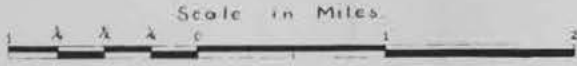


QUALLA BOUNDARY

CHEROKEE INDIAN RESERVATION

N.C.



- LEGEND**
- Trunk Highway
 - Secondary Roads
 - Railway
 - Ridges
 - Creeks
 - Reservation Line
 - County Line
 - Township Line
 - Lookout Tower
 - Telephone Line
 - Public Grounds
 - Bridges
 - Horse Trails
 - Truck Trail Under Construction



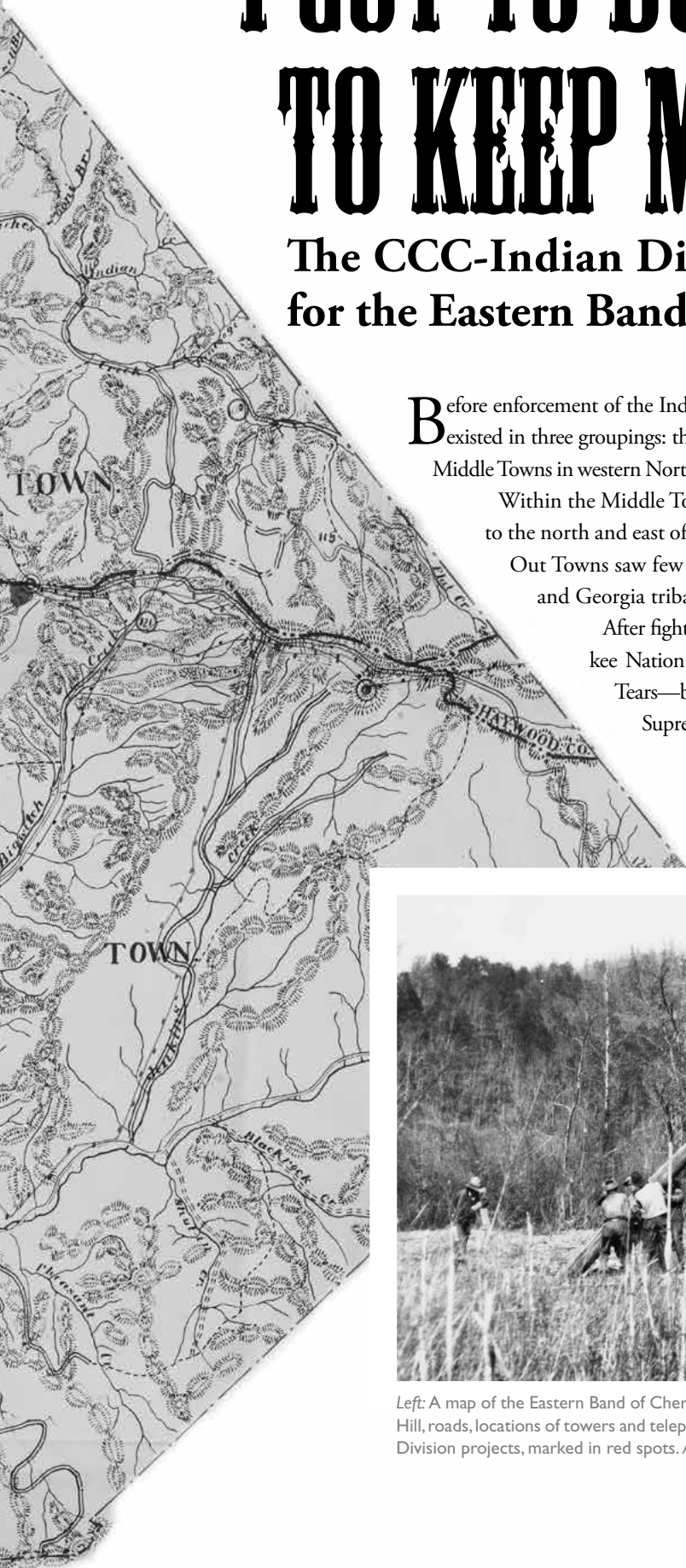
‘I GOT TO DO SOMETHING TO KEEP MY FAMILY UP’

The CCC-Indian Division Offers a New Deal for the Eastern Band of Cherokees *By Mattea V. Sanders*

Before enforcement of the Indian Removal Act between 1836 and 1839, the Cherokee Nation existed in three groupings: the Lower Towns along the Savannah River in South Carolina, the Middle Towns in western North Carolina, and the Upper or Overhill towns in eastern Tennessee. Within the Middle Towns a fourth group existed: the Out Towns, who were located to the north and east of the rest of the tribe. During the early years of the republic, the Out Towns saw few changes in relation to their fellow South Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia tribal members.

After fighting the state of Georgia in federal court and winning, the Cherokee Nation was forcibly moved west—what is now known as the Trail of Tears—because of President Andrew Jackson’s unwillingness to uphold the Supreme Court’s decision in *Worcester v. State of Georgia*.

The high court ruled, in effect, that Georgia had no jurisdiction in Cherokee territory, and that only the national government had authority in Indian affairs. Therefore, the Indian



Left: A map of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Reservation, 1934, shows the towns of Wolf Town and Yellow Hill, roads, locations of towers and telephone lines, and sites where Eastern Band members worked on CCC-Indian Division projects, marked in red spots. Above: Workers raise a pole on the Cherokee Soco telephone line.

Removal Act of 1830 gave Jackson the power to negotiate removal treaties, which he did in 1835 with the Treaty of New Echota with the written consent of only 500 of the thousands of Cherokee tribal members. This treaty forced the Cherokee Nation to relocate to lands west of the Mississippi.

However, members of the Middle and Out Towns renounced their tribal membership and retained their lands along the rivers adjacent to the Great Smoky Mountains because of legislation by the state of North Carolina in 1783. These parcels of land, and the peoples who settled on them known as Qualla Indians, became the nucleus of what is now the reservation of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians.

By the dawn of the 20th century, federal policies of the late 19th century had taken their toll on Native populations. Many reservations were rife with poverty, widespread alcoholism, and a high infant mortality rate. Because of their already poor situation, the Great Depression had little effect on Native communities. The Eastern Band of Cherokees, long suffering from poverty and a lack economic opportunity, soon found economic opportunity through the Indian New Deal.

"I GOT TO DO SOMETHING TO KEEP MY FAMILY UP"

"I want you to let me know [about] this job down there on ECW [Emergency Conservation Work] in Snowbird," wrote an Eastern Band tribal member to the superintendent in charge of the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) agency on the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians reservation in 1935. "And I hear that they were able to use a couple more and I am asking you to let me have a job and I don't mean maybe. And I want you to let me know as soon as possible. I got to do something to keep my family up."

The writer had heard about the work opportunities and wages earned by other members on the reservation through the Emergency Conser-

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
FIELD SERVICE

Cherokee Indian Agency,
Cherokee, North Carolina,
May 10, 1933.

Mr. J. P. Kinney,
Indian Office,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Kinney:

I have your letter of May 2, 1933, regarding the proposal to establish a camp on this reservation in connection with the reforestation projects initiated by President Roosevelt.

Our first intimation that such a step was in contemplation came through newspaper announcements some time ago. We did not take that very seriously as our newspapers do not always get things straight, but it occurred to us at that time that the establishment of camps here for Indians would be an unnecessary expense. They all have their homes convenient to the localities in which the work that we would propose to do is to be found. It would simplify the matter greatly if we were furnished a couple of trucks to convey the workers and their implements from their homes to the locality where the work is being done. Another thought that occurred to us is that it would not be possible to get 200 Indians for this kind of work under the instructions proposed according to our information for enlisting them, and I am not in favor of taking that many Indians, or even a much smaller number, and placing them in camps now. Practically all of our Indians are actively engaged at the present time in planting and caring for their crops. To take any large number of them away from these farming activities at the present time and put them in a camp would simply perpetuate their trouble through the next winter. We are pressing them to produce enough food and feed this summer to support them next winter. A camp as suggested would prevent such a result.

I am sending you herewith a letter prepared by Mr. Robinson setting forth some of the work which needs to be done here. As he states, our biggest need on this reservation is the construction of suitable trails and telephone lines, together with the improvement of small side roads so that automobiles and trucks can get to sections of our forest lands which are otherwise inaccessible for this type of transportation. He has listed certain trails which are the key trails on the reservation. Others that need to be constructed would be on the 3200 Acre Tract lying near Bryson City on which the National Park Service is considering the erection of another tower. There are numerous other smaller trail projects which should be developed at the same time in order to make the reservation

In May 1933 Agency Superintendent R. L. Spalsbury urged that Eastern Band workers not be organized in residential work camps. He argued that they could be transported to work sites, and that they should be allowed to maintain their crops to "produce enough food and feed this summer to support them next winter."

vation Work (ECW), or the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division (CCC-ID).

The CCC-ID work that the Eastern Band member was so desperately seeking was a part of the Indian New Deal, the brainchild of John Collier, an American social reformer who was heavily involved in the American Indian Defense Association and became FDR's choice for commissioner of Indian affairs.

Seeking to promote tribal self-determina-

tion, Collier sought legislation that would allow Native nations to be semiautonomous of the federal government. His plans included an end to allotment, funding for new land, and permission for Indians to write their own constitutions for local self-government and economic corporations.

While these policies had both positive and negative effects for Native Americans nationally, locally Collier's programs did

Reforestation

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Circular REC'D OFFICE OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

JUN 9-1933

FIELD SERVICE
Indian School
Cherokee, N. C.

COMR. IND. AFFRS.

June 6, 1933.

Mr. John Collier,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs,
Washington, D. C.

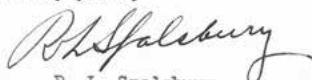
Dear Sir:

I have just received your circular letter of May 24, 1933 concerning emergency Conservation work on Indian reservations. I am not undertaking to answer that letter at this time but I do wish to take this opportunity to express my hearty agreement with the first sentence of that letter which reads as follows: "As a general policy, it is the desire of the Indian Service to place as much responsibility on the Indian Tribal Organizations as possible."

For years I have felt that much of the dissatisfaction on the part of the Indians has been due to the fact that programs were announced without consulting them and I have previously expressed this thought in reports now on file in your office. Since assuming charge of the affairs of this agency I have encouraged the Tribal council and the chiefs to assume as much responsibility as possible. In every case they have responded well and we are constantly placing more and more reliance on these men who are the duly elected representatives of the band.

We have also recently organized a guild among them to handle and market their handicrafts. In this they will be given all the responsibility possible with such safeguards as any prudent business man would throw around an organization handling funds. Accordingly we feel quite elated that you have announced this policy and we assure you that at this agency your policy has our entire sympathy and accord. We will continue along those lines with considerably more satisfaction now.

Sincerely yours,


R. L. Spalsbury
Superintendent

Superintendent Spalsbury wrote of tribal dissatisfaction at not being consulted in the past, and was "elated" about Commissioner John Collier's policy in June 1933 "to place as much responsibility for planning on the Indian Tribal Organizations as possible."

change tribes, individual Native lives, and the relationship of tribes to the federal government.

CREATING AN INDIAN DIVISION FOR THE NEW DEAL'S CCC

Collier created the CCC-ID through the Wheeler-Howard Act, which passed in June 1934. Collier had appealed to President

Franklin D. Roosevelt for a separate unit of the CCC to aid American Indians. The original Civilian Conservation Corps was meant to provide employment for single men between the ages of 18 and 25.

The goal of the CCC was to take young men out of the breadlines and place them in healthy outdoor working environments where they would perform conservation-related work. The CCC did not serve Ameri-

can Indians, however, because state quotas dictated how many men could enroll.

As a result of the limited slots available, states did not include American Indians in their enrollment. The CCC-ID functioned out of the Office of Indian Affairs under Collier. He and his agency assumed total responsibility for administration, enrollment, work planning, and work supervision as well as day-to-day operations for the Indian CCC projects.

The central tenet of the CCC-ID was simple: self-sufficiency.

If the government gave Indian men the necessary skills, the tribes could be more successful in the future. CCC-ID camps had more influence from local communities than regular CCC camps did. The reservation's tribal council and chief—in cooperation with the Office of Indian Affairs Superintendent, not the U.S. Army—managed the camps and the work.

Issues such as pay rates, however, went through the main CCC-ID administration in Washington rather than the tribal council.

Unlike the CCC, the ages of the enrollees in the CCC-ID could be between 17 and 35, and they could be married. CCC-ID camps were also structured differently. There were camps with single men, camps where married men with their families could reside, and nonresidential camps where men were allowed to live at home with their families and travel to work. The most common of the three were the nonresidential camps where men lived at home with their families.

The CCC-ID ended July 2, 1943, after serving 85,000 Native American men, 67 reservations, and costing \$72 million.

THE EASTERN BAND GETS ITS OWN CCC-ID

The Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division program with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians began in 1933.

The Eastern Band CCC-ID conducted projects on the reservation and in parts of

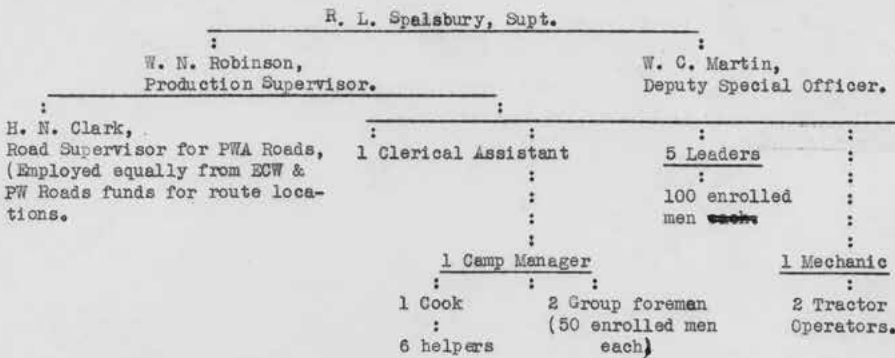
PROGRESS REPORT - February, March, April & May, ECW

Emergency Indian Conservation work ended its 11th month on the Eastern Cherokee Reservation with the close of the working month of May with 8 miles of telephone lines, 150 man days fighting forest fires, 25 miles of truck trails, seven miles of horse trails and seventy five check dams in erosion control, completed. For the first six months of this period only 100 men were on the pay roll at one time, but now, with the consent of the Washington Office the quota has showly been increased so that now we are working nearly two hundred men at a time. During the first two enrollment periods \$44,712.40 was spent for payroll, which included team hire, subsistence and commutation, \$3,981.64 was spent for supervising and facilitating personnel and \$1,759.10 was spent for the purchase of heavy equipment.

Office letter of January 5th authorized this agency to erect a garage and storage shed for our equipment from E. C. W. funds. Work was started on this building the first part of February. On March 7th, while the men were busily putting the finishing touches on this new structure, it collapsed injuring six men. These men were treated at the agency hospital. One received compound fractures of the leg and was later sent to the Veterans Hospital at Oteen, N.C., for care and treatment. With the exception of this man, the other injured men are up and able to get about. Two men have been discharged from the hospital as their injuries have completely healed. When this accident happened, the Superintendent wired Washington concerning it and requested an investigation be made for the probable cause. Mr. C. A. Leech, Construction Engineer, was sent here. He thoroughly investigated the case, and forwarded his report to the Washington Office. All lumber from the building has been cleared and piled up, awaiting the necessary authority to rebuild.

During the first part of February, Mr. B. C. Courtright, Special Agent, visited this agency, and inspected the records and work of the ECW.

The Project Manager, Gwenn Denton, was relieved from duty at the closing of the working day of April 30th, as per Office recommendations. The present personnel ~~xxx~~ set-up is as follows:



By early 1934, according to a progress report, over 200 Eastern Band men were at work at the camp on dams, trails, telephone lines, and at fighting forest fires. An organizational chart of the managers, headed by Superintendent R. L. Spalsbury, is included.

the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The nonresidential camp worked best for the Eastern Band because the men lived so close to their work sites, and they needed to maintain their small farms while still working for the CCC-ID.

The Eastern Band administration did not establish residential camps for fear of disrupting the economic, social, and cul-

tural lives of the enrollees. R. L. Spalsbury, the superintendent of the Office of Indian Affairs agency in Cherokee, wrote to J. P. Kinney, the director of the CCC-ID in Washington, D.C.:

Practically all of our Indians are actively engaged at the present time in planting and caring for their crops. To

take any large number of them away from these farming activities at the present time and put them in a camp would simply perpetuate their trouble through the next winter.

The CCC-ID was the only New Deal program that supported Native American communities. For the Eastern Band, the CCC-ID brought major changes that radically affected the reservation and left legacies that still resonate today, such as wages, labor, tourism, and revitalized lost traditions.

ADMINISTRATION SEEKS TO SHIFT MORE AUTHORITY TO TRIBAL COUNCILS

The Cherokee CCC-ID functioned through the superintendent of the agency, who was appointed by Collier; the tribal council; a small administrative staff; and 20 hired Eastern Band members who worked in staff positions such as foreman, sub-foreman, tractor operator, trail locator, stone mason, and clerk stenographer.

Spalsbury, who was both the first superintendent of the Eastern Band CCC-ID and superintendent of the Office of Indian Affairs in the Eastern Band, wrote openly about the past issues of the office in particular and the federal government in general: "For years, I have felt that much of the dissatisfaction on the part of the Indians has been due to the fact that programs were announced without consulting them."

In an effort to correct this oversight, the superintendent consulted with the Eastern Band by calling an annual meeting of the tribal council to discuss the proposed CCC-ID projects for the coming year. The superintendent at Cherokee understood that tribal self-governance took time and that the federal government should transition gradually. In a letter to Collier, he noted with "delight your agreement with the general policy of placing as much responsibility on the Indian Tribal Organizations in so far as this emergency work is concerned."

Collier also emphasized placing responsibility on the Native nations for managing programs and approving projects and appropriations. In a letter to the superintendent of the OIA agency for the Eastern Band, Collier described what he expected: “encourage the Tribal council and the chiefs to assume as much responsibility as possible.”

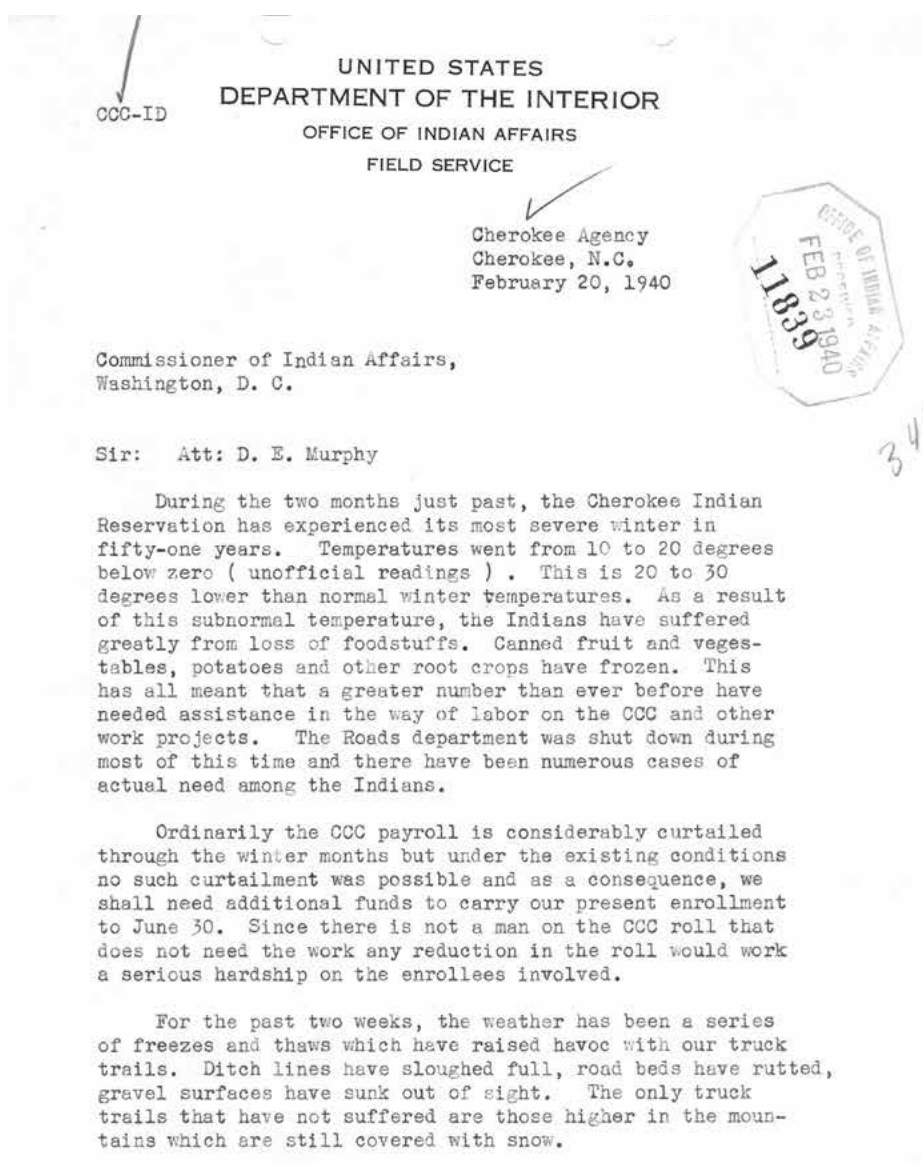
The CCC-ID also hoped to strengthen the tribal government structure of the Eastern Band. Collier wrote extensively about the importance of placing responsibility on the tribal structure. For the Eastern Band, the CCC-ID promoted responsibility within the tribal government by hiring the chief, Jarrett Blythe, as the “additional subforeman that will place additional responsibility on the Indians themselves.”

Their choice to make him the subforeman reinforced his authority as chief. By becoming an integral part of the program, Blythe demonstrated his personal and professional approval of the program. Bringing the tribal governmental structure into their own program gave the CCC-ID more power within the reservation. This way of using the Eastern Band to gain social and cultural approval for the program occurred especially in relation to the labor practices of the CCC-ID.

CCC-ID'S LABOR PRACTICES COME UNDER SCRUTINY

The superintendent of the Eastern Band OIA wanted to promote an economically sustainable and self-determined Eastern Band through creating opportunities for wage labor. Although the recruits of the CCC-ID received half the pay that those in the traditional CCC did, the administration of the CCC-ID wished to give as much work and income to as many enrollees as possible.

With the establishment of the CCC-ID for the Eastern Band, the superintendent received strict instructions from the director of the CCC-ID in Washington to spread



In his February 20, 1940, letter to the commissioner of Indian affairs, Camp Superintendent C.M. Blair asked for additional payroll funds during the exceptionally cold winter that created hardships for Eastern Band families.

wages out to as many members of the Eastern Band as possible: “Projects and employment should be distributed to spread the pay to as large a proportion of the Indians needing work as possible.”

One hundred and fifty men worked a month, but they were allowed to work only two weeks a month to stretch the income to as many people as possible. In many cases, this meant paying enrollees less to provide

work to more. Even when money became scarce in the OIA for the CCC-ID program, the agency made an effort to try to spread out the work. As a later superintendent of OIA agency for the Eastern Band wrote to Collier:

From the standpoint of relief for the Indians, the situation is not encouraging. Our average CCC-ID payroll for

the past six months has been \$3,970.86. With the exceptions of supervising personnel, leaders, assistant leaders, we had up to December 1, 1937, worked the enrollees in two shifts of one-half month per shift. Starting December 1, 1937, in an effort to keep down the payroll and still give employment to a maximum number of men, the month was divided into three shifts of ten calendar days per shift.

In 1938, funding became even more restricted, and the program reduced the number of enrollees to 25 men. The lack of

steady wages caused Cherokee men to rely heavily on different types of work, including agriculture, to feed their families.

The CCC-ID also attempted to eliminate as much overhead as possible to reserve funds for salaries. In 1937, the director of CCC-ID programs congratulated the superintendent of the Eastern Band on the significant portion of money he successfully budgeted to the Eastern Band: "An analysis of your expenditures for the past fiscal year shows that approximately 60% of CCC-ID funds went to the enrollees, 18% to supervising and facilitating skilled workers, and 20% for materials and supplies."

It was a budget goal of the superintendents to keep their costs down and ensure that the enrollees were the central beneficiaries of the program. In 1938 the superintendent of the Eastern Band calculated the annual cost per enrollee to be \$1,015. In addition to wages, enrollees received: "subsistence, clothing, (and repair thereof), transportation, and hospitalization and medical treatment."

The heavy labor involved in the enrollees' work brought safety and health risks. In 1934 a warehouse that the enrollees were in the process of constructing fell on six enrollees, injuring them. A report sent to Washington demonstrated the extent of



Left: Eastern Band workers breaking the Soco Gap truck trail. The trails and truck roads were largely cut by manual labor.

Above: Construction of lookout towers was a priority for forest management and fire prevention.

the damage: “This report shows that six men were injured. The Office records do not indicate that report of injury has been received as to any of these men. Please report fully, submitting the required forms properly executed.”

The federal government also had to go to court because of situations that occurred among enrollees or between enrollees and employees of the OIA agency. Sibbald Smith, an Eastern Band enrollee, was called to be a witness in a 1934 suit brought by two other enrollees against one of the Eastern Band CCC-ID employees. The CCC-ID program paid his wages while he took time off to serve as a witness for this case.

Ultimately, the court decided in favor of the Eastern Band enrollees, and they received compensation; however, this case shows that the United States government could see American Indians as laborers deserving of fair treatment in the workplace.

When the Eastern Band fell on particularly hard economic times, the federal government was ready to step in. The superintendent maintained a surprisingly open relationship with the enrollees, and they reached out to the OIA agency if they were not receiving enough work to make ends meet.

If the superintendent could not provide more work, he appealed to Congress for greater appropriations, such as during the harsh winter of 1940, when the temperatures dipped below 20 degrees Fahrenheit and food became scarce.

“[T]he Indians have suffered greatly from loss of foodstuffs,” wrote the superintendent, and “canned fruit and vegetables, potatoes and other root crops have frozen.” He received more appeals for work than ever before.

However, the superintendent’s ability to distribute work evenly was tested as appropriations for Roosevelt’s programs trailed off in the late 1930s. In the early years of the program, the CCC-ID paid enrollees for their weekends in addition to their regular pay. By 1940, this practice had ended, and the CCC-

ID routinely had crews work 10 days straight with no time off on the weekend.

THE CCC-ID PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The CCC-ID program conducted extensive work for the National Park Service. In March 1942, the superintendent asked for a considerable increase in funding to cover their work for the National Park Service and the National Forest Service. He wrote:

Our projects are an integral part of the protection and development of the valuable timber resources. The Reservation is practically surrounded by the National Park and the National Forest Service lands and there is no doubt that we will be called upon to fight fires on these lands.

The Eastern Band fought fires on both the federal land and their own land and made firefighting a priority not only for safety reasons but also for economic reasons—to preserve timber.

The National Park Service relied on the CCC-ID to help it protect the land from forest fires. In exchange for fighting fires for the Park Service, the Eastern Band acquired equipment.

In 1942, the CCC-ID wanted to enlarge the Lookout House at the Barnett Knob Tower. This project involved constructing “a 18’ x 16’ addition to the present 14’ x 16’ frame house which is altogether too small for a man and his family.” Furnishings for the house came partly from the CCC-ID, but the “doors windows, and some of the hardware will be donated by the Park Service.”

The relationship with the Park Service also brought the Eastern Band economic stability through the tourist industry that blossomed after the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The National Park Service also hired CCC-ID enrollees. In 1942 the CCC-ID furnished five enrollees “to assist in operating the United States Park Service Nursery at Ravensford, North Carolina.” In exchange for the workers, the CCC-ID received “free of charge enough seedlings and transplants



The Eastern Band CCC-Indian Division baseball team, undated.

J. PROGRESS ON PROJECTS

Class and Project Number	Man-days	Description	Size of Projects		Per cent completed	
			Number	Units	this week	to date
42-2	7	Enrollee Program.				
140, 42-3	5	Telephone Line Operation and Maintenance.	40.6	Miles.	4%	75%
206, 42-4	4	Foot Trail Maintenance.	40	Miles.	1/2%	31 2/3%
602, 42-5	36	Fire Lane Maintenance.	-	-	16 2/3%	82 2/3%
202, 46-6	28	Truck Trail Maintenance.	40	Miles.	1/2%	75 2/3%
202, 42-7	55	Washington Creek Truck Trail, Construction.	1.7	Miles	2%	5%
202, 42-11	18	Stock Piling Gravel.	15,200	Cu. Yds.	1 1/3%	67 1/2%
104, 42-15	20	Will West Long Bridge.	2 x 4	Decking.	5%	83%
A	49 1/2	General Administration and Office Expense.				
E	5	Operation of CCC-ID Cars and Trucks.				
	<u>227 1/2</u>					

An Indian Division progress report dated February 10, 1942, identifies the kinds of projects under way—including foot and truck trails, telephone line maintenance, and bridge construction—and the extent of work completed.



Eastern Band of Cherokees work at flooring the connecting link between the Lower Bunches Creek section and Upper Bigwitch in the Wrights Creek section.

to equal the wages and subsistence of the enrollees that were engaged on such work.”

The CCC-ID enrollees also received training through the Park Service, as the superintendent of the Eastern Band OIA wrote to the director of the CCC-ID in Washington: “Tree nursery work would fit in well in educating our Indians in this class of work. There is a movement now on planting Rhododendron plants to sell to the tourists. Our Indians could learn about this at the Nursery where they have had experience with it for the past several years.”

Working for the National Park Service also gave the Eastern Band CCC-ID the opportunity to come into contact with the regular CCC, and the two groups regularly played baseball games against one another. CCC regulations charged corps area commanders to create athletic programs in their camps, and sports included baseball, boxing, and basketball. These activities became tremendously popular, often producing intense rivalries.

PROJECTS ON THE RESERVATION ARE PART OF CCC-ID'S WORK

Collier hoped that Native communities would be more self-sustaining, and to this end, he advised superintendents to choose projects that would better use natural resources for economic gain on the reservation.

Projects included building bridges, garages, lookout cabins and towers, telephone lines, latrines and toilets, utility buildings, trail shelters, fences, guardrails, dikes, levees, and foot and horse trails; checking dams; engaging in erosion control; planting and seeding fields; improving forest stands; conducting nursery operations; combating forest fires; reducing fire hazards; developing public picnic grounds; promoting forest education; establishing boundaries; and preserving trees.

One of the projects introduced new crop practices to farmers, such as strip cropping and terracing. In the case of the terraces, the CCC-ID took special care in preparing the outlets

for the terraces so that "the runoff water will not cause the formation of a gully." The CCC-ID also built dams to try to redirect water out of the already formed gullies. To combat soil erosion, they investigated plants that would create root systems and enrich the soil.

Chief Blythe proposed a project for a community building at Big Cove through the CCC-ID. Blythe argued for the project: "The CCC program provides specifically for the conservation of natural resources and since our young Indian people constitute our greatest natural resources, I feel that it especially desirable to provide some means to furnish them decent recreational facilities."

The existing recreational facility for young people was not accessible to most of the reservation. Blythe believed that investing in a building for young Eastern Band members was important because "[m]ost of them have no means of transportation and lacking recreational facilities at home, far too many of them are walking the roads at night, getting drunk, causing trouble. It is believed that with a suitable building where they can gather for games, box suppers, and dances, they will have less desire for the periodic carousels which now constitute too great a part of their leisure time activities."

The CCC-ID also worked on a project to improve horticulture on the reservation. Previously, the Eastern Band relied on wild fruits to sustain their diet, but the federal government did not view this as a profitable or sustainable practice. The new project was described in a report of the projects of the Eastern Band CCC-ID issued by the inspector general for the entire Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division:

Each year some trees are planted. These are ordered by the individual Indians, mostly from a salesman for Stark Bros. [a Missouri orchard and nursery company], who works in a store on the reservation. A few men have purchased small quantities of other fruits, with the intention of increasing their plant-

CCC-ID

Mr. Paul T. Jackson
Supt., Chemawa School

Dear Mr. Jackson:

In view of the fact that CCC-ID has been placed on a war basis and work restricted to (a) aid in war work construction, and (b) war resources protection and development of natural resources, it does not appear that we shall be able to continue CCC-ID work at your school during the next fiscal year.

If you can present projects which will meet these requirements, you should do so. If not, please arrange to close out your CCC-ID work as soon as possible, advising us the date on which the work will stop and the amount of funds which may be withdrawn.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) D. E. Murphy

D. E. Murphy
Director, Indian Division, CCC

DEB:eh
4/22/42
cc-Mr. F. B. Lenzie

Handwritten: Murphy
344
APR 27 1942
Handwritten: Cornwall

The work of the CCC-Indian Division was largely terminated with the start of World War II. An April 27, 1942, letter from D. E. Murphy, Director of the Indian Division, CCC, lists the new priorities of "war work construction" and "war resources protection."

ings by propagation from these plants. Four farmers have been increasingly cutting their grapes, one having rooted and set out 400 cuttings in 1938.

The same inspector general's report stated that the CCC-ID program attempted to train Eastern Band farmers to furnish "sufficient fruits and berries for the homes, with a surplus of quality

products for sale," but the Eastern Band retained their traditional partiality to a diet of wild berries. The inspector noted that "The crop of wild berries was very abundant, especially blackberries and strawberries. Some families have planted improved varieties of strawberries in their gardens, to have larger berries close at hand, but the flavor of these is . . . inferior to that of the wild berries." While the CCC-ID program tried

to introduce different varieties of berries to the Eastern Band, the tribal members felt that they did not have the same taste as the wild ones. As a result, the inspector noted that “No attempt has been made to expand the planting of berries, except raspberries, on account of the profusion of the wild growth.”

In addition to horticulture, the CCC-ID tried to reintroduce some of the natural species that had declined. One of the ways they did this was through stocking the streams with fish. In the fall of 1939 alone, Moris Burge, a non-Indian employee of the CCC-ID, noted that “more than 45,000 brook and rainbow trout were planted in the streams on the reservation.” Brook and rainbow trout are both native to western North Carolina, but the main reason the CCC-ID chose these fish was their desirability for recreational fishing.

The Eastern Band hoped that the tourists would view Cherokee as a fishing destination, especially because the National Park was off-limits to fishing and hunting. The CCC-ID also attempted to stock the reservation with deer, but Burge also noted: “The National Park objects to the Pisgah deer because these animals are said to be mixed species and this mixture does not come under the National Park policy of propagating only native species.”

WORLD WAR II BRINGS THE END OF CCC-ID

In April 1942, the CCC-ID was placed on a war basis and could only do work that

would “aid in war work construction, war resources protection, and development of natural resources.” With the restriction, the CCC-ID at Cherokee began to curtail the projects they undertook. The superintendent declared that “if you can present projects which will meet these requirements, you should do so.” However, many projects, including the cooperative projects with the schools, ended: “please arrange to close out your CCC-ID work as soon as possible, advising us the date on which the work will stop and the amount of funds which may be withdrawn.” In a reflection about the work of the CCC-ID for the Eastern Band, Chief Blythe wrote:

As I have said before, our farms are small, but very productive, with lots of work they provide us with enough to eat, but there are some things we have to have that we can not grow, and the Emergency Conservation Work has made it possible for our Indian people to obtain these things.

The CCC-Indian Division came to a quick and sudden halt as America entered World War II. In its nine-year history, from March 1933 to July 1942, the Cherokee CCC-ID spent \$594 million in federal funds. Per member, they spent \$164,000, or “approximately \$10.40 per acre of tribal land in conservation improvements.”

The Indian New Deal demonstrated to the federal government the importance of Native American participation in their own governance and sovereignty, and they realized that Native Americans had the right to govern themselves. The Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division was one of the largest single federal government programs specifically for Native Americans. The presence of the Cherokee CCC-ID, the only one east of the Mississippi, demonstrates the federal government’s commitment to the Eastern Band.

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NOTE ON SOURCES

This article is primarily based on the Records of the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division in Records of Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C. The Records of and Concerning the Eastern Cherokee Enrolling Commission and the Orders, Circulars, and Circular Letters also informed this work. These documents include correspondence between the superintendents of the Office of Indian Affairs for the Eastern Band, the commissioner of Indian affairs, and the director of the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division in Washington, D.C. The most-often-cited letters in this article are those written by R. L. Spalbury, superintendent of the Eastern Band Office of Indian Affairs, to the commissioner of Indian affairs and the director of the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division in 1933. This article also quoted from a “Narrative Report” written in February, March, April, and May of 1934 and an inspector general’s report of project descriptions written in 1934.

The baseball image came from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Archives. Secondary sources of particular use to this project included: Graham D. Taylor’s *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934–1945* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), Harley E. Jolley’s *That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace: The Civilian Conservation Corps in North Carolina, 1933–1942* (Raleigh: North Carolina Office of Archives and History, 2007), Christina Taylor Beard-Moose’s *Public Indians, Private Cherokees: Tourism and Tradition on Tribal Ground* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009), Jennifer McLernan’s *A New Deal for Native Art: Indian Arts and Federal Policy* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009), and Peter Iverson’s *“We are Still Here”: American Indians in the Twentieth Century* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1998).



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- Native Americans scouts for the U.S. military, go to www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2009/summer/indian.html.
- Native Americans in the military in the early 1800s, go to www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2007/winter/indians-military.html.
- Records in the National Archives about Native Americans go to www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/075.html.