

**Background Information** The Depression that officially began with Black Tuesday in 1929 was the longest economic downturn in American history. Citizens reeled from its effects and the inconsistent attempts by the Federal Government to “make it go away.” President Hoover’s philosophy was firmly against governmental assistance for unemployment or relief. His belief in cooperative efforts between business and community as the route to ending the depression came to be seen as heartless as the economy worsened and jobs, homes, and lives were lost. In his 1930 State of the Union address he advised the country of his firm conviction that “economic ‘depression can not be cured by legislative action or executive pronouncement.”<sup>i</sup> While he did finally approve some relief measures, his foremost concern was strengthening business, as he believed that improving its plight would definitely end the Depression.

With Roosevelt’s election to the Presidency, a dramatic philosophical approach to handling the crisis began. FDR moved swiftly to take control of the situation through a series of proposals now referred to as the New Deal. The most significant legacy was his belief that the government had the responsibility to be proactive in addressing the plight of both worker and businessman as well as taking steps to ensure that future downturns in the market would not be able to spiral out of control and plunge the economy into depression. New Deal programs can be divided roughly into three categories: relief, recovery, and reform. The relief programs basically altered the government philosophy on providing governmental relief in times of crisis. Some of the programs falling into this category are the:

1. WPA, or the Works Progress Administration, which built or improved more than 2,500 hospitals, 5,900 school buildings, and nearly 13,000 playgrounds as well as providing funds for federal theater, arts, and writers projects. [This program, perhaps the best known today, was passed in 1935 and was part of the Second New Deal.]
2. CCC, or the Civilian Conservation Corps, which Roosevelt restricted to “forestry, the prevention of soil erosion, flood control and similar projects”<sup>ii</sup>
3. FERA, or the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, whose responsibility it

was to oversee applications from states for emergency assistance money.<sup>iii</sup> Granted \$3,000,000,000,000 for direct payments on wages. 4. CWA, or Civil Works Administration, which provided temporary jobs to people such as leaf raking, snow shoveling, etc. 5. Home Owners Loan Corporation that set aside over one million dollars to save mortgages on non-farm homes.

The second phase of the New Deal dealt with recovery of the economy. Believing that the relief portion would provide immediate assistance to those most in need, FDR's next tactic involved stimulating the economy by injecting money into various segments: agriculture, business, and employment.

1. AAA, or the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, paid farmers a stipend for not growing crops as a step to limit production. Roosevelt believed that it was essential to have an "adjustment of totals in our major crops, so that from year to year production and consumption would be kept in reasonable balance with each other, to the end that reasonable prices would be paid to farmers for their crops and unwieldy surpluses would not depress our markets and upset the balance."<sup>iv</sup> 2. PWA, or the Public Works Administration, which had an initial appropriation of \$3.3 billion to assist in the employment of workers and the costs of construction of courthouses, sewage plants, bridges, hospitals, and city halls. 3. NRA, or the National Recovery Act, provided guidelines for pricing and production, guaranteed collective bargaining, minimum wages, and maximum hours to laborers. There were problems convincing labor that the courts and government were not prejudicial to business in decisions. The final part of the first part of the New Deal was reform. Measures enacted to reform identified problem areas in the economic institutions of the country. Many of the measures passed dealing with reform are actually known as the "second New Deal."

1. FDIC, or the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, created in 1933 during the Bank emergency to restore confidence in banks by insuring investor deposits and to "promotes safe and sound banking practices."<sup>v</sup> 2. SEC, or the Security and Exchange Commission, was formed from two pieces of

legislation and designed to restore confidence in the stock market by ensuring that companies provide investors with true information about their companies, including investment risks and that the people buying and selling the securities treat investors fairly and honestly, putting the interests of the investor first, ahead of their own personal gain. 3. NLRB, or the National Labor Relations Board, was created as an independent federal agency in 1935 to administer the National Labor Relations Act, which guarantees the right of employees of companies in the private sector to organize and to bargain collectively with their employers or to refrain from all such activity.<sup>vi</sup> 4. Tennessee Valley Authority, proposed by Senator George Norris, was signed into law in 1933 and it was “charged with the broadest duty of planning for the proper use, conservation, and development of the natural resources of the Tennessee River drainage basin and its adjoining territory....”<sup>vii</sup> enabling people in the valley to have a higher standard of living, maintain their homes, and provide electricity to surrounding states. 5. Fair Labor Standard Act “prohibited child labor and required industry to adopt in stages a forty-cent hourly minimum wage, as well as establish a forty-hour work week. The act did exempt the agriculture industry, domestic service, and certain other service categories.”<sup>viii</sup> 6. Social Security Act, passed in 1935, was designed to pay retired workers over aged 65 and older a continuing income for the remainder of their lives.

While residents in all states shared in the improvements and changes after passage of New Deal legislation, Delaware’s citizenry reaped many of the benefits from the CCC. The state’s CCC workers spent time in important conservation programs such as ditching marshes to control mosquitoes, working in forestation in Redden Forest, and in agricultural drainage camps in Georgetown and Wyoming.<sup>ix</sup> Delaware’s workers were part of a labor force of nearly three million workers between the ages of 17 and 25 who were provided work restoring and protecting the natural resources of this country. For their efforts they were paid \$30.00 each month and were required to send \$25.00 of it home to assist in supporting their families. The CCC was not one large organization but was comprised of units that were under the direction of the Departments of Labor, War, Interior, and Agriculture. There were 1,437 forest work camps selected and approved to

take care of the entire Corps, designated as follows: National Forests, 573; State Forests, 321; private land, 220; state parks, 101; National Parks, 62; other Federal Reservations, 18; and on special erosion and flood control work, 122.<sup>x</sup> Participants in the program were required to participate in education and physical conditioning. Many learned to read for the first time, almost 5,000 earned high school degrees, and an additional 2,700 earned college degrees. The program, one of FDR's favorites, ran for nine years.<sup>xi</sup>

Delaware was the last state to receive a CCC camp, as it did not have any forestland in the early 1930s. Fortunately, through the intercession of Governor Douglas Buck, Harry Cannon, and W. S. Corkran, Executive Director of the Mosquito Control Commission, and a meeting held with Mrs. Elsa Smith of Washington, Delaware applied for a CCC camp and became the last state to receive federal approval for a camp. The local CCC camp worked on digging drainage ditches in marshes and wetlands as a way to reduce mosquito infestation. Approximately 20% of Delaware's surface area is tidal marsh or wet woodland. At least 60 different species of mosquito have been known to inhabit the state<sup>xii</sup>, especially in the southern beach area, which, due to the success and work of the CCC, became a popular resort area for in and out of state visitors. During the first two years of the CCC's work in the state, workers in four camps completed 2,950 miles of ditching as well as cleaned and cleared miles of already existing ditches.

In addition to boosting visits to Rehoboth, the work of the CCC improved crops, aided in milk production by reducing annoyances to cattle, and increased muskrat population in the marshes. "Muskrat trapping is a several hundred thousand dollar industry in Delaware."<sup>xiii</sup> Unlike camps in other states, Delaware provided camps with administrative units, teachers for education, and arts and crafts programs. Each camp had the use of two army trucks, an ambulance, eight 1.5-ton pickups, and two powerboats for marsh transport. The units were run like military detachments, overseen by military officers, with barracks for living quarters, infirmary, mess hall and kitchen, officers' quarters, and latrines. Military style discipline governed the daily routines of camp life. Reveille was sounded at 6:10 and curfew began at 11:00 PM. Barracks were inspected daily and men were rated daily on the quality of work performed.<sup>xiv</sup>

The work of the CCC in Delaware was not restricted solely to mosquito control. Other units were established and worked on establishing Trap Pond State Park after the land was purchased by the Federal Government for the state, building a picnic site at the Ellendale state forest, and working on agricultural projects. Not only did Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps provide jobs for young men but it also improved the quality of life and health for all state residents.

<sup>i</sup> Herbert Hoover: Biography- Domestic Affairs. [Online: <http://www.americanpresident.org/history/herberthoover/biography/DomesticAffairs.common.shtml>] May 31, 2003. <sup>ii</sup> Roosevelt, Franklin Delano. Three Essentials for Unemployment Relief. [Speech] March 21, 1933. [Online: <http://newdeal.feri.org/texts/64.htm>] May 31, 2003. <sup>iii</sup> Ibid. <sup>iv</sup> Roosevelt, Franklin Delano. Extemporaneous Address on A.A.A. to Farm Groups. [Online: <http://newdeal.feri.org/speeches/1935e.htm>] May 31, 2003. <sup>v</sup> About FDIC. [Online: <http://www.fdic.gov/about/index.html>] May 31, 2003. <sup>vi</sup> Fact Sheet on the National Labor Relations Board. [Online: <http://www.nlrb.gov/facts.html>] May 31, 2003. <sup>vii</sup> "Seventy Years of Service and Innovation," Tennessee Valley Authority. [Online: <http://www.tva.gov/features/anniversary/index.htm>] May 31, 2003. <sup>viii</sup> Fair Labor Standards Act. [Online: <http://www.nps.gov/elro/glossary/fair-labor-standards-act.htm>] May 31, 2003. <sup>ix</sup> Miscellaneous clipping, n.d. RG 1620.29. <sup>x</sup> "With The Civilian Conservation Corps," *American Forests*. July 1933. [Online: <http://newdeal.feri.org/texts/486.htm>] May 31, 2003. <sup>xi</sup> Kutler, Stanley I., editor. "Civilian Conservation Corps," *Dictionary of American History, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 2001. p. 220. <sup>xii</sup> A Dozen Frequently Asked Questions—Mosquito Control Section. [Online: [http://www.dnrec.state.de.us/fw/mosquito\\_faqs.htm](http://www.dnrec.state.de.us/fw/mosquito_faqs.htm)] May 31, 2003. <sup>xiii</sup> Blakeslee, Alan. "State Mosquitoes Losing Battle Against CCC Forces Led by Army Officers," *Journal Every Evening*. December 9, 1935. no page number visible. <sup>xiv</sup> Ibid.