

Stokes Nature Center
History & Lore of Logan Canyon Podcast Series
Forest Army

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt entered the White House, he faced an economic crisis of extreme proportions, the Great Depression. The Civilian Conservation Corps, created in 1933, was one of Roosevelt's New Deal programs. It had two major goals: to help provide relief from unemployment and to protect natural resources nationwide. The Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC, provided training and work for 2.5 million young men and succeeded in helping to protect, provide access to and direct attention towards America's wild places.

CCC workers were paid a wage of \$30 per month, \$25 of which went to support their families back home. When Cache County was allotted 113 spots in the program, 275 men applied.

Beginning in 1933, uniformed CCC workers labored throughout Logan Canyon. That first summer, they built a camp at Tony Grove, called Camp F-1. The camp included a mess hall, recreation hall, barracks, blacksmith shop, hospital, and several other buildings. CCC enrollees in Logan Canyon worked on projects such as planting trees, building dams and bridges, fixing roads, cleaning and repairing campgrounds, stocking fish, repairing soil erosion, and fighting forest fires. In their free time, they made belts out of snake skins, played baseball, and pranked newcomers by sending them on nighttime hunts for the "snipe," a mythical creature which was rumored to inhabit the canyon.

According to an article printed in the Herald Journal in September 1933, "One of the most completely successful of all the items on the New Deal program seems to be the forestry work of the Civilian Conservation Corps. . . So well is the project working out that a person is inclined to wonder if it might not be a good thing to make this forest army a permanent affair. . . All of this of course would be pretty expensive but it might be money well spent. . . certainly the question deserves serious consideration. This forest army is too good an outfit to be discarded off-hand."

The Guinavah-Malibu campground amphitheater, completed in 1936, is part of the legacy of the CCC. The amphitheater boasts a stage of limestone surrounded by rows of benches, enough seating for up to 1,000 people. Today, the amphitheater is used for lectures, concerts, religious services, and local nature and history programs, such as those sponsored by Stokes Nature Center each summer. It also remains a standing tribute to the CCC, a group that left a lasting legacy both through their conservation work, and in the hearts and minds of Americans.

Sources:

Portraits in Time: Logan Canyon, a Historical Guide. Published by Bridgerland Travel Region and the United States Forest Service Logan Ranger District.

Utah.gov History to Go website: http://historytogo.utah.gov/utah_chapters/from_war_to_war/the_civilianconservationcorps.html.

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Utah State History website: http://history.utah.gov/research_and_collections/photos/ccc.html.