

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW RELEASE FORM: Civilian Conservation Corps Project

Funded in Part by the Arkansas Endowment for the Humanities

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INTERVIEWEE King C. Boyd
 DATE 8-1-82
 INTERVIEWER To Ann Dobbell
 DATE 8-5-82

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Funded in Part by the Arkansas Endowment for the Humanities

With the Assistance of the Public History Program

University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Name of Interviewee: King C. Byrd

Title of Oral History Memoir: The Corps Remembered as a Reinforcement
Of the Work Ethic

Sponsor: National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni

Date of Interview: 6:00 P.M., August 5, 1982

Name of Interviewer: Jo Ann DuVall

Preface

This material was collected through a tape-recorded interview of King C. Byrd on August 5, 1982. The interview was conducted by Jo Ann Duvall, a graduate student of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Public History Program. The UALR Public History Program assisted the Arkansas Endowment for the Humanities in collecting information on the Civilian Conservation Corps in Arkansas.

Mr. Byrd was born in Paris, Arkansas on October 11, 1912. His father was a minister and farmer. He was the third of six children. At the age of nine they moved to Springfield, Arkansas in Conway County. He attended high school at the high school division of Agricultural, Mechanical and Normal College (A.M. & N.) at Pine Bluff, where he finished at the age of twenty-four. He was immediately recruited into the Forrest City CCC camp. He was stationed there from 1936 to 1941. His first year was spent under the Local Experienced Men (LEM) program. Mr. Byrd worked as a cost clerk. During his remaining three years at the camp he was classed as an assistant leader. He taught carpentry under this designation. He was exempted from military service during World War II because he was a teacher. He taught vocational education for about thirty years. In addition, since 1947 he has been an independent construction contractor. While working at two jobs, teaching and construction, Mr. Byrd was also working towards his degree. He received a Bachelor of Science in Trade Industrial Education from A.M. & N. in 1970. Although he retired from teaching in 1976, he has continued in the construction business, helping his son who is also an independent contractor.

What follows is a tape index of King C. Byrd's oral history memoir. This index summarizes the content of the interview and identifies the position

(Preface continued)

on the tape of the topics covered in the interview. Neither the interviewer, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Public History Program, or the National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni are responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir or for the views expressed by the narrator.

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INTERVIEW DATA SHEET: Civilian Conservation Corps Project

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE: King C. Byrd

ADDRESS: 1409 Pine Street

North Little Rock, Arkansas

TELEPHONE: (501) 372-2572

INTERVIEWER: Jo Ann DuVall

DATE OF INTERVIEW: August 5, 1982

PLACE OF INTERVIEW: Home of interviewee

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 45 minutes

TERMS OF USE: Open

COLLATERAL MATERIALS: Copies of nine documents:

Letter of Advice, two Red Cross

Certificate cards, three CCC Certi-

ficates, List of Duties of Cost

Clerk, two Honorable CCC Discharges,

Additional Information on Interview.

Interview Outline

Interviewee: King C. Byrd

Interviewer: Jo Ann DuVall

- I Background
 - A. Birth and early life at Paris, Arkansas
 - B. Education through high school
 - C. Recruitment into CCC LEM program
 - D. Family
- II Forrest City Camp
 - A. Stationed at Forrest City
 - B. LEM program
 - C. Became assistant leader
 - D. Differences between LEM program and that for assistant leader
- III CCC Training
 - A. Social Skills
 - B. Vocational Skills
- IV Camp Recreation
- V Educational Opportunities
 - A. Related to job training
 - B. Included carpentry, farm management, and conservation
- VI Daily Functioning of the Camp
 - A. Waking, washing, breakfast
 - B. Work call: duties as an office cost clerk
 - C. Supper and recreation
- VII Differences Between LEM Duties and Assistant Leader Duties
- VIII Camp Food
- IX Marriage Began While an LEM
- X CCC Learning Experience Promoted the Value of Hard Work and Perserverance
- XI Children
- XII Work During World War II
 - A. Construction work
 - 1. Private contractor
 - 2. Government defense contracts
 - B. Taught vocational education

(Interview Outline continued)

XIII Teaching Career

XIV CCC Contribution to the Nation

XV St. Francis River Flood of 1937

Question List

Side A of Tape

1. Introduction for Interview:

This is an oral history interview in the Civilian Conservation Corps Project sponsored by the Arkansas Endowment for the Humanities. The date is August 5, 1982. The place is 1409 North Pine Street, North Little Rock, Arkansas. The interviewer is JoAnn DuVall.

2. What is your name, Sir?
3. Would you tell me about yourself: the date of your birth, where you were born, something about your parents and your brothers and sisters?
4. Where were you born?
5. Could you tell me something about your brothers and sisters?
6. How old were you when you entered the CCC?
7. How did you learn about the CCC?
8. Could you give your main reasons for enlisting in the CCC?
9. Could you tell me something about your family's financial situation? How bad was it?
10. Your father was mainly a farmer?
11. When and where did you enlist in the CCC?
12. You were stationed there in Forrest City?
13. When did you leave the CCC and how long did you serve?
14. How was the LEM different from your latter duties as an assistant leader?
15. What is your wife's name?
16. What were the different kinds of training that you received in the camp?
17. You also had skills such as carpentry?
18. What did you do in the camp when you weren't working, when you had off-time?
19. What teams did you play?

(Question List continued)

20. Did your camp have educational opportunities other than job training?
21. Some of the camps had opportunities for some of the men, if they had not finished high school and some if they were near colleges, to take courses for credit. Did you have anything like that?
22. Everyone at the Forrest City Camp had finished high school?
23. Give me an idea of what camp life was like and what a typical day was like from the time you got up in the morning until you went to bed at night?
24. I believe that you told me over the phone that you taught carpentry. That was when you were in the LEM?
25. After you became assistant leader, you became a cost clerk?
26. What was the food like?
27. Did you grow some of your own food around the camp? Did you have gardens?
28. How did you feel about being away from home? Were you homesick?
29. Where was Mrs. King living when you first married?
30. How often did you get to see her before she moved?
31. Did you write home to your wife and family?
32. How did your family feel about your being in the CCC and your wife after you got married?
33. So when she came and you got a home in Forrest City you didn't live in the camp?
34. Did the government take out some [of your salary] to send to your wife?
35. Since you lived at home you just took it home?
36. Can you tell me something about the living experience? What use it was to you later?
37. What were your children named?
38. Did you have more children later?
39. What were you doing during World War II?
40. Were you ever in the military?
41. That's [Jones High School] here in North Little Rock?
42. Do you remember what year that you started teaching ?

(Question List continued)

43. Where is Ridge Road?
44. It's here in North Little Rock?
45. When you went into the CCC how much college had you completed?
46. What were you teaching, mainly vocational...?
47. What is your opinion of the CCC and its contribution to the youth and the nation's economy in those years from 1933 to '42?
48. I understand that congress has recently passed a bill to reinstitute the CCC. Do you think that that would be a good thing?
49. I've asked you questions about the CCC and what your part was. Is there anything that you would like to tell me that was important to you?
50. How long did the flood go on?
51. After the flood was over did the camp do anything to further help the community or was that the end of it?

Side B

52. Do you keep in touch with any of the people who were in the CCC camp who might still live here in Arkansas?
53. Would any of these have been out in the field during the flood?

Oral History Tape Index

Interviewee: King C. Byrd
Interviewer: Jo Ann DuVall
Project: Civilian Conservation Corps
Location: Mr. Byrd's home at 1409 North Pine Street, North Little Rock,
Arkansas
Date of Interview: 8-5-82
Length of Interview: 45 minutes

Tape Footage	Side A	Subjects
000-063		Background
000-012		A. Birth through high school.
013-018		B. Recruitment into CCC Local Experienced Men (LEM) program by Col. Snyder.
019-034		C. Family.
035-048		D. Entered CCC at age twenty-four. LEM program. Reasons for enlisting.
049-063		E. Family's financial situation.
068-100		Forrest City Camp
068-076		A. Enlisted and stationed there from 1936-1941.
077-100		B. LEM discontinued. Became camp assistant leader. Differences between LEM and assistant leaders.
101-122		Training
		A. Ability to get along with others.
		B. Vocational skills.
123-136		Camp Recreation
137-165		Educational Opportunities
		A. Job related.
		B. Included carpentry, farm management and conservation.
166-235		Daily Functioning of the Camp
166-195		A. Rising. Work call. Office work.
196-229		B. Duties as a cost clerk.
230-235		C. Supper and recreation.
236-239		Differences Between LEM and Assistant Leader Work
240-258		Camp Food
259-324		Being Away From Home
259-280		A. Had married.

(Oral History Tape Index continued)

281-289	B. Keeping in touch
290-324	C. Setting up housekeeping at Forrest City. LEM.
325-340	CCC Learning Experience
342-354	Children
355-410	Work During World War II
	A. Construction. Private contractor. Government defense plants.
	B. Began teaching at Jones High School.
411-448	Teaching Career. Jones High. Ridge Road Junior High. Vocational Education.
449-495	Contribution of the CCC
496-End of Side A	St. Francis River Flood
000-024 Side B	Continuation of Flood Experience

Interviewer's Comments

King C. Byrd Memoir

The interview took place in the kitchen of Mr. Byrd's home at 1409 North Pine Street in North Little Rock, Arkansas. The time was 6:00 on a hot August evening, 8-5-82.

Mr. Byrd is sixty-nine years old. He is semi-retired. He appeared to be in good health. Mr. Byrd was interested in relating his experience at the CCC camp in Forrest City. He did not seem to tire at any time during the interview. He continued to talk for awhile after the taping was concluded.

Mr. Byrd's memory appeared to be clear on the experiences which he was most interested in, those relating mainly to his work, the commanding officers and to several friends with whom he has kept in touch. He acknowledged that not all camp aspects are clear to him because he had no first hand knowledge of them, such as what the work in the field was like during and after the St. Francis River flood.

Mr. Byrd had only positive remembrances of his CCC camp. There are several reasons for this. At the age of twenty-four when he entered the camp he had already been away from home and therefore was not homesick. However, he married the first year he was at the camp and did miss his wife who was living some distance away at Springfield, Arkansas with his parents. Secondly, those in the LEM program had more personal freedom than regular enrollees. LEMs could live in town. His wife was able to move to Forrest City and they set up housekeeping together. Later as an assistant leader he enjoyed the same freedom.

(Interviewer's Comments continued)

King C. Byrd's narration seems credible. Mr. Byrd is a man influenced early in life by the work ethic who views his CCC experience and his life with work as a central focus. His remembrances are valuable for two reasons, the length of his service and the positions from which he served. He was at the same camp for four years. In positions of authority, as a cost clerk and as a teacher, he had more of an overview of the camp operation than a regular enrollee. However, he admitted that he would not know as much about field labor as an enrollee.

Although Mr. Byrd is a black man who was stationed at one of the few black CCC camps, he did not talk directly about this form of segregation until after the taped interview was concluded. He then spoke briefly, several sentences, on the subject. He did not appear to have any recriminations but rather accepted the situation as a fact of life. Mr. King did note that times have changed. He said that at the North Little Rock Burns Park reunion both white and black alumni had many things in common from their CCC experience. They all remembered the discipline and hard work.

In listening to the tape one must note that at times both Mr. Byrd and the interviewer refer to his high school as "college." This was due to the fact that he attended the high school division of a college, A.M. & N., which is now known as the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. He did receive a BS degree from that institution in 1970.

Honorable Discharge
from the
Civilian Conservation Corps



TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to Certify That* King C. Byrd CC7-164049

a member of the CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS, who was enrolled
July 16th, 1938 at Co. 4734 CCC, Forrest City, Ark., is hereby
(Date)
HONORABLY DISCHARGED therefrom, by reason of** Own Request.

Said King C. Byrd was born in Paris
in the State of Arkansas When enrolled he was 23 years
of age and by occupation a Carpenter He had Brown eyes,
Black hair, Brown complexion, and was 5 feet
7 1/2 inches in height. His color was Colored

Co. 4734 CCC
Given under my hand at Forrest City, Arkansas, this Eleventh day
of August, one thousand nine hundred and Forty-one.

C. R. Murphy
C. R. MURPHY, Company Commander

* Insert name, as "John J. Doe."
** Give reason for discharge.

RECORD OF SERVICE IN CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

**Served:

Co. 4734 CCC

a. From 7/16/41 to 8/11/41, under War Dept. at Forrest City, Ark.

Type of work Project Assistant (Technical Service Clerk) *Manner of performance Excellent

b. From _____ to _____, under _____ Dept. at _____

Type of work _____ *Manner of performance _____

c. From _____ to _____, under _____ Dept. at _____

Type of work _____ *Manner of performance _____

d. From _____ to _____, under _____ Dept. at _____

Type of work _____ *Manner of performance _____

e. From _____ to _____, under _____ Dept. at _____

Type of work _____ *Manner of performance _____

FINANCE OFFICE
 E. 25th & R. 11 R.F.
 LITTLE ROCK, ARK.
 PAID IN FULL
 CHECK # 1000
 AUG 19 1941
 ANOTHER CHECK # 1000
 STEPHEN J. MURPHY

Remarks: AWL: 7/10/39 to 7/16/39 (6 da.) 9/7-8/39 (2 da.) 12/22-26/39 (5 da.)
1/23-28/40 (6 da.) 4/26-27/40 (2 da.) 8/12-17/40 (6 da.)
12/22-26/40 (6 da.) 2/3-8/41 (6 da) 6/4-7/41 (4 da.) 8/4-9/41 (6 da)

AWOL: None. AWOP: None.

APPOINTMENTS: Appointed from Mbr. to Leader 7/16/38

REDUCTIONS: None.

CHARACTER: Excellent CONDUCT: Excellent
 Typhoid: 7/16/38 7/25/38 7/30/38

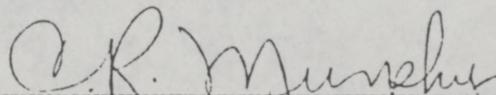
Inoculations: Smallpox: 7/16/38.

Records/Hearings: None. Fines: None.

THIS ENROLLEE WAS AN EXEMPTED MAN (Technical Service)

Discharged: August 11, 1941 at Co. 4734 CCC, Forrest City, Ark.

Transportation furnished from No Government Transportation involved.


 C. R. MURPHY (Name) Company Commander

*Use words "Excellent", "Satisfactory", or "Unsatisfactory".
 **To be taken from C. C. C. Form No. 1.

Honorable Discharge
from the
Civilian Conservation Corps

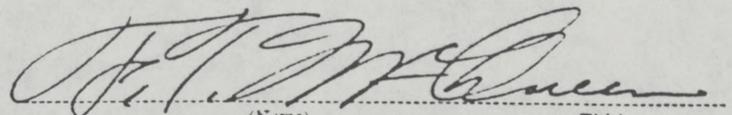


TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to Certify That * Chester King, Byrd 667-164049
a member of the CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS, who was enrolled
June 1, 1936 at Camp SCS-10, Forrest City, Ark., is hereby
(Date)
HONORABLY DISCHARGED therefrom, by reason of ** Expiration of enrollment.

Said Chester King, Byrd was born in Paris
in the State of Arkansas When enrolled he was 23 years
of age and by occupation a Carpentry He had Black eyes,
Black hair, Black complexion, and was Five feet
Seven inches in height. His color was Colored

Given under my hand at Camp SCS-10, this Thirtieth day
of September, one thousand nine hundred and Thirty Seven


F. T. McQUEEN (Name) Capt. Inf., -Res (Title)

* Insert name, as "John J. Doe."
** Give reason for discharge.

RECORD OF SERVICE IN CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

**Served:

a. From 6/1/35 to 9/30/37, under War Dept. at ^{Camp SCS-10} Forrest City, Ark.

Type of work Carpentry *Manner of performance Satisfactory *F.T.M.*

b. From _____ to _____, under _____ Dept. at _____

Type of work _____ *Manner of performance _____

c. From _____ to _____, under _____ Dept. at _____

Type of work _____ *Manner of performance _____

d. From _____ to _____, under _____ Dept. at _____

Type of work _____ *Manner of performance _____

e. From _____ to _____, under _____ Dept. at _____

Type of work _____ *Manner of performance _____

Remarks:

Appointments: Asst. Asst. Ldr. Ex. mbr. C.C. #76 11/1/36

Reductions: Det'd. Asst. Ldr. To Mbr. per Co #14 6/1/37

ATOL: None

ATCP: None

ATL: 12/19-27/36 9 da. 2/17-19/37, incl.

PROPERTY OFFICER
 FOR THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS
 NORTH ARKANSAS FOREST, ARK.
 Paid in full: 10/1/37
 Cash \$ 361.00
 Advice Checks
 1937

E. W. Williams
 Chief, Exp. Fin.

Honorably Discharged: September 30, 1937 at Camp SCS-10, Forrest City, Ark.

Transportation furnished from Forrest City, Ark. to Springfield, Ark.

F. T. McQueen

F. T. McQueen (Name)

Capt. Inf.-Res. (Title)

* Use words "Excellent" or "Satisfactory."
 ** To be taken from C. C. Form No. 1.

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

U.C. 772170



Unit

Certificate

THIS CERTIFIES THAT King Chester Byrd of Company 4734 has satisfactorily completed 14 hours of instruction in Farm Management and is therefore granted this Certificate.

Howard T. Barnett
HOWARD T. BARNETT Project Superintendent. *Oliver C. Harvey*
OLIVER C. HARVEY Company Commander.

Harvey V. McDaniel, Jr.
HARVEY V. McDANIEL, JR. Camp Educational Adviser.

Date 9/18/40 Place Forrest City, Arkansas

6-9671

1. THE AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS



THIS CERTIFIES THAT

K. C. BYRD
HAS COMPLETED THE STANDARD COURSE
OF INSTRUCTION IN FIRST AID TO THE INJURED UNDER THE
AUSPICES OF Co. 4734, CCC
FORREST CITY, ARKANSAS
12/1/36

Harold H. Eulow

DIRECTOR, FIRST AID AND LIFE SAVING

2. THE AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS



THIS CERTIFIES THAT

King C. Byrd
HAS COMPLETED THE Standard COURSE
OF INSTRUCTION IN FIRST AID TO THE INJURED AT
Co. 4734, CCC
Forrest City, Arkansas
5/27/41

Harold H. Eulow

DIRECTOR, FIRST AID, WATER SAFETY AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION

1. (This Certificate expires three years from date)

COUNTERSIGNED

J. F. Clark M.D.

TITLE

HOLDER'S SIGNATURE

King C. Byrd

ADDRESS

Forrest City Ark.

FORM 1305 REV. 6-8-34

2. (This Certificate expires three years from date and is renewable only through enrollment in and completion of another First Aid Course)

COUNTERSIGNED

Geo W French

TITLE

Camp Engineer

HOLDER'S SIGNATURE

King C. Byrd

ADDRESS

*220 S. Division St.
Forrest City, Ark.*

FORM 1305 REV. MAY 1941

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

Official Educational Certificate

This is to Certify that King C. Byrd
of Company 4734, Civilian Conservation Corps, has completed a Course of Instruction in
Office work

and is hereby awarded an Official Educational Certificate. This award is made
this 24 day of September 1937

Harvey V. McDaniel
Educational Adviser.

J. M. Green
Commanding Officer.



CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

Official Educational Certificate

This is to Certify that King Chester Byrd
of Company 4734, Civilian Conservation Corps, has completed a Course of Instruction in
Carpentry

and is hereby awarded an Official Educational Certificate. This award is made
this 21 day of September 1937

Harvey V. McDaniel
Educational Adviser.

J. M. Green
Commanding Officer.



DUTIES OF COST CLERK

Under the direct Supervision of the Camp Superintendent and Chief Clerk, the Cost Clerk is responsible for:

1. Collecting all reports and information to be reported on the SCS-515 and CCC-7 each month.
2. Responsible for making the above reports as assigned by the Chief Clerk.
3. Responsible for the checking of the number of men turned over by the Army each day in order that they check correctly for the CCC-7.
4. Responsible for the assisting in training of new enrollees in general office work and keeping the office equipment in good condition.
5. Responsible for assisting the File Clerk with the mail and filing material, and acting doing his absence.
6. Responsible for checking and issuing all office supplies that come from the warehouse to be used in the office.
7. Responsible for preparing lunch list for each field crew daily, in order that sufficient food is prepared for enrollees in the field.
8. Responsible for figuring and inserting all actual job cost on work orders (SCS-656) immediately after jobs are completed.
9. Responsible for answering all telephone calls, and taking messages for all members of the SCC personnel doing their absence from office.
10. Responsible for seeing that all orders given by the Superintendent and Chief Clerk are carried out doing their absence from office.

King A. Byrd.
Cost Clerk

~~Subject;~~ A letter of advice

During the past four years I have been fortunate in seeing large groups of Enrollees come and go, to and from the camp. By September 30th there will be approximately fifty men discharged from the company. Some of these men will no doubt be discharged due to misconduct in camp, others due to unsatisfactory work in camp, or in the field.

There are some who have made good records thus far, but knowing that their time is very short in the C's, fall in the back row, hence, losing that which they seem to have. But let me warn you men, don't begin to loaf on the job as you near the goal you have been striving so hard to reach. If the impression that you have made has been poor, take advantage of your last days and do your best to make the last impression a good one.

Remember, the cripple can't carry the lame, and it is always the man who is your superior who can say the most for you to help you on to success. A good recommendation is worth far more to you than a few days shirking and dodging your duty.

By King C. Byrd.



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

33RD AND UNIVERSITY · LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72204 · 501/569-3235

Department of History

July 26, 1982

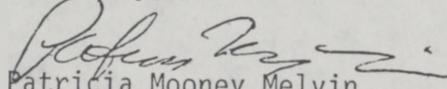
King C. Byrd
1409 North Pine
North Little Rock, AR
372-2572

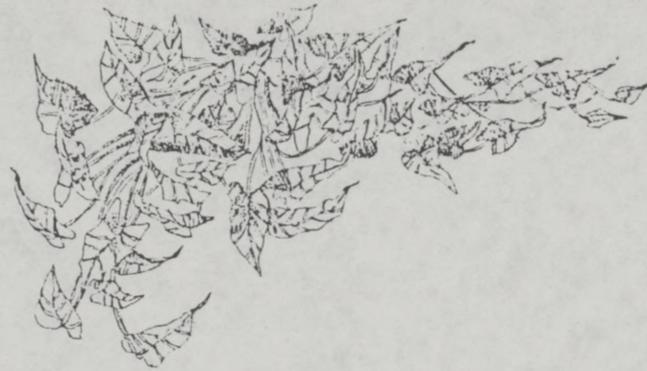
Dear Mr. Byrd:

As you know, the Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni in Arkansas, under the direction of James Ratcliff, President of the South Central Region of the National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni, is gathering material for a history of the CCC in Arkansas. My oral history class at UALR is assisting Mr. Ratcliff in this effort. Each student is going to secure an oral history interview from a former member of the corps. Mr. Ratcliff suggested that you would be willing to participate in this project. Within the next week one of my students will be contacting you.

I have included a copy of the release form for the interview and of the list of questions for your perusal. I appreciate your cooperation in this project.

Sincerely,


Patricia Mooney Melvin
Assistant Professor of History



8-11-82

Dear Mr. King

I would like to tell you again how much I appreciate your co-operation on the CCC oral history project. It was a pleasure to interview someone who both had useful information on the CCC here in Arkansas and who was eager to share his experience with others.

I made copies of your documents and mailed them back to you on Saturday. I hope that you have received

them by now.

Sincerely,

Jo Ann DuWall