

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 410 090

RC 021 121

AUTHOR McCarthy, Kevin J.
TITLE 1930s Program Can Help Schools in 1997.
PUB DATE 20 Mar 97
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the National Conference on Creating the Quality School (Oklahoma City, OK, March 20, 1997).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; *Applied Music; Elementary Secondary Education; Federal Programs; *Human Resources; Music Activities; *Music Education; *Nonschool Educational Programs; Popular Music; Singing; *Work Experience Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Civilian Conservation Corps; Depression (Economic 1929)

ABSTRACT

A federal program, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) employed young men during the Great Depression to help conserve natural resources by planting trees and building paths, roads, picnic areas, and parking lots in National Forests and National Parks. The men were supplied lodging at a camp, food, and one dollar a day. They could also take educational courses. Music was a very popular course, as well as a pastime. Many participants were from a broad spectrum of rural areas and came with folk music backgrounds. Most camps had glee clubs, orchestras, and bands, and the musicians performed at camp concerts and in towns. Often the towns and camps would exchange or combine musical programs. Recollections from former camp members are presented. Former CCC members have formed alumni groups and are willing to make presentations in schools about their experiences. The address of the national alumni group, which can provide contact information on local groups, is provided. Contains 22 references. (TD)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Kevin J.
McCarthy

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

1930s Program Can Help Schools in 1997

by

Kevin J. McCarthy
University of Colorado
College of Music

National Conference on Creating the Quality School
March 20, 1997

The Civilian Conservation Corps was a Federal program from 1933 to 1942 which employed unmarried young men generally from the ages of 16 to 24 years. Over 260,000 youths were enrolled in these camps each year and in 1941, there were 322,947 enrollees (Division of Research) at an estimated cost of \$280 million per year. (Lorwin) The camps were set up help the nation conserve natural resources but they also served to help the citizens during the Depression. The men were supplied lodging (which they built or in tents), food (which they cooked) and clothing (which they washed and repaired). As one enroll put it, "The CCC provided a good bunk, clothing, 3 squares a day, and pay of one dollar a day. Where else could a young man get a better deal than that during those lean dark days of the depression?" (Gilbert) The young men received \$1.00 a day wages. Each month, since they had no real expenses, \$25.00 was sent home to their parents and the men could keep \$5.00 a month for their needs and entertainment. However, the \$5.00 was received as \$2.50 in credit at the camp store and \$2.50 in cash. This insured that all of the disposable income was not spent in one place.

Usually the camps were located outside of towns (in some cases

McCarthy - CCC

cities) where the enrollees could work on jobs in rural areas - planting trees (they were called Roosevelt's Tree Army), creating paths and roads in National Forests, building picnic areas and parking lots in National Parks, and often performing unskilled labor tasks as requested by the local towns. In 1941, 44.1% of the enrollees were from cities and towns while 55.9% were from rural areas (Division of Research).

As a "secondary" goal, the youth could continue their education, learn employable trades, and were evaluated concerning their employment potential. In one situation, enrollees returning from one camp to Niagara Fall, New York recorded a 42 percent employment record. (Glover) Since each camp could enroll up to 290 men, the problem of recreation and entertainment for these men was a very real one. One of the most important buildings in the camp was the Recreation Hall. The enrollees in one of the "colored" camps recorded the following in their newsletter:

Many of the boys spend their evenings gathered about the Recreation Hall piano, where they are learning and improving their dancing ability, in both ball room and stage dancing. Winston Washington is serving to some as a tutor in ball room gliding; while Ike Gibson is giving instructions in both ball room and tap dancing. (Casual Camp Courier)

The average camp schedule divided the day into the following activities: 5:30 a.m reveille, 5:45 calisthenics, 6:30 breakfast, 7:00 sick call, 7:15 police call, 7:30 work call, 12:00 noon work recall for lunch, 1:00 p.m. work call, 3:30 work recall, 5:00 assembly and retreat, 5:15 dinner, 6:00 classes and leisure time,

McCarthy - CCC

9:30 lights out, and 9:45 taps. (Oxley, 1940) While they would be physically tired when they returned to the camp after 8 hours of very strenuous labor, they still had social, educational and recreational needs as yet unmet. Camps would sponsor dances, show movies, teach crafts classes, perform plays and organize music groups. Music was one of the more popular recreational activities. An average of 10 percent of the enrollees participated in music courses, excluding the "common activities" of community sings, and instrumental and choral groups. In one camp had as many as 35 members studying piano. (Oxley, 1938)

Since the enrollees were drawn from all over the region, they often came with strong folk music backgrounds and played instruments ranging from accordions and guitars to ocarinas. Of course, no standardized instrumentation existed and each camp made music with the players who were stationed there. Participatory music was the rule. A pictured captioned "One of the Many CCC Bands" appears in a publication of the National Association of CCC Alumni which shows three guitar players, two violin [fiddle?] players and one mandolin player (Nolte, 1990). The enrollees at the camps would request the Director to supply music teachers so they could, in one case, "learn the fundamentals of string music." (Happy Days Jr.) According to the Director of CCC Camp Education, "Glee clubs, orchestras, and 'hillbilly' bands" were organized in most of the camps (Oxley, 1941).

McCarthy - CCC

The music concerts presented in each CCC camp consisted of concerts given by local townspeople, by camp members, and by traveling music groups. In addition, since many camps sponsored "radio clubs," the popular music being broadcast became an integral part of the camp life, along with the music performed in that camp.

In another style, the religious services in the local towns provided the reason to visit town and to produced music in the camps. The Reading, Kansas camp newsletter provides the following information:

Twelve members of this Company have taken active parts in the A.M.E. Young People's Choir. They are conveyed to and from practice twice a week in the Camp Bus. Peter Andrews is in charge of the group of men from the camp. (Casual Camp Courier, September, 1935)

This same camp reports that a very good Camp Quartet was formed to sing many Negro Spirituals and Southern Melodies. The quartet, under the direction of Miss Ethel Love of Kansas University broadcast over radio station WREN at Lawrence singing such songs as Little David Play on Your Harp, Jerusalem Morning, Didn't It Rain, Li'l Liza Jane, Look Away to Heaven, Scandalize My Name, and Climbing Up the Mountain Children. (Casual Camp Courier, December, 1935)

Often, enrollees would organize and take part in a minstrel show which was written by the performers. These shows became very popular with the local townspeople. "Even in a town such as Boulder [Colorado], the local CCC camp was able to fill Macky

McCarthy - CCC

Auditorium [2600 seats] two nights running with a minstrel show organized by the camp boys!" (Pinto, p. 104)

The government sponsored programs of the 1930s often overlapped and supported each other. Company 3779 in Sheridan, Arkansas was visited at least twice by the Federal Theatre Project Number 1 from New Orleans, Louisiana with a minstrel show that included the traditional minstrel music. Following this performance, "Don S. Espanoza, with his Piano Accordion and Marambaphone gave several numbers of both classical and popular music." (The Hurricane, 1936, 1937)

Another example of both the musical talent available in CCC camps and of government programs supporting each other is the notation in newsletter of the camp at Pine Bluff, Arkansas which mentions that the camp band won second place in the district music contest.

"The contest was held by the Music Division of the Federal Recreation Program of the W.P.A." (The Hurricane, 1938)

The local camp level of musical activity was not often recorded in the national newsletter Happy Days, but it made up a regular part of some of the individual camp newsletters. Most camps printed a newsletter as a training activity as well as a recreational activity. State and local historical libraries have kept copies of some of these publications and they prove to be valuable sources regarding the musical programs performed at the local camps. The present researcher has located some local issues in the Boulder

McCarthy - CCC

Historical Library (two camps in Boulder, CO), the Rocky Mountain National Park Ranger Office (four camps in Estes Park, CO), at the Federal Center in Jefferson County (two camps in Morrison, CO), and at Cleveland State University Library (three camps in the Cleveland, OH area). From such local newsletters, one can find that in Boulder Colorado, guitar, orchestra and vocal music lessons were available at the camp or in town for camp enrollees (Flagstaff News). Further one finds that in December 1936 the Ellensburg State Normal School Girls Glee Club attended the assembly at Camp Ginkgo (SP-15) in Beverly Washington and sang such popular songs as Just the Way You Looked Tonight, I'm a Lone Cowhand, Ah! Sweet Mystery of Life, When Irish Eyes Are Smiling, and It's a Sin to Tell a Lie. (Happy Days at Camp Ginkgo)

One of the citizens who was employed to direct a camp band was Chet Nolte, now of Denver, Colorado. He directed a band of 12 to 15 members at Camp Allison (SP-18) in Indianola, Iowa but often other enrollees would wander into the rehearsal and play by ear on the guitar, banjo, harmonica, ukelele, jews harp, washtub bass, or jug. The band rehearsed every night for four nights a week and played for Oyster Suppers, County Fairs, School Assemblies, and twice over the radio on station WOI in Ames and on station KRNT from the camp (Nolte, 1996a).

Another enrollee (85 years old) gives one of the motivations for joining a band. It allowed the members to leave the camp on

McCarthy - CCC

Saturday night to play in nearby towns. Further he writes that his "love of music has inspired me over the years to become a better instrumentalist on the guitar and also to become a vocalist. I get a lot of pleasure out of recording country western, popular music, and just about anything that comes along." (Gilbert) This enrollee has furnished a tape recording of his songs to the author. The recording is a happy mixture of storytelling and singing, which is a natural result of developing the style in the absence of other forms of entertainment like television, movies, and even radio. [play tape #1 selection here "Cindy"]. The many tape recordings sent demonstrate two very strong points: 1) personal creativity/interpretation and story-telling are at the heart of these renditions, and 2) rhythmic freedom was the rule, except in cases where the musicians were playing for a dance. These two points are demonstrated in the two songs selected from Mr. Gilbert's tape [Get Along Home Cindy and Summertime Waltz.] This second song demonstrates a closer attendance to the meter, since it would be played when people intended to dance.

Another member of the CCCs who has sent a recording of his songs is Marion Johnson of Fort Smith, Arkansas. He writes that he remembers playing his guitar and singing songs with his good camp friend Merel McKinzie, a fiddle player. Their favorites included She'll Be Comin' Around the Mountain, You Are My Sunshine, Down in the Valley, Home Sweet Home, Stockade Blues, and Rancho Grande. "We sat around the old pot belly stove and played and sang until we

McCarthy - CCC

were very tired. Some [songs] I've forgotten, but I'll never forget that song, 'Boil Them Cabbage Down!'" (Johnson) A more polished performance was sent by Al Bachman from Chappaqua, New York of a song he composed about his original home state of Idaho. [Play Bachman's I Want to Go Back to Idaho].

Another alumnus of the CCC has shared a copy of songs often sung around the recreation hall at Camp NP-5, in Grottoes, Virginia in 1935. The titles include: When Irish Eyes Are Smiling, Sidewalks of New York, Let Me Call You Sweetheart, My Wild Irish Rose, Down by the Old Mill Stream, In the Good Old Summertime, After the Ball, I Want a Girl, I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles, Beer Barrel Polka, Margie, Four Leaf Clover, Toot Tootsie, Daisy, In My Merry Oldsmobile, Take Me Out to the Ballgame, Moonlight Bay, Shine on Harvest Moon, You Are My Sunshine, If You Knew Susie, Give My Regards to Broadway, and I'm A Yankee Doodle Dandy. (Petro)

The band director, mentioned above, remarks further that the some of the old songs were "generally from the Civil War days--we weren't too far removed from that." And he lists Tenting on the Old Camp Ground, Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory, Darling Nellie Gray, Shine on Harvest Moon, Old Kentucky Home, My Bonnie, Home on the Range, I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now? and, of course, Brother Can You Spare a Dime. (Nolte, 1996b)

CCC Company 1817 of Wewoka Oklahoma organized a quartet comprised

McCarthy - CCC

of a clarinet player, two guitar players, and a fiddle player. The combo played marches and popular music of the time such as My Blue Heaven, Five Foot Two, and Carolina Moon. However Alumnus Joseph Bolles (lead guitar) remembers the most requested tunes as being those that were made popular by Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys. Some of the songs they played were: Sitting on Top of the World, Four or Five Times, Blue River, She's Killin Me Ida Red and San Antonio Rose. (Bolles)

Finally, one of the enrollees mentioned that most of the members in the CCC with him were from "backwood farms" and played fiddles, guitars, mandolins, ukeleles, bones, washtub bass, and "drums" on a wooden typewriter box turned up on end. He worked his way from a camp in Florida to a camp in California and, after his CCC days, he attended the University of California for a degree in forestry. The one technique he remembers from the camps was the Talking Blues, where a member would strum a blues background on the guitar and tell stories in a rhythmic style. (Thaxton)

The camp newsletters and the national newsletter for the Civilian Conservation Corps mention many events dealing with music. However, the memories and recordings supplied by those who served in the CCC sixty years ago remain the clearest signal that music was used by the members of the CCC to entertain themselves and their friends after long days of physical labor. These young men built parks, cleared forests, and helped stop forest fires in every

McCarthy - CCC

state in the Union - then 48. They joined up with the CCC because there was no work for them in their home towns and cities. They lived through the "Great Depression" and then entered the service for the Second World War. The men who have survived have formed CCC Alumni groups all around the country. They meet monthly to share stories, meet new members from other CCC camps and to do whatever they can to keep the memories alive. AND THEY STAND READY TO MOVE INTO YOUR CLASSROOMS TO TEACH WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO LIVE DURING THE DEPRESSION OF THE 1930s.

From the National Office of the CCC Alumni one can get a list of names and address of the local Alumni Groups. Just write to them at P.O. Box 16429, St. Louis, MO 63125-0429 and they will provide the address of your local CCC Alumni group. And remember, these men are NOT a renewable resource. When they have passed on, we will have lost the opportunity to have them pass their experiences on to the next generation. So the time to contact these folks is now.

Thank you.

McCarthy - CCC

NOTES

Bolles, Joseph G. Personal letter to author dated June 20, 1996.

Casual Camp Courier, Co. 767-C, Reading, Kansas, Vol. 1, No. V, August 1, 1935, and Vol. No. VI, September 1, 1935.

Casual Camp Courier, Co. 767-C, Lone Star, Kansas, Vol. 1, No. IX, December 1, 1935 [note: camp was moved to Lone Star in November, 1935.]

Division of Research and Statistics, With the CCC, School Life, February 1942, p. 148.

Flagstaff News, Co. 809, Sp 2-C, Boulder Colorado, April 12, 1934.

Gilbert, Ervin F. Personal letter to author dated March 3, 1996.

Glover, Katherine. Youth...Leisure for Living, Washington, D.C. U.S. Department of the Interior, 1936, pp. 110-111.

The Hurricane. Co. 3779, Sheridan, Arkansas, Vol. 1, No. 9, September 31, 1936 and Vol. 2, No. 4, April 30, 1937.

The Hurricane. Co. 3779, Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Vol. 3, No. 3, March, 1938, p. 5. [note: the camp was moved from Sheridan to Pine Bluff in 1938.]

Happy Days at Camp Ginkgo. SP-15, Beverly, Washington, Vol. 1, December, 1936.

Happy Days Jr. CO. 1447, TVA-32, Jefferson City, Tennessee, December, 1937.

Johnson, Marion. Personal letter to author dated March 1, 1996.

Lorwin, Lewis L. Youth Work Programs: Problems and Policies. Washington, D.C. American Council n Education, 1941. p. 127.

Nolte, Dr. M. Chester, ed. CCC, The Way We Remember It, 1933-1942. National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni. Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Col, 1990.

_____. Personal letter to author dated March 14, 1996.

_____. Personal letter to author dated March 24, 1996.

McCarthy - CCC

Oxley, Howard W. CCC Camp Education: Guidance and Recreational Phases. Bulletin 1937, No. 19. Washington, D.C. United States Office of Education, 1938, p. 18.

_____. Camp Life as a Basis for Program Planning, School Life, November, 1940, pp. 56-7.

_____. Recreation, School Life, February, 1941, pp. 151-2.

Petro, Angelo M., Sr. Personal letter to author dated March 1, 1996.

Pinto, Leonard. The CCC in Colorado: The Enrichment of Social Life, the Gift of a People to Themselves, in Humanistic Perspectives on the Civilian Conservation Corps in Colorado, Denver: Colorado Humanities Program, 1980, pp. 98-133.

Thaxton, John. Telephone conversation with author March 19, 1996.



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Title: 1930s Program Can Help Schools in 1997 | |
| Author(s): Kevin J. McCarthy | |
| Corporate Source: University of Colorado, College of Music delivered at National Conference on Creating the Quality School, Oklahoma City, March 20, 1997 | Publication Date: |

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic/optical media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) or other ERIC vendors. Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following two options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all **Level 1** documents

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all **Level 2** documents

XX



Check here
For Level 1 Release:
Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical) **and** paper copy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 1



Check here
For Level 2 Release:
Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical), but **not** in paper copy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 2

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed at **Level 1**.

"I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic/optical media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."

Sign here →
please

| | | |
|--|--|------------------------|
| Signature: | Printed Name/Position/Title: Kevin J. McCarthy Associate Dean, Music | |
| Organization/Address: Box 301, University of Colorado College of Music - 18th & Euclid Boulder, CO 80309-0301 | Telephone: (303) 492-6352 | FAX: (303) 492-5619 |
| | E-Mail Address: Kevin.McCarthy@Colorado.EDU | Date: 7/23/97 |

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

| |
|------------------------|
| Publisher/Distributor: |
| Address: |
| Price: |

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

| |
|----------|
| Name: |
| Address: |

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

| |
|--|
| Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse: ERIC/CRESS at AEL 1031 Quarrier Street, 8th Floor P. O. Box 1348 Charleston, WV 25325-1348 |
|--|

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
1301 Piccard Drive, Suite 100
Rockville, Maryland 20850-4305

Telephone: 301-258-5500
FAX: 301-948-3695
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov