



Contributed to Maine Memory Network by Maine Conservation Corps
MMN # 82308

Date: April 24, 1985

Description: Jean P. Ouellette wrote to Norman "Red" Wetherington about his experiences serving in the Civilian Conservation Corps.

April 24, 1985

Dear Red,

I am not much of a writer, but I'll try my best to tell you a bit of my experience in the C.C.C.

The reason I was interestedd in joining the C.C.C., was that my father being ^{^was} a General Contractor, I used to go on different jobs with him helping to unload material and I ~~used to~~ enjoyed it very much, because I did not have to attend school and I would be able to enjoy restaurant meals and ice cream treats in the afternoon, which in those days was a big thing for young boys like us.

But my father wanted me to finish High School and I didn't want to go, because I enjoyed going with my father much more. But I the Fall my father insisted that I go to school and when I refused he asked me to leave home and earn my own living, which at the time seemed harsh and hard to me, but he had my own interest in mind. So at this time I decided to join the C.C.C.

At the time I was only a ninety-five pound weakling. And when I went to the E&R Center in Bangor for my Physical Exam, I could accept

tell that the doctors were hesitant to [^]except me. So I explained to them the situation and having too much pride and did not want to go back home, they expected me. accepted

We were then shipped to South west Harbor Camp. I was glad to be there but I felt a little out of place with all those big guys besides me. Captain Gagnon was in charge at the time and when he sent us to supplies for our clothing, I guess they wanted to play a joke on me, they issued a size forty waist, thirty-five length pair of pants and when I took the pants and held them up to take a look at them they came up to my nose and I really felt bad and when the Captain saw me, he could see I was a bit sad, he asked me what was wrong and then I showed him the pants he could not help but laugh also, but he came to the supply room with me and gave the Sgt. and gave him a good talking.to.

I also had a tough time at meals, cause when it came time to eat after prayer, all those big guys with long arms would grab the food platters first and when it came to me there was nothing left, and I tell you that after a few days of this I was getting alittle weak. I finally decided to tell this story to my Foremen Bill Rector, and he told me to sit next to him from now on and he kept a good watch on the guys and it wasn't long and I was getting served too.

Enclosure



JEAN P. OUELLETTE

PAINTING CONTRACTOR

UPPER FRENCHVILLE, MAINE

AGENT FOR:
CHILTON - BRI MAR AND
SHEERWIN-WILLIAMS PAINT
SIGNS OF ALL KINDS
STAGING RENTAL
FUMIGATION

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I served ten months in the C.C.C. and during this time I did not work with the field crew, they kept me around the camp to keep the fire going.

After a while being able to do sign and art work I started to do some pictorials and lettering for the men on their foot locker trunks. One day after a Barracks Inspection the Captain noticed the lettering on the trunks and asked the Barracks leader who was doing this work and he told him it was me and the Captain called me to his office thinking I was going to get scolded, but instead he asked if I did any other painting and I said yes, that painting was my line of work. He asked if I would like to do some inside and outside painting in the Barracks and I said yes. My first job was the Officers Quarters and he was very satisfied, he asked if I liked to do more and I said yes, so he set up a paint shop for me, and not long after he gave me a few guys to work with me and this continued to be our job.

And one day my brother, living in Conn. at the time, wrote me a letter offering me a job that would pay Fifty dollars a week, which at the time was unbelievable and my Captain did not believe me either and said he couldn't let me go, but he said that if I could get my brother to call him and tell him it was true he might let me go. So my brother called him and told him and my Captain let me go.

Enclosed are pictures of South West Harbor, Bar Harbor, and a picture of the Forester, Barracks Leader and Crew.

We will see you in June if all goes well. Anxious to see you. Sorry this is late.

Sincerely yours,

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