built pools, like this one at Abilene, are a favorite destination that provides a cool break from the Texas heat. *TPWD Photo.*

Chapter 4:

Keeping the Boys Busy

Introduction

The Civilian Conservation Corps kept unemployed young men busy with work projects, classes and recreation.

During the Great Depression, many boys left their homes to lessen the burden on their families. In urban and rural areas, thousands of young men wandered the streets in search of work and shelter, but few found either.

The CCC gave young men jobs to support their families and provided skills that they used long after the Great Depression ended.

► Download ["My Keepsake" guide for Chapter 4.](#)

During the Great Depression, many young men were homeless. The Civilian Conservation Corps provided needy boys with food, work and shelter, like these barracks.

Photo courtesy of the National Archives.



Once in a Lifetime

The Civilian Conservation Corps gave young men a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work and have fun in a summer camp-like setting. The boys never had time to be bored because their days were filled with both hard work and fun activities.

The bugle sounded at 6 AM to get the boys out of bed for breakfast and exercise. They worked from 7:45 AM until 4 PM, with an hour break for lunch. After finishing their work, the CCC boys ate supper. Then, classes, sports and other leisure activities kept them busy until it was time to go to bed.

The CCC gave hopeless, poor young men skills they carried throughout their lives, cultivated life-long friendships and in the words of a CCC veteran "made men out of boys."



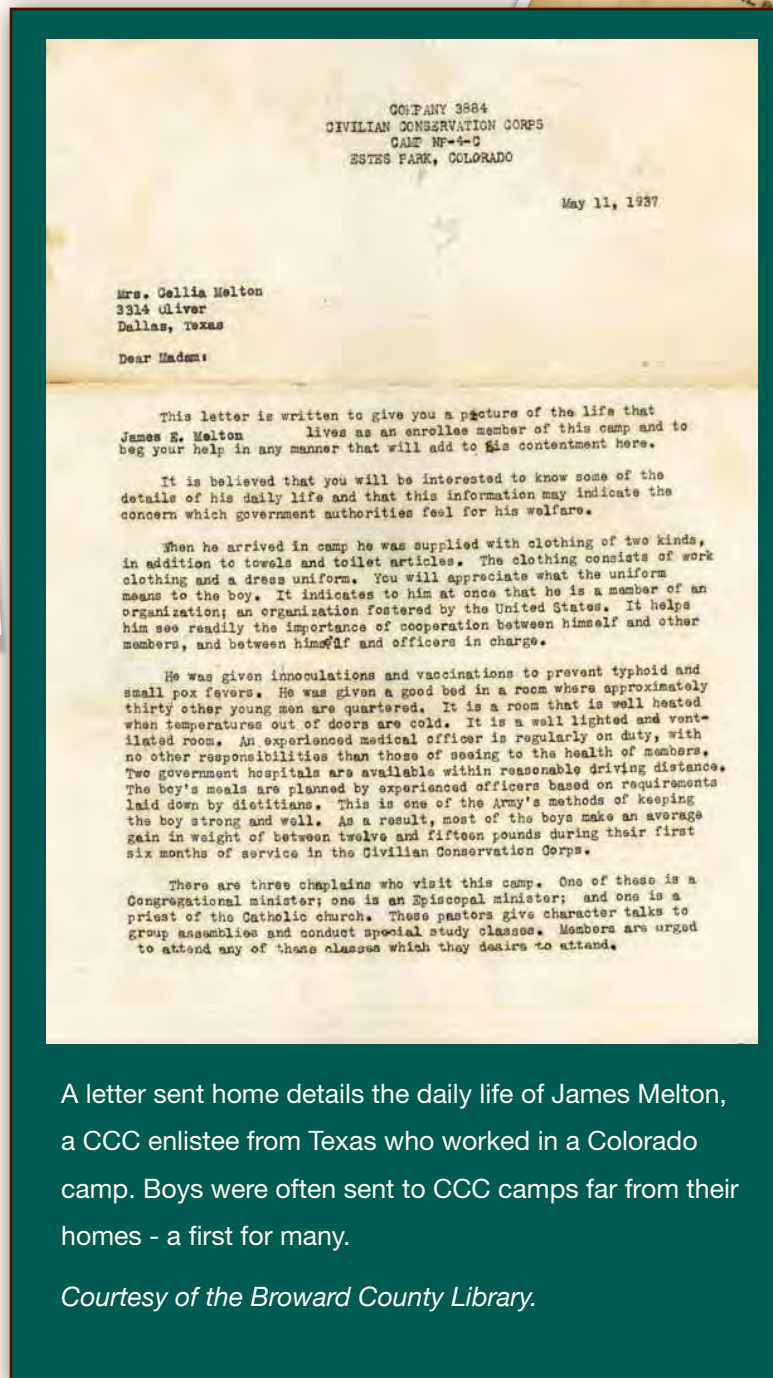
The CCC was officially a civilian organization, but the camps took on a military-style appearance. CCC boys wore uniforms, lined up for morning detail and lived in barracks. While the CCC was not officially intended as soldier training, its military-style setting groomed boys for military service. In fact, most CCC enlistees became soldiers in World War II.

"Detail, Colored CCC" Location unknown. Photo courtesy of the National Archives.



The CCC boys were well fed. They ate three "squares" a day which included breakfast, dinner and supper. On average, the boys gained 15 pounds after they arrived at camp. They even had special meals for the holidays as seen in this Christmas menu from the camp at Balmorhea.

Photo courtesy of the J. D. and Louise Sellers Family Collection.



A letter sent home details the daily life of James Melton, a CCC enrollee from Texas who worked in a Colorado camp. Boys were often sent to CCC camps far from their homes - a first for many.

Courtesy of the Broward County Library.



James Melton, a CCC enrollee from Texas who worked in a Colorado camp.

Courtesy of the Broward County Library.

Chance to Learn Something Interesting and Useful

When the CCC boys were not working, they were encouraged to participate in the



Women were not allowed to enlist in the CCC, but they often worked in the camps as teachers and cooks. Eleanor Roosevelt recognized that women needed relief too. She helped start camps for women, known as the She-She-She, but there were few and did not provide widespread relief for women.

"Typing Class - WPA Instructor," 1933. Photo courtesy of the the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library Digital Archives.

educational opportunities at the camp.

Regardless of their educational level, CCC boys could continue their education. They could learn to read, receive their high school diploma or even take a college course at schools like Southern Methodist University or Texas Tech.

Vocational opportunities were available to the boys as well. Boys could apprentice with Local Experienced Men in trades like blacksmithing or masonry. Courses in auto mechanics and radio operation gave CCC boys skills that they could utilize long after camp ended.



Learning opportunities varied in the CCC camps. Some enlistees could study carpentry while others learned about cooking or auto mechanics.

"Kitchen Scene" Camp McArthur (Camp SCS-5-T)Waco, TX. Photo courtesy of the National Archives.

Boys Will Have Fun

In the midst of long days working outside, the CCC boys managed to find time for fun.

CCC boys formed musical groups that entertained the rest of the camp. With free weekends and money to spend, the boys headed to local towns to attend church services, watch movies and hang out at local bars and dancehalls.

There was no shortage of pranks around the camps either. Common high jinks such as short-sheeting and hot-footing amused many and angered some.

Whether strumming a guitar or playing a game of pick-up basketball, the boys of the CCC found time to have fun during hard times.

- ▶ [Click here to hear "Loveless CCC" sung by Tommy Rhoades, lyrics by Herman Beeman.](#)



CCC boys take a break from work to show off for the camera. *Antics outside of Mess Hall, Texas CCC Camp. TPWD Photo.*



Some CCC enlistees entertained their comrades with their musical talents. Here, a quartet sings for fellow camp members in Yanceyville, North Carolina, May 5, 1940. *Photo courtesy of the National Archives.*

Many CCC camps had baseball and basketball teams that played other camps, and impromptu boxing matches helped resolve conflicts. *Cleburne CCC Camp basketball team. TPWD Photo.*



Excerpt of an oral history given by Ezekiel Rhodes:



Ezekiel Rhodes

TPWD Photo.

Martin: Was there any other pranks played?

Rhodes: Oh, yeah. We played all kinds of tricks on people. We would take all the blankets off your bed, bring the other end of the sheet up to here, make it look just like here.

When you pull that

sheet off, you couldn't get in the bed. We call it short-sheeting (laughs).

Martin: Short-sheeting?

Rhodes: Yeah.

Martin: I heard about that at A&M, too, when I was there.

Rhodes: We also take grape nuts and put between your sheets (laughs).

Martin: That's got to be an odd feeling-

Rhodes: But you never could find out who done it.

Martin: Never did?

Rhodes: Never did find out who. No. I could be murder if you told who put, who do all that stuff.

Martin: Did they do it to you?

Rhodes: Sure.

Martin: Did you do it to anybody else?

Rhodes: Yeah (laughs). A lot of times, we'd be out on the road spreading the gravel and have a little break. Some of them would sit down, and we'd stick a match in your shoe and set it afire.

Martin: Hot foot.

Rhodes: Hot foot. Done all that. Fortunately I never did get - nobody ever hot footed me.

Martin: Did it lead to any fights on occasion?

Rhodes: Occasionally.

Martin: Occasionally, huh?

Rhodes: Yeah.

Martin: If they take it the wrong way?

Rhodes: Yes.

Martin: Hopefully not too much.

Rhodes: Oh, no. It didn't amount to much. You could soon break it up before it gets too far. Never was over three or four licks passed before it'd be dispersed.

Excerpt of an oral history given by Herman Kelch:

Taylor: Did they play pranks on you to get back at you?

Kelch: Yeah. They did one time. It was cold wintertime-this was up at Fort Griffin-about two o'clock in the morning. I was laying there sound asleep and they just turned my bunk over and I landed on the floor. One of the things that we did, we had a guy that would get up-we had these two pot-bellied stoves-we had five barracks and we had two-pot bellied coal stoves in each barrack-he would put the coals in at night before he went to bed. The next morning all you do is just drop a match in there. We went to town and found a couple of cherry bombs and put them in the stove. This old boy was from Brenham, Texas. I won't mention his name. Next morning when that cherry bomb went off, it blew the top of the stove off. It blew the door off. He didn't know what in the world happened. He danced around that stove. He was scared to death. He asked me, "Herman, what do you think happened?" I said, "I think the gas fumes from the coals probably did that."

Taylor: You didn't admit to that one?

Kelch: No



Extra! Extra!

Like many communities, CCC camps had their own newspapers that featured the boys' poetry, short stories, and drawings.

Producing the camp newspaper helped CCC boys to improve their writing skills in a fun way and promoted a sense of pride in their work.

In addition to printing and publishing newsletters, CCC boys featured their creativity through poems and drawings.

Campers at Camp Roosevelt in Virginia print their camp newspaper. Photo courtesy of the National Archives.

Camp newsletters like the Blue Eagle News and the Fort Parker Buzzer circulated around the camps about every other week and featured camp activities and enlistees' reflections on camp life.

A comic like these, depicting life in the CCC camps, may have been featured in a camp newspaper.

Comic from publication "My CCC History." Courtesy of the Broward County Library.

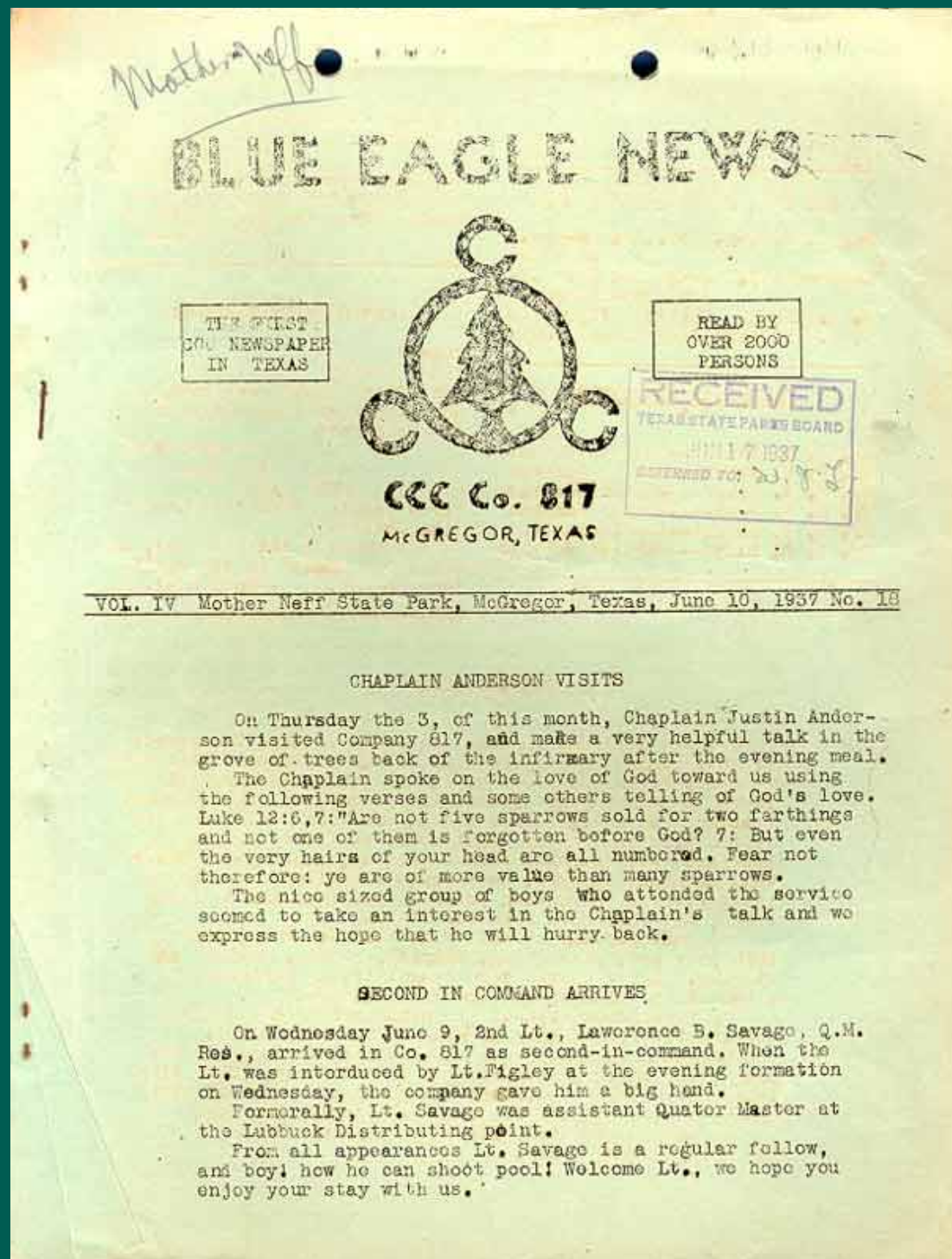


Blue Eagle News

Happy Days was the nationwide CCC newsletter but many camps published their own local newsletters like Mother Neff's Blue Eagle News.

This is the June 10, 1937 - "Blue Eagle News," camp newspaper at Mother Neff State Park.

Courtesy of the Texas State Library & Archives Commission.



Chapter 5: CCC Legacies

Introduction

The Civilian Conservation Corps shaped Texas' lands, provided places for recreation, built character in Texas youth and gave needy families relief. Camps eventually shut down and projects ended when World War II began, but the spirit of the Civilian Conservation Corps continues every day in Texas Parks, modern corps organizations and CCC reunions.

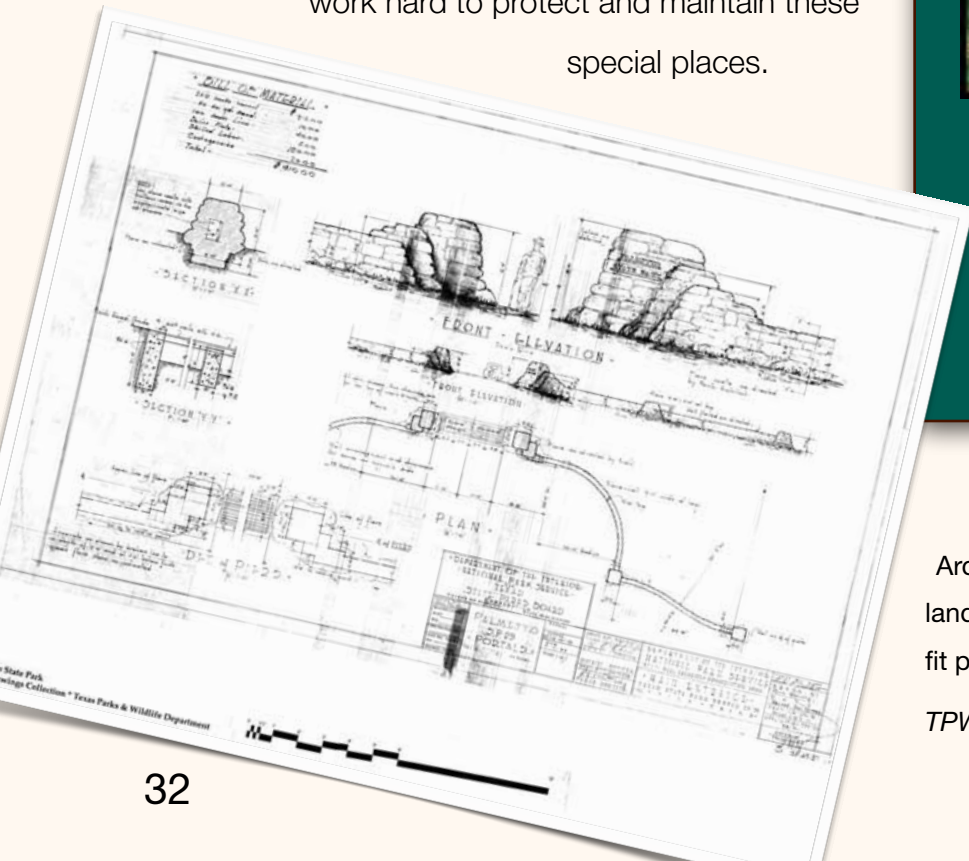


CCC alumni from Garner State Park gather for a reunion in 2005. *TPWD photo*

► Download [*"My Keepsake" guide for Chapter 5.*](#)

Legacy You Can See

Across Texas you can see the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps in picturesque parks, along Texas highways and in dense forests. In Texas State Parks, this legacy endures in the hand-crafted and unique architecture of park buildings and structures. Refectory buildings, picnic shelters and even water fountains were designed with nature in mind. Great care and craftsmanship were taken from the earliest drawing to the last stone laid. Today, the people of Texas Parks work hard to protect and maintain these special places.



The heavy, rough stones used at the foundation of the Refectory Building at Palmetto State Park seem to make the building emerge from the earth, uniting the natural and man-made.

TPWD photo

Architects considered local materials, the natural surroundings and the shape of the land in every project they designed. What resulted were beautifully crafted buildings that fit perfectly in the natural setting.

TPWD photo of architectural drawing of the Palmetto entry.

Personal Legacies

The Civilian Conservation Corps changed the life of each individual whose hands stacked stones or built trails.

Luckily, many CCC alumni have shared their personal stories with Texas Parks and Wildlife. These stories give us a picture of what life was like during the Great Depression and in the CCC camps. CCC oral histories recount how

CCC boys learned skills that they carried with them throughout their lives or how they met their wives at the local dancehall.

Each story is unique and a part of the enduring legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps.



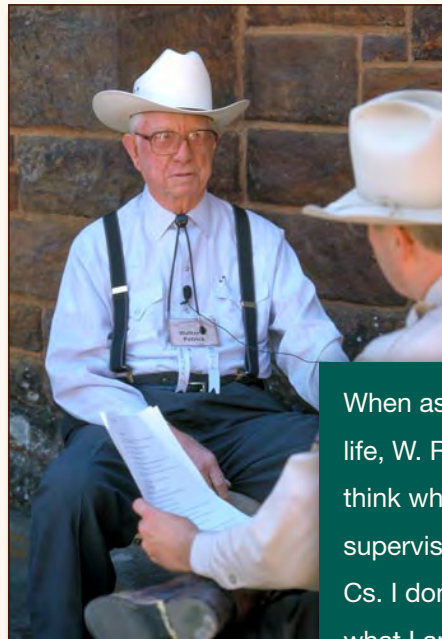
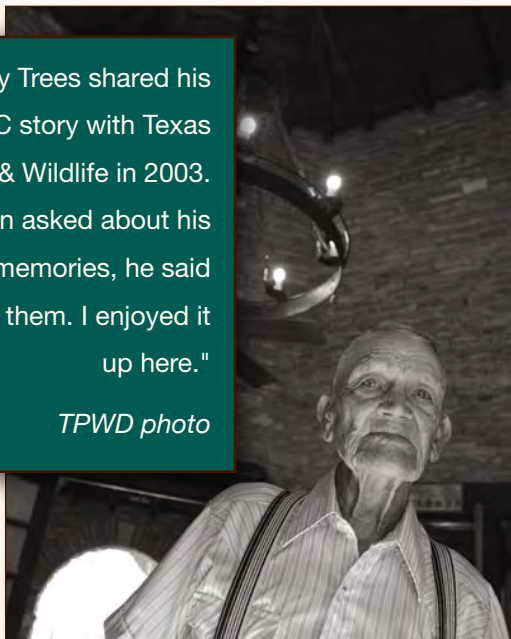
M. F. Rutherford worked at Fort Parker and expressed his pride in building parks for Texas. "When I see this place here, and when my mind reflects back over some fifty some-odd years ago, and I see this place, and it gives you a proud feeling to know that you had something to do with this park. Long-lasting. The hope and with the quality of work that was put in to this here, and the time that I spent on this building here, and when I come back and my mind reflects back to when I was a boy, 18 years old - now I'm a man 76 years old - and reflect about what this training in the CCC - the work, the officers, the leadership, the directorship that we had in this - I just makes me feel good to know that I've lived long enough to see this."

CCC Alumni visit Fort Parker for the dedication of historic plaque in their honor. TPWD Photo.

Henry Trees shared his CCC story with Texas Parks & Wildlife in 2003.

When asked about his fondest memories, he said "All of them. I enjoyed it up here."

TPWD photo



When asked what he learned in the CCC that helped him later in life, W. R. Patrick responded "Everything. No doubt. Mostly, I think what it did for me, is how to handle people. I was a supervisor for the rest of my life and most of the time in the three Cs. I don't like to brag about it, but that's what made me today, what I am today. Ain't no doubt about it." *TPWD photo*

Corps Movement Today



At a recent CCC reunion at Bastrop State Park, AmeriCorps volunteers used tools and techniques used by the CCC.
TPWD Photo.

The CCC provided the foundation for many corps groups that operate today all over the United States. The Corps Network is a group of over 113 conservation and service groups that operate in 41 states.

In Texas, American YouthWorks provides opportunities for at-risk youth to serve their community, further their education and assist in conservation projects across the state.



Today, young people from all over the United States give back to communities while building skills just as the CCC did over 70 years ago. *TPWD Photo.*

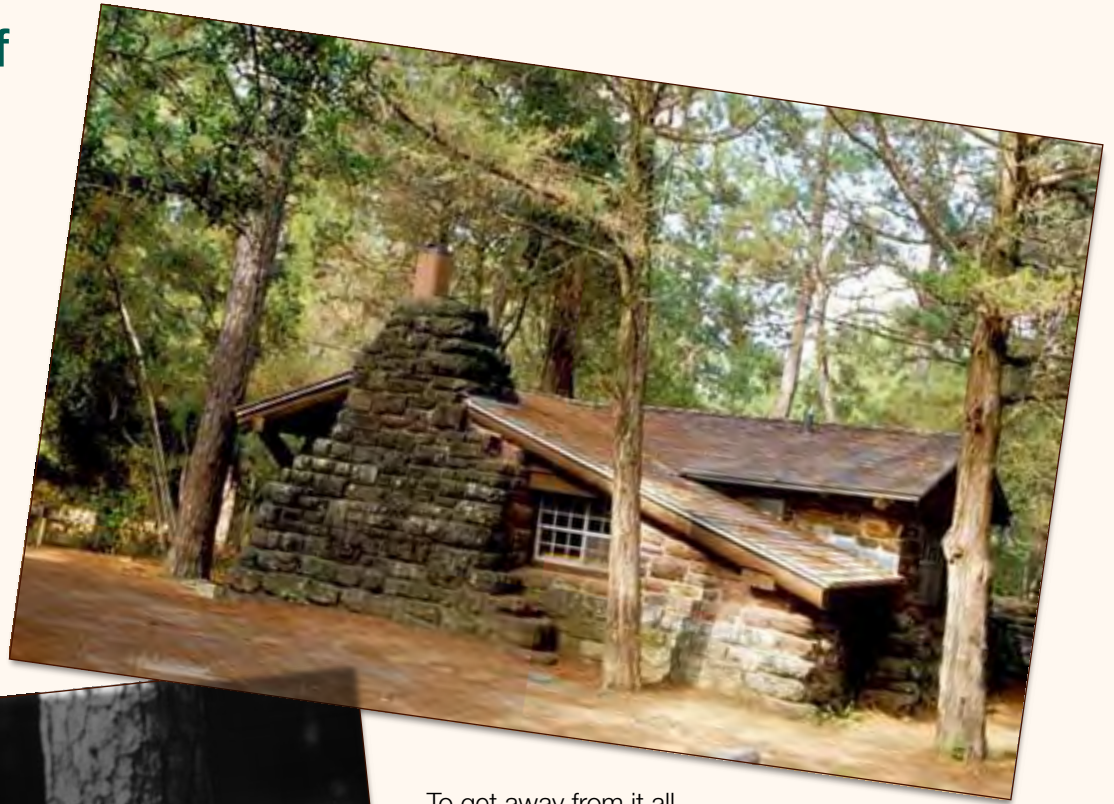
Volunteers from American YouthWorks have continued in the CCC legacy by maintaining trails and buildings built by the CCC in parks like Garner State Park.

Experience the Legacy Yourself

The Civilian Conservation Corps made a lasting impact on Texas Parks. You can experience the legacy yourself by visiting some of the 29 state parks that were built by the CCC.

Not only can you experience history through the Civilian Conservation Corps, you can experience the unique beauty of Texas through its parks.

Much like early nature lovers, visitors enjoy many different outdoor activities like camping, picnicking, hiking and swimming in your own backyard. Discover your Texas parks today!



To get away from it all, many park visitors spend the night in parks in tents, RVs, and even CCC-built cabins like this one in Bastrop State Park. *TPWD photo*



Texans have enjoyed their state parks for over 80 years. Today, there are 89 state parks across Texas. *TPWD photo*



Lake Brownwood State Park Video
(watch [Lake Brownwood's video](#) on YouTube to see captions)



Palo Duro Canyon State Park video
(watch [Palo Duro Canyon's video](#) on YouTube to see captions)



Daingerfield State Park video
(watch [Daingerfield's video](#) on YouTube to see captions)



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