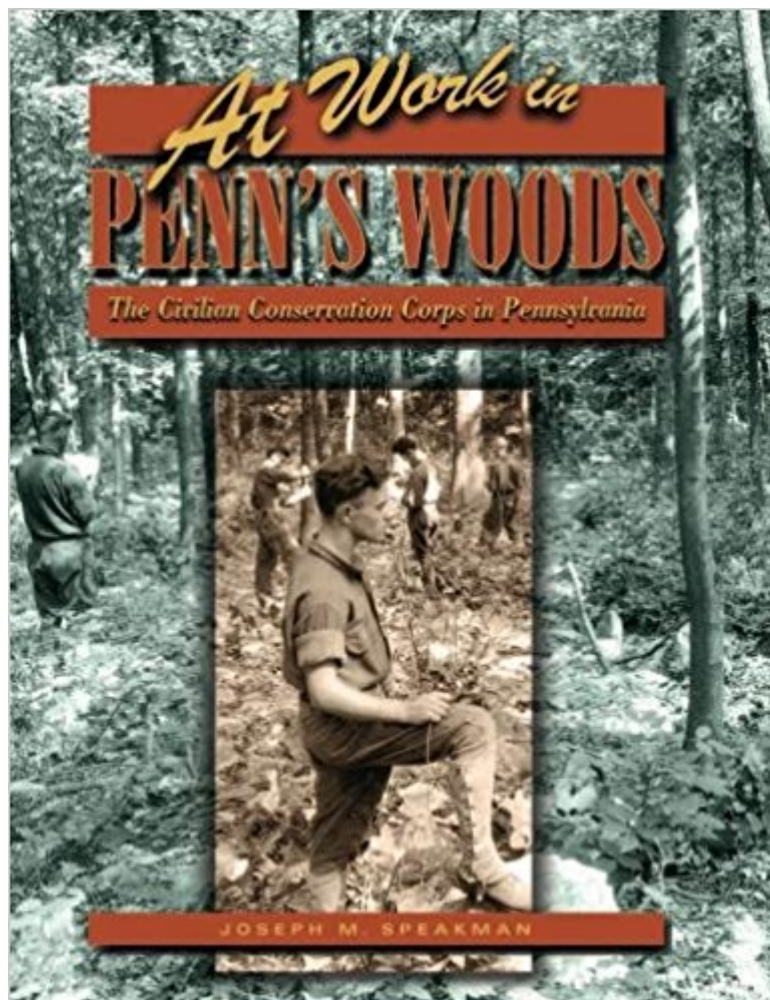




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# At Work In Penn's Woods: The Civilian Conservation Corps In Pennsylvania (Keystone Books)



## Synopsis

The Civilian Conservation Corps was one of the most popular programs of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. Over the nine years of the program, from 1933 to 1942, over two and one-half million unemployed young men found work on conservation projects across Depression-stricken America. As Roosevelt's Tree Army, as the CCC men were sometimes called, planted billions of trees, fought forest fires, did historic preservation work, and constructed recreational facilities in state and national parks. *At Work in Pennsylvania's Woods* offers a rich and compelling portrait of Pennsylvania's CCC program. In Pennsylvania, the CCC had one of its largest and most successful programs. The state recruited the second-highest number of workers and had the second-highest number of work camps in the country. Gifford Pinchot, perhaps the most famed conservationist of the first half of the twentieth century, was governor of the state in 1933, and his state foresters were well prepared to make use of the abundant labor the CCC made available to them. The Pennsylvania CCC men planted over 60 million trees in a state that had been scarred by clear-cut logging, rampant forest fires, and destructive tree diseases. They also worked at creating and upgrading state park recreational facilities; some of the camps did historic preservation work at Gettysburg, Hopewell Village, and Fort Necessity. A dozen camps provided assistance to farmers on soil conservation projects. Aside from conservation work, the CCC program also played another important role in providing relief assistance to Pennsylvania's families in need. The men were paid \$30 a month, but usually \$22—25 of that was sent home to their families, who were often on relief and in need of the extra money their sons earned. In their free time the men were given the opportunity to take courses in a variety of academic and vocational subjects to train them for life after the CCC. *At Work in Pennsylvania's Woods*, the first comprehensive study of Pennsylvania's CCC program, combines administrative history with portraits of many of the men who worked in the camps. Speakman draws on archival research in primary sources, including some source collections never used before, and on interviews with former CCC men.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

• "An excellent study of state history with national themes." P. D. Travis, Choice

The Civilian Conservation Corps was one of the most popular programs of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. Over the nine years of the program, from 1933 to 1942, over two and one-half million unemployed young men found work on conservation projects across Depression-stricken America. "Roosevelt's Tree Army," as the CCC men were sometimes called, planted billions of trees, fought forest fires, did historic preservation work, and constructed recreational facilities in state and national parks. *At Work in Penn's Woods* offers a rich and compelling portrait of Pennsylvania's CCC program. In Pennsylvania the CCC had one of its largest and most successful programs. The state recruited the second-highest number of workers and had the second-highest number of work camps in the country. Gifford Pinchot, perhaps the most famed conservationist of the first half of the twentieth century, was governor of the state in 1933, and his state foresters were well prepared to make use of the abundant labor the CCC made available to them. The Pennsylvania CCC men planted over 60 million trees in a state that had been scarred by clear-cut logging, rampant forest fires, and destructive tree diseases. They also worked at creating and upgrading state park recreational facilities; some of the camps did historic preservation work at Gettysburg, Hopewell Village, and Fort Necessity. A dozen camps provided assistance to farmers on soil conservation projects. Aside from conservation work, the CCC program also played another important role in providing relief assistance to Pennsylvania's families in need. The men were paid \$30 a month, but usually \$22.25 of that was sent home to their families, who were often on relief and in need of the extra money their sons earned. In their free time the men were given the opportunity to take courses in a variety of academic and vocational subjects to train them for life after the CCC. *At Work in Penn's Woods*, the first comprehensive study of Pennsylvania's CCC program, combines administrative history with portraits of many of the men who worked in the

camps. Speakman draws on archival research in primary sources, including some source collections never used before, and on interviews with former CCC men.

Good photos & narratives.

Great! My father was in the CCC. I could follow his enlistment from the data in the book.

An excellent overview of the CCC with an excellent state CCC history as well are included in this book. This is one of the better state CCC books and an excellent read.

I enjoyed each and every chapter of "At Work in Penn's Woods." The author did a tremendous amount of research and it was very thorough. He covers the CCC from its inception until its death. Despite the fact that it is an historical book, it is very readable and not at all boring. He does an excellent job of describing what the purpose of the CCC was; the politics involved in administering it; the role African-Americans took (had to take) in the CCC; the role of the CCC during the Depression, when the Corps began, through to the buildup to, and beginning of, World War II, when the program was finally shut down; tasks that the CCC men (boys) performed; as well as other topics. Although there are some statistics and charts in the book, they are interesting and needed, and most are contained in an appendix. As mentioned in other reviews, Dr. Speakman's inspiration for the book came from the fact that his father was in the Pennsylvania CCC. My father was also in the Corps, hence my interest. Unfortunately, my father's time and work in the CCC was a topic that we didn't really talk about, so I have no oral history from him about his experiences. On the bright side, my sister does have the documentation of my father's service in the Corps, so at least I know the Camp, Company, and time that he served. That's a start. To those who have had a relative in the Pennsylvania CCC, this book is a must read. To those who did not, or don't realize that they did, it is still very highly recommended for the fact that you will be amazed at how many projects these men worked on throughout the Commonwealth. I'd be willing to bet that there's one close to where you live - most likely still in existence.

This well-researched and authoritative book will be of great interest to anyone with an interest in Pennsylvania's history, and a love for the state's outdoor resources. The Civilian Conservation Corps program during Roosevelt's New Deal was especially successful in Pennsylvania, due to the presence of tens of thousands of unemployed young men during the leanest years of the Great

Depression, plus the need for statewide conservation work to repair forests and natural lands after the logging era. Visitors to any number of Pennsylvania State Parks and Forests will make use of facilities built by the CCC, and backpackers will not have to hike far to find remnants of the widespread tree farms that CCC workers planted in previously denuded or clear-cut areas. Speakman untangles the confusing administrative history of the CCC, as the program was set up during an economic emergency and had conflicting goals and priorities. We learn that the CCC truly benefited thousands of young men during hard economic times and vastly improved Pennsylvania's natural environment, but also that the program was marred by political infighting in Washington, poorly-planned administration and logistics, and creeping militarization during the war years. Speakman also digs deeper into some unexpected aspects of the CCC program, as some companies worked on private farms or in city parks, and there is an outstanding chapter on the inequality faced by African American CCC workers. While the CCC ultimately proved to be a temporary outgrowth of the New Deal, the evidence of the program's usefulness can be seen all over Pennsylvania. [~doomsdayer520~]

Very informative information about Pennsylvania and its history. Would like to see more of the same type of books. Would recommend this to any one who enjoys the State Parks in Pa.

A great look into the history of our state. The CCC not only provided work but also hope in our countries darkest times. Why can't we have programs like this for today's youth? One of Roosevelt's great legacies.

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