

CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123 NEWSLETTER

3412 Pleasant Run Road, Irving, Texas 75062

December 2014

Chartered: Nov. 1, 1985. **Past Presidents:** *Nelson Oats, *Harold Ballard, *W. O. Mullin, *Verle Oringderff, *Harold Trammell, *William Oakley, Frank Polenta, *S. L. Baker, *George Payne, *Harry Steinert, & *Al Clement. *deceased. **Current Officers:** President-Mike Pixler, phone contact: 817-929-1557, First Vice President-Jim Rau, phone contact: 817-307-0889, Second Vice president-Pat Mann, phone: [info later], Secretary/Treasurer- Steve Porter, phone contact: 817-244-6714, Sergeant at Arms-Troy Jones, Chaplain-Rev. James Pixler, Kitchen Committee, [Open], Historian-Ruby Pixler, Reporter at Large & Newsletter Editor-Bill Stallings, phone contact: 972-255-7237.

Monthly Meeting is held on the *second* Saturday of each month from 10:30 AM to 1PM at the North Side Multipurpose Center, 1801 Harrington [North], Fort Worth, TX 76106. Dues are \$10 a person annually and are effective from Oct. to Oct.

Directions: Interstate Hwy 30 runs east & west. It accesses the downtown Fort Worth area from the south. Exit north on Henderson St. After a couple of miles it crosses a fork of the Trinity River and becomes State Hwy 199 which goes to Lake Worth, and the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge. When you reach the traffic light at the intersection of 18th St. NW, turn right [east] and go up the hill four blocks to Homan St. Turn left [north], and go a block to the Y. Stay right and continue into the Center's rear parking lot. Our meeting room door with the CCC sign is to the right as you approach the building. Bring a friend & enjoy fun, fellowship & food. Sign the register for you may win the \$10 door prize.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES: None in December.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Larka Tetens, Arlington, TX, 12/16

MINUTES OF MEETING, CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123, December 13, 2014

Weather: Clear, Temp. 55°, Attendance: 11

The meeting was called to order at 11:04 AM by President Pixler. He welcomed all with a Merry Christmas and shared a few remarks of Bible study humor.

The Invocation was offered by Chapter member Mike Pixler, Jr.

Pledges to the flags were led by Sgt-at-Arms Troy Jones.

President Pixler reminded those present of the purpose of the CCC Legacy during the holiday season and of the continuing education of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942.

It was asked if all present had received the November, 2014 newsletter which included the minutes of the meeting, all had. He asked if there were any changes, there were none. A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Pat Mann, 2nd by Mike Pixler, Jr., all in favor, motion passed.

A written financial report was made available by Secretary/Treasurer, Steve Porter. Steve was battling an illness and was not in attendance. Motion to accept by Troy Jones, 2nd by Bill Stallings, all in favor, motion passed.

Sick call, birthdays and anniversaries followed. Pres. Pixler and Bill Stallings shared information on Steve Porter. Bill continued sharing information on Tony Rodriguez who apparently was out of town. CCC Boy, G.C. Murray is doing, OK. He wants to thank "the woman" who continues to send money to the chapter in his name. Following a discussion, the members wish to thank past member and author, Kathy Mays Smith for her continuing support. Kathy is missed at our meetings and wishes for her return and good health were made. Jim Rau shared information about chapter member and author, Wes Culwell. Wes is looking for information for his forthcoming book subject, life in the CCC in and around the Lake Worth area. It was asked if any of the "Boys" or any chapter member who has information on the subject to contact him. President Pixler shared the thank you card from Rebecca Hensley, daughter of CCC Boy James Green, who passed away 16 November, 2014 [see November Newsletter]. She thanked the chapter for the support during the visitation and graveside service.

There were no members present with an anniversary in December. Larka Tetens, daughter of CCC Boy, Larkin Dilbeck, spoke up and asked if birthdays for December had been skipped by mistake, on purpose, or saving the best for last. It was asked of her, "Why?" She shared that it was her birthday on the 16th and she would be ??? years young. After numerous remarks the chapter sang "Happy Birthday" to Larka.

Old business followed with Larka sharing a bit on the trip she and her father had taken to Branson, Missouri. The details were a bit sketchy, but what I understood was while at one of the shows, somehow CCC Boy Larkin Dilbeck ended up in Janet Lennon's [of the "Lennon Sisters"] dressing room. Another occasion, Larka and Larkin were waiting in a long line for show tickets. Larka had just paid for them, when the "Big Boss" ordered the ticket agent to refund the full amount to her card, and he would pay for them. This apparently had not been done before. When they were at the Osmonds Show, Jimmy Osmond had been talking to Larkin prior to show start. Jimmy introduced Larkin Dilbeck as a World War II veteran and Civilian Conservation Corps enrollee. Larkin received a standing ovation from the audience. It was stated neither the Osmonds nor the Lennon Sisters received a standing ovation for their performances. To hear the stories, attend the meetings.

A discussion of the CCC Memorial Project followed with the total contributions made to date. First Vice President Jim Rau presented a personal check #3355, and from neighbor Gale A. Cupp, check #6725, to president Pixler as donations towards the project. These checks will be forwarded to CCC Legacy, Inc.

A brief mentioning of the CCC Legacy gathering of 2016 in Texas followed. No additional information was available. CCC Legacy Chapter 123 will work as necessary for the gathering in 2015, location to be announced.

A briefing of status of CCC Legacy Chapter 123 as a 501c3 and the IRS followed. Needed paperwork to reinstate the 501c3 is nearing completion. Once completed, the paperwork, with a fee of \$400, will be submitted for approval, with reinstatement, to follow. Following a discussion if the chapter wanted to reinstate as a 501c3 followed. The decision was made to continue the process with a motion made by Larka Tetens, 2nd by Pat Mann, all in favor, motion passed, to pay the \$400 fee to reinstate the chapter as a 501c3.

A reminder of dues renewal was shared by Pres. Pixler, with an announcement of the confusion with Pixler sharing updates to the roster. President Pixler shared that there would be one list prepared and issued by Secretary/Treasurer Steve Porter. That list will be forwarded to CCC Legacy, Inc. by President Pixler o/a 31 January, 2015.

During the program a rendition of "T'was the Night Before Christmas" was presented as the members exchanged gifts. A number of members brought additional gifts. Thank you to them.

Pass the Can and Drawing were next. CCC Boy, Larkin Dilbeck won the \$10 door prize and immediately donated it back to the chapter. A special drawing was held for a pictorial photo of World War II, donated by the "War in the Pacific Museum" and Admiral Nimitz Foundation of Fredricksburg, Texas, which was won by Wanda Jones. Wanda is the unnamed Kitchen Committee Chair. Thanks Wanda for the tireless effort you make in support and preparation of the meals. It was suggested that in the future, Wanda will be out front and the chapter will prepare the meal for her. This too shall come to pass. The blessing was offered by Mike Pixler, Jr.

Motion to adjourn made by Troy Jones, 2nd Pat Mann, motion passed. We adjourned at 12:45 PM.

A wonderful Christmas dinner was enjoyed by CCC Legacy Chapter 123 family and friends.

Respectfully submitted for Steve Porter, Sec/Treasurer

Mike Pixler, President
CCC Legacy Chapter 123

AN UPDATE ON A LOYAL MEMBER

We recently received a call from Jack Bragg, Jr. currently of Carrollton, TX, advising us that he will be retiring soon from the Dallas Police Dept. and that he and his father, member Jack Bragg, Sr. will be relocating to Erath County, Texas. The address will be 2206 CR 121, Mingus, TX 76463. Jack Sr.'s cell phone: 214-226-4779. Jack Jr. tells us that after they get settled in, they will plan to come to a meeting. We will surely welcome them!

A PERSPECTIVE ON THE \$25 A CCC BOY SENT HOME TO HIS FAMILY

The following is taken from "We Were Soil Soldiers: The Civilian Conservation Corps of the Lufkin {Texas} District" by John Wayne Garbutt for his Master's Thesis at Stephen F. Austin State University, December, 2007.

"The \$25 going home had purchasing power that helped a generation survive. Sam Hayes of P-51, Center, Texas, traveled home with some of his friends and saw how thankful the families were for money and how much it helped their situation. The son was able to provide income for his family while his own income and needs were taken care of by the Corps. The large families were able to use the money to purchase clothing, food, and other goods that otherwise would not have been available. While \$25 could not support an entire family, it provided much needed necessities of survival. For the men back home, undershirts and shorts could be purchased for .24c a piece. Socks sold around .10c a pair, and shoes for \$1.49 or \$1.98 a pair. Work boots and overalls could be purchased for \$3.95 and .98c respectively. Men's shirts were available at .79c or \$1.50- \$1.65, depending on type.

Pants were around .80c a pair. Women's dresses and work shoes could be bought for \$1.95-\$2.95 and \$1.49. A woman's blouse cost .25c.

While a farm was able to provide some food for the families, its main duty was to provide income. This left the grocery store as the source of food [and staples]. Ten pounds of potatoes sold at an average of .20c. A forty-eight pound bag of flour averaged \$1.42. A ten pound bag of sugar averaged .47c. Bacon averaged .26c a pound, roast at .09c a pound, pork sausage .15c a pound, and rice at .15c for four pounds. Three cans of pork and beans sold for .20c and sandwich meat at .25c a pound. A sixteen ounce loaf of bread sold for .07c. A pound can of coffee {A FULL POUND!} sold at .26c and a half pound of tea for .41c. Toilet paper sold for .25c for six rolls and three bars of soap for .17c. The prices quoted came from East Texas town newspapers from years 1933-1937.

Most of the enrollees in this study came from the farm, as was the case state wide. Sixty-seven per cent of Texans in the CCC came from farms. Regardless of the father's profession, the young men all came from large families which needed help.”

A WEST TEXAS BOY TELLS OF HIS ENTRY INTO THE CCC

“I graduated from high school in June of 1936. I was 16 years old, but I weighed only 104 pounds and was 5' 4” tall. One had to be 17 and weigh over 110 pounds to meet the minimum requirements to get into the CCC. I struggled mightily to gain some weight and height that summer and fall, so I could get into the CCC in January, 1937. Papa was sick during that time, and I had to work as hard as I could to keep us fed. It was difficult to gain any weight when I was working 10-hours a day in the hot sun. I was a good hand, so the farmers would pay me a dollar and a quarter a day for hoeing weeds in the cotton fields, shocking fodder, heading maize, etc. Of course when the cotton started opening, I could make more, sometimes as much as \$2.00 per day.

When January 1st came around, I was as hard as nails, but I was still skinny and short. When they weighed me in at the induction center, I was a pound or two short of the 110 pound minimum. I guess that I looked so distressed that the doctor said, ‘This boy will gain a pound a day when he gets into that good army chow.’ He OK'd my physical and I was in the CCC.

We were examined in Sweetwater, and spent a few days there in the old National Guard Armory until a proper contingency of boys were accumulated. The night before we were to board a troop train for Oregon, we were issued paper and pencils and told to write our folks so they wouldn't worry about us.

In the National Guard barracks at night, “old heads” that had done a hitch in the CCC before, regaled us with stories so gruesome that about all of us were ready to go “over the hill” and go back home to our mamas and papas. One of the stories was that the doctors had to give a special shot with a forked needle. They said about one out of every ten died from this injection which had to be placed, simultaneously, in both testicles; thus the need for a forked needle. Most of us doubted the truth of this story, but so much was happening to us so soon, that we couldn't rule out the possibility. When we got in line, we were bordering on the edge of terror. Most of us had never been away from home before, and it was hard to keep up our stalwart façade. Many boys fainted when they were grabbed by two big orderlies and held while medics pumped shots and vaccines into their arms. To counteract the sore arms and sick feelings, the Army personnel had us do calisthenics even though we were about to collapse, but we eventually did survive.

We had written home that we were going to Oregon. The Army had found that young recruits would be better off, in the long run, if they were removed as far from home as was practical. From my grammar school geography lessons I knew the location of the State of Oregon, but to me it was just a green colored area on the map of the west coast of the United States. The furthest I had been from home was to Fort Worth, but I was a world traveler compared to most of the boys, who maybe had been to Big Spring or Coleman a time or two.

They put us in sleeper cars with a mess car for feeding us because it was not practical to try to feed 200 or 300 enrollees in a dining car. The train would stop at meal times, and we would fall out with our mess kits and canteens. A chow line would be set up beside the railroad of huge Dixie cans {30 gallons} from a box car converted to a cook kitchen. We filed by and had typical army field chow dumped into our mess kits. Two Dixie cans were available with hot water for washing and rinsing our utensils. This was a large troop train hauling several groups of CCC boys to different places in the West. Each group had their own chow line to facilitate rapid feeding of all of the boys.

After one gets out of Texas, the country is the same through southern New Mexico and Arizona. The first indication of something different in the way of scenery came when we hit the San Joaquin Valley of California, about 3 days out of Sweetwater, Texas. By this time my mind was boggled at the immense distances we had traveled, and I was told that we were only about 2/3 of the way to Oregon. The splendor of the scenery from there on to Oregon was beyond my power of comprehension. When we passed Tule Lake in Northern California, the ducks were migrating, and there were millions of them on and above the lake. By the time we reached our point of debarkation, most of the boys had been dropped off in Arizona or California, so we were attached to a passenger train and were being fed in the diner. Oh what splendor! Oh what grandeur! Paul Vanzandt, also from my home community, was completely flabbergasted at all the things he had seen and done for the first time, since he had never been more than 30 miles from home before.

At Roseburg, Oregon, canvas-covered army trucks were waiting for us. It was pouring down rain, and we were separated into two groups to go to two different camps. Paul and I were parted, and I felt a deep apprehension that my last tie with the world as I knew it had just been severed. It poured down rain on us all the way to Coquille, Oregon, and from there, we took to the country roads. They were unpaved, rutted and slick from the saturated clay. We passed a country store and post office, and I read "McKinley, Oregon" on its weather-beaten sign. The roads got progressively worse, and we slipped and slid into one of the most beautiful settings that I had ever seen.

Our camp had an old-fashioned rail fence around it, and we drove onto the company street and were told to get out. There were 6 wooden barracks, three on each side. A large log building that turned out to be the mess hall stood at the far end of the street. Other smaller buildings were situated along the street, and they were all painted green except the mess hall, which had been shellacked so the natural yellow color of the peeled Douglas fir logs was exposed. The camp lay on a grass-covered slope in a clearing in the forest, and previous enrollees had made flowerbeds and curbs out of large stones that had been whitewashed. In the middle of the company street, a stone border encircled a tall, silver flagpole; at the top of which fluttered a giant Stars and Stripes flag. The Oregon state flag, solid blue with a golden shield was flying below it. The rain had almost stopped, and the sun occasionally peeped down on a sparkling, fresh green landscape.

A 1st Sgt. from the Regular Army stood in the light rain with his army poncho shielding the roster clipboard. He dispensed with the usual "welcome and threaten" speech that the army feels is so necessary, and told us to go to

the barracks number that he indicated when he called our names. Inside the barracks a fire was burning in a large stove standing in the middle of the long room. It was January, so the fire was a blessing to our tired, wet, chilled bodies. Each bed had a stack of bedding on it; blankets, sheets, pillows and pillowcases. Each mattress was covered with a blue-striped canvas mattress cover that was to be changed every month. I found out later that clean sheets were issued twice a week, and a special bugle call, right after reveille, was blown, and we were supposed to jump out of bed, dress, strip the sheets, and go to the supply room for clean ones. Our previously issued army uniforms were terribly wrinkled and dirty from the long trip. We were greeted by a LEM {Local Experienced Man}, a Forestry employee, helping the Army get us settled in. He told us to get out of our soiled, wet uniforms and put on a pair of new fatigues to be taken from the stack in the middle of the aisle. The fatigues were pants and jackets made from green denim that came in small, medium and large sizes. We were told that when the 1st Sgt. blew three blasts on his whistle, we were to go to the latrine and bathhouse and get the first shower of our CCC career. Oh that steaming hot water cascading down over our travel stained and weary bodies felt good! Dressed in our clean, dry fatigues, we suddenly realized that it was mid afternoon, and we had not eaten since early morning, except coffee and donuts when we got off the train.

We were taken to the mess hall and seated at long tables with benches built along the sides. There we had our first encounter with that delicious standby of army chow called "SOS" {creamed chipped beef on toast}. A nice term for it would be 'something on a shingle.' Everybody griped about SOS, but that was because you were supposed to gripe about the food in the army. Secretly, it was a favorite, and no one ever missed chow when it was being served. We also had pitchers of fresh cold milk, huge plates of newly baked bread, green beans and new potatoes, spinach and chocolate pie. Water and coffee were also available in pitchers on the table, and there were ketchup, sugar, salt, pepper, vinegar, mustard and peanut butter always setting in the center of the tables.

After we gorged ourselves, we went back to the barracks and became acquainted with our new quarters. They were typical army-type quarters with upper and lower bunk beds and foot lockers setting at the aisle end. These lockers had a hasp and a lock so each enrollee could have protection for his personal property. End tables had a reading lamp and drawers for towels, underwear, etc. and were located between the bunks. We soon learned to put personal belongings in our locker and leave only Government Issue items in the unlocked drawers. Our assigned LEM gave us lessons in the proper way to make up a bunk, army stile. Soon, we could make up a bed so tight that a coin would bounce when tossed on it. The 1st Sgt. And the commanding Officer would inspect the barracks several times a week. If things were not proper, the 1st Sgt. would write down your name and the infraction. So many "gigs" meant extra duty, such as weekend work like KP, latrine cleaning, grease trap cleaning, window washing, etc.

Lights went out at 9:30 in the winter, and after our long trip from Texas and the trying day in the trucks, we were all ready to hit the sack. The lights went out and a muted bugle played "Taps." Homesickness moved in on me and I rolled over in my bunk and buried my face in the pillow, and cried like a little child. I kept it quiet, because I did not want anyone to know that I was not a tough cookie from Spade, Texas. If the truth were known, I am sure there were many, many others who cried into their pillows that night, and several nights to come."

This excerpt is from the book "A NICKEL'S WORTH OF CHEESE" by Russell G. Hood, and Published by Russell Hood of Roswell, Georgia, in May, 2001. Russell grew up in the small community of Spade, Texas, which was near Colorado City in Mitchell County of central West Texas.

The Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy is a non-profit organization dedicated to research, preservation, and education to promote better understanding of the CCC and its continuing contribution to American life and culture. *“I propose to create a Civilian Conservation Corps to be used in simple work, more important, however, than the material gains will be the moral and spiritual value of such work.*

--FDR, 1933

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