

Building Indiana State Parks—Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Works Progress Administration (WPA)

Key Objectives

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the United States experienced difficult economic times. Many people were out of a job and poor. When Franklin Roosevelt became president in 1933, he started a program called the New Deal. Two popular New Deal programs were used to help build Indiana State Parks. The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration provided jobs to unemployed people. Through their work, these programs built parks and planted trees, among many other things, and provided an important service to the public. Students will explore and understand the role of the Civilian Conservation Corps in developing facilities in Indiana State Parks, and will gain a sense of what the CCC meant to the young men who were a part of it.

State Parks Featured

Pokagon State Park www.stateparks.IN.gov/2973.htm
 Shakamak State Park www.stateparks.IN.gov/2969.htm
 Ouabache State Park www.stateparks.IN.gov/2975.htm
 O'Bannon Woods State Park www.stateparks.IN.gov/2976.htm
 Spring Mill State Park www.stateparks.IN.gov/2968.htm
 Fort Harrison State Park www.stateparks.IN.gov/2982.htm

Activity:	Standards:	Benchmarks:	Assessment Tasks:	Key Concepts:
The Civilian Conservation Corps: Building our State Parks	SS.4.1.11	Identify and describe important events and movements that changed life in Indiana in the early 20th century.	Using primary and secondary resources, students will research an important event in Indiana in the early 20th century.	Parks Centennial Change Contributions Figures of speech
	SS.4.1.15	Create and interpret timelines that show relationships among people, events and movements in the history of Indiana.	Using information about key individuals and events, students will create a timeline with five key details about Indiana in the early 20th century.	
	SS.4.1.17	Using primary and secondary sources and online source materials, construct a brief narrative about an event in Indiana history.	Using primary and secondary resources, students will research an important event in Indiana in the early 20th century.	
	SS.4.1.18	Research and describe the contributions of Indiana artists and writers important to the state's cultural landscape.	Using primary and secondary resources, students will research an important event in Indiana in the early 20th century.	
Figures of Speech	ELA.4.RV.3.1	Determine how words and phrases provide meaning to works of literature, including figurative language.	Reading the CCC newsletters and worksheet, students will understand the meanings of certain figures of speech.	
	ELA.4.RV.3.3	Explain the meanings of proverbs, adages, and idioms in context.	Reading the CCC newsletters and worksheet, students will understand the meanings of proverbs and idioms.	

Key Resources

- CCC Legacy ccclegacy.org/CCC_Brief_History.html
- Brochure on CCC 517th Company <https://www.in.gov/dnr/state-parks/files/SP-Obannon-CCC517-brochure.pdf>
- History of Indiana State Parks www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2444.htm
- New Deal Network <http://newdeal.feri.org/>
- American Experience, PBS documentary www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/ccc/player/
- A Brief Overview of the WPA www.broward.org/library/bienes/lii10204.htm
- DNR video about the Civilian Conservation Corps (long version) <https://vimeo.com/126170266>
- DNR video about the Civilian Conservation Corps (short version) <https://vimeo.com/126170277>

Activity 1: The Civilian Conservation Corps: Building our State Parks

Activity Summary

Students will learn about the CCC in general, and why it was formed. For this lesson the students will be divided into groups to do research on the New Deal programs that impacted Indiana State Parks the most: the CCC and the Works Progress Administration. As a result of their research, the students should work together to prepare a live-broadcast news program to report on the work of the CCC and WPA. Students should be prepared to report on a variety of topics, including President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the CCC camps, and the daily life and work of a member of the CCC or WPA.

After the news programs, students will discuss how the program benefited the state parks we have here in Indiana such as Turkey Run, Pokagon, Shakamak, Ouabache, McCormick's Creek or O'Bannon Woods. The students should be able to talk about two or three positive things and two or three negative things about the New Deal.

Background

In 1933, the United States was in the grip of the Great Depression. Banks no longer had money. Many people were out of work and hungry. The CCC was established in 1933 by President Roosevelt as one of the first programs in the New Deal. The CCC was designed as a work program for young men from ages 18 to 25. The workers would sign up for a renewable six-month term in which they would work on projects mostly related to land management, soil conservation and parks construction. They received a \$30 per month stipend, \$25 of which was sent home to their families. A number of Indiana's State Parks were developed by the CCC. The CCC was and remains one of the most popular programs of the New Deal.

CCC workers lived at camps that were run by the Army. The CCC offered an education and skills training. Camps had sports teams, newsletters and **recreational** activities.

The WPA also hired unemployed workers for building projects and other projects, including park shelters. The WPA also offered jobs to artists and musicians. In 1938, the WPA employed 3 million men and women. WPA workers were generally older, married and had children.

The Story of the 517th Company

The 517th Company of the CCC was established in 1934. After training at Fort Knox, Kentucky the 517th was stationed in Corydon at Camp Wyandotte from May 1934 to October 1937. From there the company moved to South Bend for two years and then on to Portland in eastern Indiana for its final two years. The company finally disbanded in 1941 as the country turned its attention toward the escalating conflict in Europe. While at Camp Wyandotte, the 517th graded roads, built stone walls, planted trees, and constructed buildings that still stand. The 517th even helped victims of the devastating 1937 flood that impacted many of Indiana's Ohio River communities.

But it wasn't all conservation work for the CCC. The men not only learned valuable trade skills, but also received an education in the classroom. The young men took classes on a variety of topics such as mechanical drawing, typing, foreign languages and art. Extracurricular activities included boxing, debating and singing as part of quartet.

Indiana had 56 CCC companies, eight of which were made up solely of African-Americans. Despite wording in the legislation that created the CCC that disallowed discrimination, the program was segregated based on race because of the prevailing racial attitudes of the day. The 517th, which had about 250 men, was the largest and most enduring of Indiana's African-American CCC companies. Other African-American CCC companies in the state were stationed in Bloomington, Mitchell, Evansville, Cromwell and several other locations.

Frank Wilson's Story

After dropping out of school in the eighth grade, Frank Wilson saw the CCC as a great opportunity to work, so he joined in 1934. He was attached to the 517th and headed to Fort Knox, Kentucky to receive training. A month later he and the rest of the 517th were in Corydon at Camp Wyandotte.

Wilson started as a CCC laborer. But after about a year, because of some cooking classes he had taken in school, he was transferred to kitchen duties. Wilson was sent to Fort Benjamin Harrison for special training. He also received a small increase in pay and the chance to remain in the CCC longer than the normal six-month term. Wilson was with the 517th throughout its existence, from Corydon to South Bend to Portland.

Later in life, Wilson shared that he was unsure of how an African-American company would be received by the towns where they were stationed. In an interview in 1994 for Portland's Commercial Review, Wilson said "there were 250 of us after all. It was an all-black unit. And it worried a lot of the towns we went into. But it was a good bunch of fellows, and I think we had the best reception of all in Portland."

After leaving the CCC in 1941, Wilson worked for 25 years at National Cash Register in Muncie. In his interview with the Commercial Review, reflecting on his time in the CCC, Wilson said "I've had a real good life and it all stems from the CCC Camp. That was a good life for young men who were just on the streets when we started."

William Meyers's Story

William Meyers graduated from Crispus Attucks High School in 1932. After working various jobs for a couple of years, he joined the 517th in 1934.

Meyers showed a knack for leadership early. He began as a CCC laborer but soon worked up to foreman. Meyers also became head of "A" barracks. For recreation, he sang in a quartet along with Frank Wilson and two other members of the 517th. Their singing group was heard on local Louisville radio stations. After his time in Corydon with the 517th, Meyers was transferred to Fort Benjamin Harrison, where he became a senior foreman for Company 3550. He was discharged in 1937.

After his time in the CCC, Meyers enjoyed a long and fruitful career. After two-and-a-half decades as an Indianapolis firefighter, he changed careers and began working for Indiana National Bank. Meyers was also active in civic leadership. He served as a precinct committeeman, was appointed to the Marion County Tax Adjustment Board, and was elected to the Indianapolis School Board.

In the 1937 edition of the Ft. Ben Banner, the CCC camp's newsletter, Meyers wrote an essay titled "What I Have Got out of the CCC Personally." He wrote that "the youth of the United States had never received the best kind of training until the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps..." Extolling the education he gained during his time in the CCC, Meyers concluded his essay by writing that the CCC taught him "how to live — what to live for — and where to live best."

Vocabulary

Depression: A long, severe downturn in the economy.

Civilian: A person not in the military or police force.

Conservation: Protecting natural resources.

Corps: A body of people given a certain kind of work.

Recreation: An activity done for enjoyment.

Materials Required

- Computers with Internet access
- Pencils and paper

Focus Questions

- In what ways did the CCC help people?
 - How do we remember the CCC today?
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Step-By-Step Directions

1. Divide the students into groups of three or four students each.
2. Direct them to conduct Internet research following the links to the resources listed on the first page.
3. Students will use their research to write a news program that reports on the CCC. The news program should include information about President Roosevelt, the CCC camps and the daily life and work of a member of the CCC or WPA.
4. After the news programs by each group, students should discuss as a class how the program benefited Indiana State Parks. The students should be able to talk about two or three positive things and two or three negative things about the New Deal in general and the CCC specifically.

The Civilian Conservation Corps at Ouabache State Park



The 1929 stock market crash was the catalyst for the Great Depression. Almost 18 million people were unemployed and 2 million Americans were homeless. Newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt implemented emergency measures. Among them was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC provided jobs to unemployed, single young men. Projects focused on reclaiming land, enhancing natural areas, and building parks.

Ouabache's CCC Projects

Firetower

The Lodge

Service Building

Bird Pens

Egg Hatchery

Trails End Shelter

Rustic Oak Shelter

Campview Shelter

Kunkel Lake

Tree Planting

Roads

Almost 64,000 Hoosiers were stationed at camps throughout the state.

Ouabache State Park began as the Wells County Game Farm. Wildlife was raised and released for hunting. From 1935 - 1940, the CCC Company 1592 was stationed at the game farm. They built bird pens and egg hatcheries. They also constructed recreational structures such as a lodge, service building, ice house and firetower.

In 1962, the Wells County Game Farm became Ouabache State Park.



Camp



Firetower



Service Area



Building the Lodge

The Civilian Conservation Corps at Pokagon State Park



The 1929 stock market crash was the catalyst for the Great Depression. Almost 18 million people were unemployed and 2 million Americans were homeless. Newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt implemented emergency measures. Among them was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC provided jobs to unemployed, single young men. Projects focused on reclaiming land, enhancing natural areas, and building parks.

Pokagon's CCC Projects

County Road Bridge

Beach

Saddle Barn

Spring Shelter

Toboggan Slide

Gatehouse

CCC Shelter

Beach Bath House

Group Camp

Park Office

Campgrounds

Parking Lots

Park Roads

Retaining Walls

Tree Planting

Erosion controls

Trails

Water Lines

Almost 64,000 Hoosiers were stationed at camps throughout the state. Company 556 was stationed at Pokagon State Park from 1934 to 1942. Before work could begin, a camp of temporary buildings was constructed to house and feed the CCC boys. The camp contained 12 buildings: several barracks to sleep in, an office building, officer's living quarters, a recreation hall, the kitchen and dining hall, shower house and bathrooms.

The camp housed about 180 men at any one time. When the Pokagon projects were all completed, the camp was taken apart and removed. Some of the barracks became married student housing for Angola's Tri-State University (now Trine University). They have long since been removed and no longer exist.



Mess Hall



Stone masons building the Spring Shelter



Gatehouse under construction

The Civilian Conservation Corps at Pokagon State Park



The 1929 stock market crash was the catalyst for the Great Depression. Almost 18 million people were unemployed and 2 million Americans were homeless. Newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt implemented emergency measures. Among them was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC provided jobs to unemployed, single young men. Projects focused on reclaiming land, enhancing natural areas, and building parks.

Shakamak's CCC Projects

Tree planting

Sealing mine openings

Road building

Beach House

Saddle Barn

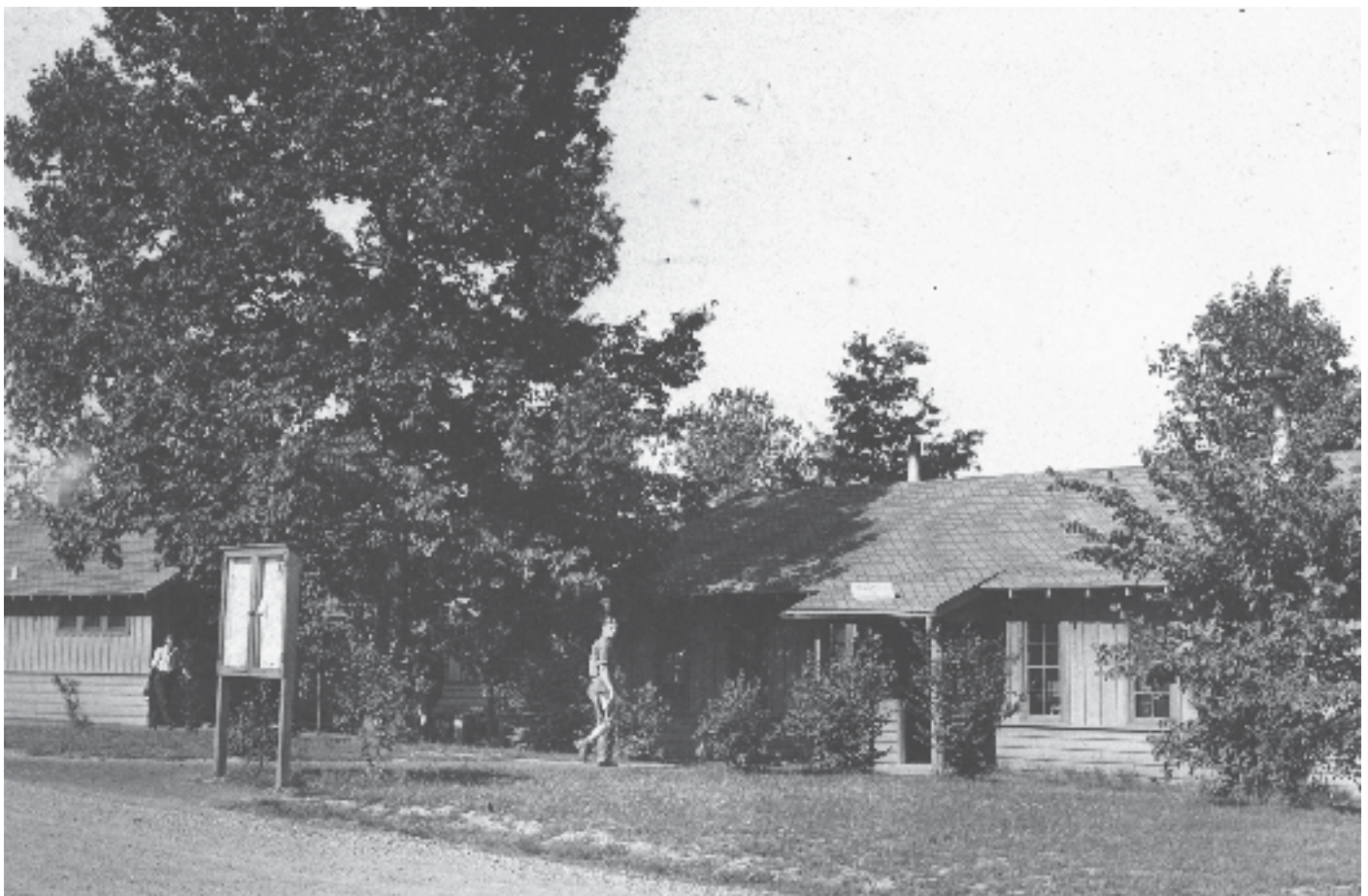
Picnic Shelters

Almost 64,000 Hoosiers were stationed at camps throughout the state.

The CCC arrived at Shakamak State Park in 1933 and were housed in an existing 4-H Group Camp at the park.

When Shakamak was created in 1929, most of the land had already been cleared of trees. Many open mines and mine scars were evident. The CCC planted trees and closed mine openings, allowing the land to recover.

The CCC also constructed park facilities such as the beach house, saddle barn and picnic shelters. Attractive brickwork in the buildings used locally made bricks.



Group Camp used to house the CCC

Activity 2: CCC Camp Life: Figures of Speech

Activity Summary

Students will review the CCC newsletter and identify idioms and other figures of speech that may be new to them. A worksheet capturing some of the figures of speech will help them understand the language of the day.

Activity Length: 40 minutes

Background

The boys of the CCC lived in camps within many of our state parks. They slept in barracks lined with cots. They ate meals at the mess hall.

Camp life included activities beyond the work projects. Camps had sports leagues and educational classes, and hosted dances with local communities. The camp newsletter spread the word about all of the projects, announcements and other activities.

Vocabulary

Barracks: A building used to house soldiers.

Mess hall: A room or building used to feed people, especially soldiers.

League: A sports club.

Materials Required

- CCC newsletters

Listed under lesson 9: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/8280.htm>

- Pencil and paper

Focus Questions

After browsing the newsletters:

- What issues and problems were common during the Great Depression that we see less of today? (hunger, lack of educational opportunities)
- What types of activities were available at the CCC camps that are available today? (sports, library, social activities)
- What is slang or jargon? Were there any words or phrases that you did not understand?

Step-By-Step Directions

1. Give the definitions and examples of some of the figures of speech, such as simile, metaphor, idiom, proverbs and hyperbole.
2. Students will review the CCC newsletters and discuss issues, articles and focusing questions that deal with camp life.
3. Present the worksheets on figures of speech taken from the newsletters, or develop others based on class input.

4. Answer key

- 1) a, 2) a, 3) b, 4) a, 5) b, 6) (fill in), 7) b, 8) b, 9) c, 10) a, 11) a, 12) b, 13) a

Extension Ideas

- Visit CCC sites at McCormick's Creek State Park www.stateparks.IN.gov/2978.htm
- Visit CCC sites at Turkey Run State Park www.stateparks.IN.gov/2964.htm
- Pokagon CCC Camp Tour www.stateparks.IN.gov/2973.htm
- Research fire towers in Indiana's state parks and their connections with the CCC
- Explore CCC work at reservoirs: Hominy Ridge at Salamonie Lake www.stateparks.IN.gov/2952.htm and Frances Slocum State Recreation Area at Mississinewa Lake www.stateparks.IN.gov/2955.htm

Figures of Speech

Name: _____

See how many phrases, proverbs and idioms from the newsletters you understand. Circle the correct answer.



1. “Legris *had his ears lowered* when he went home for the weekend.”

This means . . .

- a. Legris got a haircut.
- b. Legris got into trouble.

2. “We have had more rain here at Pokagon State Park in two weeks than we have had for nine months at the Dunes. *No wonder they have so many lakes around here.*”

This is an example of hyperbole

- a. True
- b. False

3. “DeHaven *spreads it on thick* – and it isn't butter on bread either.”

This means . . .

- a. DeHaven enjoys eating peanut butter and jelly.
- b. DeHaven exaggerates.

4. “Each leader should . . . not be afraid to *take it to the floor* and speak up.”

This means . . .

- a. No one should be afraid to present their argument to the group.
- b. Each leader should be willing to wrestle someone else on the floor.

5. “Barracks #3 is noted for producing the *cream of the crop* for the Company.”

“Cream of the crop” is an idiom that means . . .

- a. The best milk.
- b. The best of the group.

6. “Many of you were a long way gone on the *road to ruin.*”

Complete this sentence in your own words:

“Many of you were . . .

(Continued)

7. “A man ought to *face the music*.”

This means . . .

- a. A musician ought to face the orchestra instead of the audience.
- b. A person needs to admit their mistake and take their punishment.

8. “He seemed *quite put out and killed two snickers* with his snarl.”

This means . . .

- a. He was hungry and ate two candy bars in one bite.
- b. He was mad and quieted two gigglers with an angry look.
- c. He was angry and killed two people.

9. “*Think nothing of it.*”

If someone said this to you, it would mean that . . .

- a. You had done something wrong and said you were sorry.
- b. You had been forgiven.
- c. Both

10. “He is only 6-foot 4 inches tall and *has to stand twice to make a good shadow*.”

This example of hyperbole means that . . .

- a. The person is really thin.
- b. It's a cloudy day, so the person can't make a shadow.

11. “Elmo is one of our well-known *lady-killers*.”

Elmo is probably . . .

- a. Very handsome.
- b. About to murder a woman.

12. “He has them all *hanging on the ropes*.”

A person “hanging on the ropes” is a helpless person. This idiom comes from . . .

- a. Killing someone by hanging them from a rope.
- b. Boxing. The loser is helplessly hanging on the ropes that surround the boxing ring.

13. “*Dead men tell no tales.*”

This proverb means that . . .

- a. The only way that a secret can be kept is if all who know it are dead.
- b. Dead people are unable to talk anymore.