

CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123 NEWSLETTER

3412 Pleasant Run Road, Irving, Texas 75062

April 2015

**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 18<sup>th</sup> 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:** Troy & Wanda Jones, Everman, TX, 04/14 [#48].

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY:** James Pixler, Fort Worth, TX, 04/14.

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MINUTES OF MEETING, CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123, April 11, 2015

Weather: Cloudy, Temp. 74°, Attendance: 10

The meeting was called to order at 11:10 AM by President Pixler.

The Invocation was offered by Merle Timblin.

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

President Pixler reminded members present of the purposes of the CCC Legacy to educate and further understanding of the Civilian Conservation Corps and its contribution to American life, 1933 to 1942.

Minutes of the March 2015 meeting were available to all members in the newsletter. Motion to accept the minutes as printed was made by Merle Timblin, second by Troy Jones. All in favor motion passed.

Members with birthdays in April included James Pixler. Troy and Wanda Jones celebrated their 48<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Secretary/Treasurer Steve Porter and Marianne celebrated their 61<sup>st</sup> Anniversary on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Happy Anniversary was sung by the members.

The CCC Legacy Chapter 123 on Facebook for members and other interested persons to visit and offer comments.

Members were reminded that election of officers for the CCC Legacy {National} will be scheduled soon. Ballot will appear in the July/Aug issue of CCC Legacy Journal and deadline for voting is September. The annual gather of CCC Legacy is set for 24-27 September 2015, in East Windsor, CT. Discussion of continuing efforts to have the 2016 gathering in Texas led to many questions of logistics and coordination with CCC Legacy officials. Larka Tetens agreed to chair a chapter committee concerning the 2016 gathering. Discussion of dedication day for the Memorial Project at Lake Worth resulted in a motion by Jim Rau, second by Merle Timblin, to make May 30, 2015, as official dedication day for the project. All in favor, motion passed. Further details and program for the dedication will be announced in local media and at our May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Slides of the Memorial Project at Lake Worth were shown and narrated by Jim Rau. This will be a lasting tribute to the CCC Boys of Camp 1816. Donations to the project are still being accepted by CCC Legacy, P.O. Box 134, Edinburg, VA 22824 or forwarded through Chapter 123 CCC Legacy, 3505 Socorro Rd., Fort Worth, TX 76116. Donations are tax deductible and should specify "Lake Worth Memorial Project."

The Can was passed and door prize drawing was won by Mike Pixler who returned the money to the chapter. Blessing for the meal was offered by Merle Timblin. Motion to adjourn was made by Merle Timblin, second by Jim Rau. President Pixler adjourned the meeting at 12:25 PM. The Kitchen Committee came up with a delicious meal as always. Our next meeting will be May 9, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Porter, Sec/Treasurer

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**TO ALL: OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT!!!**

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE DEDICATION CEREMONY OF THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS (CCC) LEGACY LAKE WORTH MEMORIAL PROJECT.

Who: THE "BOYS" OF THE CCC AND CCC COMPANY 1816, SP-31-T.

When: SATURDAY, 30 MAY, 2015, AT 10:00 A.M.

Where: FORMER CAMPSITE OF CCC COMPANY 1816 (Watercress Rd. & Peninsula Club Circle)

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE. "THE CCC IS FOREVER"

Sincerely, yours in service,

Mike Pixler, President

CCC Legacy Chapter 123

3116 Indian Gap St.

Weatherford, TX 76087 817-929-1557

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## CHAPTER ETERNAL

We recently received word from Barbara Brown, a family friend, that member and CCC “Boy” Morris Taylor of Keller, Texas, passed away this last January 30<sup>th</sup> at age 90. He served in the 3Cs in Arizona and Pennsylvania. During World War II Morris served in the Army in England as a medical records clerk. He is survived by his wife, Marjorie. They were married in England in 1945, she being a war bride. He re-enlisted then and served on occupation duty in Germany for two years so he could bring his new bride back to the U.S. Marjorie told Mrs. Brown they celebrated 69 years of marriage, possibly due to it was a long way home to return to her mother’s!

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We also learned that this past March, we lost probably our oldest “Boy,” Norman C. Horton of St. Paul, Minnesota, age 99 ½. Mr. Horton had a full and interesting life, and we thank our CCC Legacy President Joan Sharpe for sending along a portion of his obituary which, we understand, was written by his longtime secretary. He had auto parts businesses in both St. Paul and in Orlando, Florida. He was born in Wisconsin and the family moved to Rochester, Minn., where they were in the restaurant business until the market crash of 1929. Norm joined the CCC and worked in camps in the North Woods of Minnesota, in temperatures of 40-50° below zero. When he got out at age 19 there were still no jobs to be had, so he rode the rails west to California to pick fruit. He told of riding the rails as a hobo; how to carry his possessions in a bedroll over his shoulder, leaving the hands free to pull yourself aboard freight cars. He wrote: “There were hundreds of bums, hundreds, on every freight train. I couldn’t believe it. It was hard to get a car by yourself.” He and his fellow hobos found a few days work here and there; often living on food they found in the trains. He once ate nothing but canned blueberries for days on end he recalled. He joined the Army during World War II and worked state side. He did undercover work for the Government while working at Ford’s Willow Run Bomber Plant. He got into the auto parts business in 1950 and gradually expanded. He married twice, had seven children, 10 step-children, 19 grandchildren, and 22 great-grandchildren. His professed secret to a long life was, “Don’t drink, don’t smoke, work hard and believe in God.”

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## WE CONTINUE WITH HOMER COZBY’S STORY IN THE CCC

*In last month’s article he gave us an overview of the 1930s and the start of the CCC. Here he takes us along as he joins the service.*

The afternoon sun beat down on me out of a cloudless sky. I was returning to our farm house after a fruitless search for small game animals suitable as meat for our table. In the years of the Great Depression, any kind of edible meat was considered a fair meal for the family. It was late April, 1940, and days were long. There had been little rain again this year, and the lands that came to be known as the “Dust Bowl” lay barren and ravaged. At times the western sky would darken with an ominous haze, and even at mid-day boiling clouds of dust could hide the sun for days accompanied by stinging sandstorms. Grassy shoots and spring flowers would wither and burn in the hot, dry winds as if nature had gone berserk in its abuse by man, and it had been so going on to four years.

As a farm family, our crops had been sparse to none. Maybe some drought stunted hay for the animals, a bit of

Vegetable garden stuff to supplement food staples bought in town. My father had turned to cutting and supplying firewood to people in the nearby town. At age 18, I had become gaunt and lean-muscled as an animal. Helping my father saw and split the oak wood that we cut off our leased farmland, gave me a usually unsuppressed appetite. At times we ate rabbits, squirrels, birds and even armadillos to survive those dry years.

Dad and I had just that morning cut a full wagon load of firewood which he had hauled to town with the old mule team. As I came into the house, mother was seated, talking to a man, a stranger to me, but I found that he was a county agent that had come to grant me the opportunity of enrolling in the Civilian Conservation Corps – the CCC. After questioning us, he informed that I would soon receive a notice to report to the county seat for entry into the Corps.

Soon I and about 20 other men my age were trucked to our county seat of Brownwood, Texas. There we were sworn into the CCC, and late that day, were put aboard a train coach with about 100 other men from the surrounding area. We had our few personal articles, and were given, what looked to us, a huge sack lunch which was to last us for three days and two nights travel across Texas, New Mexico, and into Arizona where I was to spend the coming year as a CCC tree monkey, soil soldier, and other names we came to be known by.

The old steam locomotive was slow, creeping through town after town with long stops for no apparent reason we could see. There was no air conditioning and it being November, coal dust from the engine seeped into our coach. I had a coal cinder in one eye, a croupy cough, and a sleepy headache. When we finally stopped at the small Arizona town of Wilcox, we were tired, dirty and hungry. We were hurried off the train, loaded into Army trucks, and driven at high speeds over rough dirt roads for another 35 miles. We went up through a narrow gorge into a great mountain canyon; crossed a clear, running stream, and came onto the parade grounds of old Camp NP-9A, designated as CCC Company 828 at Douglas, Arizona, year 1940.

I hardly remember my meal that night. I was sick, cold and feverish. My luck was to draw a cot, only inches away from a huge coal-burning stove that was supposed to heat 1600 sq. feet of barracks space containing 60 men. I tumbled into my bunk and hardly closed my eyes when an older enrollee came to fill the already flaming stove. That was to happen time and again that night. The monstrous stove glowed red-hot almost close enough to sear by aching face. I lay sweating in my long-handled drawers, coughing and retching through the night. Next morning and through the following days, I coughed, wheezed and shook with fever. Not knowing of possible sick call and medicine at the camp infirmary, I stumbled on through clothing issues, indoctrinations, formations for instructions and further issues. Finally almost total exhaustion took over and I slept fitfully through another night as that same camp member shoveled fuel into the fire-breathing demon at my side. Bathing and shaving had helped my appearance, so no one questioned me of my ailing. I stood or sat through course after course of designation, denotation and demonstrations. After another night or two of heated misery, one enrollee's hitch was terminated, which left an empty bunk which I gratefully accepted. During the day my bunk was beginning to look neat and uniform, food in the mess hall was tasting great, including plenty of syrup and pancakes. My government issue great wool overcoat, necessary in high mountain winters, fit me like a tent; the brogan army shoes pinched my toes; but I kept thinking I will survive. With fever gone and now a light of adventure and expectation alive in me again, I began to enjoy the close comradery of men and barracks life. With the coal stoker gone, I began sleeping well and looked ahead to life in the beautiful mountains of the Chiricahua National Monument. My first job with the Park Service was carrying great, round stones for 50 feet or

more to build a ford across the mountain stream which ran close by the camp.

Our camp was located in the Chiricahua Mountains of southeastern Arizona, known today as the Chiricahua National Monument and contains some of the most beautiful and extraordinary scenery in the western United States. Roads up the canyon to the wonderland of rocks called Massai Point and Sugarloaf Peak were built by men of the 3 Cs; as well as miles of scenic hiking trails to Echo Canyon, Natural Bridge, and the Forest Foothills and Mountain Meadow Trails.

Working with pick and shovel, hoes and axes; we CCC men spent the long days of our enrollment. Most of the roads, trails, and structures were built with hand labor, aided only by trucks, wheelbarrows and on big jobs, the air drills or jack-hammers. There was great companionship and peerage among the men, grouped into this camp mainly from Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas. Sometimes there were personal grudge fights between individuals. There were competitive games and recreational entertainment almost weekly, including trips by trucks into Douglas, Arizona, on Saturdays into Sundays. Springtime brought baseball with match games with distant CCC or other teams. A few of the men got some money from home in addition to their canteen tabs. I was saving with my eight dollars, a seemingly bonanza, after my long 'teen years of the Depression. It was generally used for personal hygiene items, the occasional sweet, and my awful vice of poker with the men in our barracks on weekends.

After a grueling week of hard labor and a Saturday of barracks scrubbing, bed airing and policing the area, as well as sometimes K.P. (kitchen duty); we looked forward to Sundays. After morning chapel and noon mess, (stuffed peppers and frijoles were an occasional treat) a group of five to seven of us made hiking the scenic trails our past time. Most of the now existing trails were already in use, built by former CCC members of Camp NP-9A. Taking our army issue canteens, a pocket knife, and sometimes a camera, we climbed mountain trails, slid down steep cliffs for better views or climbed where no trail led.

In my days of duty in the CCC camp there was a great cattle ranch situated at the entrance to the Chiricahua Nat'l Monument called "Far Away Ranch." It was owned by the Riggs family, and Mr. Riggs was working for the Park Service at that time. In the years after CCC Camp NP-9A was terminated, it became a very fancy dude ranch located on the exact grounds of the old camp and used some of the old buildings.

*We will resume our excursion into southeastern Arizona with Mr. Cozby next month.*

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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