

DAILY ROUTINE

The enrollees' workday began at 6:00 a.m. with reveille. The youths then had half an hour to dress and prepare themselves for the day's work. This was followed by 15 minutes of calisthenics and a hearty breakfast of fruit, cereal, pancakes or ham and eggs, and coffee. After breakfast, the enrollees made beds, cleaned barracks, and policed the grounds. By 8:00 a.m. they were either at or on their way to work. They would work until noon, when the crews stopped for a one-hour lunch. Sometimes a hot meal was provided, but most often lunch consisted of sandwiches, pie, and coffee. The youths then worked until 4:00 p.m. , when they were transported back to camp. The maximum work period was eight hours a day and 40 hours a week. Sometimes crews worked on Saturdays to make up for days lost during the week due to inclement weather.

Once the youths returned from work, they could engage in such recreational activities as reading, baseball, football, basketball, boxing, volleyball, pool, table tennis, horseshoes, swimming, and fishing, with tournaments between barracks often arranged. The park might purchase the recreational equipment, hold fund raising activities for buying the equipment, or solicit items from local groups. At Rocky Mountain National Park, the staff put on a minstrel show in the village of Estes Park to raise money to buy athletic equipment for the camps. Occasionally, camp officials organized bingo games, arranged dances with young ladies from nearby towns, presented plays, and had musical shows. Enrollees sometimes participated in historical pageants and theatrical performances to provide entertainment for themselves and for people from the local communities. The official newspaper of the CCC was "Happy Days" and copies were distributed to every camp. In addition, almost every camp published its own newspaper or newsletter, which appeared at more or less regular intervals.

In 1937 the Park Service conducted a fire prevention poster contest opened to all CCC camps supervised by the Park Service. The winners of the first three places were brought to Washington where they drew the final color plates under the supervision of NPS artists and designers. In other camps spelling bees and singing contests were instituted to raise camp morale.

1) In what ways did the CCC reflect American culture and values? Explain.

2) To what extent did the CCC represent FDR's promise of a "New Deal" for the American people?

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Each camp had a library of approximately 50 books--adventure stories, mysteries, westerns, science fiction, forestry, travel, history, natural science, athletics, biography, national parks, and miscellaneous subjects. In certain areas, the library was moved from one camp to another. Also such periodicals as Life, Time, Newsweek, the Saturday Evening Post, Radio News and the Sears-Roebuck Catalogue were popular. Certain publications, including The New Republic and the Nation, were banned from camps because they were considered subversive. Further, critics charged that camp officials provided books which pandered to popular taste and lacked literary merit

Between 5:00 and 5:30 p.m., the recruits changed into dress uniforms and presented themselves for the evening meal--fresh vegetables, bread, fruit, and desert. During the first year of the CCC, the ration cost per man per day was approximately 37 cents. The food was plain, but was served in large quantities.

After class (see discussion below on training and education), enrollees could do as they pleased for the remainder of the evening. At 9:45, camp lights were flashed on and off and the youths prepared for bed. Camp lights were shut off at 10:00 p.m., with taps blown 15 minutes later. At 11:00 p.m. the camp commander made a bed check to see that all enrollees were present. This ended the day's activities.

Daily routine changed on weekends. On Saturdays, unfinished work projects were completed. If such work was caught up, the day was spent cleaning and improving the campsite. Afternoons were left for recreation and in the evening camp members were occasionally allowed to go into nearby towns for a dance or movie. On Sundays, religious services were held and the youths could go fishing, swimming, or just relax around the camp. In addition to Sundays, the camps did not work on New Year's Day, Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, or on other holidays of the Jewish, Catholic, Greek Orthodox, or Protestant faiths.

A recruit remained in the CCC camp for six months unless he received an offer of permanent employment or some extraordinary circumstance occurred that forced him to leave. At the end of six months the youths were given the opportunity to reenlist for another six months. Those who declined were given physicals and provided with transportation to their homes or places of enlistment, depending on which was nearest.

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