**Directions: The text in the left column has excerpts from the transcript of the film. On the lines in the right column, write notes of anything you learned from this film that you didn’t know before, found interesting, or have more questions about.**

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: I remember the time growing up in North Carolina, looking up and watching Kansas blow by, the dustbowl reaching North Carolina, of course. I also remember fires, floods, drought, erosion, soil gone. What do you have to live on? We were in a sad condition environmentally. The word “environmental” wasn’t there at the time, basically, but the situation was. And it was a critical situation.

**Vincente Ximenes, Joined the CCC in 1938**: We didn’t have food. We didn’t have jobs. I don’t think people realize how close this nation came to having a revolution.

**Clifford Hammond, Joined the CCC in 1934**: If it hadn’t have been for Roosevelt in establishing the Civilian Conservation Corps, I don’t know what a lot of us young guys would have done. I don’t know what my next step would have been.

**Franklin Delano Roosevelt (archival)**: Give me your help, not to win votes alone, but to win in this crusade to restore America to its own people!

**Clifford Hammond, Joined the CCC in 1934**: I was raised on a farm and we were poor. I just thought that was the way life was going to be. We didn’t have elaborate stuff to eat, either. Like I say, cornbread for noon, cornbread and beans, and cold cornbread and milk for supper. My daddy didn’t know hardly what fertilization was, rotation of crops, or soil erosion, and stuff like that. My ag. teacher taught it, but he was just too far ahead of times. And the farmers didn’t accept him.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: We had not taken care of our country. We had not taken care of our land. No basic scientific farming to speak of. Farm this, gut it and move on. Farm this, gut it and move – that’s what we did. We’re talking 150-plus years of no care, of very poor care. I can remember playing in gullies two stories high. That was my playground. But it was a bad thing, because that meant all that erosion and that much good land gone. The soil erosion we were losing annually was enough to load a series of boxcars seven times around the earth. That’s a lot of dirt. Part of it goes back to the big timber companies of the ’20s and ’30s, cutting and cutting and cutting, leaving slash. Slash would burn, storms would come, floods would come, and down the river goes our good fertile soil. The end result

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is it caught up with us, total impact, in 1930s, big, big, big-time impact with the resulting disaster.

**Vincente Ximenes, Joined the CCC in 1938**: I was born in Floresville, Texas, in 1919. We were not hit hard in the beginning because we had a little plot of land. And we could grow some vegetables and things like that, that would keep us going. In fact, I can remember very clearly that they rounded up all the cattle that was in the area and slaughtered them, because there was just no market for meat. But you couldn’t sell a heifer or a cow or a pig for anything, you know. You couldn’t get any money for it.

**Houston Pritchett, Joined the CCC in 1939**: I grew up mostly in Detroit. We kind of moved to Detroit in 1929, right at the start of the Depression. We didn’t have any jobs, my father wasn’t working. We were just poor. The soup kitchen, that’s where we would go line up to eat, just what it said, “Soup Kitchen.” You’d line up, you’d go there and just sit down and you’d eat.

**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: When Franklin Roosevelt took office in March of 1933, the official unemployment rate was 25%. But that grossly underestimated how many people were actually looking for work or unemployed. If your house was foreclosed upon, tough luck. The stock market was down 90%. Someone approached the great British economist John Maynard Keynes and said “Have we ever seen anything like this Depression before?” And he said “Yes, it was called the Dark Ages and it lasted for 400 years.”

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: According to the tradition in the United States at that time, English tradition was that it is not the government’s responsibility to aid the needy. It’s the responsibility of family and the church, not the government, not state government, not the local government, not the federal government. And forget about it. We’re not going to do it. People had lost hope. They’d lost opportunity. There was practically no promise, whatsoever, of a job anywhere out there. So, what do I do? I do whatever I have to. I get food wherever I can. I get clothing wherever I can. I’ll get what I have to get, but I’ll get it.

**Vincente Ximenes, Joined the CCC in 1938**: I remember having, you know, discussions with individuals who were so angry that they were saying, you know, “To heck with the government. Maybe this whole system maybe ought to be changed.” The seeds were there. I mean, the people were there who were angry enough to do it. I would say that FDR is the one that saved this country, you know, from having a revolt.

**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: When Franklin Roosevelt took office in 1933, it was almost a perfect match of man and moment. He was somebody who could inspire people

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and used the crisis to redefine what we owe each other as a people. That’s one of the reasons why the New Deal really was a “New Deal” between the public and the government.

**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: Roosevelt believed that work was ultimately more important than relief. He wanted to put people to work as quickly as possible. The Civilian Conservation Corps was really the first of several jobs programs that Roosevelt developed, but the CCC was very close to his heart. And he took a very direct interest in it. And he designed a lot of it because he did have this longtime interest in conservation.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: On his own farm there in Hyde Park he saw the erosion. He saw the depletion of the forests and was very well aware that, in his entire state, the same thing was going on.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: So he became Governor in ’29, they began putting young men to work reforesting and repairing the gullies. Then he became president, good for the whole nation, again, out of personal experience, in his own home town.

**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: The opposition to the CCC was concern that President Roosevelt was not focusing enough on the interests of business. They were very concerned about taxes. And they were very concerned about deficit spending.

**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: There were 15 major pieces of legislation in Roosevelt’s first 100 days. And many of them had long-lasting effects, like the first regulation of Wall Street and price supports for agriculture. But there were also some really bad ideas in the first 100 days, things that didn’t work, that actually may have even harmed the economy to some extent.

**Vincente Ximenes, Joined the CCC in 1938**: You can imagine, at the time, Roosevelt saying “We’re gonna plant umpteen million trees,” you know, and convincing people that this was the right thing to do.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: Roosevelt made the point to Congress that “We need to put young men to work immediately. And I propose Civilian Conservation Corps to do that.” And because all those politicians were aware that they had young men in their hometown and their home state that could vote for them next time around, “Yeah, yeah, we’ll go with it,” and very quickly came to pass.

**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: The most amazing to me, was the speed with which he got it going. Three months later, by summer of 1933, 250,000 young men were in the CCC. It was the fastest mobilization in American history, and it has never been matched since.

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**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: The local welfare department recruited you. You had to be a citizen of the United States, had to be male, no she-she-she’s, had to be male. You had to be unemployed. And you had to be willing to spend six months, eight-hour day, dollar a day.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: Two hundred men per camp in every state across our Union, each state had a quota. The black population in the United States was about 10% at that time. And they were allowed 10% of the quota. And they were in separate camps. Same type of work, same type of food, same type of clothing, same everything except segregated. White officers.

**Houston Pritchett, Joined the CCC in 1939**: When Roosevelt first started this, it was black and white in the same companies in some places. And they separated them in a hurry and put them — the black here and the white over here. The white was not gonna be in there with the black.

**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: You got to remember, in 1933, we’re living in a very, very segregated society. So the idea of blacks even participating in the CCC was a huge move forward. In addition, in the early days of the CCC, Roosevelt waived the age requirement and said, “If you’re older and you’ve been a World War One veteran” — and many of these veterans were in their 30s — “you can join the CCC.” About 25,000 joined right at the start, even though they only got paid a dollar a day. The CCC was an enormous logistical feat that took place over the objections of most of Roosevelt’s cabinet. The army didn’t want the extra responsibility. The Interior Department raised all kinds of questions. The fact that it was run, in part, by the army, that it was called “Roosevelt’s Tree Army,” and that it took place at a time when Mussolini and other fascists had their own private armies, gave rise to some controversy.

**Vincente Ximenes, Joined the CCC in 1938**: There was a CCC camp in our community in Texas. And there were some farmers who didn’t like FDR and what he did. He was called a communist, a socialist, and whatever, any name you could find. So, therefore, the CCC-ers also, of course, were no good as far as they were concerned. There was large numbers of people who felt that government intervention is not good for the country.

**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: The objections to it were considerable. The Labor Secretary, Frances Perkins, first woman in the cabinet, she said “We can’t pay these people a dollar a day. Organized labor is totally opposed to this.”

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: The union wanted more and said, “This is slave labor.” What they were afraid of was “Hey, we’re going to wind up with one dollar per day being the major labor price.” So

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typical Roosevelt savvy, he appointed a union man to head the program.

**Clifford Hammond, Joined the CCC in 1934**: Right after high school — I graduated in ’33 — my dad pretty well run me off. I hoboed and hitchhiked around, trying to find a job. You’d ride in a boxcar or whatever you could. I asked people if they had work to do if they’d give me something to eat. And I’ve never — they never would let me work. They’d always give me something to eat.

**Vincente Ximenes, Joined the CCC in 1938**: We lived very close to the railroad tracks. And you could see young people, they would stop there in our little town. They were looking for jobs. Of course, there were no jobs in our little town. Some of them would stick around and go to the soup kitchen that was there close to the railroad tracks and get a little something to eat, and wait for maybe the next railroad car that comes along and then jump on it and off they go.

**Clifford Hammond, Joined the CCC in 1934**: I rode the trains, hoboed, for about a year. And then I decided I’d better go home. Too cold to be out like that. So that’s when I heard of the CCC.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: My neighbor got enrolled. He came home on furlough and began talking. And, the more he talked the more I became interested. And, from that, I went and sought to get enlisted and get enrolled and wound up in the same camp my neighbor was, a little camp in Lexington, North Carolina, soil conservation camp. Most of us, first time to have a toothbrush, first time to have a vaccination, first time to have a daily bath, all these firsts.

**Houston Pritchett, Joined the CCC in 1939**: I was determined, I’m gonna stay and finish school. I made that. But, after getting out of school, there were no jobs. And we were just in the street. Some of my friends went into the CCC. When he came home, they had money,

they had different clothes, and oh, they was the last word. But they convinced me and a lot of my buddies to go in the CC’s.

**Clifford Hammond, Joined the CCC in 1934**: I joined the CC’s in September of 1934. I was 18 when I went in. And they took them up to 25. I liked it mainly because that was the only time in my life I ever had two pair of shoes. You had your medical and three squares a day. And you only worked about six hours a day. I had been accustomed to working 12, 14 hours a day on the farm. I thought I really had it made.

**Houston Pritchett, Joined the CCC in 1939**: Roosevelt was the best thing that ever happened. He didn’t only do something for the poor black man, he did something for

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the poor white man too. Because it was more of them poor than it was us, you know. Now we’re eating regular. We got clothes. They’re teaching us to work. And we were learning something.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: It seemed so very normal to hear that voice come across. We’d laugh at his pronunciation of some of the “Rs” of course. But, by and large, it was a warm feeling. This man is our man.

**Clifford Hammond, Joined the CCC in 1934**: The Civilian Conservation Corps had the army style. You know, you had Reveille and sort of roll call. And then we’d go back to the barracks, had to keep your bunk all made up nice and everything clean. In a little bit, breakfast would be ready.

**Vincente Ximenes, Joined the CCC in 1938**: Good breakfasts, with eggs and bacon and sausage, and they had pancakes and waffles, you know, juice of all kinds. Plenty of everything. You could eat all you want. Then, by 7:30, I was on a truck on the way to the site where we were gonna work.

**Houston Pritchett, Joined the CCC in 1939**: You get out there in that hot sun, it’s 100 degrees, and you’re working all day. And you sweatin’. And you worked right up to lunchtime. Then they bring you food out to the field. Now, that was quite a thing, too. We wasn’t used to nothing like this.

**Vincente Ximenes, Joined the CCC in 1938**: Food that you wouldn’t believe, good food, sandwiches, I mean, with a lot of meat and plenty of— plenty of everything. Apples, bananas, I mean, you were waiting for that food. Then you’d be back to work.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: We were hardworking boys. By four o’clock you’re back to the barracks, and you have a little time for recreation. Six o’clock it’s chow time. And we were always ready to eat more. I firmed up. I became much sounder in body, built good legs, that territory as well. And I wound up a fairly good, healthy young teenager.

**Clifford Hammond, Joined the CCC in 1934**: Fed you good, yep. I come out of there weighing 174 pounds, and the most I ever weighed in my life. [laughs]

**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: A lot of the newsreels in the ’30s featured the CCC.

**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: You had millions of young men working out in the countryside in the sunshine, clearing trails, planting trees. It was good footage. The pictures were good. And Roosevelt understood that immediately. And he also liked to have himself photographed at CCC camps.

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**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: The CCC was a win-win for FDR. Both put hundreds of thousands, eventually millions of people to work. And he also did something for posterity, for future generations, for what we would now call the Environment.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: It was a healing, heal the man, heal the land. Taking land that had been totally devastated, replanting it, rebuilding it. We’re talking about land improvement and conservation all across the country.

**Vincente Ximenes, Joined the CCC in 1938**: The condition of the land in Texas was absolutely depleted. Rotating crops, that sort of thing, had not been done. A lot of it had been left fallow after they had raised cotton year-in and year-out. So the mesquite would take over. And that’s the mesquite that we went in and cleared out, and made it into permanent pastures, which is really what we’re talking about insofar as the environment is concerned, and that is to do things that will reproduce

We did a lot of contouring. We did a lot of water conservation. So we CCC-ers came along as the first environmentalists.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: Before FDR, most of our national forests were very slow in getting improvement. For example, there were very, very few fire trails and fire roads. One fire could wipe a thing out. But the CCC boys came in and that changed, rapidly changed.

**Houston Pritchett, Joined the CCC in 1939**: When there’d be a fire, the Forestry Department, they would call to the different camps and get the CCC to fight these fires. You get out there in that fire, well, that was one of the most dangerous jobs we had. First needed to have you cut a lane where the fire wouldn’t jump over. Then we’d get in there with the shovels — most of it was shovels — we didn’t have too much water supplied unless you’re right near a river or something. And you’d fight until you’d get that fire down where you can handle it. And you were tired and beat up, and all your clothes was burnt. And you were dirty from that dust that you were throwing. But we’d get the fire out. Then you’d get on this truck, you might have to ride 25 or 30 miles back to camp, sometimes further than that. You’d get in there, you’d clean up, you’d have your dinner. And most of the time you’re too tired to do anything but go to sleep. But, that was the way of life. And we was enjoying it. It was different. Now, just like other places, we’d have racism. But you just had to deal with it. There was some areas they did not want no 45 or 50 black young men sittin’ out there close to their settlement. And some of them places we didn’t want to be sittin’ out there with them, either. They never believed that we could work. There’s a lot of them. But once we’d get the chance, that’s what did it. And coming up to that CCC give you the know-

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how to get in there and get it done. The CC’s really taught you to have a backbone, stand up for yourself. And don’t let nobody run over you.

**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: The CCC Corps members came from very different backgrounds. And they were

thrust together, sent out from whatever neighborhood they came from, out into the countryside, put in these barracks. And they had to learn how to deal with each other. The only thing they had in common was that they were poor. And they needed a job.

**Vincente Ximenes, Joined the CCC in 1938**: I had to not only work with people who had come from families who were extremely poor, but people who had become poor all of a sudden. Some of them were highly educated, had PhDs. And some of them hadn’t been to the first grade. People who had been in business lost their jobs. But now the CCC was their only remedy. And to have to go and work at theCCC for $30 bucks a month, well, all of us, you know, were in the same boats.

**Clifford Hammond, Joined the CCC in 1934**: Well it was carpentry work, steel work, or rock quarry work, I don’t remember anybody in my outfit cussing what they did. You know, by them knowing they were going to have three meals a day and a place to sleep, and recreation and all that stuff, everybody was enthused about what they did. But I don’t care if you get in with a bunch of guys, they’re gonna have conflicts periodically. And we solved ours by grudge fights. You know, two guys couldn’t get along, we’d — we had a ring, a boxing ring. And we’d get them in there and let them fight it out.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: Many of our boys couldn’t read or write. So one of the first things that FDR said, “They will be taught to read and write. Nobody, no boy will leave our camps illiterate.” We were taught the idea that “Hey, you can do things. You can do better than what you’ve done in the past. You do have a future.” And we believed that.

**Vincente Ximenes, Joined the CCC in 1938**: After dinner, they had vocational type classes available to persons who wanted them — typing classes or plumbing and electrical, that sort of thing. In my camp, there was an opening for a company clerk. So I went and practiced after work on my typing skills. And the company commander said, “Okay, so you’re hired. You’re going to be my company clerk.” So then, I was an office worker then. From then on I didn’t have to go out in the field. I did the payroll. Each member received thirty dollars. Twenty-five dollars went home automatically.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: Each man would send home twenty-five dollars each month and keep five for myself. Now the dollar had enormous precious impact in the 1930s. So twenty-five dollars sent

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home, multiplied across the nation by thousands, that’s a lot of economic improvement nationwide. And then not only were the boys there employed, remember they had support people — foremen, superintendents, engineers, all this. So here are skilled people employed as well. Then supplying the camp food, all the things it takes to

run a camp for a week, that went to the local economy also. So it was a major impact on all the economies wherever the camps went. And they went everywhere.

**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: Franklin Roosevelt was a very clever politician. And he planted CCC camps all over the country in strategically designated congressional districts. And that helped to build public support for the program. And, when he ran for reelection in 1936, which was really a referendum on theCCC and Social Security and the other New Deal programs, he carried all but two states, Maine and Vermont. He had the largest victory since George Washington.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: The CCC had a newspaper called Happy Days. And this repeatedly pointed out all the good things that the boys were doing across the country, and the fact that “Hey, this is not only a land improvement, it’s improvement in patriotism, it’s improvement in awareness, a cultural awareness,” and it was very much so.

**Clifford Hammond, Joined the CCC in 1934**: Of course, after payday, we would go into town, you know, and I have that five bucks to spend. We had a roller rink pretty close. I think it cost a quarter to skate all night. And that’s where you’d meet your girls and stuff. I know a couple of the boys met local gals, then they married them.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: My first camp I was in the middle of a town. We’d go to movies, go bowling, all those good things. The boys hated us. The boys didn’t— the girls loved us. The local people, by and large, were glad to see us because of the work that was being done on their farms.

**Vincente Ximenes, Joined the CCC in 1938**: In my company, about 80% of the members were Mexican-Americans. Going into town was a problem. The people in town hated FDR. They hated the CCC. And, more than that, they hated the Mexican-Americans who were members of the CCC. You had to be careful where you went to, to get a hamburger or sandwich, or where you went to get a drink. Some of the bartenders said, “I’m sorry, but we don’t serve Mexicans.” Well, one of the guys just rammed him right away and tore the place up. And we took off, went to the — went back to inside the camp where they couldn’t do anything with us. But we tore up the place. But that happened a number of times, even though they accepted the work that we were doing in and around the area.

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**Clifford Hammond, Joined the CCC in 1934**: Civilian Conservation Corps made me understand how other people lived and realize that we should all just get along well with each other. Like I used to think I was better than a Mexican because there’s no Mexicans in Illinois

when I was growing up, you know. All the

farm boys and girls just all white like me. So that mixture helped me a lot to know other types of people, and realize that they’re just like anybody else.

**Vincente Ximenes, Joined the CCC in 1938**: Even in my own camp, there were individuals who were outright racists, you know, to individuals who were the recipients of racism. I learned that we could get both sides to come together, that we could convince them to work as a community and work together. Human relationship was important. Human rights was important. That value that I learned or I picked up in CCC’s was with me from then on. It stayed with me the rest of my life.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: We got to see basically a change, not only in us, but also in the total environment, an improvement, not a deterioration, but a major improvement. No more looking up and watching Kansas pass by. No more looking and seeing the rivers flood. No more of the business of fires everywhere. But an environment that was pleasant to experience, providing an enjoyable change of pace from the city, come up and into the mountain country and see nature on all sides, have a picnic and enjoy the beauty of our country.

**Vincente Ximenes, Joined the CCC in 1938**: There are places that most people have no idea that the CCCs were the ones that built them. Camp David, for example, was built by the CCCs. Carlsbad Caverns, we’d built everything except the cave. And, when you look at all of the state parks and national parks that were built by the CCCs, then you can begin to see what happened to this nation as a whole. That changed the entire recreational patterns of this nation.

**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: If you go out on a hike, now, all over the United States, there’s a very good chance that the trail you’re hiking on was cut by the CCC. The first ski trails in the United States, in Vermont, were also cut by the CCC. So a paralyzed President, who couldn’t walk, much less ski, indirectly launched the American ski industry. Any agency of government that manages to plant 2.3 billion — with a “b” — trees to create 800 state parks, to save the topsoil of the United States, has to be considered one of the most pro-environmental organizations ever established.

**Franklin Delano Roosevelt (archival voice-over)**: We realize, now, that we committed excesses which we are, today, seeking to atone for. We used up, we destroyed much of our natural heritage, just because that heritage

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was so bountiful. We have prayed sincerely and honestly to look ahead to the future years. We are, at last, definitely engaged in the task of conserving the bounties of nature, thinking in the terms of the pull of nature.

**Houston Pritchett, Joined the CCC in 1939**: I was in the CC’s for 23 months and four days, never forget it. And I left because they was gonna take the men out of the CC and send them straight in the army. It’s time for us to make a move.

**Harley Jolley, Joined the CCC in 1937**: The coming of Pearl Harbor and the movement of the United States into World War Two brought an enormous demand for manpower. That was the axe that killed the CCC. By July of 1942 the CCC was phased out, gone.

**Vincente Ximenes, Joined the CCC in 1938**: Without the CCCs, I really… I really don’t know what we would have done. We did not have an army prepared to go to war. And here was approximately two and a half or three million men who were prepared and had been organized to work together. I joined the Air Force in 1941. And they didn’t have to do a hell of a lot of training for me. I was prepared.

**Houston Pritchett, Joined the CCC in 1939**: Nobody didn’t have to tell you about how to make a bed and how it should be done, how to clean your clothes. And they didn’t have to tell you — if the man tell you to go do something, you didn’t ask questions, you do it. The CCC made me a man, it made me respect discipline and how to work and get along with people.

**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: The CCC not only was a major foundation of our ethic of national service in this country, but also an ethic of conservation. After generations of Americans essentially raping the land for whatever it was worth economically, as happens in so many other parts of the world, suddenly there’s a break in that in the ’30s. And you have a pretty large chunk of a generation, three million people, who have some experience in conserving the land instead of exploiting the land, who care about what we leave behind.

**Houston Pritchett, Joined the CCC in 1939**: Recently, we went back to find the camp we was in. I went back up there and seen them trees, where they got them where you can’t cut them down. And my little granddaughter, she was telling them, “All these trees,” she said her grandpa planted all the trees up there. [laughs]

**Jonathan Alter, Writer**: Who were the people who pioneered the environmental movement in this country and who now are helping us to transition to more of a green ethic? Many of their parents and grandparents were in the CCC. An ethic of conservation is then born and developed and nurtured and built, because it’s all a generational conversation that takes place, that one thing builds on another, builds on another.

**Clifford Hammond, Joined the CCC in 1934**: You know, I met a lady at a wingding for us old people that knew exactly where my camp was. And she says — because I had told her, after we got acquainted with each other, I told her I just loved to go back and see where my camp was. And she said “You couldn’t visualize what a change you guys made.”

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