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Tom Mix in Glenwood Springs—page 1

The Civilian Conservation Corps in Garfield County—page 11

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C O L O R A D O

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*Tom Mix and cast member from
The Great K & A Train Robbery,
Glenwood Canyon, 1926.*

(Frontier Historical Society,
Glenwood Springs, CO.
BB-18.)

Tom Mix in Glenwood Springs Christy Madsen*

Glenwood Springs, a small mountain town located in west central Colorado, experienced growth in the 1920s. A J.C. Penney's department store opened, the fire department got its first motor-driven fire engine, and an air show, called a "Flying Circus," visited town. In 1925, the Land Office in Montrose closed and its records were moved to Glenwood Springs, making that office the largest in the nation.¹ On September 17, 1925, the first concert was transmitted to Denver via the telephone, marking the first broadcast from Glenwood Springs. At this time, the city purchased Hanging Lake from White River National Forest, and secured Rosebud Cemetery from the pioneer Bailer family. The residents of Glenwood Springs endured Prohibition and many of its "saloons stared with vacant faces."² In an effort to further reform the town, "houses of ill fame" were also forced to close.³ Automobiles, introduced a few years earlier, added excitement to life.

On the national scene, there were few signs that things would slow down. A dapper, silver-haired Republican named Warren Gamaliel Harding occupied the White House. Henry Ford's automobiles enabled Americans to "race furiously into the future, enjoy the fruits of the great economic loom, but still pay lip service to old-fashioned values."⁴ Entertainment boomed along with the rest of America, and more and more Americans attended movies. Prominent among the celluloid offerings were films of the Western genre, providing American movie-goers the opportunity to admire the vigor developed on the Plains frontier. Most famous of those early cowboy-movie heroes was Tom Mix. This star

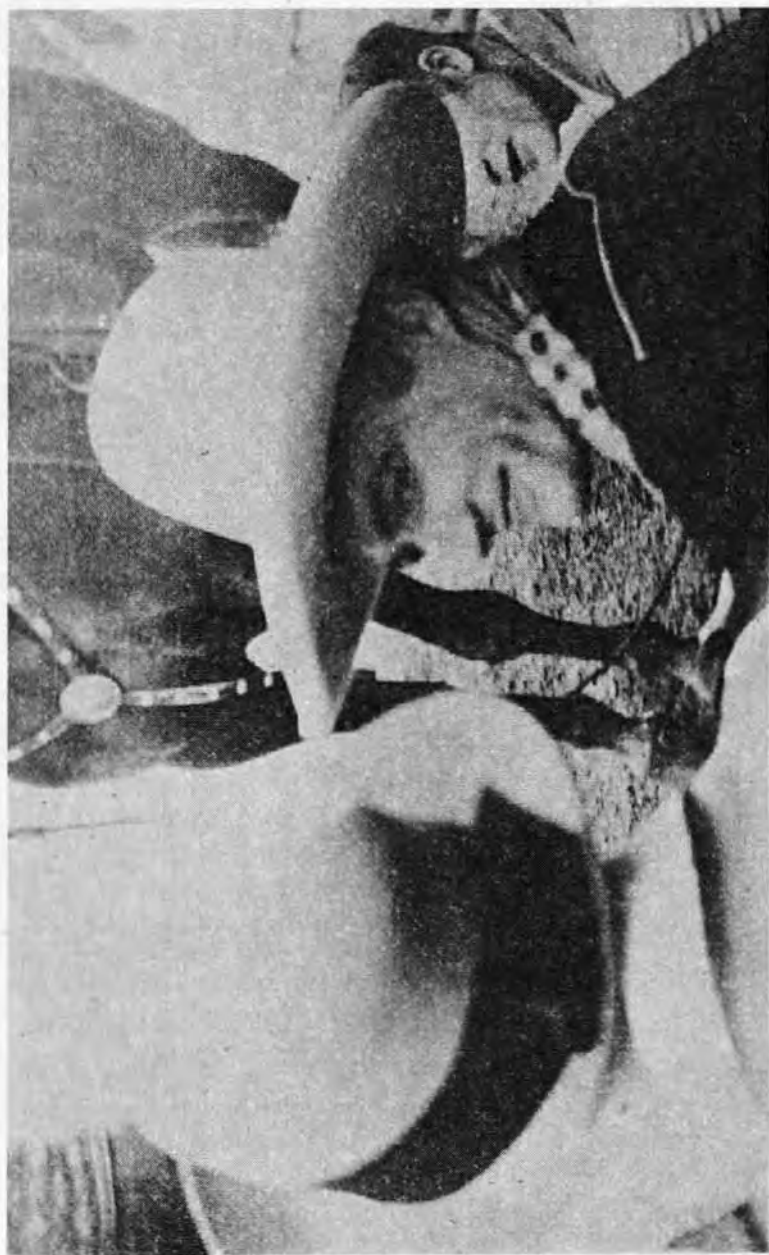
*Christy Madsen graduated from Glenwood Springs High School in 1994. She recently received B.A. in History from Mesa State College. Currently, she is working toward her elementary teacher licensure.

created a sensation when he announced plans to make two movies, *The Great K and A Train Robbery* and *The Canyon of Light* in Glenwood Springs.

Tom Mix was born on January 6, 1880 in Driftwood, Pennsylvania. As a youngster, he attended a performance of Buffalo Bill's Wild West show which inspired him to begin practicing skills such as marksmanship and horsemanship. As a young man, he joined the Army, hoping to perform heroic deeds in the Spanish-American War, but he failed to see action and eventually deserted. Mix then went west and found employment as a cowboy for the Miller Brothers on the 101 Ranch in Oklahoma. While there, he learned cowboy skills and joined the Miller Brothers' Wild West show. After this he turned his attention to the fledgling movie industry. He signed on with Selig Polyscope films in 1910. In 1913 he was given his own camera crew and studio. By the mid-1920s, he was working for Fox Studios and was the best known of all the Western stars. Americans loved his movies because they offered escapist entertainment, filled with action, spectacular scenery, and conflict between characters who were either unmistakably good, or unmistakably bad.⁵

Mix's connections to Colorado stretched back to 1910. He spent the summers of 1910 and 1911 near Cañon City making movies.⁶ He appreciated the scenic beauty of this part of Colorado and pronounced the "area ... an excellent locale for filming pictures because it had lots of sunshine and plenty of beautiful mountain scenery." The birth of the Colorado Motion Picture company came in 1914 with its headquarters in Denver. Due to an unfortunate accident, the company lasted only for a short time. During filming, leading-lady Grace McHugh tried to cross the Arkansas River on horseback, but her mount tripped and she fell into the river. A cameraman jumped in to rescue her, but he hit his head on a rock, and he and McHugh drowned. An ensuing lawsuit forced the Colorado Motion Picture Company into bankruptcy.⁷

In 1917 Mix signed with Fox Studios and began a climb to stardom. He clearly delineated characters who were either undeniably good or undeniably bad. After World War I, he tailored his movies to the spirit of the age by reducing the violence in them, adding strong doses of morality, and making them pure escapist entertainment. Mix's elaborate costumes, daredevil temperament and patriotism pleased his fellow Americans, including great numbers of children who flocked to Mix's movies to see this highly romanticized rendition of the American West. When Americans thought of Western movies and the cowboy, Mix most often came to mind.⁸



*Tom Mix on location of
The Great K & A Train Robbery, 1926.*

(Frontier Historical Society,
Glenwood Springs, CO. BB-21.)



*Dorothy Dawn, female lead,
The Great K & A Train Robbery,
Glenwood Canyon, 1926.*

(Frontier Historical Society,
Glenwood Springs, CO. BB-24.)

In 1926, shortly after a highly publicized tour of England and the Continent, Mix came to Glenwood Springs to film *The Great K and A Train Robbery* and *The Canyon of Light*. At this stage of his career Mix carefully chose locations that offered spectacular scenery. He believed the rugged beauty of the Glenwood Canyon offered the perfect backdrop for these films. Another part of the attraction of this locale was that it included a railroad; Mix loved to incorporate trains and action on trains—such as fistfights atop them—into his productions. Although a road allowed automobiles to travel the canyon, the Eagle River separated the road and the railroad, allowing filming on the train to continue without regard for the traffic across the river. The populace of Glenwood Springs was pleased that Mix paid them the compliment of choosing their part of Colorado to make a movie.⁹

Mix and his crew arrived on the morning of July 8, 1926. The group consisted of sixty people: Mix, his wife and family, and fifty-five other people, including director Mr. Seller, cameraman Dan Clark, and leading-lady Dorothy Dawn.¹⁰ The entourage was completed by twenty head of horses, two special Pullmans, two baggage cars, two other “special” trucks, and the camera truck. The Chamber of Commerce arranged for rooms at the Hotel Colorado for the Mix family and a few other high-ranking members of the crew. Mix brought his horse Tony, but the company rented livestock from McDonald Livery Stables. The Chamber of Commerce also helped Mix’s crew obtain permission from Public Service Company to use the Shoshone Bridge for some scenes. Seven or eight coaches were secured for the hold-up scene and other scenes. When filming began, Mix promised to perform many stunts and daredevil tricks. He was capable of this because he trained with heavyweight boxers and kept himself in “tip-top” physical condition.¹¹

Despite pronouncements about his ability to handle physically challenging action, Mix injured himself in a get-away scene shortly after filming began. He slipped as he jumped from the top of a tunnel onto a train, and could not catch himself because of a previous injury to an arm that had not healed properly. He consequently fell twenty feet. Although not seriously injured, he was shaken-up and he excused himself from work the rest of that afternoon.¹²

Those in the business community believed the film crew would spend a sizable amount of money in Glenwood Springs. Tom Mix’s presence in Glenwood Springs impacted the people in more than just economical ways. Not only did his company bring business to town and help to advertise it, but Mix also touched the people in a personal way.

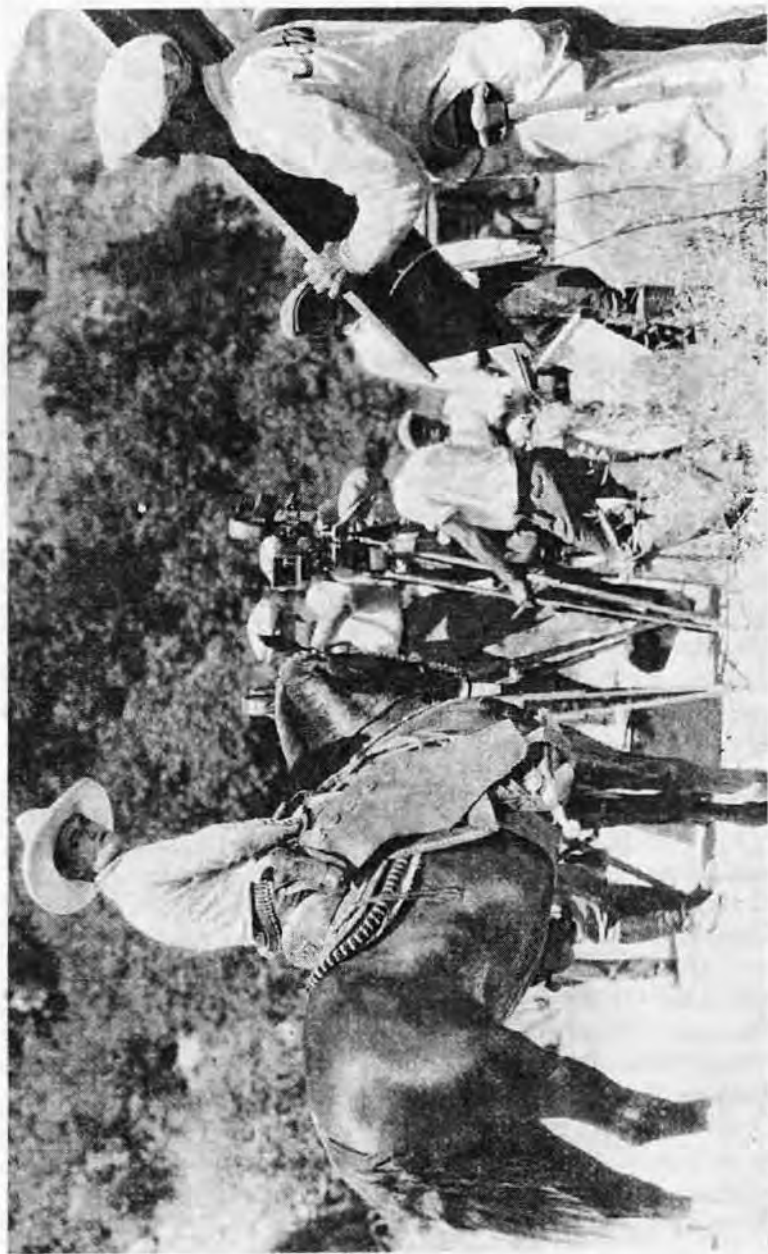
Every day the movie was filmed, hundreds of "Glenwoodites" boarded the train used in the movies and rode to the set. Once there, they watched the action from a distance, waited in line, and hoped for a part as an extra. Extras received no money for their appearances, but they did get the opportunity to see Tom Mix up close. Among those who made this trip to Glenwood Canyon was Gladys Hanson Dickson, whose father owned *The Glenwood Post*. Gladys was sixteen years old when Tom Mix came to town, and she remembers him as a good-looking cowboy whose presence created much excitement.¹³

Although he had a very tight shooting schedule, Mix did all he could to connect himself with the people of Glenwood Springs. Over and over again, he praised Glenwood Springs and its people, saying he and his company had never been treated better. He stated,

We do not hold ourselves aloof from the people of the communities where we work, but on the other hand, we seek to know the people and, wherever possible, to render some service in appreciation of the courtesies always extended to us. We seek to leave only an impression of faithfulness, loyalty, good fellowship and brotherly love, and thus we strive to see it that no community is the worse, but rather the better because we have visited it.¹⁴

Working with the Chamber of Commerce, Mix put on special performances, including a boxing exhibition, an indoor Wild West show, and a rodeo. The Wild West show was staged at the junior high school. The program featured tricks such as roping. *The Glenwood Post* documented the popularity of the performance: "The audience which greeted Tom Mix and 'the westerners' was perhaps the largest ever in Glenwood, and although seating capacity had been provided for 1,200 hundred people, every chair was filled before the hour scheduled for the performance, and many were glad to avail themselves to standing room."¹⁵ Ushers added that 1,600 to 1,800 people attended and that 500 to 600 people were turned away due to lack of space.¹⁶ Those who saw the program enjoyed it and afforded the performers a standing ovation at its conclusion.

Another bit of entertainment was a boxing match featuring Mix's personal trainer Frankie Dolan, and a famous Native American heavy-



Tom Mix with Tony, Glenwood Canyon, during filming of 'The Great K & A Train Robbery, 1926.

(Frontier Historical Society,
Glenwood Springs, CO. BB-23.)

weight champion named Mace Carry from Grand Junction. Mix also boxed a round with heavyweight champion Bill Ward. Although Mix was only a middleweight, he held his own with Ward much to the delight of the crowd. Local newspaper accounts called Mix the "greatest of all the middle weights in scientific boxing," and praised his devotion to the sport and his own rigorous training regimen. According to these sources, Mix and Dolan had boxed together for the equivalent of 5,500 rounds. Both were in excellent shape and neither had experienced a serious mishap or injury while in the ring.¹⁷

Mix also provided outdoor entertainment in the form of a rodeo for Glenwood Springs's population. Advertisement for it began after the Wild West performance. Flyers declared that "because Mr. Mix and his Troupe are 'Sold' on Glenwood they have agreed to give us a Fancy Exhibitions of Trick Riding, Broncho Busting, Rope Spinning, Calf Tying and all the tricks and skill that make up a genuine Wild West Exhibition."¹⁸ The rodeo was open to the big names in the sport as well as locals and anyone else who wanted to participate. Mix liked the idea of bringing amateurs and professionals together in his show. The rodeo was given on July 20, 1926, and some of the famous individuals who competed included Colorado Cotton Smith, Smoke Allison, Stub Musselmen, Slim Smith and Tom Mix. A number of local cowboys also joined in the contest. None of the contestants paid an entry fee and patrons were admitted free of charge. The rodeo drew a crowd of 6,000 to 8,000, surpassing even the size of the crowd drawn to Strawberry Days, Glenwood Springs's local fair. A columnist proclaimed Mix's venture the "greatest outdoor entertainment ever seen in Glenwood."¹⁹

When the time came to leave Glenwood Springs, Tom Mix thanked the citizens for making his stay so enjoyable. Although his stay had lasted only three weeks, it seemed longer to most people. He brought business to the town, made the locals feel accepted, and had done much to advertise western Colorado. The people of Glenwood Springs still remember Mix's visit. In 1965, the Frontier Historical Society in Glenwood Springs wrote to the Associated Cinema and Theater Arts in Sherman Oaks, California requesting a copy of *The Great K and A Train Robbery*. ACTA obliged the request and sent a copy of the film directly from Fox Films, or Twentieth Century Company. The film is often shown in the high school auditorium during the annual Strawberry Days celebration. Over seventy-five years after Mix's stay, people in Glenwood Springs still celebrate the visit of a movie star.²⁰

NOTES

¹Lena M. Urquhart, *Glenwood Springs: Spa in the Mountains* (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing, 1970), 131.

²*Ibid.*, 133.

³*Ibid.*, 134.

⁴Michael A. Parrish, *Anxious Decades America in Prosperity and Depression, 1920-1941* (New York: W.W. Norton Publishing, 1992), 46.

⁵Paul Reddin, *Wild West Shows* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 188-195.

⁶*Ibid.*, 192.

⁷*The Glenwood Post*, 1 July 1926; David Emich, "Colorado Movie Makers," *Colorado Country Life* (March 1998): 14.

⁸Paul Mix, *The Life and Legend of Tom Mix* (London: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1972), 96.

⁹*The Glenwood Post*, 1 July 1926.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹*Ibid.*, 7 July 1926.

¹²*The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel*, 8 July 1926.

¹³Gladys Dickson-Hanson, Interview with Christy Madsen, Glenwood Springs, CO, 14 October 1998.

¹⁴*The Glenwood Post*, 15 July 1926.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 29 July 1926.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 15 July 1926.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*, 14 June 1988.

The Civilian Conservation Corps in Garfield County

Paul Harvey*

On October 29, 1929, the stock market crash began an economic depression like none previously experienced in the United States.¹ After four years of federal inaction, Franklin Delano Roosevelt became president and quickly bombarded Congress with bills designed to help the country. Included in this flurry of legislation and executive action was the Emergency Work Act of March 31, 1933 which created a work force of young men called the Civilian Conservation Corps, or the CCC.² This peacetime labor corps worked in the forests, parks, and waters of America, to "[s]ave the soil, save the forests, and save the young men."³ After nine years in service to the country, the CCC did just that. The first camp opened on April 17, 1933, and by that summer the program grew to include 275,000 men.⁴ From 1934-1942 Garfield County witnessed the deeds of the CCC. The daily lives of these young Americans affected everything surrounding them as they endured the extremes of the Great Depression.

The CCC operated in every state in the Union and the territories of Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.⁵ Camps appeared in Colorado in 1933, and the next year Garfield County received its first camp. A site was established in Rifle in 1934, which moved to Glenwood Springs later the same year where it remained until 1942.⁶ Rifle and Glenwood Springs are the largest towns within Garfield County which is located on the Western Slope of Colorado, and contains many beautiful parks within the Rocky Mountain region. The CCC

*Paul Harvey, from Rifle, is a current student at Mesa State College majoring in History and the 1999-2000 Vice-President of Phi Alpha Theta. He is also the public announcer for the MSC baseball team, and plans to teach high school and coach.

improved many of these parks and its influence can still be seen in these areas today.

The CCC camps were made up of men from all over the country. Unmarried men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five were eligible to work for the CCC if they were legal citizens, had never been in another camp, and had never been in jail. Families on relief got first priority,⁷ but exceptions were made for the 14,000 Native American workers—they could be married.⁸ The workers received between twenty-five and thirty dollars per month, the majority of which went to their families and the remainder for pocket money.⁹ The average CCC worker was twenty years old when he entered the program, came from a family of six children, had not worked in the last nine months, had an unemployed father, and usually had only completed the eighth grade.¹⁰ He was somewhat undersized, standing only five feet, eight inches tall and weighing 147 pounds. Every man who entered the CCC had room to improve his life financially, physically, and mentally.

Several government agencies ran the CCC: the United States Army, the Departments of Labor and Agriculture, and the State Departments of the Forest and Parks Services.¹¹ While this was a complicated way to run the program, it worked well. Military and Forest Service officers ran the camps and commanded the men. The daily routine of the CCC enrollees began at 6:00 AM when the men got out of bed, washed, and dressed in identical blue denim work uniforms. Physical training began at 6:30 followed by a hearty breakfast. Afterward, roll was called and the workers left camp for the worksite at 7:45. Each crew had a foreman, and were joined by local men who were familiar with the construction areas. These local citizens taught the CCC workers the necessary skills as well as serving as their bosses.¹² For lunch, the fare occasionally was a full-scale hot meal, but the usual menu consisted of sandwiches, pie, and coffee. The workday ended at 4:00 PM, leaving some free time before dinner for the workers to read, do homework, play sports, or simply relax. At 5:30, a hot meal was served, usually meat and potatoes. After dinner, most men attended classes, others went to town, and some enjoyed various forms of recreation. At 9:45, they prepared for bed, lights went out at 10:00, and the commander made bed checks at 11:00. Most fell asleep quickly after the day's work.¹³

Corps members were free on the weekends, except when work was delayed during the week because of weather. Sports, drama, and relaxing filled Saturdays, and the workers could attend religious services on Sundays. Work was halted on all of the standard holidays and

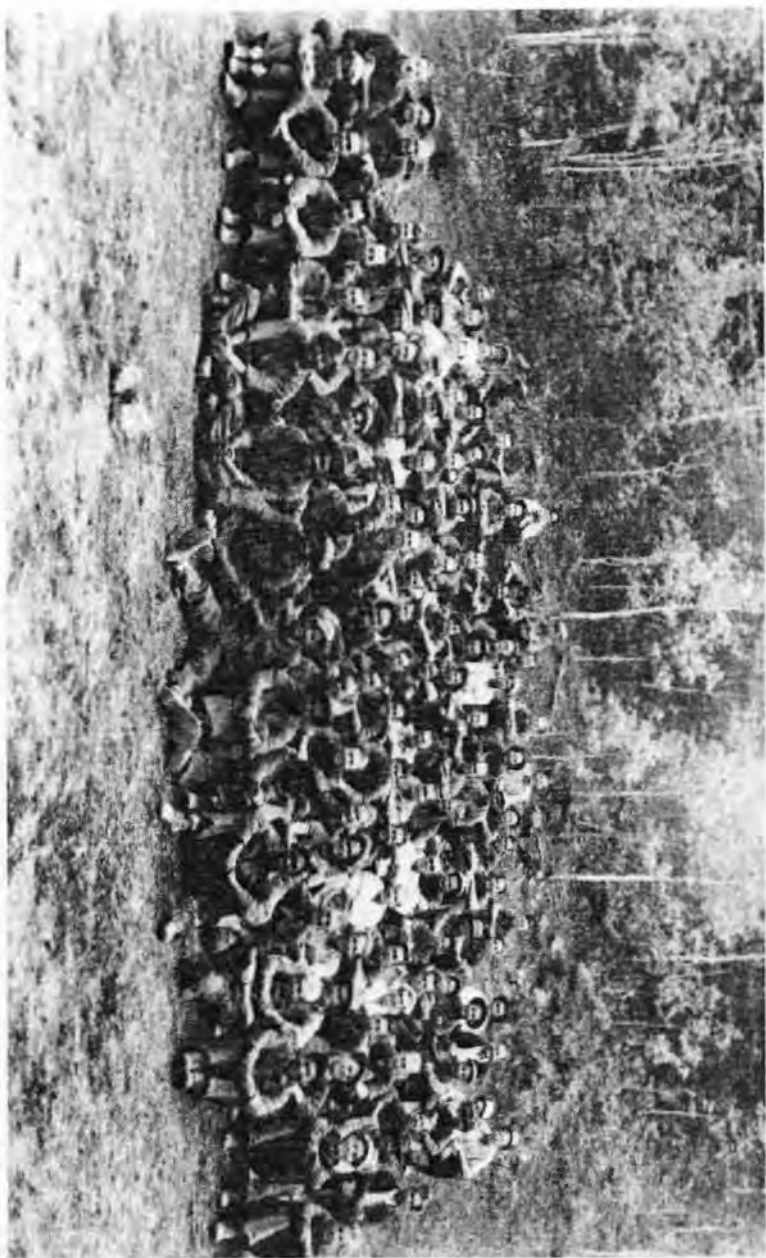
some religious ones, and a one week vacation was allotted at Christmas.¹⁴ Those who were from the area could go home to spend holidays with their families. For those who stayed in camp, social activities—such as films—were planned.¹⁵ On Thanksgiving, a traditional meal was served.¹⁶ For elections, the men received three days off, one so they could register, another to vote in the primaries, and the third to vote in the general elections. Not surprisingly, the CCC members tended to vote for the Democrats.¹⁷

Many members had experienced hunger before joining the CCC, but they ate well and in abundance in the camps. Lieutenant Fred M. Small wrote about the eating habits of the Rifle camp in the *Tent City Journal*, reporting that the average man in the camp gained about twenty pounds after joining the CCC.¹⁸ He also calculated the amount of food the men had consumed in the past year: 64,750 pounds of beef (about 129 steers), 3,900 chickens, 21,000 eggs, 7,313 pounds of oatmeal, eight and a half tons of beans, 78,200 bottles of milk, 14,300 pies, and significant amount of other sweets.¹⁹

The average enrollee's health improved while in the CCC due to the care they received in the camps which had been inaccessible prior to joining. The *Tent City Journal* published the *McCloskey Report* with statistics on the health of the laborers: ninety-seven men nationally, or about one-tenth of one percent, had suffered a serious illness or injury over the year. There were only eighteen cases of communicable disease in the Rifle camp, mostly measles, and only two major work-related accidents occurred in the camp during that year, both incurred during fire fighting. From May 1933 to 1934, one person died in the Garfield County camp from complications of pneumonia.²⁰ Aside from being tired, the men were generally healthy.

The group that eventually moved to Rifle was Company 826. Formed and previously stationed at Fort Logan, South Eggers, it moved to Boulder, Colorado before setting up in Rifle. While in Boulder, the camp attained a very good record and reputation.²¹ It was rated the best camp in the state in January of 1934, and was rated the second best camp in the entire Eighth Corps area. This area comprised of 130 camps in Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Oklahoma, and Wyoming.²² Obviously, Rifle boasted one of the finest camps in the entire western United States.

Company Number 826 moved by train to Rifle on May 14, 1934, led by Lieutenant Fred Bell.²³ The campsite was located about fifteen miles north of Rifle in Rifle Mountain Park. This is a stunning area



*Rifle Mountain Park CCC Camp, 1934.
The camp moved to Glenwood Springs in
October, 1934.*

(Frontier Historical Society,
Glenwood Springs, CO. L-8.)

formed by Big Box Canyon, stretching north about ten miles to Little Box Canyon and the Three Forks National Forest. The city of Rifle owns the land and maintains the park.²⁴ Bell used twenty-eight local men to build the camp over a two week period.

Commanding officer Captain Earl J. Yates and 180 men arrived in camp on May 15. There were thirty-nine tents and several other structures in the camp. These pyramidal tents each had wooden floors and walls with canvas roofs, and housed six men. There was also five tents for officers, three storage tents, a recreation hall, a hospital, a bath house, a large mess hall, and an isolation tent. Camp SP-5-C, as it was officially called, was located near Hoffman's Gulch in Rifle Creek Canyon, at an elevation of about 7,000 feet.²⁵ Trucks from the Park Service soon arrived to unload heavy equipment for the camp's projects. With them came a large compressor, several dozen shovels, picks, axes, and crowbars. Complete blacksmith and tool shops were set up in the camp. The CCC bought most of its oil, dynamite, tools, lumber, and cement in Rifle.²⁶ The men were now ready to work.

An abundance of leaders and upper level personnel were on hand to guide them. Army personnel served as commanding officers, mess and supply officers, as well as camp surgeons and educational advisors. The Park Service provided men to oversee the CCC men as they worked, led by superintendent C.F. Clark and an additional eleven men.²⁷ The camp leaders had a 1927 Model Handson Sedan, donated by the county commissioner, at their disposal.²⁸ Unlike most camps, camp 826 was not under the jurisdiction of the Army or Forest Service, but rather the Park Service, and it devoted its energy to the improvement of municipally owned parks like Rifle Mountain Park.²⁹

The immediate goal of the corps was to upgrade the park for the city, and the first task was to improve the main road into Rifle Mountain Park.³⁰ The road was widened a minimum of eighteen feet, curves were broadened, and steep grades reduced.³¹ Later, they built five miles of barbed wire fence in the park to keep out cattle and sheep. This crew had plenty of experience in this type of work, having built twelve miles of fence in Rocky Mountain Park the previous summer. They also built lavatories, stone picnic tables, incinerators, and foot bridges across Rifle Creek. One group cleared the forests of fallen timber and brush, and used the cuttings to dam the stream, forming spawning pools for fish.³² A larger dam—ten feet high by forty feet long—was also installed, creating a lake just below the camp.³³ Logs driven into the ground with a

pile driver borrowed from the county secured the dam. The finished project included a fish ladder to let fish through. Insect eradication was also undertaken to rid the park of mosquitoes and flies. The general landscape of the picnic and campground areas was improved by clearing trash and debris, and leveling camping areas.³⁴

The biggest project, and the one most beneficial for the community, was the construction of a community recreation hall. The hall was constructed of stone and logs, measuring thirty by fifty feet. Timber obtained from the thinning of forests was used to create a rustic looking structure overlooking the newly created lake. The addition of a road and a bridge leading to the hall completed what was a dream-come-true for the city. For a number of years, there had been a demand for a gathering place for picnics, conventions, and other activities.³⁵ The citizens of Rifle still make use of the building today.³⁶

Other projects included a large Park Service barrack, including a blacksmith shop, tool room, sleeping quarters, and Park Service offices. Lumber for this structure came from a locally owned lumberyard, Rippy's Sawmill.³⁷ Another group of men made a complete topographical map of the area.³⁸ Finishing the jobs often proved difficult as men often left throughout the summer for a more urgent task—fighting fires.

Fighting fires was a dangerous and strenuous endeavor, consuming many man-hours and precious dollars. The first fire fighting job in Rifle Creek Canyon on June 26, 1934 proved a relatively easy fire to manage.³⁹ A fire in South Canyon, five miles west of Glenwood Springs, was more of a challenge; it destroyed two square miles of land and required twenty camp personnel to extinguish the blaze. The first major fire the men fought was located a few miles northwest of Glenwood Springs near Mitchell Creek. This fire lasted from July 1- 6, and destroyed about 500 acres of timber and brush.⁴⁰ Fire fighting fatigued the men, and some were injured, including Harry R. Burton, a writer for *The Glenwood Post*, who badly hurt his leg in this fire.⁴¹ Work-shifts in the fire zone lasted for eighteen to twenty-four long hours. However, the CCC's efforts did not go unappreciated as the sheriff thanked them several times in the newspapers.⁴²

The next two weeks would prove even tougher on the men. Fires at Roan Creek and Brush Creek required a greater number of men—about 110—and several temporary camps known as “fly” camps were established at the site of both fires.⁴³ The uniqueness of the soil made fighting the fires particularly difficult. The dirt was largely composed of

oil shale, and when the fire fighters threw dirt on the fire, it burst into flames.⁴⁴ They also found that the ground was sometimes burning when they arrived to fight the fires, and men not familiar with oil shale were especially frightened.⁴⁵ As a result the fire fighters had to use more water than normally required, or they sometimes simply let the fires burn themselves out. The Roan Creek fire lasted four days, destroying 1,100 acres of land, 500 of which were covered by commercially valuable cedar trees.⁴⁶ The Brush Creek blaze lasted five days and destroyed approximately the same amount of land.⁴⁷ After battling the fires and improving land, the men needed a break, and the CCC offered many recreational activities.

Roy Youngs organized a Drama Club in the camp. It was one of the most popular activities; in fact, one publication called it the backbone of the company.⁴⁸ On Tuesday nights, the club presented weekly socials for their camp-mates. The socials sometimes included a sixteen-part variety show and a performance from the camp orchestra. When the camp held community gatherings, the Drama Club always gave a performance of some kind, giving the laborers something to look forward to after a hard day of work.

Religion was important to many of the CCC members; however, it was sometimes hard for the men to attend services as the district chaplain visited the camp for a couple days every few months. Luckily for the men, the Reverend J.S. MacInnes of the local First Presbyterian Church offered his services.⁴⁹ He regularly went to the camp on Sunday nights to give sermons, and during the week to lead the men's stunt night where participants gathered to read poetry and the Bible, and to sing. Adapting his sermons to fit the camp lifestyle and speaking often of unemployment and the suffering of families, MacInnes won the hearts of the CCC men.⁵⁰

At the encouragement of their leaders, those at the CCC camp devoted time to athletics and games. The camp had a 120 by 20 foot recreation hall containing a library, athletic equipment, games, and lounge area.⁵¹ The typical CCC library offered magazines and over a hundred books, including adventures, westerns, travel books, history, science fiction, athletics, classics, and theology.⁵² The men enjoyed athletic competitions and participated in them frequently. Almost immediately after arriving in Rifle, two CCC softball teams were created—called the *Reds* and the *Blues*—and were entered into the local league. The teams usually played two nights per week throughout the summer, and entered



*Interior of barracks at
Glenwood CCC Camp, 1936.*

(Frontier Historical Society,
Glenwood Springs, CO. L-16.)

local baseball tournaments on the weekends.⁵³ The teams were competitive: the *Reds* won the league title by the halfway point of the season.⁵⁴

Boxing provided another way to escape the routine of camp life. Shortly after arriving in Rifle, a local promoter brought some professional fighters to town, including Billy Neiheisel, the state welter-weight champion. Neiheisel came to the camp a week early, stayed with the men, and coached them on their boxing skills. Several CCC men participated in the local fights held on June 1, 1934, and most of the men won their bouts, showing themselves to be promising boxing prospects.⁵⁵ In the camp itself, weekly boxing matches kept the men active and morale high.⁵⁶

Education was also important to the CCC. The first educational advisor in camp 826 was Lieutenant W. Earnest Hunter, who started the program in the winter of 1933. He stayed with the camp until August of 1934. George McBurney, who grew up in nearby New Castle,⁵⁷ replaced him.⁵⁸ Camp members were offered classes in reading, writing, and math, and some of the workers traveled to Glenwood Springs once a week to attend safety classes.⁵⁹ A concern for safety was justified since the flammable camp tents were heated by Sibley stoves, which were known to cause fires if not used properly.⁶⁰

The camp held open houses, the first of which attracted about 200 people who enjoyed seeing the new camp, watching one act plays, and refreshments. This open house and the ones that followed favorably impressed the citizens of Rifle.⁶¹ Near the end of their stay in Rifle, the men gave a public benefit dance to raise money for an emergency travel fund. This fund covered the expense of trips home due to a sickness or death in the family. Prior to this, the corps members had to depend on the generosity of their compatriots to pay for the trip. The men arranged the music, performed specialty numbers for the crowd, and held a ladies popularity contest, selecting the most attractive woman in attendance. Men were charged twenty-five cents and women were admitted free. The dance was a huge success.⁶²

The CCC men eagerly participated in any activity that would ease the daily stresses caused by the Great Depression. Sometimes they traveled to different towns like Glenwood Springs or Grand Junction. Some occupied their time with camp improvements, such as planting flowers and erecting a flag-pole.⁶³ The men even held a beauty contest for camp members.⁶⁴ During the summer of 1934, *The Rifle Telegram* offered an essay contest to the CCC men to write about Roosevelt's pro-

gram. The winning papers were published in the newspaper and the authors received cash prizes. Paul Hallett submitted the first place essay titled "What the CCC Has Done For Me." Hallett explained he originally joined to end his dependence on government relief and to better his economic standing; however, he soon came to believe that through the interaction and camaraderie which developed between the members, they became a team and in the process, better people. For Hallett, pride and satisfaction grew from improving and conserving the land, and making America a better place.⁶⁵

The second and third place essays were submitted by Jack Sugarman. In his second place essay, also titled "What the CCC Has Done For Me," he explained he joined the CCC in order to have a job, and "to keep the wolf away from our door." Working for the CCC helped him regain the confidence to pursue his dreams. In short, he felt the Depression made many people feel like failures, but working again gave them hope.⁶⁶ In Sugarman's other essay, "What I Think of the CCC," he praised the program, stating that of all the methods used by Roosevelt to help the country, the CCC was the most successful, and it had created positive results everywhere. Thousands of unemployed men and boys became employed, the economy grew, and America's parks were beautified and made more accessible by endless miles of new roads, and millions of acres of land cleared of trees.⁶⁷

Many people, however, saw the CCC differently. Although the pre-civil rights era legislative act that created the CCC stated that "in employing citizens for the purpose of this act, no discrimination shall be made on account of race, color, and creed," many blacks thought the CCC was discriminatory.⁶⁸ The unemployment rate for blacks was double that of whites in 1933. Despite the two million black people on the relief rolls, few blacks became a part of the CCC program. The South resisted compliance with the nondiscriminatory aspect of the policy until pressure from the federal administration forced compliance to regulation.⁶⁹ However, even at the end of the CCC program only 200,000 of the over 2.5 million men in the program were black.⁷⁰

While the official CCC policy was integration, it remained an uncommon occurrence. African-Americans usually were put into separate camps, and many Caucasian citizens protested the movement of non-white companies into their area.⁷¹ Rifle, however, did not. On July 6, 1934, over one hundred men from Texas transferred to the Rifle camp to replace men whose terms had expired. Twenty of the new men were

African Americans. The camp swelled to 230 men, and tents which previously housed six now had to accommodate seven people as some had to do without beds, and the blacks received three tents for themselves.⁷² While in Glenwood Springs, they shared a barrack with the camp cooks.⁷³ The Rifle paper listed the new men's names, including those of the blacks.⁷⁴

Soon after arriving, the black men formed their own softball team in the city league. When the CCC "*Colored Boys*" (later renamed the *Tigers*) played the Rifle *Pirates*, *The Rifle Telegram* reported that the crowd was one of the largest in the city's history.⁷⁵ The paper commented that the blacks' "obvious good nature and drawling comments, caused no small amount of hilarity among the spectators and won the good will of the crowd." When the *Tigers* lost twenty-seven to seven, some attributed the poor performance to stage fright. The paper carried a complete box score including all the players names.⁷⁶ The black members also participated in camp activities, including the weekly social programs,⁷⁷ and the entertainment provided during the community open houses.⁷⁸ One black man tied for first place in the camp beauty contest despite the fact the blacks could cast only a fraction of the votes,⁷⁹ and they occasionally traveled to Grand Junction for a evening of dancing.⁸⁰

As the term for Rifle's camp was running out as the summer of 1934 came to a close, the men hurried to finish their projects. Sometimes double shifts had be used to complete projects such as the community building.⁸¹ Rifle applied to host another camp for the following summer,⁸² and some speculated that Rifle might even get two camps the next year; however, despite the efforts of Congressman Ed Taylor, this did not come to pass.⁸³ In the end, the camp stayed in Glenwood Springs⁸⁴ and several small fly camps were built in Rifle during subsequent summers while work continued in Rifle Mountain Park.⁸⁵

In the seven months the CCC was in Rifle the camp spent \$85,000 of which \$3,500 was spent every month for food, supplies, and materials—a substantial amount of money for the times.⁸⁶ The presence of Company 826 in Rifle proved a positive experience for the city; the CCC provided odd jobs for local men, while bringing a sense of pride to the city, and improving Rifle Mountain Park.⁸⁷ The company moved from Rifle to Glenwood Springs on October 3, 1934.⁸⁸

Lieutenant Robert Bells, wanting to build the best barracks in the state for the workers, supervised the building of the camp which took about five weeks and employed sixty local men.⁸⁹ The barracks were

built to withstand the winter elements, each barrack having two special furnaces. Five barracks were built with lumber, each costing about \$20,000, measuring 20 by 112 feet, and capable of housing forty men. Bells also oversaw construction of a mess hall, recreation hall, bath house, Army garage, and an administration building.⁹⁰

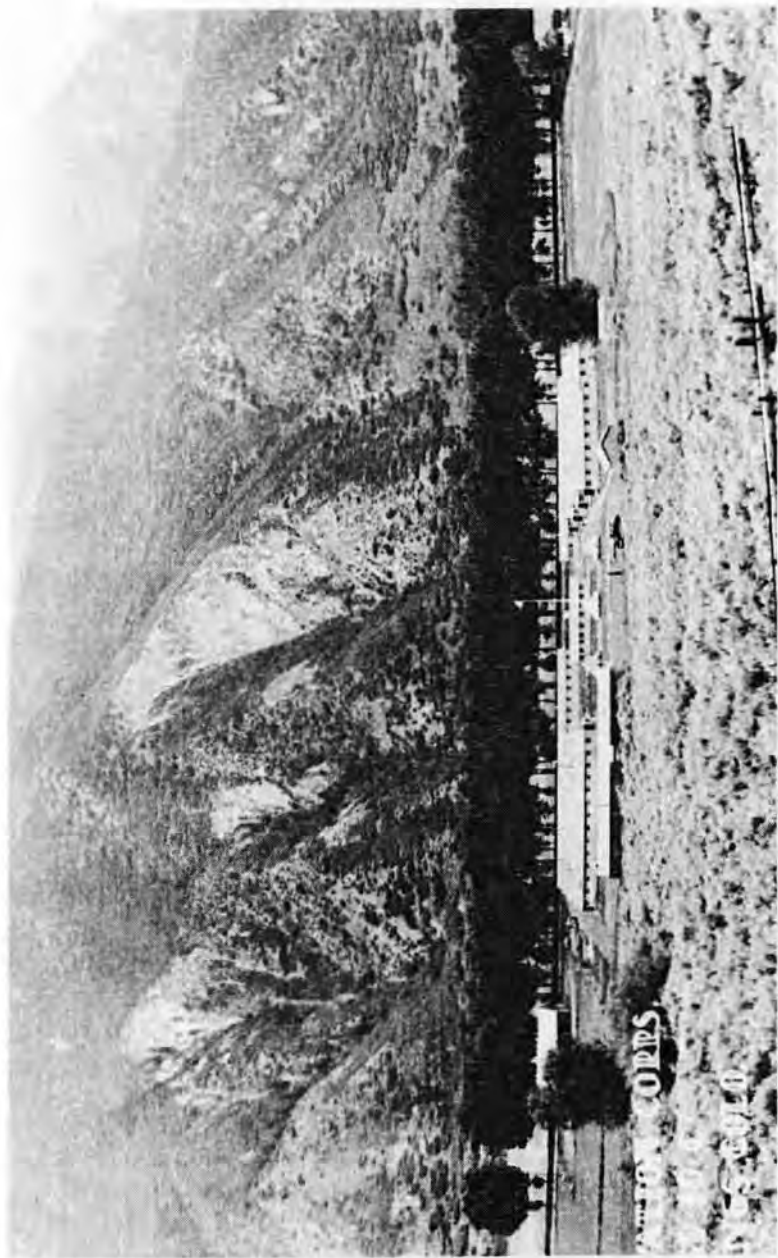
The camp was located north of Danceland, near Grand Avenue at the present day site of Sayre Park.⁹¹ Camp SP-10-C, commanded by Captain Mewhirter, initially housed 150 men. Here, the corps members were stationed closer to town than they had been in Rifle, enabling them to travel frequently to Glenwood Springs to escape the daily routine.⁹²

Since the Glenwood Springs camp was also a Park Service camp, it only worked on city owned land. The first project assigned to SP-10-C was to improve Lookout Mountain by widening the roads, reducing steep grades, and improving the area on top of the mountain. The men stayed in Glenwood Springs for eight years, building trails, roads, campsites, three homes for forestry personnel, a new trail to Hanging Lake, Grizzly Creek campground, runways for the airport, and a ski run and lift. They also fought forest fires, and replanted trees—the workers were kept busy improving the town and its surroundings.⁹³

Heavy snows, boundary disputes, and worker illness occasionally caused work delays.⁹⁴ In one instance, work stopped because the city could not locate the specific boundaries on Lookout Mountain, so surveyors were brought in to solve the problem.⁹⁵ The camp was quarantined twice during the winter of 1934-35, each time for two weeks. When work was delayed, the men improved their camp by using supplies donated by local merchants.⁹⁶ Installing gravel sidewalks between buildings and painting the barracks battleship gray were part of an attempt to become the best camp in the state.⁹⁷

Members of the CCC camp continued work on Lookout Mountain and started building new trails leading up to Hanging Lake while fly camps continued work in Rifle Mountain Park.⁹⁸ New men came and old ones left as publicity about the CCC camp abated. In the winter of 1936-37, members of the Glenwood Springs camp were sent to live in Grand Junction and work on the Colorado National Monument. Also during this time, a camp from a higher elevation (Norrie, Colorado) moved in with the Glenwood Springs camp because the former could not be inhabited during the winter months. All of the men returned to their original camps in the spring.⁹⁹

In 1937, the men began construction of National Park Service buildings. They also received better road equipment for the Lookout



*Civilian Conservation Corps Company 826,
Camp SP-10-C, Glenwood Springs, CO, 1934.*

*(Frontier Historical Society,
Glenwood Springs, CO, L-7.)*

Mountain project, including a caterpillar tractor, a dump truck, and cranes which accelerated work on resurfacing and sub-grading the road.¹⁰⁰ In the winter of 1937-38 the men were again transferred to Grand Junction, returning to Glenwood Springs in the summer of 1938. Later the same year, fifty-four men were transferred to Grandby, and fifty-six were sent to Craig. The few remaining in Glenwood Springs were joined by a new company from New York.¹⁰¹

On July 15, 1938, the new company—195 men strong—arrived to fill the ranks of the Glenwood Springs contingent. They continued the Lookout Mountain and Hanging Lake projects¹⁰² and began building runways for the Glenwood Springs airport.¹⁰³ The new men soon received fire fighting training; tested with a dummy fire, the New Yorkers performed well and felt they were prepared for future blazes.¹⁰⁴ That same summer, work started on the new Red Mountain ski run. With the help of several local volunteers, brush and trees were cleared from the mountainside creating a half-mile run. The run opened in December of 1938 and was considered one the best ski slopes of the time.¹⁰⁵

For the next two winter seasons, the corps again transferred to Grand Junction. When they returned to Glenwood Springs in the summer of 1940, they started construction on a ski lift on Red Mountain. Another section of the mountain was cleared on which towers and terminals were built by the CCC, who then donated the structures to the city.¹⁰⁶ After the city bought a used wire rope for the lift,¹⁰⁷ it was thought to be ready to open in 1941 until a chair caught on a tower and pulled it down. The lift finally opened in January of 1942, making it one of the first chair lifts in Colorado. However, it received little use; the drain World War II was placing on national resources mandated that the lift only be used on weekends.¹⁰⁸ After the war, the lift was used more frequently until Aspen Mountain opened in 1946. The ski run survived until 1959, when Aspen Highlands prepared to open.¹⁰⁹

The Glenwood Springs camp also emphasized education. Through the winters, the men took classes in English, math, spelling, drama, and electives, such as geology, surveying, and mechanics.¹¹⁰ The education program helped many receive their high school diplomas while in the CCC. Athletics was also a major part of the recreational activities at the camp. Basketball was popular during the winter, and a team was organized to play local teams, sometimes traveling to Grand Junction to play other camp teams.¹¹¹ During the summer, baseball and softball teams played in the city leagues. In 1936 the softball team won the Western

Slope Softball Tournament.¹¹² Boxing was also popular, and some boxers traveled to Grand Junction for intercamp bouts.¹¹³ Following the national CCC trend, interest in athletics was high.

The Glenwood Springs camp, like the Rifle camp, enjoyed a friendly relationship with the townspeople who donated approximately 1,250 books to the camp library, making it the largest CCC library in the district.¹¹⁴ In appreciation, the CCC members cut Christmas trees for the camp and the town, decorated the camp with Christmas decorations, and held an open house for the community.¹¹⁵

The entry of the United States into World War II caused a change in the structure of the CCC. Members left to join the war effort; however, prisoners of war replaced the regular CCC members. While they finished some of the CCC's projects, the POW's did not have the same impact on communities in which they were stationed.¹¹⁶

Overall, the CCC was a grand success, employing almost three million men while stimulating local economies and helping families during the Depression. Members also benefited from educational training and extracurricular activities. Forty thousand illiterate men learned to read and write while in the CCC. A number of men became professional athletes because of their involvement in CCC athletic programs.¹¹⁷ In Colorado, sixty-six communities reaped the benefits of the CCC.¹¹⁸ Colorado had 35,445 of its own men serve in the camps, while 57,944 men came from other states to work in Colorado. The state spent a total of \$63,737,601 on the CCC program, of which nearly seven million dollars were paid to workers and their families.¹¹⁹ On a local level, Garfield County gained numerous benefits due to the presence of the CCC: local parks became premier places to visit, thousands of acres of wilderness were saved from fire, money flowed into the area, and the people gained civic pride. Citizens and corps members alike felt the government was concerned about them, and was taking actions to improve their lives. In this way, the CCC helped stimulate patriotism in America.

The CCC was a successful part of Roosevelt's plan to stimulate the economy. The corps created jobs, beautified parks, and was a source of national pride. It saved the soil, the forests, and the young men—just as the motto proclaimed. Today the parks in which the CCC worked are still beautiful areas to visit. Rifle Mountain Park is a great place to camp, hike, fish, and explore ice caves, and—with its two and a half miles of limestone walls—is one of the most popular rock climbing locations in

the nation.¹²⁰ The community hall is still used for social events, and Hanging Lake and Lookout Mountain are inspiring areas to visit. Thanks in part to the labors of the men of the CCC, Garfield County is a popular tourist destination.

NOTES

- ¹Perry H. Merrill, *Roosevelt's Forest Army: A History of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-42* (Montpelier, VT: Perry H. Merrill, 1981), 1.
- ²DeWitt Nelson, "Foreward," in *Roosevelt's Forest Army: A History of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-42* (Montpelier, VT: Perry H. Merrill, 1981), vii.
- ³Emma McCreanor, "Al Look Lecture Series," Oral History Tape, (Mesa County Public Library, TA83-08). The phrase was coined by FDR, and served as the CCC's motto.
- ⁴Nelson, "Foreward," vii.
- ⁵Merrill, *Roosevelt's Forest Army*, 15.
- ⁶L.A. Gleyre and C.N. Alleger, *History of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Colorado 1936* (Denver: Western Newspaper Union, 1936), 144.
- ⁷Nelson, "Foreward," vii.
- ⁸*The Rifle Telegram*, 28 June 1934.
- ⁹Merrill, *Roosevelt's Forest Army*, 12.
- ¹⁰*Ibid.*, 11.
- ¹¹John A. Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942: A New Deal Case Study* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1967), 135.
- ¹²McCreanor.
- ¹³Salmond, *New Deal Case Study*, 137-141.
- ¹⁴*Ibid.*, 140-141.
- ¹⁵*The Glenwood Post*, 17 December 1936.
- ¹⁶*The Rifle Telegram*, 21 June 1934.
- ¹⁷Salmond, *New Deal Case Study*, 142.
- ¹⁸Lieutenant W. Earnest Hunter organized the *Tent City Journal*, a local one-sheet newspaper edited and published in the camp.
- ¹⁹*The Rifle Telegram*, 12 July 1934.
- ²⁰*Ibid.*, 26 July 1934.
- ²¹Gleyre and Alleger, *History*, 144.
- ²²*Ibid.*, 145.
- ²³*Ibid.*
- ²⁴*Rock Climbing: Rifle Mountain Park*, brochure (Boulder, CO: Sportiva, n.d.), n.p.
- ²⁵*The Rifle Telegram*, 17 May 1934.
- ²⁶*Ibid.*
- ²⁷*Ibid.*, 24 May 1934.

- ²⁸*The Glenwood Post*, 7 June 1934.
- ²⁹*Ibid.*, 23 August 1934.
- ³⁰*The Rifle Telegram*, 17 May 1934.
- ³¹*Ibid.*, 24 May 1934.
- ³²*Ibid.*, 17 May 1934.
- ³³Gleyre and Alleger, *History*, 145.
- ³⁴*The Rifle Telegram*, 24 May 1934.
- ³⁵*Ibid.*, 31 May 1934.
- ³⁶The author knows the community hall is still in use because his father was remarried there in 1991.
- ³⁷*The Glenwood Post*, 7 June 1934.
- ³⁸*The Rifle Telegram*, 21 June 1934.
- ³⁹*Ibid.*, 28 June 1934.
- ⁴⁰*The Glenwood Post*, 5 July 1934.
- ⁴¹*Ibid.*, 12 July 1934.
- ⁴²*The Rifle Telegram*, 5 July 1934.
- ⁴³*The Glenwood Post*, 19 July 1934.
- ⁴⁴Gleyre and Alleger, *History*, 145.
- ⁴⁵*The Glenwood Post*, 19 July 1934.
- ⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 5 July 1934.
- ⁴⁷Gleyre and Alleger, *History*, 145.
- ⁴⁸*Ibid.*
- ⁴⁹*The Rifle Telegram*, 16 August 1934.
- ⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 9 August 1934.
- ⁵¹Gleyre and Alleger, *History*, 14.
- ⁵²Salmond, *New Deal Case Study*, 139.
- ⁵³*The Rifle Telegram*, 24 May 1934.
- ⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 6 September 1934.
- ⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 31 May 1934.
- ⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 12 July 1934.
- ⁵⁷Gleyre and Alleger, *History*, 145.
- ⁵⁸*The Rifle Telegram*, 23 August 1934.
- ⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 30 August 1934.
- ⁶⁰*The Glenwood Post*, 22 June 1934.
- ⁶¹*The Rifle Telegram*, 7 June 1934.
- ⁶²*Ibid.*, 30 August 1934.
- ⁶³*Ibid.*, 9 August 1934.
- ⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 16 August 1934.
- ⁶⁵*Ibid.*

- ⁶⁶Ibid., 6 September 1934.
⁶⁷Ibid., 27 September 1934.
⁶⁸Salmond, *New Deal Case Study*, 88.
⁶⁹Ibid.
⁷⁰Ibid., 101.
⁷¹Ibid., 91.
⁷²*The Rifle Telegram*, 12 July 1934.
⁷³Gleyre and Alleger, *History*, 145-146.
⁷⁴*The Rifle Telegram*, 12 July 1934.
⁷⁵Ibid., 26 July 1934.
⁷⁶Ibid., 2 August 1934.
⁷⁷Ibid., 23 August 1934.
⁷⁸Ibid., 30 August 1934.
⁷⁹Ibid., 18 August 1934.
⁸⁰Ibid., 9 August 1934.
⁸¹Ibid., 13 September 1934.
⁸²Ibid., 31 January 1935.
⁸³Ibid., 7 June 1934.
⁸⁴Ibid., 29 November 1934.
⁸⁵Ibid., 20 December 1934.
⁸⁶Ibid.
⁸⁷Ibid., 28 June 1934.
⁸⁸Ibid., 4 October 1934.
⁸⁹Ibid., 6 September 1934.
⁹⁰Ibid., 4 October 1934.
⁹¹*The Glenwood Post*, 23 August 1934.
⁹²*The Glenwood Post*, 4 October 1934.
⁹³Lena M. Urquhart, *Glenwood Springs: Spa in the Mountains* (Boulder, CO: Taylor Publishing Co., 1970), 139-140.
⁹⁴*The Glenwood Post*, 29 November 1934.
⁹⁵Ibid., 11 October 1934.
⁹⁶Ibid., 18 July 1935.
⁹⁷Ibid., 25 October 1934.
⁹⁸Ibid., 19 November 1936.
⁹⁹Ibid., 12 October 1939.
¹⁰⁰Ibid., 1 April 1937.
¹⁰¹Ibid., 23 June 1938.
¹⁰²Ibid., 21 July 1938.
¹⁰³Ibid., 12 October 1939.

- ¹⁰⁴Ibid., 28 July 1938.
- ¹⁰⁵Ibid., 8 December 1938.
- ¹⁰⁶Ibid., 24 January 1985.
- ¹⁰⁷Ibid., 31 August 1990.
- ¹⁰⁸Ibid., 24 January 1985.
- ¹⁰⁹Ibid., 31 August 1990.
- ¹¹⁰*The Rifle Telegram*, 6 December 1934.
- ¹¹¹Ibid., 23 August 1934.
- ¹¹²*The Glenwood Post*, 23 April 1936.
- ¹¹³Ibid., 10 December 1936.
- ¹¹⁴Gleyre and Alleger, *History*, 146.
- ¹¹⁵*The Glenwood Post*, 17 December 1936.
- ¹¹⁶Ibid., 31 August 1990.
- ¹¹⁷Merrill, *Roosevelt's Forest Army*, vii.
- ¹¹⁸McCreanor.
- ¹¹⁹Merrill, *Roosevelt's Forest Army*, 115-116.
- ¹²⁰*Rock Climbing: Rifle Mountain Park*, brochure (Boulder, CO: Sportiva, n.d.), n.p.

Book Review

Historic Telluride in Rare Photographs. By Christian J. Buys (Ouray: Western Reflections, Inc., 1999, pp. 320. Hardback, \$39.95).

Historic Telluride is the second picture history of a Western Slope mining community by Mesa State professor Chris Buys. His first, *Historic Leadville in Rare Photographs and Drawings*, was an award-winning work. *Historic Telluride* covers a mining district from the 1870s through the 1940s. It includes over 350 photographs, many published for the first time. Maps of the Telluride region, the "Upper San Miguel Mining District," and Telluride itself help readers locate places mentioned in the text. A bibliography and an index add to the usefulness of the book.

Buys visited eight repositories of historic photos, copied images from private collections, scoured periodicals such as *Harper's Weekly*, and persuaded his daughter Amy to photograph materials from his private collection for use in the publication. The author's purpose is to share "the delight of visual treasures, the exhilaration of discovery." Buys asks: What can equal finding "a long-forgotten miner's cabin" or "abandoned glory hole" (p. 1)? The photos are well chosen, thoughtfully arranged, and large enough to be studied for details.

A picture captioned "Dwarfed by Surroundings" encapsulates the mood of the book. In it human efforts and the mighty San Juans are juxtaposed in a photo of a pack train zigzags its way down a small trail etched on a great mountain. Studying the picture makes the reader wonder if people really believed that they could conquer these mountains.

How did these people feel and what did they think as they cut trails by hand, followed horses and mules laboriously pulling wagons, and attacked rock faces with picks and dynamite? The images in the book convey that people worked and played hard in Telluride, but that nature—snowstorms, cloudbursts, mud slides, and bitter cold—determined much about living in Telluride.

Photos of people stick in one's mind. Pathos emanates from the bedraggled hermit Linnard Reminie who, mistakenly believing that he had killed a man in Creede, came to the San Juans to prospect and hide. Viewers would like to strike up a conversation with the amicable blacksmith John Keith, who stands in a jumble of iron in his shop. Harriet Fish Backus, author of the classic *Tomboy Bride*, appears as those who have read her book would expect—patrician but sporting a mischievous grin. One wonders why the romance between the prizefighter named the "Tennessee Kid" and Ogda Matson ended. Readers marvel that a long distance romance and happy marriage resulted from John "Pegleg" Foster ordering something from Sears and Roebuck and communicating with a clerk named Francis, "the ultimate 'mail order bride'" (249). Pictures of miners and the underworld where they worked document the tremendous effort that mining required.

Not all the images in *Historic Telluride* are photographs; Buys uses strong verbs and a rich pallet of colors to paint captivating word pictures. For example, about the San Miguel River winding its way through the San Miguel Park, he writes:

In spring the river's muddy-brown water churns through an emerging abundance of brightly colored wild flowers. By summer its hearty turquoise swells splash over smooth boulders, intermittently crowd its banks. Come fall the San Miguel's sky-blue water courses more slowly through a cornucopia of oranges, reds, and yellows created by patches of high-altitude aspen and scrub oak. Skittish mule deer lower their heads to drink its bracing liquid while trout flash by. During winter the icy blue river slows, meandering among cornices of windblown snow that blankets the entire six-mile-long flat. (p. xii)

There are five chapters in the book. The first, "The Early Years (1860s-1880s)," chronicles the departure of the Utes, followed by promotional efforts for the area, the beginnings of mining, and construction of dams, sawmills, and toll roads. According to Buys, this early period in Telluride's history was lusty: "Mining, bawdiness, and booze dominated the tenor of Telluride in the early 1880s" (p. 3). In chapter two, "Telluride Thrives (1890s)," Buys explains: "This was Telluride's decade. The arrival of the Rio Grande Southern Railroad in 1890 signaled the start of Telluride's first sustained economic boom" (p.53). In this decade, Telluride produced a *bona fide* genius in Lucien Lucius Nunn who solved a local energy crisis and inaugurated a worldwide technological revolution by generating alternating current electrical power. The eight pages on Nunn will cause thoughtful readers to ponder along with Chris Buys: Why has history neglected such a man?

As the title of chapter three, "Turbulence in Paradise (1900s)," suggests, turmoil marked this decade. A miners's strike brought the state militia to town, and floods, fires, and snow slides added to the heartache. National political figures seeking sweeping political changes visited Telluride. Socialist Eugene Debs was there, as was William Jennings Bryan who recited his famous "cross of gold" speech for the locals. Chapter four, "Fashionable Balls, the Big Flood, and Flu (1910s)," documents a decade when entertainment, a mudslide of gargantuan proportions, World War I, and Spanish Flu occupied the people of Telluride.

The fifth and final chapter, "Hard Times, But Good Times (1920s-1940s)," depicts an era when mines like the Tomboy and the Smuggler-Union closed, and Telluride residents weathered the Depression (in part because of bootlegging). World War II offered something of a reprieve by creating a demand for zinc, copper, and uranium. Eventually, however, conditions worsened, and the Rio Grande Southern relegated its service to half-auto and half-locomotives called "Galloping Geese," and then cut Telluride from its route. By the late 1940s only about 400 people remained in Telluride. The popularity of skiing grew, but few saw much of a future in that.

Historic Telluride is a valuable addition to the history of the Western Slope. Scholars and general readers will enjoy following the look and feel of a mining town from its boisterous beginnings to its

decline in the mid-twentieth century. Readers of the *Journal of the Western Slope* will be pleased to learn that Western Reflections and Chris Buys have teamed up to publish a third picture history, this one featuring images of Colorado in a time before cameras became common in the state.

Paul Reddin

Professor of History, Mesa State College

Book Review

Sunset Slope: True Epics of Western Colorado. By Wilson Rockwell (Ouray, CO: Western Reflections, Inc., 1999, reprint, pp. 290. Paperback, \$16.95).

With the reprinting of *Sunset Slope*, Western Reflections makes available to readers another out-of-print classic about Colorado's Western Slope. This volume contains twenty-two fast-paced tales of adventure spanning the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Geographic settings include Brown's Park, Grand Lake, Gunnison, Grand Mesa, Durango, and Steamboat Springs. Residents of the Grand Valley will find many more local names, such as Whitewater, Delta, and Grand Junction, peppering the text.

A combination of vernacular and erudition reflects the spirit of author Wilson Rockwell who grew up ranching in Paonia, and received his education at Stanford and the University of Denver. Readers on the Western Slope recognize him as an able historian and an accomplished storyteller. Many are familiar with his other publications, such as *The Utes: A Forgotten People*, *New Frontier*, *Driftwood*, *No Way Rich*, and *Uncompahgre Country*.

The stories remind this reviewer of the tales told and retold by old-timers sitting around a pot-bellied stove in a general store on a cold winter day, or irrigators passing time in the shade of a pickup on a summer afternoon while waiting to change the water. To corroborate these stories, Rockwell conducted interviews with the participants and consulted written materials, such as newspapers, the *Congressional Record*,

CWA records at the Colorado State Historical Society, the reports of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, and other reliable sources. The result is a balance of "Wild West" folklore about the Western Slope tempered by respectable scholarship.

Sunset Slope brims with colorful characters, adventure, and bloodshed. It includes well known names like Alferd Packer, Nathan Meeker, and Tom Horn, as well as a host of lesser known individuals—cattle rustlers, bank robbers, claim jumpers, doublecrossers, sheriffs, game wardens, and hired guns. The stories are mostly high adventure featuring shootouts, murders, feuds, jail breaks, posses chasing outlaws, full-fledged battles, salted mines, lynch mobs, racially motivated killings, and disputes over water. One tale tells of arson and killings precipitated by William Radcliffe, an Englishman who bought a lake on the Grand Mesa and hired armed guards to keep it private. Another tells of Charles Delos Waggoner, a Telluride banker who pulled off the perfect crime to protect his depositors' money. Rockwell writes sympathetically about Ouray and Chipeta. What reader's interest would not be piqued by the details of the first boat trip down the Black Canyon of the Gunnison?

Rockwell's tales generally begin with a paragraph or two to locate the story in time and place, wherein he provides a brief geographic description and a little about the historic setting. Almost always he provides a physical description of the principals in the story, followed by a quick analysis of their character. After that he proceeds to tell a fast paced story. Often Rockwell concludes his tales with a poignant single sentence. In "The Price of Hay," for example, Rockwell tells the story of a gunfight that erupted over rights to cut the grass in a meadow. In it the perpetrator's sixteen-year-old son died. Rockwell concludes his account: "Everything considered, Tom Welch paid a high price for his fall hay cutting" (p. 235).

Forty-six well-chosen photographs supplement the text. The picture of outlaw Harry Tracy almost makes one's blood run cold. The up-close photos of the head and shoulders of the corpses of bank robbers will catch the attention of most readers. The photo of the gentlemanly Cash Sampson kneeling beside his dog before he died in a shootout is sad. The pictures of the wooden boats used in the first trip through the Black Canyon make the reader wonder how the men in them survived the trip.

Sunset Slope includes tantalizing sketches that may prompt more scholarship about the Western Slope. The political career of the author's

father, Robert F. Rockwell, who battled both the Nonpartisan League and the Ku Klux Klan, deserves attention. John C. Bell, a judge, congressman, and Populist from Montrose, appears to be an important but neglected figure on the Western Slope.

The reissue of Rockwell's *Sunset Slope* is a valuable service to anyone interested in the Western Slope.

Paul Reddin

Professor of History, Mesa State College

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