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# The Civilian Conservation Corps in Giant City

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THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS IN GIANT CITY

by

Robbie Hisgen

B.S., Southern Illinois University, 2015

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Master of Science

Department of Mass Communication and Media Arts  
in the Graduate School  
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS IN GIANT CITY

By

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A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Science

in the field of Mass Communication and Media Arts

Approved by:

Jan Thompson, Chair

Graduate School  
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## AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

ROBERT G. "ROBBIE" HISGEN, for the MASTER OF SCIENCE degree in PROFESSIONAL MEDIA AND MANAGEMENT presented on APRIL 12, 2018, at Southern Illinois University - Carbondale.

TITLE: THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS IN GIANT CITY

MAJOR PROFESSOR: JAN THOMPSON

The function of this film is to document the hard work of the men that built the one of the best know attractions of southern Illinois Giant City Park, using pictures archived in Morris library by Kay Rippelmeyer. *The Civilian Conservation Corp in Giant City* was conceived by a graduate student because of the countless days spent in the park and at the lodge for functions, dinners or just to be out enjoying nature walking trails and climbing the multitude of rock formations. Giant City Park begged the question who made all of this? Once researching began it was ostensible that their were more than enough photographs in the archives to make a film that documented the invaluable work that gained access to the park and the construction of the lodge. Access to Giant City being fifteen minutes from campus, along with the photographs and the audio recordings of Kay Rippelmeyer interviewing a portion of the men who built the roads and the lodge for the Civilian Conservation Corp affirmed insight for researcher and reader. America in the early nineteen thirty's may prove to be the low point in the country's history concerning joblessness, economic hardships for the majority of people and hopelessness for the future. The Civilian Conservation Corp was one of the government projects that helped restore hope, invigorate the economy and employ the men in America. Combining the interviews of the Civilian Conservation Corp workers conducted by Kay Rippelmeyer an interview of her along with interviews of Professor Jonathan Bean, and Jenny Johnson the film aims to answer the

question of who built the park. The film grants a glimpse at the honorable effort that it took in a construction of this magnitude using mainly hand tools.

## DEDICATION

To all who served in the Civilian Conservation Corps

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**CHAPTER 1**  
**TRANSCRIPTS**

**Jenny Johnson**

Speaker 1: 00:00 My name is Jenny Johnson and I am an MFA student here at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. And I'm also a musician. Um, my grandfather was in the civil conservation core and it wasn't here in southern Illinois, but it was where he was from and he had come to visit me and was just infinitely fascinated by, uh, the giant city lodge, which is where the, they have a visitor center and they have meals and dinner and lunch in a restaurant. It's a beautiful, beautiful building and it was built by the Civil Conservation Corps. So that was my first introduction to what the CCC was though I had been going to giant city state park for my entire life. And so just being around the trails and like walking the trail since I was a kid, that was my initial influence and then finding it out exactly what they did and what they built a was what inspired me to do other projects with the CCC.

01:06 Yeah. So I've done two projects about the civil conservation corps. Um, my first project was a radio drama series. So I'm an audio production major. Um, and what media arts major and I deal with audio production and so I wanted to make a radio drama series because I loved the history of a giant city state park and the CCC and what they did and I wanted to put it into a different form of entertainment. So I took Kay Ripplemeyer's book, Giant City State Park and the civil conservation corps and kinda looked at the dates that the index, the timeline that they had and of all the dates and all the events that the CCC did. And I started there and use these dates as this reference point for creating the, the, the story behind these lives of these men. So I, uh, most of it's true, but part of it's kind of like, you know, like a fictitious representation of these guys' stories.

02:07 And I had so much fun doing it. I started, um, I started reading a lot of books about the area and the radio drama starts off with, uh, the guys first day at camp and what they experienced. And some of these stories are directly from that book and from Oral Histories. I had heard and videos I had seen and so some of the names are true, uh, some of them are false, but it's this nice mix of what's, what, how, how the men lived in Camp and how they, uh, the trails that they built, they were known as soil soldiers, uh, the, the work that they did, they built the roads and so it's an introduction essentially to the lives of these men and, and some of the local lore that's included in the area to include stories of panthers, which was a lot reports about guys who said they saw panthers in the area.

03:02 So it's just kind of this fun radio drama series about that. I'm trying to think of some of the other stories that I have. It's a radio drama series. So I'm going to continue on these stories.

Speaker 1: What about the CCC? Another one I had done was a. So the guys would go on weekend leave. And so if you talk to some of the old timers, they have stories that they had heard about the um, the guys coming into camp. And so there are all these stories about, um, liquor and so, so when the CCC came into being a here in southern Illinois, prohibition was still the law for the first six months. So for the first six months they were, they were illegally drinking and, but it wasn't, you know, like it wasn't that unexpected around the area. So that, that's what the second episode is about and my radio dramas essentially these guys going out on weekend leave and some of the local places that they would run off to.

04:07 And um one of the big fears and the town, uh, the real fears about the CCC has all these young guys would come down and the local parents would be concerned for their daughters. Uh, so they had this, that was kind of the running fear within the town is like, oh no, all these young boys are here. We're like, hide your daughters away from these guys. So that was kind of what,

one of the episodes was about? And the third one, which I'm writing now is about the drury creek floods, which happened in 1937. I want to say, no 1935 I'll have to look that up, but uh, it had flooded the town, uh, and thankfully the CCC was there to help do reparations right after just repair the town and a sand bag, things off. And so it's kind of about the jury creek floods. Um, but thankfully that the CCC was actually down there to help help things that, uh, I think they described it as a 20 acre lake overnight.

05:06 So yeah, that was some of the, the interesting stories I had read and there were so many more. I mean, it could just go on forever. There's so many interesting stories and then once you begin telling these stories, we had played this radio drama on WDBX community radio and then people would call in and say, well, I heard this and how I found an old moonshine bottle back where the guys used to be in a camp and stuff. So it was a really interesting, uh, the. Once the locals get involved, what they know about it. I'm actually some of the first. So deer used to not. The deer weren't around for a long time and it got reintroduced at giant city state park, so you can thank them for all the deer that are around here. Next time you hit a deer on the road.

05:50 Uh, so some of the old timers here in southern Illinois remember going to giant city state park and seeing deer like fenced in. It was some of their first time seeing deer out there. So they kind of reintroduced that back in. Yeah, no, I'm not sure because he's from Texas, but I don't know if he was stationed there. I don't know. Um, he, he's passed now, but he was in the Korean War and whatnot. Um, so, but he always kind of thanked his training there, uh, for later on in life. And that's one thing I had heard from many people was that it kind of trained them, uh, that the CCC trained people for the wars and it also saved people from their economic plight. So a lot of these guys, what, you know from talking to people and reading was that, that this was the thing that saved them, that a lot of men whose crops were failing, who's, um, you know, houses,

you know, we're bottom loan, all these things were failing them, uh, but the CCC came in and kind of gave this economic boost to the area and also gave them another chance to have some income and it gave them valuable skills to go out into the workforce.

07:16 A lot of them became a mason's because of this. I did a lot of masonry work and stone work because that was another big thing about the CCC as they did a lot of stonework see at the giant city state lodge. I can, while I can talk about my, um, thesis, which was the song. Um, so I did a six song album about the city of Makanda, which the civil conservation corps was located and one of the companies anyways. And so one of the songs I had written was called a think. It was called. Oh, it's called giant city. Ah, that's what I named it, three different things before I settled on giant city. So the song I wrote called Giant City was about the CCC and looking back on the legacy that they created and also thinking about how they saved a lot of people from, as I said, that economic plight and giving them a second chance and also leaving this legacy of, of having something beautiful to keep going back to.

08:19 That's something that keeps rewarding the area that it's in. It's building up your house, building up your home kind of thing.

Um, and so I remember telling this, uh, to, to a local DJ Lod Addington, and he's, he's somebody who's very knowledgeable about the, about the CCC, and he immediately played a song on the radio. He's like, well, you know, Jenny, not everybody had a great experience at the CCC. In fact, this next song is called loveless CCC about this guy complaining about having to do work and hating it. They're so not everybody's experience was great, but maybe that's something you could look up loveless CCC as a song, like old country song, but having a terrible time in the CCC this time, but I feel like I'm the CCC and the FDR and the new, the new deal, the program that it was. I feel like that struggle is happening now, that economic struggle and I feel like it's a

very good parallel for this day and age that those kinds of social programs that are needed considering everything in the economy.

**Kay Rippelmeyer**

Speaker 1: 00:00 Oh, these are such good pictures

00:06 this is, um, the civilian conservation core points up a perennial tension in American history that is real interesting and pertinent to today.

00:29 1930 [inaudible] was a disastrous. I mean, the country was on the brink of huge revolution.

It was a 40 percent, 25 to 40 percent of men were unemployed. Almost all the women who are unemployed, they were all just working at home hard. Um, but think of that, you know, they raised a big fuss here. If it gets over what, six, seven, eight, um, but four out of 10 men had no jobs and those who had jobs, they weren't making very much money, most of them. So

01:18 this program was very radical, um, that the government is going to pay people to do jobs.

These are going to be government run jobs. I mean, think how that would run today, how that would go, um, it smacked of sociopolitical socialism to these people or communism. Um, that's not the government's job. And behind that is the philosophy that if you can't work, if you don't make enough, you don't deserve to live. You don't deserve to eat. That's the same philosophy we're dealing with today. So there were those who called these make work projects and men know many of the men did not come in with skilled labor. Some did. Um, because there were veterans camps. These were the veterans of World War One and the veterans and the Mexican war, you know, these are um, I mean not Mexican or Spanish war, Spanish American war. Um, so these are guys older between the ages of 45 and 70 who went into the CCC camps.

02:37 Um, there were separate. They were veterans camps, but southern Illinois had a lot of them. There weren't a veterans at giant city though. Those two camps were for juniors. Um, and

those guys were 18 to 25. Um, but that, there were plenty of people who didn't like this idea. At the bottom of it is that if you give away stuff, you'd give away work. If you give away health care, if you give away nobody's gonna, just try. Nobody's going to strive for anything. And you can see that point I have, I know people who say you give college education to people. Nobody's going to value it and it's not gonna mean anything. Now you have to really think about some of that. I draw on and healthcare personally. I think everybody has that healthcare, but some people don't. Some people say, why work then? Why try to start anything?

03:38 Why try to build anything? Why try to put in hard hours if they're going to give it to you. Anyway. So this was the tension then too, but it things were so desperate. There were criminal gangs, you know, taken. I mean that's the choice you either joined a gang or you know you joined the CCC's, and so they pushed the CCC's, and everyone said yeah, the crime rate dropped incredibly in Chicago when they allowed for the civilian conservation corps program. Um, so yes, many of these guys were unskilled. I just wrote a little article for the. Giant City newsletter that comes out quarterly. They call it the stone city seasonal. I think it's such a stone city. What was it? I have the newspapers here. Well, there was a giant city. Each camp put out a little newsletter and so there's some of them here.

04:43 And one was the stone city stone city news, stone city something. Well, I don't remember exactly it's in the book, um, but I, uh, they're putting this out now quarterly and I write a little article about what was going on eighty years ago at the park. And what I chose for this new issue is about, uh, this idea of work and how it changed. Um, the superintendent name was gibbs. He said, yes, we are using mainly unskilled labor here. These guys are, you know, they're digging with hoes and out in the woods, you know, and all those camps there, they're planting trees. They are taking down buildings there. You race in roads, they're making trails. This is all real hard

outdoor work in the woods or in the fields. The soil conservation service. CCC camps were working on farms in the fields, but they're making drainage ditches and stopping erosion carrying rocks blasting quarry rock.

05:53 Um, so like, like I told you, the Giant City camps were considered the country club camps. They were different way different than all other CCC camps in Southern Illinois. Um, there, the others felt that they were very privileged. Um, these guys could get into town, these guys could take classes at S.I.U. by getting on the train. These guys had visitors come here because it was a park in 1927, but think, you know, they weren't moving very far on getting to park. It wasn't, it wasn't like all weather roads, you know, that was the first business to make roads. So yeah, I mean it doesn't take a lot of skill to make the roads and spread the gravel. Um, but the superintendent gibbs finally was saying, these guys are going out now from the seas to get jobs. They called it on the outside. They're going in and trying to get jobs and they don't have skills.

06:54 Why? He thought that some of the mission of this CCC should be to train these guys for a job. So they converted one of the empty barracks into a wood shop. And so these guys are learning to make all the furniture that was going to go in the first cabins. They built the first cabins there and to make the beds and to make dressers and to make, you know, hat stands or whatever. And so there's a picture in the giant city of that wood shop and all that furniture they were making. All right. The controversy there though was, what are the unions say about that? The unions were just getting started and so I talk in a giant city book about that. They weren't fixing the plumbing for the lodge. They're getting the plumbing together so they hire some skilled person to come. But the CCC boys are there doing the work and learning it.

07:54 Well, the union's raise a stink and stop the whole operation. The unions were just getting started and of course they needed a union, you know? But that was a tension. So there's tension

there. And you asked me before about, um, if I thought that this kind of program could work today and I ask all the men I interviewed that same question and two of the main responses I got was kids don't want to work today. They wouldn't do this. They wouldn't work that hard. And I do believe that I really do, um, but if it's given the choice of starving are working, which is the choice that those guys had, honestly, they were watching their families go without food, without shoes, without medical care, without anything. And this was their chance to help them because, you know, \$25 they had to send home, they didn't even get to keep. So they felt like the breadwinner for their families. And it gave them a great feeling. Um, but the other response was that the unions would never allow it. I don't know what it would take for people to, to agree to it, you know, I, I think honestly, people do want to work.

09:21 I do. And, and that, that if it could be sold to them, that, that feeling of accomplishment and worth, um, could be gained that way. Um, I think they would, um, gosh, I did so much for these men. I can't tell you that the people I interviewed and things I've read in their newsletters, um, you know, of all of them. The dozens and dozens of men I interviewed, most of them cried when I ask them. Um, it was, it was, you know, because many their dads had took off because their dad's felt like a burden to the families and you know, so they have to freight and left. Um, so yeah, a lot of them. And though there were, there were guys who learned some skills. I'm a man done at Pomona. Um, then Pomona's camp was all African American guys, you know, he learned to drive heavy equipment and he did that for the rest of his life.

10:28 up in Michigan. Um, men learned how to, how to build. I mean, most of these guys, white and black had never picked up a hammer. I had never worked with any kind of saws and they learned it and a lot of it was menial labor and, but it's a start. And so, um, I don't know what you want to see pictures of here. Um, you want, you can spend time just panning over these after I



leave or another time when you, we don't need the see. Okay. That would be good. Um, they do want you to keep them in. Yeah, I'll just talk then. And then you only add it to these. I see. So at giant city, um, yeah, it had big. It was made in 27, but it was crude, you know, it was um, land too rough for the orchards. But boy, the orchards came right up.

You'll see on maps, orchards came right up to that, the slit of what is Giant City and um, they, you couldn't get there in the winter. People walked there from a Makanda up to stone fort it a lot for celebrations. Yeah. People used to walk and know that's what they did. Um, that was a dirt road that went around to the canyons. Um, you know, to the, the Squeeze and stuff. So people walked among it and they called it Fern Rocks though, uh, early on, you know, botanists and scientists would go there and study geologists, but it wasn't open for people very much. But a number of men, as I write about a number of men said, this needs to be preserved. This needs to be owned by everybody. And so the state bought it in 27, but it would have taken decades and decades and decades to slowly fix it up.

The CCCs were an incredible, incredible um a serendipitous happening because the advanced, the progress of that and the Shawnee national forest, which was being created at the same time, um, by huge amounts, you know, all of a sudden we had these playgrounds that southern Illinois did. The country did all over the country. That's what's happening. But, um, so the first order of business at all the camps in Giant City and all the camps throughout southern Illinois was roads, otherwise they weren't even going to get them in there. They weren't going to get the trucks, they, they weren't going to get. So they started working on the roads and that required engineers. And um, then they, you know, use some horses often and scrapers. But there was some heavy equipment that was brought in it, some of them. And they built the roads and mapped out the way that you go.

Um, and then yeah, they decided we're shelters would be. And where I'm put trails and horse trails and when they use the native stone, that was the idea at all the national parks and state parks to try to make it seem um indigenous to the area. So this is, is made out of this sense that they quarried, they found a coring, I'm near the railroad tracks. I'll have to look in the book and be sure. But they found a quarry, you know, they just scraped the soil off. I'm just started blasting out chunks you'll see in some pictures. And then they, um, broke it up, you know, with a chipping hammers and um, ended up getting blocked out. And so working on the lodge was a huge project. I wasn't the first one, but they started on it like, I think in 34 the CCCs began, you know, the first man who came there in June of 33.

It was one of the first camps in the southern Illinois, a trail of tears. That camp was their camp union. Uh, Pomona was there in 33. And um the men, we're real excited, be there. Um, and it ended up when they started the lodge, they decided, well, this is busy enough, we need to companies. So they brought in another whole camp, the first camp, or was situated like close to where the visitor center is now. The second camp was right with the lodge was right in the parking lot of the lodge. That was they called camps, which is Kinda odd that they called camp Stone Fort for it for some reason. And the other was giant city because that's kind of reverse, but that's what they did. Um, yeah, you know, all over the national parks, there wasn't interest in anything that was going to be tourists. Interesting. And so that a stone fort up there, that archaeological site was interesting. And this was sort of a embarrassing part of the CCC because, um, well the army's ran the camps and this, this is amazing. Could you get today the, the cooperation of the army's, the department of the interior who are gonna like work? The men are the forestry, you know, who are gonna work, the men all day, the armies.

### Jonathan Bean

[00:00:00] The situation was dire in 1933 when Franklin Roosevelt became president.

Unemployment was 25 percent. A lot of families were on relief. Most Americans did not believe in relief, relief was a handout. It was. Government check. To prevent you and your family from starving. That was considered degrading and humility. Even liberals such as Franklin Roosevelt. Said that we must. Begin to stop this process of relief, and put young men and women to work. So the Civilian Conservation Corps was one of his favorite programs. Prior to becoming president. He. Advocated fresh air programs. He wanted to take children from New York City and he did. To upstate New York in the summer. He believed in. Rejuvenating power of nature.

[00:00:58] Being trained and working outdoors. Franklin Roosevelt was also active in the Boy Scouts. And as governor he had a program that was a forerunner to the Civilian Conservation.

[00:01:11] Corps. So it was little surprise. That in his first hundred days of office. He sent. 15 major pieces of legislation to Congress. Congress voted on those bills. Giving him the powers of a dictator practically. He wrote the bills. Congress passed the bills. Often sight unseen. One of those bills created the Civilian Conservation Corps. Which put men 18-24 and then later extended the age range. To work on conservation erosion control.

[00:01:51] Building roads in rural areas. 300000 people. Men. Young men were working. And it was an immensely popular program with the American People. Ultimately I think 7 million young men worked on c c c camps.

[00:02:12] Their were c c c camps all over Illinois. Nearby we have a giant city lodge. Which was built by the CCC. The CCC projects span the nation. There were separate CCC programs. For veterans. And. Were American Indian. And.

[00:02:32] The larger New Deal you see reflected in the CCC its self. For example. FDR. Could get anything passed by Congress. But he needed the support. Of racist. White. Democrats in the south. Who. Held the power chairmanship on important committees. And. So in the south there were laws segregating, separating blacks and whites.

[00:03:00] Including in government workplaces. Southern Democrats demanded that the CCC be segregated throughout the nation. They got their way. I. Did notice,

[00:03:14] like you mention that the Indian groups were actually black like regiments of the CCC.

[00:03:19] Yes there were separate black camps. American Indians were. The American Indians again were another reflection of the new approach to the New Deal. Too American Indians.

[00:03:32] Headed by a man named Collier. He believed in Indian self-determination. So in the past. The federal government had worked top down and told the Indians what to do. Collier used the CCC and other New Deal programs. To let the Indians decide what they wanted to do. So the work done by the. American Indian camps was somewhat different. Because it was here that making the Indian Indian again. Because for decades the federal government tried to strip. American Indians of their. Indian-ness. And make them more like.

[00:04:11] White America. So we see that reflected. And. Lastly. When the New Deal finally ended and we moved into World War Two. We see the reflection. Of. The racism that was. Prevalent in the Roosevelt administration. When the president himself when he signed the. Order to intern. Japanese. In. Camps. And.

[00:04:35] Ccc camps were used for that purpose. So.

[00:04:41] Again the CCC was popular because Americans believed in workfare not welfare.

[4.5] The CCC was. It. Was the name Roosevelt's tree army. Now there were a few people that

thought at the time. It had fascist overtones. Taking young men just as Hitler took young men and made them into the Hitler Youth on different work projects. The camps were operated by the Department of War. So a few Old Guard critics of the administration. Thought this was troubling something to watch out. But in the end.

[00:05:24] It didn't become Hitler Youth and even now in-memory people think very highly. The dirty secret.

[00:05:38] Of the CCC. Is that. It was run by. A union boss. The president. Of the American machinist union, as I recall. Unions do not want competition

[00:05:58] in the job market. Unions were the biggest contributors to the Democratic Party in 1930s. They were very concerned. That. FDR was going to create a program that would give these young men useful skills.

[00:06:13] Beyond manual labor. And so it took. Roosevelt. Personally. Took. The head of the American Federation of Labor. AFL. On a tour.

[00:06:27] To show that young men actually were learning nothing at all to be able to compete in the marketplace.

[00:06:35] And this is the dirty secret because while popular will put people to work. Studies have shown that. Those young men. Who participated in the CCC. Over time. Lagged behind other young men. Who were not in the CCC.

[00:06:54] If you compare all the different variables in their backgrounds and so forth. So actually put them to work.

[00:07:00] But it prevented them, it was a lost decade for them. It's not until world war two. When we needed. Workers in factories or soldiers with skills. That the government finally decided to give these. Young men. Useful skills so that they too might get union jobs. And in

some instances and this was common with all the New Deal work programs. If. You are a manual labour. Planting trees or. Working on pavement. Or another agency. And. They need to operate a bulldozer or Crane. Or. Some semi-skilled or skilled position.

[00:07:48] You would not be trained for that position. They would bring in union labor. So that was a secret deal that. FDR made with the unions.

[00:07:58] The American public did not see this. The American public simply saw this as. Something good like the Boy Scouts. So did that stop the union opposition to it.

[00:08:11] Absolutely. Union the unions. The unions were in fact running supervising. The CCC. And they got a deal that anytime skilled labor was necessary. People are already with union jobs.

[00:08:28] Would do that labour. So again that's the dirty secret that.

[00:08:33] It gave these young men work. It gave, they pay thirty dollars a month most of that money they had to send to their families. But it was. Retarding their. Progress. In the marketplace.

[00:08:47] One of the unintended consequence. Well I'll take that back. It wasn't intended consequence to keep these young men. From thriving in the private sector marketplace. Because the unions did not want competition. During the Great Depression when jobs were scarce. So this was a make work popular job.

[00:09:09] The American people got something for their money. On. Like welfare.

[00:09:14] And workfare even in later years. Some liberals have sense that Americans do not like welfare. I mean across the political spectrum the idea of being on welfare. In perpetuity. Is unpopular. Even among many.

[00:09:33] So-called liberals. And so. We end up with welfare reform in the 1990s. Putting a cap on how long you can be on welfare. And. Liberals sometimes have. Returned to the New Deal roots. Looked at programs like the CCC to. See how popular they are.

[00:09:52] And have argued for workfare. We need to put. Young people and older people displaced by. Industrial. Economic change.

[00:10:03] To work. And. It wouldn't be a handout. You could maintain your dignity.

[00:10:11] That's what. [00:10:12] That's the positive. That. Came out of the CCC. [3.5] And the other work. Programs like the WPA. Is. [00:10:20] That the American people. Reconciled themselves. To massive government aid. To deal with unemployment. But. To deal with it in a way that was.

[00:10:34] Consistent with the American values of work ethic. [15.6]

[00:10:48] All right. You. Were asking that question. Just. With the majority of the work they did was. road work. That's what I. Kind of gathered to my research like the lodge was just. It wasn't like a. FLUKE THING BUT just like a An unusual thing. The history of the CCC is what i gathered. Yeah a lot of work was building roads and rural areas. Many if not most of the. Young men who were. Hired to work. With the CCC.

[00:11:22] Were from rural rural areas themselves. Urban. Unemployed. Youth. Tended to work on other projects. But. America was large parts of America were inaccessible. And. This was one of the ways to. Open up. And.

[00:11:46] Particularly in state parks because they worked on government lands. That's an important point to make. Right. Now we're in government lands that we're not using eminent domain to takeover private property or do anything of. That sort. So they have free rein to. Build roads. That's what they did. They also planted three billion trees. It's. The trees that.

[00:12:11] People associate with the CCC it's not the roads. You get three million people over the. Eight years nine years of the CCC.

[00:12:24] And three billion trees. So would. A thousand trees per man.

### **Scott Vancil**

Interview with Scott Vancil, Nov. 9, 1987 at his home in Dowell.

(Looking at photos. He has a group photo of Co. 696. Vancil is the fifth one in the row.)

I went in in 34 and came out in 36. I went in from Jackson County... I was living in Hallidayboro.... No work then. My father had been a coal miner. He did carpentry work and was a good brick mason, took odd jobs was all he could get. In them days there was no building going on....

Porter Leslie was in there at Giant City when I went in. He died about three weeks ago... And Cecil Griffin was in there from Hallidayboro, he's been dead a long time. And John Barry, we called him Jack.... He's an older man than I am. Last I heard of him, he was doing OK.

Co. 696 men were almost all from Southern Illinois. (He didn't go to Jefferson Barracks first).

When I went there, the camp had been established. Some moved out and some moved in.

Co. 692 was there up on the hill next to the lodge. The lodge was under construction. This was in the summer of 34... We was working on the south part of the building, the tall part.

A lot of things happened there. When I first went in, this Porter Leslie was an assistant leader and a friend of mine. He was from Hallidayboro too. When I went down there they had the nicest poor excuse for a barber. Porter, he went to the Captain and told him that you got a barber in camp. And he said, "I'm glad to find that out." So Porter come back and talked to me. I had a license. I was a licensed barber. Porter told the captain, "You see my hair?" Captain said, "Yes, you've always got a good haircut." "That's the man I'm talking about, he does that.".... So they



set up a deal there where I went up to the barber shop one evening, Porter arranged it, I cut Porter's hair with this barber's tools and stuff. I said to him, "Man you got to get yourself some tools, but I went ahead and cut Porter's hair." The barber then wanted me to cut his hair too, so I gave him a haircut.

That guy was just chopping hair off and getting a nickel. The captain had come in there right after I went in and watched me cut them two heads of hair." He told me to come up he wanted to talk to me. So I went up to his quarters. He said I want you to take care of the barber shop. I said, "I can't." He said, "Why?" "No money to buy the chair and all." He said, "Don't worry about it, I'll loan you the money, you pay me back when you can. I'll be needing a haircut, I'll make it good." I bought the chair, but those old tools he had, I couldn't use them. It cost me \$25 for the chair and everything. I had better tools than he did, so I took them down there, so I barbered down there the whole time I was down there. I did that at night, after supper.

During the daytime I had a lot of jobs at different times...I worked on the camp detail, built things they needed as they came along. I built a couple office desks... and working on the lodge. 692 was there when they were laying the rocks (for the lodge). Some of them worked in the rock quarry with guys from 696... I worked up there laying rocks and then I decided I'd like to do something else. (says yes, he knew William Bodeker. I ask if they did, as Bodeker said, cut all the stones right at the quarry.) Don't you print that, because you can't prove it. At the quarry they shot them loose, got them broke up into pieces so they could load them in the truck, then they were cut when they got them up to the truck...They'd cut the rock out and get it up on the scaffold to the guy who'd lay that rock. If it didn't fit right, they had to trim it down to actual size so they could make it fit in... You had to cut every one to fit. To my opinion, the nicest one of those arches is the one in the big dining room and that was cut with a chipping hammer. I cut

those rocks for the fireplace myself. They build the arch to set them on, then I got me a helper and he and I set them. But I was working in a building that had been 692 barracks. 692 had been moved somewhere else. That was in the winter months, so I cut those rocks in there. They brought them in as great big chunks. There were no two sides of any one of those rocks (the one in the arches for the fireplace) that had the same dimensions...

You's use a square and a chipping hammer. An engineer had figured these rocks for size they way they wanted. There was six sides to each rock and no two alike. He cut a pattern out of cardboard or something, the size of each one of those rocks. So I had to cut a rock according to that pattern. (He is explaining the building of only the arches). There were six patterns for each rock, because no two sides were the same. So I got all the rocks cut, then he told me to go up and lay (those five rocks). I was three months cutting them five rocks. The archway of the fireplace was the most particular part of the whole building. That's all the rock that was put in that building that wasn't hand chiseled. I got me an air compressor. (We discuss the fallibility of Bodeker's information). That man ain't too smart, never was. I don't blame him.

I knew everybody in camp. I cut all their hair. If you want to get a lot of low down on the Co. 696, you should get Kenneth and I together and get us to talk about stuff that went on down there .... Another man living in town who was down there - Charlie Polinsky. He's a younger man, retired too. None of us guys are that young anymore.

They just brought that air compressor down there when I was working on there.... The ones before were all cut by hand ... I was working at the rock quarry, Kenneth was too, when they brought that air compressor down there at the lodge building. I had been up there before... They turned that air compressor over to me. I thought I'd stay inside that building and stay out of the cold.

(I ask what he was thinking sending that much time on one rock for a building). I was just a laborer having a good time, didn't make me no difference. And at night I'd go to the barber shop. (I ask about the dimensions for the rocks in the regular wall). They had to lay those rocks so the next ...you had to put a thinner one to break the mortar joint. You had to keep breaking the mortar joint in every direction. Each rock had to be cut a little different size, so that you didn't get any long seams in those mortar joints. They just measured the face of them, it didn't matter if you chipped the back side because that would be out of sight. Each rock only had one face showing. You had a mortar joint down there between there. (The wall is a double rock wall). (I ask id there are concrete slab floors on both outside wings and he doesn't know) I was there for the dedication... But I don't know what they got down there now...

We had a lot of different jobs down there. After camp detail I was on the lodge, but I wanted to because I had friends up there.... Then I went to the rock quarry. I drilled some rock with a steel drill, you'd dig a hole with a sledge hammer. When one guy got tired of swinging the sledge hammer you swapped places and he'd sit there and hold that drill. That was to drill down in that solid rock so you could blast it with dynamite. After you'd touch off a charge like that, big rocks would fly off there and we'd use sledges and smaller hammers and smaller drills and —— and put a steel wedge in that hole, you'd hit on one side and the other to break that rock into a smaller piece. (Says they didn't have any air compressors or machinery out there). First piece of machinery that come up there was the air compressor when I cut the rock for that fireplace. That's all the piece of machinery that was used there. (On the north end of the dining hall he means).

(Says they did not shoot dynamite everyday at the rock quarry). We built toilets there at Giant City that we took up to Kaskaskia State Park. Most of the men weren't confined to any one job

down there. After a while you'd get transferred around, sometimes you just wanted to move. It gave us a lot of different experiences and that was what it was all supposed to be about anyhow.

When I first took over the barber shop it was in the basement under the R & D. Receiving and Discharging, of clothing and stuff like that. It was in the basement and had an outside door...

Then when they completed the No. 6 barracks, I was an assistant leader, the second man in charge of No. 6 barracks. It took a leader to be in charge completely, he had the first bunk at the front door. And I had the bunk at the back door. It was only a half barracks but built full length.

From the back door you could go into a little reception room, to the right was a little canteen and to the left was a barber shop. So I was moved over there.... And there was a library too in that half of barracks 6.

It was 10 and 15 cents. If you had money in your pocket you paid ten. If I had to charge you it was 15 cents... I had to see that they paid me. At pay day the Captain was there and the Lieutenant and the Co. Commander and the clerk I guess. When they walked by there if he owed me something, he stopped and paid me. There wasn't no questions asked. Nobody tried to duck. I was sitting there at that pay table waiting on them. I had their names.

(I ask how it came about he became assistant leader.) He says he doesn't remember. Maybe I got that when I went on the tractor to grade the roads, I think that's where that rating came in. They didn't have any experienced operators. I had done that type of work, not the same type exactly. I was making then \$36 a month. Our promotions down there paid off... (My folks) they was living on that. All I got was that \$5 a month... and the barber money and that extra \$6 for being assistant leader, I kept that too.

It was good. We enjoyed it. I had a pretty nice automobile. We'd go out to the park entrance and count the traffic over the weekend on Saturday and Sunday when most the CCC people would go

home. Kenneth and I would go there to check the traffic. So then they'd give us days off (Instead of coming home on the weekend, they'd do that duty to build up enough to have four day weekends.). When we'd get a few days behind us, six, eight, ten, whatever we wanted and a little money on top of it, we'd go wherever we wanted to go. We'd take off and have a ball. When we'd get broke, we'd come back. We had a good time...

(Says they had roll call every morning) If we didn't, somebody else might answer for us...and sometimes somebody else slept in your bed if you had to be there....

The lodge was the biggest project done down there. I'm sure it cost more money than the roads. Unless they'd throw that tractor and grader in there, then the roads could come close to costing a lot too....

Some boys set tomato slips to earn extra money, ten cents an hour. After work or on Saturday. They did that on their own...I could cut three or four heads of hair in an hour. (I ask about the style of cutting) It was neat and trim if you could find a good barber... After the C's, I never used my barber license again.

After the C's I came back here and worked in the local coal mines and got married, had a bad time for a few years. Did construction work when we were getting ready for W.W.II. I've worked for everybody and everywhere.... in Pennsylvania in New Mexico. There are about four states in the U.S. I haven't worked in.... We had five children....

(Mrs. Vancil telling about being a cook at True Blood dormitory) When they had that first nigger riot down there. She left one morning to go to work. I turned the radio on and they give the announcement that they had a nigger riot down there, nobody allowed on the grounds. It was about 6:00 a.m. She'd been there an hour but nobody allowed in there.... (This was in 1970).

(Mrs. Vancil speaks: They were taking the furniture out of the dorms, throwing equipment in the streets and setting things afire. I had to get permission from the police to park my car, and then walk a good block and a half.)

I couldn't get a phone line down there. Took till about 9:00. I finally got Delyte Morris, he was the man down there then. I said that I wanted to know where in the hell my wife was at. You got nigger troubles and you can't handle it. Where in the hell's my wife at, she's not supposed to be in there. He said well she's supposed to be on duty. He said I don't know.... I said that you get over there and give her her paycheck. If you can't control them goddamned niggers, my wife's not going to wait on them. He didn't do nothing about it. I said if you want to save us trouble before her quitting time you hand her a check cause she ain't coming back down there with those goddamned niggers. She never went back...

(Says there were two blacks from DuQuoin in 696)...

Steumke (sp?) was the real stonemason there. He treated me good. He brought me those patterns.... There's different kinds of rock in that building. There's creek-bed rock in there, and what we blew off was hard sand-stone....

(About gambling) We had a few friendly games, card games, mostly poker... That's where I got mad at the doctor down there. I was playing cards and he wanted me to go cut his hair. I said that I was off duty on a Saturday. He kept talking and talking along about it and I was trying to play cards. Some of the guys knew that I was getting mad. He was standing right behind me... Finally he told me cutting my hair ain't like cutting an enrollee's hair. "Oh," I said, "It ain't?" "No," he said. "Oh," I said, "maybe I better go find out." So I threw my hand in, looked at my watch, and I knew those guys were watching me. In five minutes I was back in that card game. He had his

hair cut. He never come back to the barber shop anymore... I just give him a quick once over...

There was a place in the card game when I got back.

Captain Adams he was a good guy. They transferred him somewhere else before I left and the new captain they sent in, he come in there one night to that barber shop... he said he wanted to buy that shop from me. He'd take part of the money. I'd be working for him. I said, "Well, give me the money. Hell, I'm tired of it anyhow." "Well, you'd still barber." "Not if you buy the shop, I won't be barber, I'll promise you that, all I'm trying to do is get my money out of it." He said "You'll change your mind." He wrote me out a check for \$25 and before I took it I said, "What I make tonight is mine and I'm going to take my personal belongings out of here. My good tools that I brought go out. You aren't buying them." He said, "Tomorrow night you're working for me." I said, "We'll see about that." The next night I got in my car and went home... I didn't go back. I hung my barber license up and that was it.

I worked in the little coal mine. Some days I'd make a dollar, some days I didn't. It was all over when he bought that barber shop.... He was going to cut in on the profits, there wasn't enough profits to divide... It was on government property, how could I refuse.

(talks about the Kosma (?) boys)...

(We talk about the way the park looks now as compared to fifty years ago) There was a lot of drinking and playing tricks. There at the Devil's Stand Table we used to jump over to that Devil's Stand Table and drink beer. We were having a good time...

### **George Oliver**

CCC Interview with George Oliver, August 31, 1987, at his home near Makanda.

(Going page by page through his scrapbook of photos)

O. These here are photographs of the entrance to Giant City State Park. This is right at the barracks, Co. 696 .... SP stands for State Park... This is a picture someone made later on and gave me showing the barracks... that was the canteen and back of that the mess hall, just after it was completed...lot of that was covered then with tar paper, now they call it building paper, an asphalt paper impregnated with tar and then you had to put those strips on there to keep the wind from tearing it off...

I. Could anybody drive or walk in?

O. (Looking at picture 66) I believe that was part of the mess hall in this building back here...And that's a guard rail and stuff they put up there...little benches there. (Picture 69) Dept. of Interior personnel and then on the bottom here back in the corner, fourth from left was the Dept. of Interior office. The farthest on the right was where Alva Holson (Sp?), the superintendent, he lived in that one. The rest of us peons stayed in tents.

I. (I ask who built the tents and buildings there when he arrived)

O. They had hired a bunch of carpenters evidently, the same ones that were building these buildings probably put these tents up first. If you notice these had wooden bottoms and wooden floors, the tents were pulled over the top. The ones we lived in were not that way, they were just staked down on nothing but dirt.

I. How long did you live in those?

O. ... In 1933, they got ready to ship us out from Jefferson Barracks...there was probably a half a dozen of us boys from Tilden.. but we were put on a train in Sparta, IL for Jefferson Barracks to get our shots and we were put in companies of 220 men... When they got ready to ship them out they didn't ship 110, the just shipped 200 men... like I say they lined us up tall guys and one



end and on down, I was short 5' and 7 and a half. I was one of the shortest, so naturally I was in one of the last twenty men. They pulled us out to join up with the other leftovers and the original company went to Oregon... I got to come down here in my own territory.

I. Were you happy at the time? Did you know this area?

O. No, I'd been down through here one time as a kid, but I didn't know anything about the place. I just knew there was a highway out here down by Patterson Hill. That night they put us on the train to come this way, an IC train, didn't take long to get down here. We stayed in the coaches overnight. The next morning they unloaded our baggage onto Liberty army trucks, flat bed trucks, and we crawled up on top of them... there was a slight side... and rode out to the park, dodging limbs.

I. Do you remember how you felt at the time?

O. We felt happy. I'd been out of high school for a year. I'd graduated in '32 from Marissa and couldn't find jobs in St. Louis, so we were happy to get a hold of something, tickled to death to come down here... Those tents were up... and here is the completion of a barracks... Now I guess about the next morning after we were there, they lined all us boys up and call roll, all two hundred of us. Sergeant Helen of the army he calls roll. He gets through and says OK, can anyone in the bunch type? He says, if you can, step forward. I stepped out two steps and looked around and nobody else out there and I thought, Oh, my gosh, what have I done, cause sometimes the army outfit can mess you up, have you do something else. He says, OK you work in the Dept. of Interior Office. It's right over there in the corner... that was a good deal for me. I had graduated from Marissa in commercial studies, bookkeeping, typing, everything according to business.

I. Well, you were perfect for that.

O. I was, I found out later. (Talking about photos) Picture of army personnel, back row, second from left, Capt. Adams, third from left Lt. Urbach; bottom row second from left, Capt. Wood, fourth from left was Father Birmingham... I don't remember the others. (Capt. Wood in boots was in charge when he arrived). Now, the second photo Dept. of Interior personnel in back on left, A.J. Nooley, he took care of the timbers, next Carl Meyer, an engineer, Chester Harrell he was a foreman, Ivan Olson was superintendent of the park at its construction, A.J. Rudiger was his right hand man, Daniel Brewer was a foreman; bottom row on left Carol C. Collier, an engineer, Sanders, the till keeper, Floyd Boles, he was the mechanic, repaired our trucks, Brooks, the blacksmith; the man on forest, the man on right I don't remember. There's two men missing there: Red Thompson, we talked about that kid said he was in the squirrel crew and Unger, he was one of the foremen too.

I. Did the two groups, the army and the Interior Dept. chiefs, did they mix at all?

O. Oh, yes, they were friendly. But these fellows lived in separate barracks... on camp. Some had families, then they lived around the territory... some of the younger fellows who weren't married lived in the barracks or tents.

I. Would you describe what it was like living in those tents?

O. Oh, I guess there was eight in each tent... either six or eight. We had little metal footlockers we'd put our stuff in, water couldn't get in them at all.

I. Was it winter when you were in them?

O. We come in there in June, by the time we got into the barracks it was getting cold, pretty cold and really hot beefier that, but the mess hall wasn't built at that time, so all the cooking utensils, pots and pans were hanging on nails out in the open, a structure they put a tent on top of, open on the sides... (shows me photos of the first group that came in, and he's the shortest guy in the

bunch, shows me in the back row). I was noticing that all of us have our hats on, the next picture the boys didn't have their hats on. They made up put em on...

I. Were some camps less strict than others about keeping up with army protocol?

O. Well, I don't know. This one here wasn't too strict at all... (tells me man in middle in white shirt of a picture, he was part of the education office, I don't know whether his name was Eddy or what...)

I. All of these men were in 696?

O. Yes, the first group to come into the park?... Here some were cooks and some KPs and some worked in the offices for the army personnel... (shows me photo of Pop Johnson).

I. I thought he was at Jonesboro Camp?

O. Well, he must have went there. I think he lived around Murphysboro or something like that, but he's dead now... that's him, sixth from the left.

I. They told me he was an old army guy who taught them how to cook.

O. He may have been. We were pretty close friends... then second row from the bottom, second guy on the left was Russell Dunning, he was from Herrin, he was a personal friend of mine, worked in the Dept. of Interior Mess Hall. He waited on the Dept. of Interior personnel. The army men didn't eat with us.. Same row fifth man was Bob Cullum from Marissa, he wasn't any army man, he was a three C boy, but he was with the army. I think he was Sgt. Helen's right hand man, they done all the inspecting. Then the next guy to him on the right is Eddy Capps from Carbondale. He was a cook. We were all glad to see Eddy Capps cause we got some good food. He was a very good cook...

I. (I'm told by a woman that after the C's he worked in several cafes in Carbondale)

O. This is the ball team they had made up... (Explaining more photos, in general terms)

I. (Looking at photo of Alvin Olson's living quarters)

O. He was from Chicago, he had his own fireplace and easy chair and everything in there.

I. He was the superintendent in charge of all the work done in the park. What was his background?

O. Well, he came from Chicago and at that time the area was very interested in parks, had a lot of them around Chicago... (Looking at winter pictures of men in hats) (Picture says Headquarters Dept. of Interior), that's the only picture I've got of 692. This camp was built next to where the lodge was, where the parking lot is north of the lodge. That's the office I went to, from the tent to that one. In about August 1, 1934, I'd already signed up again for the 3 Cs. They decided they'd put that new camp up there and I knew that they were building it, but I didn't know what it was going to be.

I. ...You had been working in Co. 696.

O. Yes, but as an ordinary CCC boy, like the regular CCC enrollees.

I. Why were they going to bring in a whole new company?

O. They needed help, the park needed help with the trails and the lodge. We had 696 at the Devil's Stand Table and there where the lodge is at, we had 692.

I. When did 1657 come?

O. I don't know... On August 1, 1934 I was transferred from CCCs to the Dept. of Interior. I was no longer a CCC boy... At that time I worked for Alvin Olson, and Reutinger and the other Dept. of Interior men. I did all their typing and bookkeeping... in 696. So when they opened the new camp up there, they wanted me to go with them. They transferred me up there with the title of tool keeper, they had to give me some title to take care of me, cause I done my work. And that

other guy, Bob Collum, he came into the company as a foreman....All new personnel but some of us transferred over...

I. So all new buildings for 692?

O. Yea, and I didn't know at that time that Olson and Reutinger wanted me to go up there with them.

I. What'd you think of it?

O. What could I think of it? From 36 to 125, that was quite a jump...And by that time I was married, married right after that and we lived down there in Makanda. Married in 34 in December. (Shows me company poster of 692. Reutinger was transferred from Alvin Olson's assistant to the superintendent there and here I am on the bottom, tool keeper.

I. But really you typed?

O. Yea, and kept their files. here's Bob Collum spelled right....

I. What kind of work did 692 do different than 696?

O. 692 worked on the roads and that building (the lodge). They were still under the State Park... William Steumke here he was Senior Foreman from Springfield, he supervised the laying of all the rock, he was a rock mason, and he supervised the boys.

I. Was he a Polish person? I've heard that some Polish people did the rock cutting?

O. He wasn't cutting, he was supervising the laying of the rocks. (isn't on any pictures, don't know what we don't have picture of 692) Now, the forestry personnel or the state men took pictures of each project as it went along... and it all come through my hands to be sent on to the main office in Washington and all the extra ones I kep.

I. So all those pictures are somewhere in Washington?

O. Somewhere if they haven't been destroyed.

I. Did 692 shut down in March?

O. We stayed there from August 1, 1934 until November 2, 1935, that's when they broke up 692... practically all the work, the lodge was practically completed... No distinction in work duties between camps, we just done whatever was ready to be done, like trails and roads and laying rocks...

I. When they were building the lodge, the camp was right there in the way?

O. Yes, it was right there beside it, the buildings were torn down I guess when that 1657 came in there later, no, but I didn't know that....

K. Oh, that's you?

O. Here I am sitting on a curved cedar tree near the Devil's Stand Table... Here is a picture of me with the tents behind... Here I am again there in the center and my friend on the right...(We are looking through his scrapbook).

O. Here are some of the rock bluffs the boys are setting on. These are the Dept. of Interior men. This gentleman on the left is Unger, the one on the right Daniel Burr (?)... This is Edmund Thomas... That was the new building up close where the lodge is now ...of 692.

This is the beginning of our restrooms at 696...they built a new one. That was located right close to the Devil's Stand Table for 696 camp...

F. I lived in the country, just about half mile back from here....I went to one year of high school at Makanda and then I had to transfer to Cobden because they didn't have a high school down here....I was the youngest of nine children...I am Franny Lyerly Oliver. (They met in 33) I was eighteen. I was nineteen when we were married.

F. It used to be they had boxing matches out the park and we had an old bachelor here in the area. He would take a whole bunch of us young people out there. He had an old Model A Ford.

He would take a group of us out there to the boxing matches. I had been in Florida with my aunt and I had come home, I didn't know what to think (of the boys there at the camp)...I been to Florida and I looked around. I was a little smart aleck. I said I don't have to look like a palm leaf just because I've been to Florida. George was standing there by a friend of mine and he said, "I'd like to meet that girl." This friend said that that could be arranged.... and that's how we met, he introduced us.

K. Did you go to a lot functions at the camp?

About the only thing they ever had there was boxing matches, no dances... On a Thursday or Friday night we always had a boxing match. They'd bus with people from other camps...

F. George took me out there right before the lodge was started to show me the little model of the lodge in his office... The guys over George would let him have one of the company trucks.

K. They really did like you.

O. They'd let me have the pick-up truck to drive. I only used it to run around the park or to take their checks on pay day to Carbondale National Bank and cash their checks and bring the money back to them. One day one of them asked me what I did on Friday night or Saturday. I said, nothing, I just sit here in the park. They said well take that truck and go use it, so I took off in the truck, so we'd go to Carbondale. We'd hide it on back streets....

K. You got married pretty quick then?

O. We got married in a year or so.

K. Then right away you moved into some house?

F. We paid twelve dollars a month rent for a little house, two rooms.

K. Back to the pictures, this is building some latrines, huh?

O. That's the building the fancy latrines at 595... This is Mark S. Greeley, one of the foremen, he was really an architect but after the camp closed he went to Alabama....

K. Here's some pictures...

O. Here's a picture of the north entrance road, the beginning of the road into the park coming from Makanda...

O. There's (No. 19) building the rock retaining wall.

O. (No. 37) the north entrance road before. That's the way it looked when we first came in there...

O. Here's some of the rock retaining wall we built that you see on the right when you are going into the north entrance...

K. Was there some sort of trick to this, how they were taught to do this?

O. The trick to laying rock, we just picked these up out of the creek, the main thing to do with the rocks... you need to slope em back a little bit; just pick up a rock and try to fit it in the spot you got and if it don't fit there, try another rock. Just keep moving those rocks around till they fit right....it doesn't make a whole lot of difference on this just so they.... Now there's a guy that looks to me like a foreman laying one of those rocks, probably showing the CCC boy behind how to do the job.

K. Here's No. 43 probably cleaning ditches. Here's a winter shot, there's icicles in this picture.

O. That's on your left as you're going into the park, after you get around and cross the first bridge.

O. On this page is that big rock bluff on the left with a big shelter above it now, just after you go into the north entrance. I took the picture on account of this trumpet vine... But now you can hardly see that bluff. At that time there was an open place down here where we could play ball.



K. How do you get to where they quarry was?

O. I never did go to the quarry, but Leon Smith down in Makanda could take you there or show you where it is. There's a little building beside the post office, just north of it, he's the next house before you come to the curve. He knows where that rock quarry is.... It was on this side of Makanda. There was another quarry located down at Boskeydell on the east side of the RR track. I thought the rocks came from there, but Leon Smith says they came from the west side of the track in Makanda....

O. Here's showing grading some of the roads. All the equipment they had at that time was picks, shovels and wheel barrow...

K. You cut the trees by hand?

O. We cut the trees down with cross cut saws and axes...

O. The bottom picture is the road from the old 696 camp that leads up to the lodge.... There wasn't any trees in there at that time.... Somebody farmed it at one time. Now as you come around the Devil's Stand Table at the top of the bluff, it curves back to the right, you'll notice a ball field on the left there where Giant City Road from Carbondale comes in there, the ball park is just to the right there. The road coming from Carbondale to Giant City did not come all the way into the park then. That road there at the ball field was built. There was one directly east that the farmers kept open.

K. There was no road coming directly from Giant City into the park?

O. Where the garage there at the overpass is now, that's where the blacksmith and the tool shop was then for 696. That road if you come up the Big Baptist Hill in Makanda, straight up there and cross that bridge, went up there and there was a little road turn off there to the right. The custodian's house was here and straight away the road turned back toward Carbondale... There

used to be a little house there where the custodian lived, it was just a little country road that went back toward Carbondale, not like it is now.

K. 51 was a major highway at that time, right?

O. Right. From that corner where it turns back toward Carbondale, they built all that new road where through the ball park was. After you go underneath the underpass going into the park at the north entrance, you come to that building on the left that is the ranger's quarters, you can veer off to the left, go past it and that was no road at that time, that was just a bluff. When they started the park they wanted to fix it so if in the future they would charge to come in the park, they would have just one entrance, so they were trying to make a loop around the park, but they could never figure where to make the loop. So this foreman by the name of Unger, he told the engineer, why don't you come up on top of that bluff. So the engineer went out to survey it there past the Devil's Stand Table on top of the bluff there and said yes it can be done. So the Civil Engineers called that Unger Highway on account of that guy... so that became the curve that hooked into the road and made the circle for them... They never did charge. There's too many entrances to the park.

K. That's the bridge?

O. (No. 87) That's the timbers they laid in the bridges. All these rock walls, the boys picked up rocks and they are all cemented together. These are hewed timbers for the bridge floors. Here is the first bridge at the north entrance. That's the double bridge there.... Here's part of the trails in the Giant City area... They used shovels, axe, wheelbarrow and cleared out each stump. Here's construction of one of the trail side shelters.

K. 63?

O. There's Mr. Newman there again. He was in charge of the hewing of the timbers and putting up the shelters. Here he is again on the bottom picture. Here's a completed trail side shelter.

K. Did they make the shakes?

O. I don't know if they did make the shakes....I don't think they were cedar, may have been oak. This is the first one after the underpass on the right, this big fireplace, I don't think you'd find a fireplace on the others....This is the first one on the right after the underpass if you are on the lower road.

O. Here's the beginning of the lodge.

K. That's the beginning of the lodge?

O. They had dug out and poured the concrete footings and the boys are bringing the rocks up out of the ground right there. I was told after that lodge was completed there is only one stone placed wrong. They tried to place them according to the grain...

K. Do you know which one it is?

O. I don't know. There's the dedication of the lodge. Gov. Henry Horner was there.

K. Did they build a little grand stand for the ceremony?

O. They built a little stand right off the north end for the ceremony....

K. (I ask if it's true 20,000 were there)

O. That sounds awfully big but there was a lot of people there, an awful lot....

K. Wasn't much around it, kind of bare around it?

O. After they tore down the barracks there was nothing left there around the lodge.

O. Mr. Eddy I think was Educational Advisor.

K. Did you ever take a class there?

O. They didn't start any of that until after 692 got there that I know of.

K. (I ask about Capt. Kangaroo, Bob Geeshan, being there - but he says he doesn't know)

O. We had once a gentleman come out of Washington D.C. who wanted the boys to build check dams in that creek that runs along the road there from the north entrance there. He wanted us to build dams there out of rock, concrete them in, make waterholes for the wildlife. We kept telling him you can't do it, when you get rain here, it will take em out. He didn't believe it, so just lucky enough while he was here a storm came up, I mean a bad one. The next day after he saw the damage, he said, well, just forget the check dams. it was powerful coming down through there.

K. Was there much wildlife there when you were there?

O. There was a lot of squirrels but no deer at all in any of this territory.

K. You were born in England?

O. My folks came here from England in 1913 or 14, I was eighteen months old. They came to Tilden. A lot of English people around there. My dad was a coal miner, my brother was a coal miner. On this side of Tilden right near the cemetery there was a coal mine in between it and the first house. He worked there and we lived in the second house on the right from the coal mine.

K. Did the coal mines close during the late 20s and early 30s?

O. Yeah. During the depression the mines closed and that hurt the town pretty bad.... First we moved to Pocahontas and he worked in a coal mine up there, I was still in grade school at that time.... We went back to Tilden there and I did two years of high school there and the final two years in Marissa.... in 32. You couldn't find nothing to do unless you could find some farmer.

K. How'd you hear about the CCCs?

O. We probably heard about the CCC on the radio or the newspaper. We had to go to a county chairman. The guy we had to go see was in Steeleville, he ran a grocery store. So five or six of us boys hitchhiked over there, none of us had cars. We talked to him but he said he didn't have the applications yet, but we should come back in a week or two. So we had to hitch back and go again. But then we were sent to Jefferson Barracks.... I'm 75.

K. Did that money help your folks out?

O. So with the \$30 a month me and my folks could buy a lot of stuff. They owned their own home.

K. Tell about going home.

O. I was sent over to work for the Dept of Interior. This Alvin (?) Olson, the superintendent, and Rutiger, his right hand man, lived in Belleville. Him and Olson would go up there every weekend on Saturday about noon. They'd go there and spend the weekend. Rutiger went with a girl up there and what Olson did I don't know. But they had to go right through Tilden at that time, right on Rt. 13, so they'd take me with em and drop me off at my house... and Sunday afternoon they'd come back by and pick me up. One time there on Saturday, I went over to get my pass to get out of there, but the Sergeant said No, Oliver, you're not going to get one. You've gone home every week since you've been here. I said OK, so I went on back to the office and started working. Rutiger said are you ready to go, George? I said, no, I'm not, the Sergeant said I can't go. Olson said, Rutiger you go over and see \_\_\_\_\_ right now. So he went over and came back and said, George you can go, but Sergeant wants to see you before you leave. He said to me, "I'm tired of you going over my head." I said I was sorry and I'd never go over his head any more. But he didn't bother me any more after that. But I didn't go over his head at all.

K. How long would it take you to get there?

O. At that time in those slow cars it took about an hour, hour and a half.

K. You don't know what went on in camp on the weekends?

O. On the weekends most of the boys left. They'd hitchhike out of there. None of us could walk out and get to the highway before we'd get a ride. We didn't use the north entrance, we came down the Big Baptist Hill cause it was closer to Makanda than going way around. So by the time we got into Makanda, somebody had already picked us up...

K. Could you hop on a train?

O. With only five dollars a month we couldn't have afforded that train....

K. I hear stories there was a lot of gambling and drinking going on in the camp.

O. There was a lot of gambling, but I didn't see much drinking. The boys who drank would go over to Murphysboro, there was a dance hall over there called the Grey Stone (?) right downtown. Somebody might manage to get a hold of some white mule and pass that around, probably all just get about drunk. Most of us stayed together in groups. On paydays those guys did gamble, mostly with dice. Wouldn't take em long to lose their five dollars.

K. About building the lodge, were you all impressed the way it was being built?

O. (The columns in the center holding up the roof) They are solid. They go down in the ground. You can see at the bottom where they drilled in there to treat them for termites, if you look real close...

K. What kind of wood are they?

O. They are white oak... I was in the office when we were getting all that stuff together. They located some trees in the river bottoms below Anna.... I don't believe they came from Wisconsin.

O. I was there until 692 left. The building was practically completed, just a little bit of plumbing left to be done. It was in pretty good shape. After that I went into the WPA job. We had three camps at Karnak, Ullin, and Cache. They were not like the CCCs. All we were doing was clearing the river banks on the Cache River, getting the underbrush off the sides of the banks, pulling the big logs out of the channel, so the water would run on through. These were older men, not boys. Cache Camp was all colored. I was a foreman, supervised the workers on the jobs. We lived at Karnak, then moved to... Grand Chain. We were clearing the Post Creek cut-off there, a channel from Karnak down to the Ohio, a cut off of the Cache River... Had to let the water out so it didn't flood everything. It did anyway.

The Cache River doesn't empty into the Ohio River any more. At the little town of Cache, they cut a channel... in the late thirties or early forties... into the Mississippi River. Now I read in the paper they are complaining that the Cache is being all clogged up, that's the reason. We should have never cut that channel through there....

Then during the 37 flood we were there. We sandbagged the levees at Cairo. That was a job.

They said take your men down there. Sixteen hours there and eight at home.

(One time I was only home for three hours then had to go back) I don't think we ever took the colored people down there... We took the Ullin Camp and the camp at Cache down in there to fill sand bags... We just got down along side the levees and dug up dirt to fill the sand, then they'd haul em out of there on trucks to the levees where they needed them on the seawall or wherever. First time they said you guys should work sixteen hours then go home and stay sixteen hours. We done that, got home, but three hours later they wanted us back down there. We didn't get enough sleep. So I told them when we got down there that they could take it easy. I said I know you're tired, I am too. They kept working there...

But all the Cairo people were in Olive Branch at the saloons having dances and drinking liquor. There were hardly any of the residents down there taking care of their own lands. Very few. All the big shots were up there having a good time at our expense. It looked kind of queer the first time we went down there... they were extending the telephone lines to go higher out of the water. I said, Good God, if they figure it's going to be that deep, we're going way down in the water. But as soon as I crawled up on the levee at Cairo and saw where it was, it didn't bother me a bit... We were working near a big grain elevator, it was really high, it was on the south side of Cairo on the Mississippi side. I said, "Boys, if the levee starts to breaking you head for that elevator and go as high as you can get."... They thought it would break, and it probably would have if we hadn't of blowed the hole in the levee at New Madrid.

They took one of the CCC companies down there to blow the hole in that levee... (The weather was terrible) rain and sleet, never saw sleet on the ground so deep. I bet it was a foot deep. You couldn't put enough clothes on to keep warm. I had seen some rough times, but not that rough. It was bad.

K. There were all kinds of crews there?

O. The Salvation Army and the Red Cross about all they done was feed the boys. They brought food... We all knew what we had to do. We had our jobs. It was organized. A group of men would be loading sand bags. Somebody would haul them to another group of men somewhere who'd put em on the levees wherever they needed them...

K. What happened at Mounds?

O. At Mound City the levees broke. So we took all the men from the town of Cache, we went over there to repair and rebuild those levees after the waters went down. We rebuilt all those



levees, just the WPA men from around. I don't know who filled in where the highways were wrecked where the water washed under, maybe the state did. But we dug our own dirt.

On the way to Cairo where there is that big gate there, the IC Railroad goes over, it's supposed to drop down there. I was told later that that darn gate wouldn't let down. If they had had to let it down, it wouldn't have gone. It was jammed some way or other, had never been used...

K. (Everybody had to get typhoid shots) ...

K. How long did you stay in the WPA program then?

O. I stayed there at the WPA program until I started school in 1937... I studied accounting and bookkeeping. I graduated in 41, right after that I started at the Ordinance Plant until it was finished, then went to work up in Chicago helping to build the airfield at \_\_\_\_\_ air base. It got close to winter there and got cold, so I quit that and went to work at \_\_\_\_\_ aircraft engines... I knew there was no use trying to get anything else, cause it was just a matter of time before I was drafted.

I was drafted in July of 43, I went into the navy .... After boot camp so we were transferred to Navy Pier in Chicago for aviation training, then to Columbus, Ohio.... Then we came back home and I worked for a Dodge Plymouth dealer in Carbondale doing office work. From there I went out to SIU to be supervisor of Central Receiving, spent sixteen and a half years there, retired in 1977. So practically all of my life I've been in an office.

### **Kenneth Hawk**

Interview with Kenneth Hawk, September 9, 1987, at his home in DuQuoin, IL.

Subject: His CCC years at Giant City Camp #696

K. Where do you come from?

H. I was born here... (in DuQuoin)... I went to enroll in the CCC's at Pinckneyville...there was a CCC camp here in DuQuoin, right up here at the hospital, tents. It went to Murphysboro I'm pretty sure. It started in 33, but it was just tents (never a permanent camp) I don't remember a camp at Pinckneyville.... Yeh, we was examined at Pinckneyville. (never went to Jefferson Barracks) I was wanting to go to Washington, see I was just a kid, I wasn't eighteen till the first of April, so I lied about my age, I told em I was already eighteen. Three months later I was. I wanted to go to Washington. I got examined... if you was alive, you passed. I got in a truck and landed up in Giant City Park, thirty five miles from home...they didn't tell us where we were going, just said get on this truck. That's where we stopped. There was a truckload of us (people we knew)...a Purcell boy, two colored boys, Tony and something. There were three colored boys in Giant City.... (looking on picture) This boy here was from DuQuoin.... There was a lot of boys from Dowell who came to DuQuoin for the examination, Kosma boys, Dudas ? Suchus, a Vancil from Hallidayboro....

K. What year was this?

H. This was in January 35... There wasn't any work anyplace. My mother was dead. My dad had left, he was working... he went to St. Louis. I was trying to go to school, I was living with my sister at 329 East South, up the road here. She was married. I just couldn't make it, so I decided to go into the CC's. I didn't finish high school. My brother got laid off of his job and he was married, so I used his name to sign up with. As soon as I got in, he got back to work so I always got my twenty-five dollars when I came back home, for the whole almost two years I was in there.... It came to him but I just came home and got it. You had to have somebody who depended on you, so they got 25 and you got 5.

K. So you were one of the richer ones?

### Discipline in Camp

H. I had a car most of the time I was down there, you weren't supposed to have. They were lenient in this camp... on most of things. Months would go by when we wouldn't have to sign for a weekend pass, just go. Then sometimes they'd tighten down and we'd have to go sign up to get a pass. You always got em it seemed like. I've seen that camp almost empty on weekends.

H. The only time they complained about food down there was on a weekend when they gave cold cuts, there was only about twenty-five, thirty of us in the camp...I didn't complain, but some did about the food. I noticed that the only people who really complained were the kids who were even poorer than I was, had never had anything to eat. I got plenty, and I just tried and had a ball. I never had two years better life.... than when I was in the CC's.

### Camp Buildings

K. What did the area look like do you remember?

H. The only route down there was 51. The camp itself was all built except they built a new bathhouse on the north side while I was there and they built one new recreation hall and part of it was barracks and the other half was recreation hall. Number 7 was what it was.

K. Was 692 gone by that time?

H. #692 was still there when I got there. Seems like they was there about a year before.... 692 was right at the base of the lodge. We were all building dams and water retaining walls and cleaning underbrush. When I left there that whole park looked about like a city park, clean, no undergrowth or nothing. You could see the Devil's Stand Table from the road down there. We piled all that up and burned it and hauled it off. All the undergrowth was cleaned out. But now they're against that I guess.... I don't think it's pretty like it used to be. Coming in on that north

road there, you could see that whole bluff along there, cleaned out and mowed. That bluff was the real beautiful place.

K. You were a truck driver?

H. I done everything there, everything but work in the kitchen. Scotty Vancil and I and another guy took care of the camp itself, cleaned up right in the camp itself and I laid rocks on the lodge and a lot of flagstone in the shelter houses around there. I helped get flagstone out of creeks, some in the park and some around on different farms. One time we were trespassed south of the park getting flagstone and the farmer come down there and we were on the wrong ground, we got run off. I think the state finally bought his flagstone, but we'd go out and peel that and haul it in lay it.

#### Stonework

H. Scotty Vancil and I laid the biggest face stone in the lodge.

K. Do you know where it is?

H. It's in the first dining room they had. The two sides weren't on there originally. It's on the west wall, a red stone like. We had it bigger than that, but somebody cut a corner off it and messed us up. We worked for days on that one rock, cause we wanted a big rock. There are bigger rocks on the arches, but they were cut by machine. They finally got an air hammer and shaped some by machines. But that's a hand shaped rock.

K. You all shaped it?

H. Yeah

K. Wren't most of em shaped at the quarry?

H. NO, They brought em (the rocks) in and dumped em right north of the lodge, where the new buildings are now and they dumped truck load after truck load. Like when I was laying stone, I'd

have four boys who were cutting stone for me. I'd tell em what size I wanted and they'd cut the size I wanted. Then if they got behind, we had to help cut stone too, rather than stand around waiting... (corrects me that the stones were not cut square at the quarry) No, even the air compressor we had up at the lodge itself. No, they brought it up rough, how they had blown it off the cliff or out of the pit and brought it up there. It was rough.

K. Then you do it by hand what was the process of doing it?

H. You had a hammer and a chisel. You had a small chisel you could hold in your hand and chip. They furnished you goggles and then they had some sledge hammers with big chisels you'd hold and chip. That's what you worked with and a trowel and a level.

H. Did you ever notice there's a difference in the stone? Down at the bottom on the south end the stone is rough looking rock, then all of a sudden it starts looking chipped off and clean. A guy by the name of Benny Baltimore... lived in Carterville, he turned out to be a bricklayer later in life. He was there and one day he started trimming his stones up, cause they was still foundation. The state liked it so that's why they started trimming the stone. Otherwise it would have been a rough rock stone building with no chisel marks in it, just how you pick it up... On the south end of the building there's a change, they were up about six foot on that end when I went down there, and I was there when they dedicated it. Benny was the one to make them smooth on all sides and pretty flat in front too, on the face. That was his idea.

K. Who was in charge of all that?

H. In charge was a man by the name of Sims, and a Mr. Eddy. We called them State Men... (looking at photos). This is Mr. Butler (the newspaper picture of them building the retaining walls - Butler is the man in the background on the left side) He was a state man. (In the white shirt was a corporal) This is me with the axe and Scotty Vancil with an axe. But I don't know if

that's a retaining wall at the lodge or one down at Giant City at the creek. I'm thinking it's down at Giant City. This photo is out of a St. Louis newspaper.

H. When I went down there, there was a bath house across the road on the south side of the barracks, at 696. That was just a shower house, when you took your showers, the water just run over the cliff down into a field. Our toilet was an outside latrine on the north side. When I was down there they built a real fancy bathroom with toilets and everything on the north side. That was the last building there.

H. The company street had urinal cans in it for use in the night. One of the guys on the job would empty them and scrub them each morning. Cause the bathhouse was over in the dark. I don't think we had lights there....

K. Ok

H. (Shows photo of No. 2 barracks) I was in #1, 2, 3, and 7. Every now and then they'd change and put you in alphabetical order or they'd say just sleep where you want to. (looks at photo of Benny Baltimore on the right of a picture of five workers, and Scott Vancil and \_\_\_\_\_ Griffin and Purcell). If he's still living (Baltimore) he's around Carterville, up in his seventies too.

H. (Showing pictures around the camp site located across the road from Devil's Stand Table). Scott Vancil lives at Dowell. (Standing in the door of one of the barracks).

H. That's when we started on the north wing of the lodge... The joists were put in as we went up....Needed scaffolds to stand on as we went up...

H. One of the state men, bosses, Winn.

H. That's Vancil and I on the Stand Table (right across the road from the camp) There was a hole in there that used to hold water, we used to take a case of beer out there. You done a lot of things when you were eighteen or nineteen years old.

K. Was right across from the camp? Now where was this tower?

H. (The Tower) .... I think was at Bald Knob...

(Tells of working in Chicago after the C's in a foundry)

(Talks of Agnew House that burned down) That's where Baltimore and his wife lived. He got married and they lived there. He was just a two striper.

H. They were very lenient down there. As long as you behaved yourself and did your work. I was on KP just one time in two years.

K. What would you have to do to really get in trouble?

H. You'd have to have a disarranged bed or be gone when they didn't want you to...

H. This is one guy down there, McDermont, we called him the Detective. I don't know if he was or not. At the north end of the dining room, there's a basement under there, used to be the barber shop and he took that as his photography place and he developed pictures under there, under the dining room of the barracks he developed pictures, he was a photographer.

H. Scott Vancil was the barber, costs you a quarter. He opened the barbershop for a couple hours every night. When they built the new barracks, we called No. 7 they put a barbershop and canteen in it with the recreation hall.

H. Eschman was in it and Howard Purcell... This Treece girl lived in Makanda.

H. When I was down there everybody got along real well. Horace Hiller married a girl from down there in Makanda. She had gotten pregnant and married another camp guy but they got

divorced and Horace and her got married. We ran around a lot together.... I found out he has died.

H. I'd come back here on the weekends to see her when we was going together and then we quit going together and I went up to Chicago and came back and we started going together again.

Next April we will be married 50 years....

K. You were assassinated certain jobs and did it change a lot, or did you do the same job?

H. Your job down there was changed a lot. It was according to what you wanted to do. If you wanted to go on a different job where they had room for you, they let you do it. You went to see the head state man... If you'd get off of one job for some reason, you'd go do something else. Us rock layers they moved us all over the place. I helped build those shelters, I done a lot of that. They had drawn out blueprints, just exactly. That's the way you had to do it. Most of them had sand then leveled, then concrete on that, then these flagstones on top of that. Then you had to level that.

H. This one guy always ran around with a portable transit. He carried it in his pocket and could set down and tell you when the rock was perfect by just looking at it... He was a state man...

These one, two and three striper were over every gang. The three striper was at the head of every barracks. The last I remember was in #3, name was Bill Weeks.

K. So if you wanted some sort of change you'd talk to him?

H. I liked laying rock.... the hinges down there that have the indentations on them, that's all done by hand. Scott Vancil and me decided we wanted to do that. So they put us in the blacksmith shop by the garage where that overhead bridge is. That's still there. One guy would hold this hammer with a round ended point on it, the other guy would hit it with the sledge hammer and you kept moving it around that's all hand wrought iron.... They had brought in



sheets of steel of the right width. It came in four-five inches wide and the right length. It was heated to make where the pin goes through the hinge, then it was all flattened out and you laid it on another big sheet of iron. It was already cut into pieces. So then we made the indentations on it to make it look rustic....

H. How I got to truck driving. Scotty and I was there and they had a 1914 or 15 Liberty truck from WWI, solid rubber tires, 4 cylinder motor, and I think it had 14 speeds forward and 10 in reverse.... They parked it in our way in this garage while they unloaded it and the driver Adcock, went back to the barracks for something. We wanted to move it, so I took over. You had to crank it to get it started. Whoever the state man was said, well, if you're smart enough to start it get it out of here. So I backed it out and drove it for a while. Never did know what gear I had it in. 70 mile an hour was as fast as it could go. An old clutch thing. So after that I decided I wanted to drive a truck. I started driving a truck....

H. I don't regret any of it. I learned to do a lot while I was down there.

H. I was young and full of vigor. I liked to do different things. We had 1933 Chevrolet dump trucks. They were new then and had racks on them....you hauled sand or whatever.... You washed your own truck, kept your own truck clean, see that it had oil and everything in it. Turn it back in at night. (If there was something really wrong with it) you took it back to the garage and the mechanics worked on them.... That's one of the few jobs I didn't do, a mechanic in the garage.

H. (All the hardware in the Lodge) all that was made there. It was painted black. We did cut the designs on them too, on the end of those hinges....One man was in charge of the blacksmith shop and the garage...

(Asked about cockfights) Every now and then we'd have inspection, you'd have to put on your dress clothes, your army brown wool and tie and you had to open up your foot locker and your bed had to be made and your other locker fixed up just like it's supposed to be. And you stood inspection. I stood inspection with four gallon of whiskey in my foot locker with clothes spread on top of it... They just seen it was real nice on top and went on. Tony Graff here in DuQuoin sold whiskey. I could show you the house on south 51 on the left hand side of the road, about half way down there. That fellow bootlegged. I think it was \$1 a gallon, best I remember. I'd get some and sell it for a little more than that and take it back to the camp.

H. We did have cockfights. Bill Adcock...right out in the country streets. The army guys were watching it most of the time I don't believe it was illegal then....These guys in camp had little pens fixed out there in the woods, right there....

H. On pay day night the gambling would last all night, in the washroom. You had to go in the washroom. Lights out at ten o'clock, so had to go to the washroom to play the dice....Just camp boys... Don't remember any fights. Guy by the name of Halstead won everybody's money one weekend that was there in the camp. He was from Carbondale. There were a lot of good card games there, poker, in the bathroom too. We set on the floor...

H. I didn't call anything that went on too wild....I never did see anybody with a gun or knife or anything at our place.

H. Seems like we took something over to Pomona Camp one time....a stove or something like that.... I remember the talk being that that was a rough dirty camp. Some of the camps were a lot stricter than ours.

### Cars

H. Here at Giant City a farmer Rendleman had a big barn and barnyard. We left them up there. If you parked in the barn, it cost you dollar a month or leave it outside for nothing. There were two little houses up there too, right north of the camp, on that road that comes under the bridge that comes from Makanda. That road used to go someplace else, not into where the camp was... There was a road right straight north of the camp at that time too to go to Rendleman's house. You could see our cars from sitting up on the hill. I've heard that Capt. Adams who was down there announce that they were going to have company so hide your cars. If some big shot was coming.

H. There was also a Lt. Fite.... There were Co. select people. That was a married man who had a family that could get in the CCs. He was allowed to live off the base. Two lived up in those little houses, a fellow by the name of Griffin from Hallidayboro who lived in Makanda down there. He either walked or got a ride to the camp each day. Another guy named Jones from out at Ferne Clyffe, his wife was pregnant. He had a deal made with me that I'd take him home when she called. So of course it happened about midnight, so we cut across country. We could leave anytime from there, long as we were there when it was time to go to work.

H. There was about six months there when we had roll call and retreat. Otherwise we never even had that. Some camps had roll call and retreat every day....I believe that was going on when we first got down there and then they stopped it. We were free, white and twenty-one. Not even twenty-one. They really treated us nice, I think.

H. They never had dances. But during the summer, there was a boxing ring...

Sometimes there would be singers or some entertainment come in and then somebody would box. This Adcock was an old boxer and he could whip almost anybody in the whole company....

H. We did have a boy fall off the cliff there, where that bridge is where you get the camp itself... banged him up pretty bad, it was slick there, he slipped off, it didn't kill him.

H. We had a....dispensary, but very seldom anybody in it. There was a doctor there, they called him that, I don't think he was. An older army guy... I spent one night in there, drank too much whiskey and was out too long.... People didn't drink too much during the week.

H. They'd run a truck or two on certain nights to Carbondale. Even so far as Murphysboro or Anna.

H. Wisconsin. Some of those barracks were still there for a while. Tool sheds and stuff, but most of it they just loaded up and moved out.... They were doing the same work we were when they were there, clean out underbrush and retaining walls and the lodge.

H. I left Nov. 15, 1936. I had been there just six weeks short of two years... Friend of mine was the chief of the kitchen, a three striper. We bought a Model T Ford and we were going to go to California... He left his Wisconsin CCC camp. We bought this Model T Ford for \$20. Schroeder Funeral Home, like there on Washington St. That man wanted a retaining place to burn garbage in. He was a good friend of my Dad's, so my Dad said, "my son can build that," so he signed that I had employment. You had to have that to be discharged, so I worked two weeks for him. So we were going to California. I don't know what I was going to do there... it was the land of milk and honey. But in those days you had to have somebody vouch for you if you went in without a job. If you weren't visiting you couldn't get in. We never did get anybody to vouch for us, so we didn't go. The other reason was the old Model T got in bad shape. I had other cars before that.... We thought we'd go in the Model T and work our way out. We had a little money saved and thought we'd work for a tank of gas there. I had an old Gardner car and a Willy's. Anything I

could buy for \$15 or \$20, that's what I drove. I had a Model A a really good car once for a long time....

H. I then went up to Chicago to the steel mills, then worked in a tavern, just before the war started I got on at this foundry. Then on VJ day our plant shut down for a week's repairs, so we come home to DuQuoin and we decided to not go back, who wants to raise three kids up there....

I wanted to work in the mines but they weren't taking anybody till they found out who was coming back from the service. But one morning the packing house called, Bluebell Packing House, so I worked there over thirty-five years.

H. A lot of Chicago kids had been in the C's. At the time the CC's started we were rats. We were the underdogs, the poor class people. They didn't think too much of us. You could tell, from the way people looked at you. You weren't too welcome in a lot of places. We were just trash. We'd wear our browns sometimes.... Later on it eased up and it didn't make too much difference. I think it finally got so that we were the few of the kids who had 50 cents on a Saturday night to spend at the businesses.

H. There were a lot of guys from Dowell in the C's. Fact is, the CCC's kept Dowell going for a long time, seemed like. They had a baker shop down there that furnished the bread for the camp, for #696, Ogilini used to bring it. There was a guy by the name of Hands and Feet, Frank Kosma(?)... You ever hear of Walk-a-Thons? He was a Walk-a-Thon. A great big guy, way over six foot. He had huge hands and feet, so his nickname, Hands and Feet....he was a three striper from Dowell and had a lot to do with who contracted this stuff out, so Ogilini's Bakery in Dowell got the breadstuff, cause if I was hitchhiking to camp and could get to Dowell, I could set till they left about 4 in the morning and ride the bread truck back to camp, every morning, they took it to camp.

H. Prairie Farms from Carbondale it seems, furnished the milk, and the meat from the DuQuoin Packing Co.

H. I think the C's ought to come back.... I think it would do a lot of good. It didn't hurt me. There wasn't anything though that could have hurt me. I couldn't do anything but go up. I got three good meals a day and a bed to sleep in, some clothes and shoes. Who could ask for anything more.

H. I don't remember they had any education classes down there. There was a guy, Mr. Eddy, was kind of like a Chaplain, tried to get a little entertainment and stuff like that. He was Army. (In glasses, behind the first man on the ground on the left side. He's the only man with a suit on)

H. Pop Johnson, in charge of the kitchen (I ask if he's the same as the guy at Jonesboro) He was an older man, must have been an L.E.M.

H. Nicknames: Big Horse Hiller. We called Eshman, Nose. he was a German from up around New Athens and had a pretty good size nose. We just used last names. There were several Vancils and Penrods from Cobden. Some guy down there got run over by a train and got a leg off, he was from Cobden and another Penrod still in the camp.

(Tells a story of a nose bleed he got while he was wheelbarrowing at the retaining wall),,, most everybody went on and did their work. We weren't pushed to begin with, so you couldn't just sit there.

H. Benny Baltimore and I laid the bricks in the kitchen in the north wing of the lodge, a brick wall, I got mine crooked, off by 1/4 inch and had to rebuild mine, tear it down, clean the bricks and start over. Baltimore was really good at it, he later made a living as a brick layer. Everything had to be done right. if it wasn't done right, you had to tear it down and start over again.

H. If you'd stand on the front porch of that lodge and look over the hill there was a farmhouse, there was a young girl there, we'd watch her in the yard with the transit, take turns watching. (about initiation) We'd get these rookies in, I've seen boys sit around and cry for three or four days... We'd harass the heck out of em, kid em, you didn't console em or anything. Sometimes they'd go over the hill, just take off and go back home and didn't come back. So they got a dishonorable discharge.. (I ask if they ever felt guilty about that - he answered, No)

The guy couldn't take it so what the heck, I was having a ball. We'd call em cry baby and momma's boy...

Every so often they'd have a moving day and put people in different order... There were cliques of people.... I kind of took care of this Purcell boy, Swatty... I was lucky in the rearranging, I always seemed to get a bed by the door, at the end of the barracks.

The Hickam twins, Berle and Merle, from Hallidayboro, they had went to SIU for one semester and couldn't make it cause they had no money, so they enlisted...

Seemed like every six months.... new enlistees would come in.

In 696 most guys were from Olney on south. I don't think we had any Chicago kids at all. Maybe that's the reason we all got along, we were all hillbillies down there.

I boxed one night, a fake boxing match for entertainment. I was going to have to do something I didn't want, so they told me if I boxed that night, I'd get out of it, so me and Merle Hickam we were going to box one another. I had washers and bolts in my boxing gloves. We were just faking it, I knocked him out and they shook my gloves out and all this stuff came falling out, just for entertainment. We didn't have too many entertainment nights like that.

(If the C's hadn't a come along).... I probably would have starved to death. My mother died in 30 and I was twelve. My dad was a Spanish/American war veteran and used to draw \$30 a month

pension. You could eat on that in those days, then they cut him down to \$17 and finally completely out. We didn't have nothing. I guess my sister would have kept me. Her husband was working at the old Coke plant. But I couldn't live there off her my whole live. You just couldn't find a job.

I passed bills. Like now how Kroger comes out with an ad in the newspaper, the stores would hire people to go all over town putting hand bills on porches, maybe you'd make a dime all day Saturday. The economy was gone. The mines if they worked one day, they might pay sometimes. At United Electric, it's Freeman now. if you were lucky to have a job there. They done real good. But shoot, to get a job out there, I don't know how you'd done that. By the time I got in the work force, they had all the men they needed in 33.

I was wearing my brother-in-law's striped overalls to school to have something to wear and a green shirt. Somewhere I'd got a green shirt. That was my clothes. In high school, a sophomore when I quit for the C's.

If you got a job out on the farms, you worked for room and board, that's all you got.

(about Scott Vancil) ....When I was a kid there was six or eight of us boys ran around. All had been in jail at one time by then but me. For stealing coal off the railroad, throwing it off the cars, picking it up and selling it to houses. They'd get caught. Every one of them had been in Vandalia at one time except me.... And making whisky, stealing coal, and stealing roasting ears in the summer time for something to eat, or to sell for a dime a dozen.

Prohibition stopped in 33 but there was still a lot of bootlegging around, a lot of it, it was a lot cheaper. I got it for \$1 a gallon and would cost you at the liquor store \$5 a gallon. Bootleggers just kept on working... but it was pretty rotten. They called it rot gut, pretty rotten, but what the heck.



If it wasn't for the CC's I don't know what would have happened to me, probably would have been in jail with the rest of them.

Mrs. Hawk: ... When they moved in this CCC camp at DuQuoin we girls were just told to stay away from them...

Mr. Hawk:.... The saying back in those days if you saw a CCC boy coming down the street: Mary, get in the house, cover up the rainbarrel, anything with a hole in it, here Queeny get in here.... That's the saying they had about us, even call the dog in...but we weren't bad, just ordinary poor kids... I don't remember that the people down in Makanda had anything ever molested.

You done your own laundry in the washhouse. The sheets and the pillow cases they did. They sent them to Peerless. One day a week was clean sheet day... I always short sheeted my bed, cause then you didn't have to make it everyday. I'd put one sheet on there and pull it down half way and fold it up above. But the next morning all you have to do is tighten up your blankets. You put your other sheet in your locker and get it back out at night to use. We washed those wool clothes in water. They shrank now and then. We washed in big buckets and ringer with G.I. soap... Your regular clothes you'd bring home on weekends.

(Where would the \$5 get spent?) To town to go to the show or to buy himself something, or buy whiskey, or gamble it away. About the second day he was already broke... You could buy cigarettes or beer in camp. Beer about 10 cents a bottle could get at the canteen and candy bars. This Benny Baltimore would take sugar home off the tables and his wife would make candy and he'd bring it out on the job and sell it so much a piece on credit. So on payday, you got paid here then anybody that had to collect money would be lined up there - like Scott the Barber would be there getting his quarters from his list, Baltimore would be sitting there, and you got double for

your money. If you lent a guy a dollar he owed you \$2 on payday. You could go out for a dollar on Saturday night, I came to town a lot and have money left with a dollar... A nickel for a big glass of beer, free dances.

We did have a dance band down there one time. I knew these bartenders down here who had a square dance on Saturday night, three guys, one on piano, one on guitar and then violin. I got them a job for a dollar a piece and they gave me a dollar for taking them around. I just hauled them around, I was the manager.... Played at McCollin's (?), the first tavern across the street in Dowell. They used to play a lot in camp setting in the barracks. I got em a job playing up here in the tavern. Morgan Bright was in it.

I just had a ball in there, I tell you a little old country boy from a hick town never had a dime in his life getting five dollars a month and would come home and get my twenty-five. Shoot. I was a King. She (points to his wife) had a girls club and five or six of them, I took em all out. (She says: we all got to go in the car, but I got to sit next to the driver. Not too many people had cars. He'd come up here to get us and take us back down to Giant City). Yeh, into the dining hall for supper on Sunday evening and got by with it. On a Sunday evening there wouldn't be nearly anybody in that camp. Especially in the summertime. they'd all be down at the park. There was a lot of girl pick-up down in the park.

Many a time I got back to camp just in time to eat breakfast on Monday morning. I always hauled guys with me. I think I got fifty cents for a ride from camp to town and back. For rides guys paid in advance. I brought that Tony boy, that colored boy, home sometimes.... We never paid no attention to the difference. He was just as poor as we was. I don't remember anybody complaining or any segregation. We probably kidded him then, we could get by with that in those days.

We all went to the same high school together, but they sat in the back of the room. They had a colored grade school.... (they sat up in the balcony at the theater) DuQuoin was never real bad about all that... It was really rough up in Chicago.

At the lodge where the new dining hall is there was a septic tank in the ground. I drove over it one day in the truck, a dump truck, it's a wonder it didn't cave in with me... that was the original septic tank for the lodge...

(About the big posts in the lodge)

... When they got them to the lodge, they were found to be damaged. They had come from the Little Muddy Bottoms right here on Route 14, the original ones did, but I think the ones in there now came from Missouri, cause they couldn't use the ones from out here. They were oak. Seems to me those came from Missouri... The original ones were there on a stack when I got there but they couldn't use em.

I called this Kosma to find out about the rock quarry. He's either Russian or Yugoslavian I believe... his dad worked in the old Dowell mine. I asked Joe Kosma about the rock quarry and he said he wasn't in the C's. His brothers were just hiding him, about twelve or thirteen years old. We kept him about three weeks down there in the camp. My dad came down and spent three days with me. If there was an empty bunk to use, kitchen fed him and he went out on the job with us and sat there and talked. They were lenient over stuff like that... That boy wore khakis like the rest... just visiting. It was a loose arrangement.

About the Kosmas, when they were down there in the camp, they had this sister, Katrinka who went to Detroit and got in trouble or homesick or something. The family had a new 32 Buick that was in the garage cause they couldn't afford to drive it. So those boys went home and pumped up

the tires, bought gasoline and went to Detroit and got her, come home and parked the car back in the garage, jacked it up. Frank is still living around Dowell. Paul died (the middle brother).

We could leave and do anything like that at the camp. I believe it was because we were Southern Illinois people and because of Captain Adams. We had a Fike or Fite, a second Lt., but Adams quieted him down, only took about two weeks and Adams had him in his place. The Lt. was going to start roll call again, and Adams didn't want that.

They all had their own quarters and the state men had their own cottages out there. East of the dining room was a little knoll with little bitty one room cabins - those men even ate in a separate place.

Adams was a real gentleman. Dale Davison lives north of town three miles on 51. He was, well we called em suck-asses, pardon my language. They took care of the mess hall for the state men and the army, made their beds and cleaned their cabins. That's what Dale did. He said you can come to talk to him. He's got a later picture of the whole camp company - telephone number is 542-5309. that's our son's father-in-law. He came to the camp later in 38 or 39. To get there, go north on 51, there's a Davison's saw shop. He sharpens saws, there's a sign on the west side.

I'm 70 and there were people a lot older than me in there...

We never fought forest fires out there. In 37 when we had the bad flood, that camp did go but I had already left. But for the army and state men, you couldn't have found a better bunch than we had there. The state men were really cooperative in showing you and teaching you how to do things. Except that Fite, but they straightened him out.

Because Frank Kosma worked in the place where they issued out the clothing and sheets, any time they got new shoes, he'd let us know, so we always got the first pick, the size you need. If

you didn't, you might have to swap around to find some that fit you. Frank always knew for us. I was always lucky cause I knew them boys.

I did have to wear a pair of dungarees that two could have fit in. All our work clothing, blue denim was issued, made at the penitentiary. We had two blue pants, and shirts and shorts and undershirts and socks, sure we got issued brown socks and brown handkerchiefs. They looked dirty when you first pulled em out of your pocket. And you had one dress suit, one pair of pants and two shirts, long underwear for the wintertime and dress shoes and work shoes. Had a long army overcoat and a pea jacket, toothbrush and a double edged razor, towels and washrags. I don't remember of a Bible. Towels were khaki and soap. Had to buy your razor blades.

## CHAPTER 2

### SCRIPT

<b>Title: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Giant City</b>	
VIDEO	AUDIO
<p>Open: Fade up from black to Title over still picture of 2 men working in front of the construction site.</p> <p>Title plays for :25 sec.</p>	<p>Title Track: Passing Time plays under first 10:50 min.</p>
<p>Graphic: Roosevelt quote.</p>	<p>Passing Time keeps playing.</p> <p>Roosevelt speech starts 5 sec after graphic.</p>
<p>Still: 1930s free soup line.</p>	<p>Roosevelt speech plays under soup line video.</p>
<p>Video: 1930s soup line.</p>	<p>Roosevelt speech plays under soup line video.</p>
<p>Still: Civilian Conservation Corps posters color in the middle and black and white on left and right.</p>	<p>Roosevelt speech plays under still.</p>
<p>Still: Camp 659 panoramic March 21 1934.</p>	<p>Roosevelt speech plays under soup line still.</p>
<p>Still: Civilian Conservation men using hand tools.</p>	<p>Roosevelt speech plays still.</p>

Still: Civilian Conservation men digging out rocks.	Roosevelt speech plays under men working still.
Still: Civilian Conservation men carrying huge log.	Roosevelt speech plays under men working still.
Still: Civilian Conservation men cutting road to camp by lodge site.	Roosevelt speech plays under men working still.
Video: Roosevelt 1935 speech with graphic.	Roosevelt speech plays with video.
Still: Camp Giant City 696 housing.	Roosevelt speech plays under Camp Giant City still.
Still: Foot Trail sign.	Rippelmeyer and Johnston interview audio under still.
Still: Camp 1657 at Giant City.	Johnson interview audio under still.
Video: Johnston interview and graphic.	Johnson interview audio.
Still: Civilian Conservation men cutting logs for the lodge.	Johnson interview audio under still.
Still: Civilian Conservation men cutting rocks for the lodge.	Johnson interview audio under still.

Still: Civilian Conservation men digging out rocks.	Johnson interview audio under still.
Video: Rippelmeyer interview with graphic.	Rippelmeyer interview audio.
Still: Civilian Conservation men digging rocks and putting them in trucks.	Rippelmeyer interview audio under still.
Still: Civilian Conservation men before roadwork.	Rippelmeyer interview audio under still.
Still: Civilian Conservation men after roadwork.	Passing Time playing under still.
Still: Civilian Conservation men digging ditch.	Passing Time playing under still.
Still: Civilian Conservation men working on road.	Passing Time playing, and Bean interview audio under still.
Video: Bean interview with graphic.	Bean interview audio with Passing Time playing under.
Still: Civilian Conservation men working on road with bluff in background.	Bean interview audio under still.
Still: Completed roadway with bluff.	Bean interview audio under still.



Still: Large group working on roadway with bluff.	Bean interview audio under still.
Still: Completed roadway and railing with bluff.	Bean interview audio under still.
Still: Completed roadway and railing with bluff.	Bean interview audio under still.
Still: Men digging post holes for rail on road.	Bean interview audio under still.
Still: Large group posing by underpass.	Passing Time playing under still.
Still: Men laying stones for underpass.	Interview audio of Oliver under still.
Still: Completed underpass.	Interview audio of Oliver under still.
Video: Present underpass with modern roadway.	Passing Time playing under video.
Video: Present underpass with modern roadway from the other side.	Passing Time playing under video. Rippelmeyer audio under video.
Still: Men digging drainage under road.	Rippelmeyer audio under still.
Still: Before of bridge with no road on top.	Rippelmeyer audio under still.
Still: After of bridge with road completed.	Rippelmeyer audio under still.

Still: Five men putting up stringer at lodge.	Rippelmeyer interviewing Vancil both of their audio under still.
Still: Men and trucks on construction site with no sign of lodge.	Passing Time playing under still.
Still: The footing and first few rows of stone of the lodge.	Passing Time playing under still.
Still: Close up of the footing and first few rows of stone of the lodge.	Rippelmeyer interviewing Oliver both of their audio under still.
Still: Lodge with scaffolding.	Passing Time playing under still.
Still: Close up of lodge with scaffolding.	Interview audio of Oliver under still.
Still: Men swinging hammer breaking rocks.	Interview audio of Oliver under still.
Still: Looking down at men working on lodge.	Interview audio of Oliver under still.
Still: Forms and rocks for arch ways.	Rippelmeyer interviewing Oliver both of their audio under still.
Still: Arch way under construction.	Rippelmeyer interviewing Oliver both of their audio under still.
Still: Arch way under construction half way done.	Rippelmeyer interviewing Oliver both of their audio under still.

Video: Same arch way as still completed in present.	Rippelmeyer interviewing Oliver both of their audio under still.
Still: Arch way in front of fireplace.	Passing Time playing under still.
Video: Same arch way in front of fireplace in present.	Passing Time playing under video. Interview audio of Hawk under video.
Still: Fireplace under construction.	Interview audio of Oliver under still.
Video: Same fireplace in present.	Rippelmeyer interviewing Oliver both of their audio under video.
Still: Wide shot fireplace completed.	Passing Time playing under still.
Video: wide shot fireplace in present.	Passing Time playing under video.
Still: Men working on outside of lodge.	Rippelmeyer interviewing Oliver both of their audio under still.
Still: Rocks outside the lodge.	Rippelmeyer interviewing Oliver both of their audio under still.
Still: Men shaping rocks.	Interview audio of Oliver under still.
Still: Hinges for the doors.	Interview audio of Oliver under still.
Video: Doors of the lodge at present.	Passing Time playing under video.
Still: Men building roof of lodge.	Passing Time playing under still.
Still: Man sitting on archway.	Passing Time playing under still.

Video: Archway close up.	Passing Time playing under video.
Still: Fireplace.	Passing Time playing under still.
Still: Outside lodge almost finished.	Passing Time playing under still.
Still: Men doing wood working in lodge.	Passing Time playing under still.
Still: Man sitting on Devil's Stand Table.	Interview audio of Hawk under still. Start of Days are Long playing under still and through until credits.
Still: Three men sitting at the base of Devil's Stand Table.	Days are Long playing under still.
Video: People jumping off the Devil's Stand Table.	Days are Long playing under video.
Video: Person walking at base of Devil's Stand Table from top of formation.	Days are Long playing under video. Interview audio of Oliver under. Interview audio of Vancil under video.
Still: Three men sitting across the gap of Devil's Stand Table.	Days are Long playing under still.
Still: Lodge with no shingles.	Days are Long playing under still.
Still: Parking lot during the opening of the lodge.	Rippelmeyer interviewing Oliver both of their audio under still.

Still: Grandstand for Gov.	Rippelmeyer interviewing Oliver both of their audio under still.
Still: People in front of the lodge.	Rippelmeyer interviewing Oliver both of their audio under still.
Video: Statue behind lodge.	Days are Long playing under video.
Video: Behind lodge.	Days are Long playing under video.
Still: Men posing behind the lodge.	Days are Long playing under still.
Fade to black.	Audio fades out.
Credits roll.	Beauty playing under still.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**GRAPHICS LIST**

1. Title – Civilian Conservation Corp in Giant City
2. A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people. (Franklin D. Roosevelt)
3. 32nd American President Franklin D. Roosevelt 1935
4. Jenny Johnson Creator of the CCC Stories on WSIU radio
5. Kay Rippelmeyer Author of Civilian Conservation Corps in Southern Illinois
6. Jonathan Bean Professor of History at Southern Illinois University
7. Voice of George Oliver Recorded by Kay Rippelmeyer in Aug. 1987
8. Voice of Scott Vancil Recorded by Kay Rippelmeyer in Nov. 1987
9. Voice of Kenneth Hawk Recorded by Kay Rippelmeyer in April 1987
10. Dedicated to all who served in the Civilian Conservation Corps

## CHAPTER 4

### CREDITS

This Documentary is a research project done for the completion of a degree from Southern Illinois University's Professional Media & Media Management program in the college of Mass

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Special Thanks to  
Southern Illinois University & Morris Library  
Special Collections  
Kay Rippelmeyer for compiling all of the  
photos and audio at Morris Library

Music

Title track:

Artist: Kevin MacLeod

Song: Passing Time

<https://youtu.be/hALKMg3w7LA>

Remixed by R.G. Hisgen

Artist: Silent Partner

Song: Days are Long

<https://youtu.be/dMWPj0wu1Dw>

Artist: Joachim Heinrich

Song: Beauty

<https://www.youtube.com/user/JoachimX...>

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## CHAPTER 5

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*(If the person named below is a minor, parent or guardian must sign form.)*

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