

Bland County's CCC Camp

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Correspondent

The Civilian Conservation Corps was initiated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on March 21, 1933. This program would permit the President to take young men from city streets and rural homes and give them healthful work in the conservation of natural resources. In the late spring of 1933, a CCC camp was established in Bland County on land leased from William Johnson Bruce in Bastian.

Over 200 officers and men from Fort Monroe descended on Bastian on June 4, 1933 to begin the construction of permanent barracks at the camp. In addition to the six barracks, the camp consisted of a post exchange and recreational building, kitchen and mess hall, educational building, woodworking shop, photographic darkroom, hospital, officer's quarters, blacksmith shop, garage, bath house, library, supply room, green house, and storage buildings.

The major accomplishments of the Bland County CCC Camp were truck trail, tower, bridge and telephone line construction and timber stand improvement demonstrations. This camp also helped with fire control in Bland County and with forest management. One major accomplishment was providing employment for a great many area residents.

This camp also offered vocational, health and job instruction, and had outstanding volley ball, basketball and baseball teams. Religious services were also conducted at the camp. Each camp had local WPA teachers, some of whom were Gracyn Muncy, Minor Muncy, Minnie Wayne Peery, Minnie Archer, and Mary Porterfield.



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DO YOU KNOW THEM?: Pictured are some of the young men who were part of the CCC Camp built in Bastian; if you recognize any of these young men, please contact Brenda King at (276) 688-3366 or at her e-mail address listed below. The Bland Historical Society would appreciate your assistance in their identification.

The technical staff was headed by Superintendent Eugene M. Davidson. Some of the foremen were Charlie Eagle, Sam Suiter, Brown Johnston, Pyott Shrader, C. E. Hildreth, Charlie Burton, A. C. Bruce, O. W. Danner, and Taulby Childress. Ira Dillman was the blacksmith and Gratt Shrader was the mechanic.

Margaret Bruce Pauley, who is the granddaughter of William Johnson Bruce, lives in the home her grandfather built on the property that re-

house, which is used for storage by Margaret's family. A three-bay grease garage, once used for the camp vehicle maintenance, is still standing and also used for storage by the family.

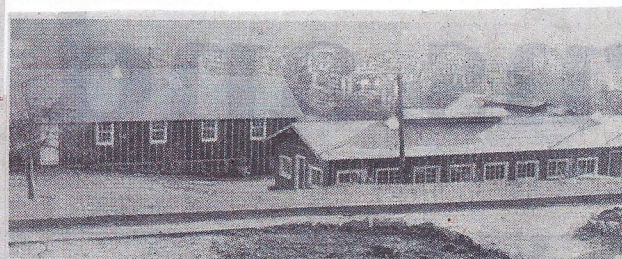
When the government men came to scout for property to build the camp, Margaret states that her grandfather took them up on the hill behind the house and the

men looked around and said, "We don't have to go any further. We like what we see from here."

Margaret remembers that one of the last jobs the camp men performed was to build the bridge near her home. She said she had the measles that summer and sat out on the porch at her grandfather's home and watched the men complete the bridge project. Now on private property, the remains of the CCC camp is remembered as a great asset in the development

of Bland County and many of the out-of-town enrollees settled in the county and became leading citizens of their communities. This camp was disbanded in December 1942.

Brenda W. King is a Bland County Historical Society member. Contact her at kingbw@centurylink.net.



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HISTORIC BUILDINGS: The above photo shows two of the buildings belonging to the CCC Camp established in Bland County in 1933.