

SPECTRUM ARTICLE

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(approx. 560 words)

THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

It has been seventy years since the entry of the United States into World War II after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. That event also spelled the beginning of the end of the Civilian Conservation Corps, arguably the most successful of Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt's "alphabetical agencies" launched to lessen the effects of the Great Depression Roosevelt inherited when he became president in 1933.

The organization "CCC Legacy," headquartered in Edenburg, VA, was created to preserve the memory of what was done during those nine years of achievement. The group holds annual conventions and this year St. George has been tapped as the host city for the meeting between September 22 and 25 at the Lexington Hotel on Bluff Street. Two field trips are scheduled—one to Pine Valley on Friday, Sept. 23 and the other to Leeds and Zion National Park on Saturday, Sept. 24, visiting the sites of most of the Washington County camps and seeing some of the work which was accomplished.

The public is invited to attend the event; call Wayne Pace at 435-688-8114 or LoAnne Barnes at 435-879-2926 for details and registration forms. You will see slide and video presentations of work done by the C's and even have a chance to meet some of the "boys" themselves.

Most of the CCC boys are gone now, but their work remains behind in the form of riprapped stream beds, campgrounds, erosion-control check dams, improved roads and truck trails. The citizens of Washington County have ample reason to be grateful to the work of the CCC between 1933 and 1942; 15 of Utah's 116 CCC camps were located here, more than any other two counties combined. Also, the CCC was active in the county longer than any other in the state. Camps operated by the US Forest Service were located in Leeds, Santa Clara, Veyo, Pine Valley, Washington, Pinto, La Verkin, and St. George; Division of Grazing (now Bureau of Land Management) camps operated in Hurricane and St. George, camps administered by the Soil Conservation Service operated out of Gunlock and Leeds, and three camps were housed in Zion National Park. A few of their more visible projects were the dam holding back the Pine Valley Reservoir, the spillway on the Santa Clara River on the Shivwits Reservation and much of the rockwork in Zion National Park.

Although there were several companies of Utah boys who served in Washington County, there were even more from out-of-state. Accounts of the C's in Utah are filled with stories of young men from the Fifth Army Corps Area: city boys from Ohio and Indiana and hillbillies from Kentucky and West Virginia made their mark—literally—upon the state's rugged landscape. Can you imagine the wonderment these eastern boys experienced on seeing the red-rock country of Dixie, Cedar Breaks or Zion?

While there were certainly cases of these young men from east of the Mississippi River marrying local girls and taking them away there were also more than a few times when the newly-weds stayed here and raised families to become part of Washington County.

You will never have a better chance to learn of the work done which has blessed us so greatly here in Washington County.

PLAN ON ATTENDING THE 2011 CCC LEGACY CONFERENCE IN ST. GEORGE SEPT. 22-24.

CCC LEGACY CONFERENCE, SEPT. 22-25, ST. GEORGE

Some of our readers might be old enough to remember the years of the Great Depression in the 1930s. And perhaps some of you might even recall the Civilian Conservation Corps, arguably the most popular and best-known of President Roosevelt's alphabetical agencies, signed into law in March, 1933, just a few days after FDR entered the White House. The C's, or "Roosevelt's Tree Army, two of the several nicknames, was created to attack the twin problems of massive unemployment among America's youth and the great need for conservation work on the American landscape.

Next month, the annual conference of "CCC Legacy," a national body headquartered in Edenburg, Virginia, will meet in St. George on Sept. 22-25. This organization is committed to preserving the memory of this great group of young men so that those enjoying the fruits of their labors will have some knowledge of how so many of our outdoor recreational and conservation facilities came about.

There are few people in America today who have not at sometime or other enjoyed the results of the work done during the nine years from 1933 until 1942 by young men in their late teens and early twenties. Over 3 billion trees were planted nationwide, as well as hundreds of campgrounds constructed. Here in Utah alone, over 20,000 check dams were built to control erosion in gullies and on hillsides; over one million fish were planted, and over 40,000 man-days spent fighting wildfires.

The camps—fifteen of which were here in Washington County—were a ready source of manpower available for emergency work. In addition to fighting forest fires, CCC crews also searched for downed aircraft, lost children or hikers, as well as provided medical assistance in remote areas where the CCC camp surgeon was the only doctor available,

Perhaps the most dramatic of the rescue efforts took place during the massive blizzards and record-breaking sub-zero temperatures of 1936-37. Across the state enrollees opened roads to snowbound towns and CCC camps so supplies, food, and medical help could be delivered. The camp here in St. George, DG-45, located next to what is now the golf course at the west end of "The Diagonal," was asked to help on the Arizona Strip to get food to stranded livestock and communities. After six weeks, nearly 30,000 head of livestock as well as dozens of people had been rescued.

Regional Forester R. H. Rutledge estimated that across the state of Utah approximately 428,000 sheep and 27,000 head of cattle worth over \$5 million had been saved from starvation, amounting to approximately \$32,900 for each of the 115 CCC boys and 39 foremen involved from 11 camps.

CCC Legacy, including some CCC boys themselves, would be happy to see you at the conference. This may be your best chance ever to learn about those campgrounds and recreational facilities you have so far taken for granted. You may call LoAnne Barnes at 435-879-2926 or Wayne Pace at 435-688-8114 for details and registration forms.

CCC LEGACY CONFERENCE, LEXINGTON HOTEL, ST. GEORGE, SEPT. 22-25, 2011.

THE CCC COMES TO WASHINGTON COUNTY—AGAIN!

Seventy-eight years ago Utah and Washington County welcomed the Civilian Conservation Corps—then officially known as Emergency Conservation Work—and hoped this part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal would provide the benefits promised. There were some misgivings; after all, was this just another political boondoggle? Would bringing in these young men from out-of-town, even from out-of-state—threaten the purity of our daughters? Would the CCC really do any good?

This month Washington County again has the honor of welcoming the CCC to our midst. They came in 1933 with wheelbarrows, picks, and shovels to only two of Utah's original twenty-six camps—to Pine Valley and Zion National Park. Today, appropriately-named "CCC Legacy" comes with cameras and credit cards to pay homage to those young men and the tremendous work they did so long ago, work still visible and utilized today.

"CCC Legacy" is made up of some of the veteran's of the C's—there aren't many left—but perhaps more so by the sons, daughters, grandchildren, and supporters of those who left home as unemployed teen-agers to not only serve their country but also their destitute family members. They served their hitches building roads, trails, and campgrounds, fighting erosion, forest fires, noxious weeds, and pesky rodents, and sending \$25 of their monthly \$30 home to impoverished families. Then, in the early 1940s most of these boys, by now grown men, turned their experience of camp life, learning to work and to obey and to give orders, mastering heavy equipment and machinery of various types into the greatest conservation movement of all time—saving the United States from the Axis powers during World War II.

Although hosting only two CCC camps during the first enrollment period from April to September of 1933, during the second six-month period from October, 1933 through the following March, six of Utah's eleven camps were located in Washington County: Leeds, St. George, Washington, LaVerkin, Santa Clara, and again, in Zion National Park. And so it continued until 1942 when the demands of World War II exceeded the demands for conservation efforts with fifteen camps having worked here in Washington County, more than any other two of Utah's counties.

The annual "CCC Legacy" conference will be held in the Lexington Hotel Sept. 22-25 and the public is invited. Two field trips to Pine Valley on the 23rd and to Leeds and Zion on the 24th will enable visitors and local residents alike to see the sites of former camps, to view some of the work that was done and even to visit with some of the men who helped make it all happen.

We are happy to see them come; the first time this conference has been held in the Beehive State. They honor us by coming; let's honor them for the work they and their ancestors did by learning what we can about this amazing organization. Too many people have never even heard of the CCC and are completely unaware of just who built the recreational and conservation facilities enjoyed by the citizens of today; let's help keep the legacy alive. For more details and registration information call LoAnne Barnes at 435-879-2926 or Wayne Pace at 435-688-8114. Hurry, however, as seats for the field trips are going fast.