

"I GOT TO DO SOMETHING TO KEEP MY FAMILY UP": THE EASTERN BAND OF
CHEROKEE INDIANS, 1920-1940

By

Mattea V. Sanders

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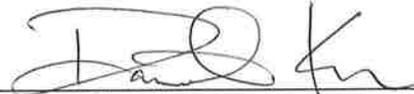
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Daniel Kerr, Ph.D.



Gautham Rao, Ph.D.



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For my mother, for always reminding me where I come from.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the economic, social, and cultural life of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, a federally recognized tribe in Western North Carolina, from 1920 to 1940. It argues that from 1920 to 1930 industrial logging and agriculture was the main source of income. However, this changed in 1932 when the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division, a program of the Indian New Deal, began on the reservation. The CCC-ID altered the Eastern Band's relationship to the land, to the communities around itself, and most of all to the federal government. This thesis argues for a middle ground in interpreting the history of the relationship between the federal government and the Eastern Band through complicating the standard narrative of the federal government being saviors and the Eastern Band as victims.

PREFACE

I will use the words Native Americans and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to describe the peoples discussed. While others have advocated for the use of indigenous or American Indian, the group discussed herein prefers these words to describe themselves.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank the Department of History at American University for all of their support of this project. My thesis committee member, Dr. Gautham Rao was a constant mentor in helping to shape this thesis and always reminding me that this was not my last word on this subject. I would also like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Daniel Kerr, for first allowing me to do this oral history project during my first semester of graduate school that inspired this eventual research. Dr. Kerr has given me wonderful guidance and believed in me when this seemed like it would never get finished. I would also like to thank Yolanda Saunooke, Russell Townsend, and Tyler Howe from the Eastern Band's Tribal Historic Preservation Office for allowing me to do the oral histories and for teaching me about these issues. I would also like to thank the whole Eastern Band community for humbling me in their generosity. Many thanks goes to my undergraduate advisor, Dr. Julie Reed, for first inspiring me with this project. And last but definitely not least to my parents who have always supported me and allowed my dreams to flourish no matter how ridiculous they may have seemed.

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CHAPTER 1: THE STORIES OF THE MOUNTAINS

Growing up in Knoxville, Tennessee the mountains of Eastern Tennessee and Western North Carolina were never far from reach. I spent the summers hiking Mount LeCounte, driving through Cades Cove, and relaxing on a tube as I drifted down a lazy river. However, unbeknownst to me, the mountains where I spent my childhood held more stories and memories than I knew. When I came to graduate school, I began to look past the trees, the peaks, and most of all the brown and green interpretive signs to the stories underneath. I heard the first of these stories during an oral history interview with Yolanda Saunooke, officer in the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) in Cherokee, North Carolina, director of the Elder's Council, and member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI). The Elders Council discusses the past, present, and future of the tribe through utilizing their combined time worn knowledge. Saunooke recalled a conversation she had with Jerry Wolfe, a prominent and well known elder within the Eastern Band community. The discussion between Wolfe and Saunooke gradually shifted to the early days of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. He talked about the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) that helped to build the park. However, he went on to say that there was actually a CCC group on the reservation called the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division (CCC-ID) made up of Eastern Band enrollees. He remembered how "at the end of the day or every Sunday they [the CCC and the CCC-ID] played a baseball game against each other and they had one ball and one bat."¹ After this interview, I scoured the relative literature on the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and none of them mention the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division. I visited

¹ Yolanda Saunooke, interview by Mattea Sanders, October 12, 2012, transcript,

the National Park Service (NPS) Great Smoky Mountains National Park Oconoluftee Visitor Center that sits three miles from the reservation.

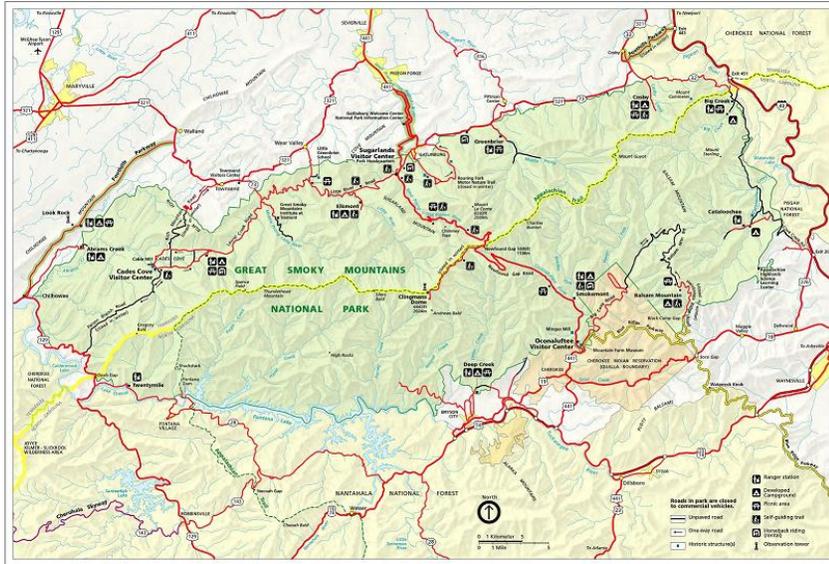


Figure 1 Map of Great Smoky Mountains National Park & EBCI
Courtesy of Great Smoky Mountains National Park Archive



Figure 2 Oconaluftee Visitor Center
Photo Taken by Author

The visitor center has an entire exhibit on the Civilian Conservation Corps. However, the exhibit does not mention the CCC-ID.



Figure 3 Civilian Conservation Corps Exhibit at Oconaluftee Visitor Center
Photo Taken By Author

Park historians also refused to accept that the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division existed. Even the National Archives and Records Commission, who possess the entirety of the records of the CCC-ID, denied the existence of the CCC-ID.

Today, the CCC is a well-known entity of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal policies, however the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division remains un-researched. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian's Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division existed from 1933 to 1942. During that time, this now obscure federal program both radically transformed the reservation but also the relationship between the federal government and the Eastern Band. Between 1920 and 1940, the Eastern Band's local environment, economy, and culture drastically changed. The Indian New Deal altered how the Eastern Band saw federal intervention within their reservation and outside of it. The Eastern Band became more entrenched and established in the region of Appalachia in these twenty years then in the hundred years prior. While on the outside it may seem that the Eastern Band constructed boundaries, they were actually laying down roots inside and

outside the reservation that would extend out for generations. This thesis argues for a middle ground in interpreting the history of the relationship between the federal government and the Eastern Band through complicating the standard narrative of the federal government as saviors and the Eastern Band as victims.

THEY DID NOT HIDE OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

Prior to removal, the Cherokees existed in three groupings: the Lower Towns along the upper 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 that were located to the north and east of the rest of the tribe.

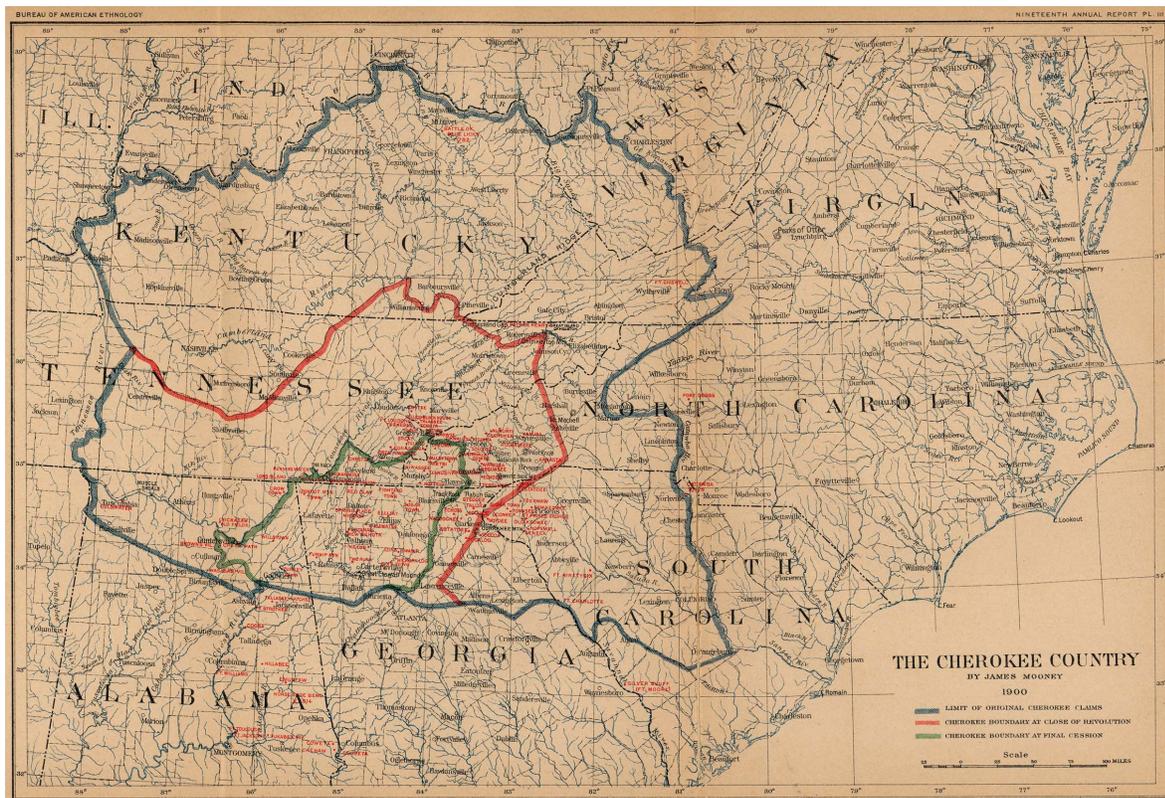


Figure 4 Map of Evolution of Cherokee Land Claims by James Mooney
Courtesy of the Perry-Castaneda Map Collection, The University of Texas at Austin

The Out Towns were the backwater of the Cherokee tribe, however, this group held the most sacred space for the Cherokee--Kituwaha, the “mother town” of the Cherokee. In the

Early Republic period, the North Carolina Cherokees saw few changes in relation to their South Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia tribal members. In 1783, the state of North Carolina told the North Carolina Cherokee that they could continue to hold the area they occupied.

The Cherokee Treaty of 1819 diminished the entire tribal domain to a small block in western North Carolina, northern Georgia, southeastern Tennessee, and northeastern Alabama. The cessation of lands was compensation for a large area of land in the West made available for Cherokees who were already relocating. In North Carolina, forty-nine Cherokee heads of families registered to have their private reservations surveyed. As a result of this action, members of the Middle and Out Towns retained their lands along the rivers adjacent to the Great Smoky Mountains. The ceded land was sold by the state of North Carolina, however, in their attempt to expedite the process they actually sold land that the federal government had guaranteed to individual Cherokees. The chaos that ensued from conflicting land claims resulted in *Euchella V. Welsh*. The ruling in this case was that the state could buy the land from the Cherokees, however, they had to buy land for them elsewhere. Most of the North Carolina Cherokees moved back to the remaining tribal lands and settled near the junction of Soco Creek and the Oconoluftee in a site known later as Quallatown. 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 Cherokees.²

The status of the Qualla Indians was still ambiguous through the nineteenth century. While they were considered citizens by virtue of the 1817 and 1819 treaties they never

² John R. Finger, *Eastern Band of Cherokees: 1819-1900* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 1-5.

sought to exercise the normal rights of citizenship. The Cherokee obtained a corporate charter in 1870. Because the corporation is considered a business the Cherokee could hold their land in trust and control it. At that time, the Cherokee organized a government and adopted a Constitution written by Lloyd Welch. Today, the EBCI functions under this constitution and the corporate charter.

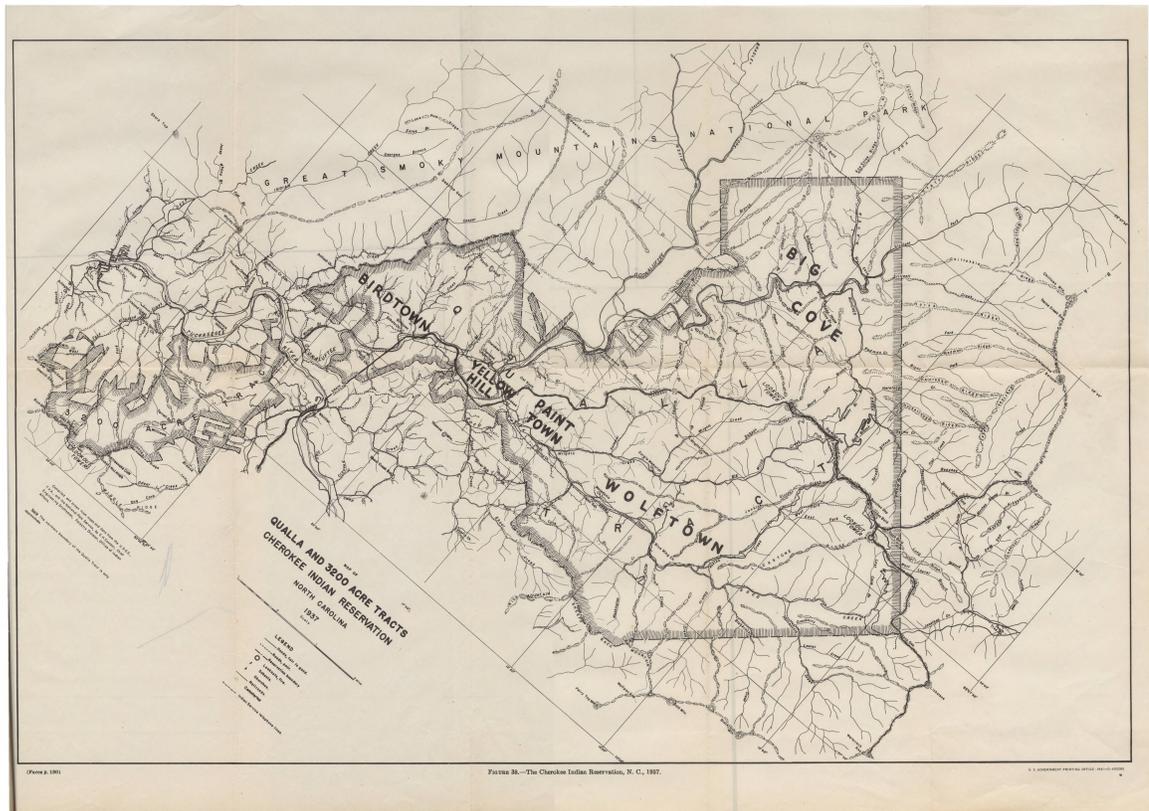


Figure 5 Eastern Band Reservation in 1937
 Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

This study is situated most specifically within Native American history, which has seen a rapidly developing and changing historiography in the last thirty years. The discussion over the role of Native Americans in the narrative of American History began with the formation of the history profession and Frederick Jackson Turner's famous Turner Thesis. Turner's Thesis argued that American democracy formed on the frontier. Native

Americans stood in the way of civilization. Turner and his students argued that the decline of Native Americans was an inevitable price to pay to allow for the expansion of the nation. Writing from the point of view of the Anglo-American conquerors, these historians demonstrated early twentieth century ethnocentric views of the triumph of “civilized” societies. These historians wrote long, all-encompassing narratives portraying Native peoples as a dying or near extinct society. Native Americans had no agency, and were “incapable of formulating agendas of their own.”³ They helped erase Native Americans from the twentieth century historical narrative.

During the mid-twentieth century, little headway was made in relation to Native American history. Historians considered Native American history to be in the realm of popular history.⁴ In the decades between 1920 and 1960, the *American Historical Review* only published four articles on Native American subjects. A few outlying historians of Native Americans stood out during this time period, the most significant is Angie Debo. Debo documented the Indian response to war and removal rather than focusing on white political and military figures that carried out these removals and wars on behalf of the United States government.⁵ Her dissertation published by the University of Oklahoma Press in 1934, *The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic*, examined how the American Civil War dramatically changed the political, social, and economic customs of the

³ R. David Edmunds, “Native Americans, New Voices: American Indian History, 1895-1995,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 3 (1995), 720. Edmunds is a comprehensive historiographical essay up to 1995.

⁴ The more mainstream narrative was that of Indian-white military confrontations: George Hunt, Randolph Downes, Howard Peckham, and Douglas Leach.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 721-722.

Choctaws.⁶ However, she witnessed tremendous hardship as a result of her interpretations. These hardships included threats to her life and rejections from numerous professorships at state universities. Similar to Debo, Walter S. Campbell also made headway in presenting a more Native centric interpretation. Campbell used personal accounts and incorporated Native American testimony into his work. Their works are also significant because they created the tribal-history format that survived well into the twenty-first century.⁷

The 1960s was a revolutionary time for Native American history. The civil rights movement and the receding of the consensus school allowed for the incorporation of ethnic groups.⁸ Native American Studies programs popped up on many college campuses and new positions opened in departments for historians studying Native Americans. Emerging historians in this period argued that their forbearers wrote “white man’s history” by only utilizing written sources. They argued that historians “knew what ‘was happening,’ but they really did not know what ‘was going on.’”⁹ The tumult of this period gave rise to the New Indian History. The “new Indian history” was “designed to place the tribal communities within the broader American perspective.”¹⁰ Historians of Native Americans sought to re-write the narratives of the past by incorporating the Native perspective and

⁶ Angie Debo, *The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1934).

⁷ R. David Edmunds, “Native Americans, New Voices: American Indian History, 1895-1995,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 3 (1995), 723.

⁸ Works such as Dee Brown’s *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Holt McDougal, 2007).

⁹ R. David Edmunds, “Native Americans, New Voices: American Indian History, 1895-1995,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 3 (1995), 725.

¹⁰ R. David Edmunds, “Native Americans, New Voices: American Indian History, 1895-1995,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 3 (1995), 725.

voice. Because of the strong Native oral tradition there were few traditional sources written from the Native perspective. Historians began to use ethnohistorical methodologies to utilize different sources that allowed them to incorporate the Native perspective in their narratives. This new “Indian-centered” perspective examines the interaction between Native Americans and Anglo-Americans from a Native American point of view.¹¹

Historians such as Daniel Richter and Karen Kupperman utilized ethnohistorical methodologies in writing their narratives.¹² Another major facet of the New Indian History was the re-enforcement of Native agency. Richter along with Richard White and Kathleen DuVal re-oriented the geography of early America to show instances where Natives were either on “middle ground” as in the case of Richard White or held their own “Native Ground” as in the case of Kathleen DuVal.¹³ Other recent movements in Native American history have been spurred by the writing of specific tribal studies.¹⁴ Different than DuVal and White, they do not seek to make a larger argument for Native America in general but

¹¹ Examples of historians using the “Indian-centered perspective: Janet D. Spector, *What This Axl Means: Feminist Archaeology at a Wahpeton Dakota Village* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1993). James Axtel, *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹² Richter, Daniel, *Facing East From Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001). Kupperman, Karen, *Indians and English: Facing Off in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000). Ethnohistory is an important methodology in my own work allowing for the utilizing of oral sources to put the Native voice at the center of my narrative. For a more in depth description of ethnohistory methodology see: “Ethnohistory: An Historian’s Viewpoint,” in *Ethnohistory* 26 (1979): 1-13.

¹³ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Kathleen DuVal, *Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

¹⁴ Malinda Maynor Lowery, *Lumbee Indians in the Jim Crow South: Race, Identity, and the Making of a Nation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

argue for the importance of a particular tribe to the larger society and culture. Studies on specific Native tribes can also include the incorporation of larger themes or methodologies. An example of the integration of a tribal history and gender methodology is Theda Perdue's *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835*.¹⁵ Christina Snyder also uses this thematic approach in her book, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* in focusing on the history of the Seminoles in her last chapter.¹⁶

TWENTIETH CENTURY NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY

While we have come a long way in Native American historiography there still remains a significant historiographical hole in the twentieth century. Twentieth Century Native history and Native studies have largely focused on four major subjects: land, education, economy, and sovereignty. In relation to economy, historians have written significantly on the deep changes to Native economies in the twentieth century specifically brought about by the switch to a wage based economy rather than one rooted in trade.¹⁷ In the introduction to Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack's edited volume, *Native Americans and Wage Labor*, they argue that understanding the emergence of indigenous wage labor should not only be placed within the context of how it changed the economic and social histories of Native peoples but also how it fits within the larger United States

¹⁵ Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1998).

¹⁶ Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

¹⁷ Brian Hosmer and Colleen O'Neill, eds., *Native Pathways: American Indian Culture and Economic Development in the Twentieth Century* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado).

economy.¹⁸ Not surprisingly, Littlefield and Knack conclude that Native American participation in the labor force in turn bolstered European or American economic success. However, I argue that Littlefield and Knack's interpretation does not allow for an analysis of the Native American's use and influence of the market economy outside of European and American contexts.

The rapidly changing education system received significant research beginning with the termination of the boarding schools in the 1930s.¹⁹ The investigation of self-determination as a concept for tribal governance is becoming a widespread topic especially in Native American Studies.²⁰ The notion of self-determination came out of the Indian New Deal and remains its' number one legacy. Studies of the efficiency and effectiveness of self-determination are continually being published especially after the Red Power movement that occurred alongside the Civil Rights movement.²¹ After the Red Power movement, historians such as Vine Deloria, Jr. wrote about the twentieth century as a long

¹⁸ Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack, eds., *Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 5.

¹⁹ Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, Lorene Sisquoc, eds., *Boarding School Blues* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

²⁰ Bradley H. Shreve, *Red Power Rising: The National Indian Youth Council and the Origins of Native Activism* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970). Smith, Sherry L. *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). It is also important to note the influence of Native American Studies to the examination of the social, political, and economic climate of Native Americans today. Significant contributions include: Donald Fixico, *Daily Life of Native Americans in the Twentieth Century* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006). Duane Champagne, *Contemporary Native American Cultural Issues* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 1999).

²¹ Terry L. Anderson, Bruce L. Benson, and Thomas L. Flanagan, eds., *Self Determination: The Other Path for Native Americans* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

struggle for sovereignty.²² Today, Native American Studies scholars are examining how the rise of gambling and the use of gambling for economic revenue on reservations either perpetuates or deters self-determination of Native tribes.²³

A more recent strain of Native scholarship that specifically correlates with this study is the investigation of Native representations in national institutions and tribal museums. Historians of Native Americans are employing theories around memory, oral history, and museology to investigate Native American history. Tiya Miles' fantastic study, *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story* investigates interpretation and the creation of history and memory at the Diamond Hill plantation in Georgia.²⁴ Miles' disassembles the layers of history of this Western Georgia plantation that belonged to Chief James Vann, one of the wealthiest Cherokee who owned many enslaved people of African descent. The strength of Miles' work is in her argument that the experience of James Vann acts as a microcosm of the larger changes going on within Cherokee society: "His life lived out on Diamond Hill reflected the growing gradations of Cherokee experience amid a changing cultural world."²⁵ Amy Lonetree investigates the role of museology and de-

²² Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, *The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).

²³ Paul Pasquaretta, *Gambling and Survival in Native North America* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2003). Kenneth N. Hansen and Tracy A. Skopek, eds., *The New Politics of Indian Gaming* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2011). Steven Andrew Light and Kathryn R.L. Rand, *Indian Gaming & Tribal Sovereignty* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005). There is also a significant historiography on Urban American Indians: Susan Lobo and Kurt Peters, *American Indians and the Urban Experience* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2001).

²⁴ Tiya Miles, *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

colonization in national institutions in her recent book *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*.²⁶ Lonetree examines three different museums and their representations of Native Americans. Her goal is to show the complexity of relationships between Native peoples and museums and advocate for best practices in how they can not only work together but create exhibits that tell a whole Native history not just a part.

ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

This study builds on environmental history especially because more than any other field it has been able to eloquently make arguments about the complexity of Native American and Anglo-American clashes and the ecological issues that lay at the heart of those clashes. These issues include differences about perceptions and uses of the land. William Cronon's ground breaking work, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, examined the changes wrought by European farming techniques on the New England landscape such as the cutting down of forests, the killing of mammals, and the changes in waterways and runoff patterns. By demonstrating that changes occurred, Cronon then was able to discuss Native American's ecological understanding and traditional methods of hunting and farming. Cronon's argument is that the fundamental contrast between Europeans and Native Americans at contact lay in the perception of land

²⁶ Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012). Amy Lonetree and Amanda J. Cobb, *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 2008). Mary Lawlor, *Public Native America: Tribal Self-Representation in Casinos, Museums, and Powwows* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006). Phillip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

and animals as commodities to be owned and exchanged.²⁷ In his work, *Down to Earth*, Ted Steinberg also discusses Native American perceptions and uses of land: “To call North America on the eve of European arrival a pristine wilderness is to deny the very powerful role that the Indians, with fire as their principal tool, played in shaping the landscape.”²⁸ His argument, similar to mine, is that Native Americans make their own impact on the environmental landscape of America, but that it must be seen through the lens of Natives. Their relationship to the landscape was shaped by three different levels as Steinberg explains, “moral, spiritual, and practical.”²⁹

Similar to Cronon and Steinberg, Mark David Spence also investigates the construction of the wilderness and the landscape in *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*. To create National Parks a new definition of “wilderness” was created that excluded all peoples except the American public. The thrust of Spence’s argument is that “uninhabited wilderness had to be created before it could be preserved.”³⁰ The creation of this wilderness involved the removal of Native

²⁷ William Cronon, *Changing in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), vii. Stephen J. Pyne, *Fire in America: A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

²⁸ Ted Steinberg, *Down to Earth: Nature’s Role in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 20.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 20. Stephen Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002). Neil M. Maher, *Nature’s New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Roots of the American Environmental Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

³⁰ Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 4. However, it is important to mention that Spence argues that the creation of national parks allowed for the creation of a common ground where “understanding and resolution” can take place because these national parks “serve as a microcosm for the history of conflict and

Americans and their ideas about the use of the land's resources. Spence, Cronon, and Steinberg all researched competing ideas of the use of land and argued how either European or government views of land ultimately prevailed.

Karl Jacoby's *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* also examines the history of National Parks and the exclusion of peoples but through the lens of the conservation movement.³¹ Much like this study, Jacoby focuses on the local to "seek to recreate the moral universe that shaped local transgressions of conservation laws, enabling us to glimpse the pattern of beliefs, practices, and traditions that governed how ordinary rural folk interacted with the environment."³² In focusing on a bottom up study, Jacoby argues that early conservationists were just as much colonizers as the local communities that they patronized. He shows that Native Americans and rural whites had long seen these places as common lands, fishing, hunting, and gathering berries, nuts, wood, and other items on them that they then used themselves or sold to generate cash. Jacoby's other major contribution is his investigation of environmental history from an economic standpoint, the relationship of rural communities to the woods was pre-industrial while at the same time being market oriented. The creation of National Parks, in Jacoby's argument, did not end destruction as much as it reordered social power and the forms of destruction. He argues: "submerging these

misunderstanding that has long characterized the unequal relations between the United States and native peoples."

³¹ Karl Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

³² *Ibid.*, 3.

differences has lent environmental history tremendous rhetorical power, but at the cost of obscuring the diversity of relationships that Americans forged with the natural world.”³³

PUBLIC HISTORY

Because I utilized oral history and investigated representations within museums, I drew heavily on the historiography in the field of public history. The first major part of this historiography that impacts this study is the recent development of the study of memory. Michael Kammen was one of the first to investigate how Americans have shaped and contested the meaning of their past.³⁴ In *Mystic Chords of Memory*, Kammen argues that the creation of memory is a contest between those who hold the power of controlling the past.³⁵ David Glassberg’s *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* argues that “like many other beliefs, a sense of national identity and history for the majority of Americans is so pervasive and deep-seated that it goes without saying, and only surfaces when challenged.”³⁶ However, as Glassberg argued in his 1997 article in *The Public Historian*, “For all the recent scholarship on memory, we still do not know nearly enough about how memorial practices vary by race, by class, by gender, by region, or by nation.”³⁷

³³ Ibid., 10.

³⁴ Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1993).

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 10. Edward Linenthal and Tom Enelhardt, *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 1996). Michael H. Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

³⁷ David Glassberg, “A Sense of History,” *The Public Historian* 19.2 (Spring 1997), 69.

This call to action still rings true today; this study seeks to investigate memory in Native American communities and how that memory can even change how history is remembered.

Another part of public history that this study makes an intersection into is the investigation of the power of place. Dolores Hayden defines the power of place as “the power of ordinary urban landscapes to nurture citizens’ public memory, to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory.”³⁸ Hayden argues for a “socially inclusive urban landscape history” where the objects of preservation would not only belong to the rich but would include all levels of society.³⁹ In *Beyond Preservation: Using Public History to Revitalize Inner Cities* Andrew Hurley investigates how historic preservation is now linked to gentrification and the dislocation of poor communities. Much like Hayden, Hurley seeks to advocate for a better practice in which historic inner cities’ historic architecture can be saved while at the same time making them economically viable and not pushing out the current communities that reside there.⁴⁰

In *The Lowell Experiment: Public History in an Postindustrial City*, Cathy Stanton investigates the creation of history around a particular place.⁴¹ Stanton uses ethnographic methodologies to study public historians who collaborated with the residents of the former textile city of Lowell, Massachusetts. These public historians applied “culture-led

³⁸ Dolores Haryden, *Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 12.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴⁰ Andrew Hurley, *Beyond Preservation: Using Public History to Revitalize Inner Cities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 11.

⁴¹ Cathy Stanton, *The Lowell Experiment: Public History in a Postindustrial City* (Amherst: University of Massahusetts Press, 2006).

redevelopment” to bring about revitalization to the city. She argues that the positive image that public historians utilized in the city’s overall redevelopment project hindered the development of more critical interpretations. The biggest proponent of the nostalgic positive image during the redevelopment project was the interpretive division of the Lowell National Historical Park.⁴² Stanton’s study is similar to my own work in looking at how the Great Smoky Mountains National Park challenges any interpretations that portray the complexity of their history with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

The latest scholarship that this thesis is grounded in is *Letting Go?: Sharing Authority in a User-Generated World* edited by Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene, and Laura Koloski. In the introduction, the editors argue for a “closer involvement with our constituents, not more distance.”⁴³ However, sharing authority between museums and Native American tribes is difficult as a result of the combative relationship between the two. As Amy Lonetree argues museums are and have been contentious spaces for Natives. To Native Americans, museums represent American colonization rather than Native resilience or persistence despite colonization. Museums are also places where Natives are forced to confront their history, which can be a jarring and painful experience. Through incorporating shared authority into museums and their relationships with Native communities, Native peoples’ healing can finally begin. As Kathleen McLean argues in her piece, “We need to think of visitors as partners in a generative learning process within a

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene, and Laura Koloski, eds., *Letting Go?: Sharing Historical Authority in a User-Generated World* (Philadelphia: The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, 2011), 14.

dynamic community of learners.”⁴⁴ It is time that Native Americans become partners in this generative learning process to teach and learn.

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE EASTERN BAND

Prior to the formation of the historical profession, James Adair wrote one of the first studies of Native Americans, *The History of the American Indians*, which has a section on Southeastern Indians. This study sought to document the histories, languages, manners, and religious and civil customs of Native Americans. But it made the argument that white colonization in the Southeast helped civilize Natives. A hundred and twenty-two years later, James Mooney, on behalf of the Bureau of American Ethnography for the Smithsonian Institution, researched and published *Myths of the Cherokee* and *Historical Sketch of the Cherokee*.⁴⁵ Mooney was part of a larger group of scholars at the Smithsonian Institution and the Field Museum of Natural History in the 1890s and 1910s. The federal government, motivated by the “interest of investors and local politicians in allocating funds for a series of new surveys of the West” funded ethnographers to research natural resources.⁴⁶ While these researchers found natural specimens, they also collected human related artifacts from Native cultures. Lawmakers quickly realized that research on Native peoples could be used for Indian policy. Out of these reports came the Bureau of

⁴⁴ Kathleen McLean, “Whose Questions, Whose Conversations?” in *Letting Go?: Sharing Historical Authority in a User-Generated World* edited by Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene, and Laura Koloski (Philadelphia: The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, 2011), 72.

⁴⁵ James Mooney, *Historical Sketch of the Cherokee* (Chicago: Transaction Publishers, 2005). James Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 1996).

⁴⁶ Denise D. Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 33.

Ethnography and a school of ethnographers trained not as historians but as zoologists, archaeologists, and anthropologists.⁴⁷

Mooney argued that Native cultures were dying out and no longer relevant in the face of expansion and industrialization within the United States in the early twentieth century.⁴⁸ James Mooney utilized anthropometry for which, “the disadvantaged and dispossessed were simply biologically and physically inferior.”⁴⁹ Federal Indian policy at this time abandoned the idea of assimilation and accepted that Native people were scientifically different and would die off in time. Mooney reflects this theory in the introduction of his book, *Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*, “the East Cherokee of to-day is a dejected being; poorly fed, and worse clothed, and rarely tasting meat, cut off from the old free life, and with no incentive to a better, and constantly bowed down by sense of helpless degradation in the presence of his conqueror.”⁵⁰ Mooney clearly believed that the white man conquered the Eastern Band and as a result were in a state of decline. He even goes on to note that reports indicate “a slow but steady decrease during the last five years.”⁵¹ Mooney argues that the traditional medicinal formulas of the Cherokee are of no value to them anymore, “On representing to him that in a few years the new conditions

⁴⁷ Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks*, 42-47.

⁴⁸ Mooney’s writing is representative of the approach of ethnographers in the early twentieth century. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 3. Edward Said wrote of this same phenomenon in discussing the Orient: “European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self.”

⁴⁹ Lowery, *Lumbee Indians in the Jim Crow South*, 190.

⁵⁰ James Mooney, *The Sacred Formulas of the Cherokee* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891), 333.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 333.

would render such knowledge valueless with the younger generation, and that even if he retained the papers he would need some one else to explain them to him [the Cherokee].”⁵² Mooney did not believe that the formulas were relevant to Cherokee society any longer. As a result, his mission was to collect what he believed would soon be ancient history to be preserved in the Smithsonian Institution for scientific study.

Mooney’s method in writing *Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees* was to collect six hundred sacred formulas from the Cherokee. He argued that the ethnographic importance of the materials was that they constituted the “genuine production of the Indian mind, setting forth in the clearest light the state of aboriginal religion.”⁵³ The formulas not only included medicinal recipes but also sacred rituals performed by shamans. He obtained the formulas through purchasing them from a variety of sources, in writing about his practice of purchasing the formulas he wrote, “It is sometimes possible to obtain a formula by the payment of a coat, a quantity of cloth, or a sum of money.”⁵⁴ However, not all Eastern Band members approved of this method of exchange. Mooney writes openly that he communicated with a young Eastern Band woman who he believed “had some knowledge of the subject” and “volunteered to write the words which she used in her prescriptions.”⁵⁵ But, Mooney elaborates that he never received the prescriptions because of “the opposition of the half-breed shamans.”⁵⁶ It is evident through this quote that the shamans who

⁵² Ibid., 313.

⁵³ Ibid., 319.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 310.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 305.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 322.

prepared these formulas were hostile towards Mooney and did not approve of his methods. This form of trade disconnected the objects from the Eastern Band and thus disconnected the Eastern Band from history. Mooney's interactions with the Eastern Band sparked immediate distrust of professional historians.

Mooney strived to portray the Cherokee as backward and uncivilized. For example, consider his discussion of Cherokee medicine. Mooney concludes, "Like most primitive people the Cherokees believe that disease and death are not natural, but are due to the evil influence of animal spirits, ghosts, or witches."⁵⁷ He treats Native America as a collective group with embryonic traits that are characteristic of all Native groups. These traits are complex rituals and religious beliefs that Mooney argues are "evil." Mooney's inability to see beyond his eurocentrism and bias creates a history that illustrates early twentieth century ethnographic practices and federal exploitation of Native Americans.

The three Eastern Band members I interviewed discussed James Mooney and the place of his work in Eastern Band society. Saunooke confirmed the flaws of Mooney's work, "The only reason I touched Mooney's book is that I recognized the legends. I didn't read nothing else other than the legends because I took those, as it was okay."⁵⁸ The medicinal formulas that Mooney collected through purchase were recognizable to Saunooke, otherwise the Cherokee history that Mooney constructed was incomprehensible. Mooney's history lacked context or a historical interpretation of the Cherokee in the early twentieth century. Saunooke could recognize the formulas long after Mooney was gone

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 321.

⁵⁸ Yolanda Saunooke, interview by Mattea Sanders, October 12, 2012, transcript, Representation of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians Project.

because they continued to be passed down through oral transmission. His work remained with the Cherokee and today they only utilize the original sources in his work

There have been quite a few recent studies on the Eastern Band that do not wholly research Eastern Band history but examine sections of Eastern Band life. Like the larger field of Native history, the utilization of ethnographic practices changed Eastern Band historiography. In *Signs of Cherokee Culture: Sequoyah's Syllabary in Eastern Cherokee Life*, Margaret Bender examines how the efforts to retain the Cherokee language is a reflection of the efforts to preserve cultural identity more broadly.⁵⁹ Virginia Moore Carney's *Eastern Band Cherokee Women: Cultural Persistence in Their Letters and Speeches* explores the agency of Eastern Band women through arguing for "the tenacity of Cherokee females."⁶⁰ Conversely, Sarah Hill's work, *Weaving New Worlds: Southeastern Cherokee Women and Their Basketry* seeks to show how Eastern Band women's persistence in retaining the practice of basketry on the reservation sustained the culture of the Eastern Band through the twentieth century.⁶¹ Unfortunately, Hill concentrates her study on the records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs instead of actually utilizing the voices of Eastern Band women. One of the most effective works on the Eastern Band, Heidi Altman's work, *Eastern Cherokee Fishing* uses fishing to "gain perspectives on the status of the Cherokee language, the vigor of the Cherokee system of native knowledge, and the

⁵⁹ Margaret Bender, *Signs of Cherokee Culture: Sequoyah's Syllabary in Eastern Cherokee Life* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), xii.

⁶⁰ Virginia Moore Carney, *Eastern Band Cherokee Women: Cultural Persistence in Their Letters and Speeches* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2005), 18.

⁶¹ Sarah H. Hill, *Weaving New Worlds: Southeastern Cherokee Women and Their Basketry* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

history of the relationship between Cherokee people and the local environment.”⁶² The last emphasis of Altman’s work on the relation between Cherokee people and the local environment can be seen in my own study as well, especially as the Cherokee’s relationship changes as a result of their economic position. Christina Taylor Beard-Moose’s work, *Public Indians, Private Cherokees: Tourism and Tradition on Tribal Ground* seeks to give voice to the Eastern Band about their views of the heavy tourist traffic on the boundary since the middle of the twentieth century.⁶³ However, her own criticisms of the influence of the tourists on Cherokee identity create a false sense of Eastern Band identity and voice not only about the tourist industry but about life on the reservation in the twentieth century. An example is Beard-Moose’s chapter, “Disneyfication on the Boundary” where she analyzes the mass tourism on the reservation in the late twentieth century. She describes the museum and the *Unto These Hills* drama in this time period as amusement park attractions. She argues, “These venues can be thought of as a CultureLand where tourists interested in Cherokees as Cherokees could find a form of history and a Cherokee cultural perspective.”⁶⁴ Her issue with these venues is that the history they present is more mythical than factual. She misses the point of what the Cherokee economically and socially gained from this boost of tourism and the creation of the Cherokee cultural perspective through memory making between the Cherokee and the tourists.

⁶² Heidi M. Altman, *Eastern Cherokee Fishing* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2006), 1.

⁶³ Christina Taylor Beard-Moose, *Public Indians, Private Cherokees: Tourism and Tradition on Tribal Ground* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2009), 16-17.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

More recently, historians John R. Finger and Sarah Hill have written comprehensive histories of the Eastern Band.⁶⁵ Warren Susman has argued, “No effective cultural history could be undertaken until historians learned how to deal with the cultural forms characteristic of their times.”⁶⁶ Just as James Mooney’s work was a result of the cultural forms of his time, Finger and Hill were able to move towards a wider and fairer analysis of the Eastern Band because of the new cultural history and the reflective history of identity politics. As Malinda Lowery writes in her work on identity politics with Lumbee Indians in North Carolina, historians began to argue against the thoroughly entrenched racial theories of the past.⁶⁷ While Hill and Finger acknowledge and discredit the racial ideologies of the past, they remain wedded to a narrative rooted in the institutional history of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The most recent and significant study of the Eastern Band is John R. Finger’s two volume history: *The Eastern Band of Cherokees: 1819-1900* and *Cherokee Americans: The Eastern Band of Cherokees in the Twentieth Century*. Finger portrays the Eastern Band in the twentieth century as reactive-always responding to outside forces rather than actively shaping the world around them. Finger also portrays the Eastern Band as existing in

⁶⁵ The interviews also discussed Mary U. Chiltosky and her works: *Cherokee Cooklore: Preparing Cherokee Foods, Make My Bread, Cherokee Words with Pictures, Cherokee Plants and their Uses: A 400 Year History*, and *Cherokee Fair and Festival: A History Thru 1978*. Chiltosky conducted oral histories with the Eastern Band and wrote mainly about Cherokee daily life. Saunooke spoke about her experience with Chiltosky: “And one other books was Mary Chiltosky which she was married to Goingback and she did some small legends and so I read that.” Saunooke indicated that because Chiltosky was married to an Eastern Band member she had a more intimate relationship with the tribe and wrote collaborative histories because of this gateway into the tribe’s history.

⁶⁶ Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2003), 101.

⁶⁷ Lowery, *Lumbee Indians in the Jim Crow South*.

isolation, arguing that they established boundaries that divided themselves from the outside world.⁶⁸ My argument is that the twentieth century was actually a time that the Eastern Band and the federal government's relationship while tenacious did involve compromise and dialogue. For the first time the federal government listened to some of the needs of the Eastern Band and created a program that benefitted them on the ground. However, this program dramatically altered the dynamic on the reservation.

A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

This work draws on my own oral histories, Bureau of Indian Affairs Records, Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division Records, National Park Service records, and an oral history project conducted through Western Kentucky University's Folk Studies program that interviewed over three hundred Eastern Band members. The compilation of these sources will hopefully allow for a greater sense of the terms in which the Cherokee saw their own historical experience between 1920 and 1940. This study seeks to argue for the re-integration of the Eastern Band's narrative into the wider history of Appalachia in the twentieth century. While arguing for Native agency, especially in using the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division as a case study, I do not wish to overemphasize the power the Eastern Band had to shape their surroundings within the region. I also hope to show that while the federal government's intervention shaped the Appalachian region, I do not want to celebrate their role. I want to show that from 1920 to 1940, the region of Western Carolina was going through a dramatic shift economically, culturally, and politically as a result of shifting views of land use, labor, and cultural persistence.

⁶⁸ John R. Finger, *Eastern Band of Cherokees: 1819-1900* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984). John R. Finger, *Cherokee Americans: The Eastern Band of Cherokees in the Twentieth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 16.

Examining these shifts will allow for a more complicated narrative. This study takes a chronological approach first discussing the cultural, economic, and social situation of the Eastern Band in the 1920s by utilizing the case study of the town of Ravensford, then discussing the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division in the 1930s, and ending with the land swap in 1940 between the Eastern Band and the National Park Service that exemplifies the evolution of the relationship between the tribe and the federal government in the twenty years prior. I will concentrate on five themes: changing views of land, labor practices, community development, local versus the national tensions, and disruption of ecosystems. It is important to remember that the federal government would not have had widespread success had it not been for the industrial lumber companies in the 1920s.

CHAPTER 2: “WE DIDN’T KNOW THERE WAS A DEPRESSION”

By the dawn of the twentieth century the assimilation policies of the late nineteenth century had taken their toll on the Native populations. Many reservations were rife with poverty, widespread alcoholism, and a high infant mortality rate.⁶⁹ Because of their already poor situation, the Great Depression had little effect on Native communities. In a seminar held at the Greensboro Historical Museum in August of 1992, an elder of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians said, “We didn’t know there was a Depression. Hard times were a normal way of life for us. Unemployment, lack of ample food and clothing, and hand-to-mouth existence were everyday routine for most Cherokee Indians.”⁷⁰

Prior to the establishment of the Eastern Band CCC-ID, the Eastern Band was in a moment of transition teetering on failure. While the Eastern Band did not suffer through allotment as many tribes did it had its own pervasive issues.⁷¹ At the establishment of the

⁶⁹ Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 5-7. The General Allotment Act, passed in 1887, divided tribal lands into 160-acre plots given to the head of each family. Any surplus lands were sold to the federal government and then sold to white settlers. The Dawes Rolls established who was to receive allotments. Today many tribes use these rolls to derive the origin of their modern day membership. One of the major emphases in allotment was assimilation. Graham D. Taylor argues that the reason allotment ultimately failed was the failure of it to establish the economic structures necessary for “Indians to benefit from or even function effectively in the emerging industrial society.” However, the Eastern Band was not allotted because of unevenness of the mountainous North Carolina landscape. There is an entire section of Native American historiography dedicated to property rights of Native Americans, while I build on this literature the Eastern Band is not easily situated into this history because of the physical realities of their landscape. Terry L. Anderson, ed., *Property Rights and Indian Economies: The Political Economy Forum* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.).

⁷⁰ Jolley, “*That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace*,” 121.

⁷¹ Tyler Howe, interview by Mattea Sanders, October 12, 2012, transcript, Representation of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians Project. “If you go back to allotment they are looking at the Qualla Boundary as an example of why you don’t need to

CCC-ID, the first superintendent of the agency wrote a letter describing the economic state of the Eastern Band: “When the conservation work began some of the Indians were so much in debt that their credit was exhausted and a number of them came and asked us to turn their checks over to the traders they named so they could get groceries for their families while they were working.”⁷² The members of the Eastern Band were in dire need of economic support.

AGRICULTURE

Appalachia divorced itself from the rest of the United States as a result of its economic and social state, as Steven Hahn argues in *The Roots of Southern Populism*, “Southern yeomen were touchy and isolated individuals, petty entrepreneurs with their backs to the wall by the 1890s.”⁷³ Unlike some areas of the South that gave way to plantations, small subsistence farms remained supreme in the Appalachian region, “Furthermore, the South itself saw the growth of dual societies: alongside the commercialized Plantation Belt arose areas characterized by small farms, relatively few slaves, and diversified agriculture.”⁷⁴ Farming in the Appalachian region consisted of cash crops such as rice and tobacco. In a 2004 oral history interview, Eastern Band Elder Bob Blankenship described the typical day for an Eastern Band child in the 1920s:

do allotment. Because the council at one time approves allotment here just like they did in Oklahoma but they realized that they cannot evenly allot land.”

⁷² R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C. Jul. 5, 1934; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

⁷³ Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 5.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

We didn't have electricity or anything. Let alone telephones or tv. Had a battery radio, but we'd have to get up early in the morning to milk cows and feed the livestock, and then go to school. And then really, we couldn't afford to get shoes for school until after we sold our tobacco, and that was up around November or something. [There was] frost on the ground. I remember herding them cows with frost on the ground, and me feet a' freezing.⁷⁵

In the late nineteenth century, the Appalachian region remained committed to “a pseudo frontier economy.”⁷⁶ In other words, “Most Upcountry yeomen participated in a market, but one decidedly local in character and regulated by custom.”⁷⁷ The area of Western North Carolina where the Eastern Band is located came to be known for corn and livestock most specifically swine. Eastern Band Elder Katie Jessan talked about the kinds of agriculture her family grew and raised: “ I know a lot of moms in the spring would set hens and try to have a lot of fryers. Along say about June when there are people, the corn would be just so high, you know, they would have to hoe to keep the weeds down and all that.”⁷⁸ While Appalachians readily embraced wage labor because of the season-to-season stability it gave them they “still kept one foot on the farm.”⁷⁹ The Eastern Band also participated in the wage labor system because of its similarity to their earlier community

⁷⁵ Bob Blankenship, interview by Kevin Murphy, August 11, 2004, transcript, Ravensford, North Carolina Land Exchange Oral History Project, 2004-2005.

⁷⁶ Pyne, *Fire in America*, 147.

⁷⁷ Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism*, 33.

⁷⁸ Katie Jessan, interview by Kevin Murphy, July 15, 2004, transcript, Ravensford, North Carolina Land Exchange Oral History Project, 2004-2005.

⁷⁹ Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, 114.

support practices that looked a lot like wage labor. Jessan described the way wage labor supplemented her father's farming:

But now when you think the way it was there was no jobs. There was no factories for the men folks-- they had to farm and raise enough food if they could, raise enough food for the winter. And nobody had money. And whenever we didn't have any money and we run out of something Dad would just go to somebody else that had more and hire out, you know. And if we needed potatoes or something that's what he would ask for pay.⁸⁰

The Eastern Band created a communal safety net so that if agriculture or wage earning did fail they would support each other. The Eastern Band came to depend on this system to be able to sustain their families in the same way that they came to rely on the wages from the logging companies and later the CCC-ID.

Stephen Pyne argues that the pattern of frontier economy “created a socioeconomic environment for the continuance of woods burning.”⁸¹ Woods burning allowed the Eastern Band “to prepare sites, to manage fallow fields, to purge sites of pests, and to dispose of debris like cane stalks and field stubble.”⁸² While this practice caused soil erosion and soil exhaustion it also paved the way for industrial corporate logging. Ted Steinberg argues: “subsistence agriculture underwrote Appalachia's industrial formation.”⁸³ The Appalachian region's dependence on agriculture also, as Steinberg argues in this quote, allowed the lumber companies to pay low wages because they knew the workers could supplement their

⁸⁰ Katie Jessan, interview by Kevin Murphy, July 15, 2004, transcript, Ravensford, North Carolina Land Exchange Oral History Project, 2004-2005.

⁸¹ Pyne, *Fire In America*, 146.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 146.

⁸³ Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, 114.

pay with subsistence agriculture. Logging companies also benefitted from the practice of woods burning because Eastern Band workers could relate their new relationship as wage laborers to earlier agricultural relationships with the woods. As Leslie Gass, a local historian whose father lived in Ravensford, discussed in his 2004 interview: “They [the Cherokee] had it cleared for farming and then the logging company came in and set the mill up.”⁸⁴ The fact that the land was already cleared allowed for an easier transition for the logging companies into the Appalachian region, the labor was recognizable albeit for completely different ends.

LOGGING

Stephen J. Pyne argues that, “More timber was logged out of the South than from any other region.”⁸⁵ Chief Jarrett Blythe wrote about the Eastern Band’s resources for industry: “Our reservation, being situated in the heart of the Smoky Mountains, is naturally very rough. Our farms are small, and a great deal of the livelihood of our people is derived from our mountain forests.”⁸⁶ As Ted Steinberg remarks in talking about Appalachia, “No place in the South felt the effects of resource extraction more than Appalachia.”⁸⁷ However, Pyne argues that “the industrial conquest of the South was not unlike the agrarian conquest

⁸⁴ Leslie Gass, interview by Kevin Murphy and Ross Fuqua, June 23, 2004, transcript, Ravensford, North Carolina Land Exchange Oral History Project, 2004-2005.

⁸⁵ Pyne, *Fire in America*, 149.

⁸⁶ Progress Report, Cherokee, N.C.; Sep. 2, 1933; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

⁸⁷ Ted Steinberg, *Down to Earth: Nature’s Role in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 113.

the European and American settlers had imposed on Indians only a century earlier.”⁸⁸ For Appalachia, industrial logging was only the second phase of economic, social, environmental, and cultural changes. The Eastern Band’s communal practices prepared and opened up workers to the idea of participating in industrial corporate logging. As a result of the availability of this wage labor, the Eastern Band was able to take some control of their economic destiny. The Eastern Band became so reliant on wage labor that when industrial logging all but collapsed in 1929 and government welfare took over through the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division, the Eastern Band welcomed the government system much more than they would have if the corporate logging had not existed.

Industrial lumbering began in earnest in the late nineteenth century and by 1930 the industrial companies owned nearly two-thirds of all privately owned land in Appalachia.⁸⁹ In this particular region of Western North Carolina, large-scale logging began in the 1880s in the Big Creek area. The logging industry moved from the Great Lakes to the mid-Atlantic region after clear cutting the forest of the upper Midwest. Industrial lumber companies such as the Scottish Carolina Timber Company, the North Carolina Land and Timber Company, the Cataloochee Lumber Company, the Pigeon River Company, the Champion Fibre Lumber Company, and the Suncrest Lumber claimed their part of the prize of the largest continuous forest cover in the eastern United States.⁹⁰ The introduction of steam-powered skidders and locomotives that could ship the timber over large distances allowed the destruction of the trees to extend wider and deeper into the forest.

⁸⁸ Pyne, *Fire in America*, 149

⁸⁹ Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, 110.

⁹⁰ Daniel S. Pierce, *The Great Smokies: From Natural Habitat to National Park* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 24-25.

The Appalachian region appealed to timber companies as a result of the high population of low or no income families. Steinberg argues that these people were “caught in the clutches of a Malthusian dilemma, folks willing to work for low wages.”⁹¹ Individuals whose families had lived in the mountains for generations relying solely on farming sought out work for “steady wages of sixty-five cents to a dollar a day and break from the uncertainties of farming.”⁹² These early companies logged poplar, white oak, ash, and cherry, which gave way to basswood, birch, buckeye, peawood, and maple and then chestnut oak, hemlock, and chestnut. To transport the logs the companies turned to the most destructive methods. Because the companies used cut and run operations, they first would roll the logs down the mountain. Then they constructed wooden dams in watersheds to create ponds that they would fill the logs with. They blew the dam up and the logs would flow downstream with devastating effect on aquatic life. As the timber industry became more technologically advanced the timber industries turned to cable-pulley systems called skidders. Skidders were some of the most destructive systems because it “pulled up underbrush, scoured the forest floor, and uprooted young trees, creating a huge accumulation of debris, known to loggers as slash.”⁹³ The consequences of this early logging included massive erosion, depleted wildlife populations, flooding, forest fires, and streams clogged with silt and slash. The elimination of the forest and the devastation of the

⁹¹ Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, 114.

⁹² Daniel S. Pierce, *The Great Smokies: From Natural Habitat to National Park* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 26.

⁹³ Daniel S. Pierce, *The Great Smokies: From Natural Habitat to National Park* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 24-25.

streams produced an even greater economic dependency as regional communities tried to sustain themselves making them more likely to turn to wage labor.

Chief Jarrett Blythe was born on May 30, 1886 and witnessed the impact of logging during his childhood. Blythe's father was a mixed-blood and mother was the daughter of Chief Nimrod Smith. Chief Nimrod Smith was the fourth Principal Chief of the Eastern Band and the predecessor of Lloyd Welch, the author of the Eastern Band's constitution. Chief Smith's major contribution was the official U.S. government recognition of the Eastern Band under federal law. In 1931, Blythe became the sixteenth principal chief of the Eastern Band of Cherokees and served in that role until 1947. Blythe's family had a long tradition of cooperation with the Federal Government--in the 1890s Blythe's father was one of the informants for James Mooney. When Blythe became chief in 1931, he welcomed the New Deal programs with open arms, and became the supervisor of the program. He wrote in 1932, a year after the program was established in Cherokee: "For many of them who have inadequate farm lands, it has been necessary in the past for them to supplement this [farming] by cutting and selling timber."⁹⁴ Timber was a quick cash industry that supplied cash easily to the Eastern Band. Blythe went on to comment about the timber industry in the Eastern Band: "Here, at Cherokee, we have some 3,500 Indians living on a reservation of slightly over 50,000 acres, of which only five or six thousand acres are suitable for agriculture. Less than two acres per person. Heretofore, the Indians have depended to a

⁹⁴ C.M. Blair, Superintendent to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., Jun. 27, 1940; File No. 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

considerable extent upon the cutting of timber for their livelihood.”⁹⁵ The Eastern Band’s geographic location made agriculture difficult, however the Eastern Band realized that this mountainous landscape could reap another kind of benefit. They turned in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to logging. The Eastern Band logged out of their reservation: southern Appalachian hardwoods, Virginia pine, hemlocks, and red spruce that covered some of the higher elevations of the boundary.⁹⁶ In 1933, an inspector on behalf of the CCC-ID, reflected on the years of Eastern Band logging: “except a few very inaccessible spots, have at some time or other been selectively logged.”⁹⁷ It is apparent that prior to the CCC-ID logging allowed the Eastern Band to financially survive and also institutionalized wage earning within the Eastern Band. The Ravensford Lumber Company and the town around Ravensford are a case study of the economic, cultural, and societal structure of the early twentieth century Eastern Band existence.

RAVENSFORD

Ravensford is a special case because it was an area of the reservation where both Eastern Band and Anglo-Americans lived alongside one another. The Ravensford Tract as it is known today, was part of the land ceded by the Cherokees at the Treaty of Tellico in 1798. In the late eighteenth century, Anglo-Americans began to settle in this area around

⁹⁵ C.M. Blair, Superintendent to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., Jun. 27, 1940; File No. 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

⁹⁶ Proposed Emergency Conservation Projects, June 22, 1933, Cherokee, N.C.; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I, Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

⁹⁷ Proposed Emergency Conservation Projects, June 22, 1933, Cherokee, N.C.; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I, Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

and among the Cherokees. In the early 1900s, the Whitmer-Parsons Pulp and Lumber Company, what became known as the Ravensford Lumber Company, purchased the land and established the lumber town of Ravensford. In a written testimony by Alfred A. Armstrong about the early history of the company, he describes how the land came to be under the lumber company: “In 1909, Mr. Whitmer acquired by purchase the Indian lands in Swain County, North Carolina.”⁹⁸ Mr. Whitmer, the owner of the company, bought the land directly from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Not only did the Eastern Band use logging as a source of wage labor but, in the early twentieth century they began to sell off their land knowing that it would then be logged. They realized the valuable resources that their land held and what they could get for it in selling it.

The Ravensford Track was not the only piece of land sold by the Eastern Band. In an interview with prominent Eastern Band elder and head of the Tribal Council, Bob Blankenship discussed the 1918 land sale:

It should bring tears to your eyes when you read a resolution passed by the Tribal Council, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, on August 13, 1918. To paraphrase it, the Tribal Council states, direct quote, ‘Therefore we authorize the sale of 750,000 board foot feet of timber to Parson’s Pulp and Lumber Company in order to construct a sawmill at Oconoluftee Station, and a railway to Parson’s boundary of timber in Big Cove. The timber shall consist of oak, pine, chestnut, and hemlock, standing on the lands owned by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians along the Ravensfork River between the Oconoluftee River, (which is here at

⁹⁸Testimony of Alfred J. Armstrong, Ravensford Lumber Company; Folder I-8, Ravensford Lumber Company, Armstrong, Alfred J. Statement of History of Ravensford Lumber Company; Box 1; Great Smoky Mountains National Park Archives.

Ravensford) and Swinney Post Office, North Carolina in Big Cove.⁹⁹

The Eastern Band were not only selling land for logging but also selling land for the building of sawmills for the continuation of logging. Blankenship's statement demonstrates that while the Eastern Band received wages they also had a complicated reaction to the selling of timber for the construction of machinery that extended the lumber industry further on the reservation. While the lumber industry had some similarities with prior agricultural practices of the Eastern Band, it still complicated their perception of land use. The cutting of timber did not give the Eastern Band a long-term return. Instead the lumber industry gave them short-term wages but in the long-term destroyed their natural resources.

The logging on the Ravensford track did not start in earnest until 1918. The Ravensford lumber town saw its heyday in the 1920s. Armstrong's testimony shows that "The only work done in Swain County prior to 1918 was the building of the Appalachian Railroad to the Indian School at Cherokee in 1909."¹⁰⁰ This railroad became a major fixture of life in the town of Ravensford. In an interview in 2005, Lucille Beck a registered member of the Eastern Band who lived in Ravensford until 1928 when her family moved to Cherokee, talked about the presence of the railroad in the Ravensford community and her father's [an Eastern Band member] work for the railroad:

And my father worked as the brakeman on the train.
At that time, they had a big logging job up there.
There were a whole lot of little settlements around
there, and I remember one called "Pumpkin Town"

⁹⁹ Bob Blankenship, interview by Kevin Murphy, August 11, 2004, transcript, Ravensford, North Carolina Land Exchange Oral History Project, 2004-2005.

¹⁰⁰ Testimony of Alfred J. Armstrong, Ravensford Lumber Company; Folder I-8, Ravensford Lumber Company, Armstrong, Alfred J. Statement of History of Ravensford Lumber Company; Box 1; Great Smoky Mountains National Park Archives.

and we lived as I said, up on the hill, in a little white house. And we lived fairly close to the railroad track. And the train would go by, and it would blow the horn, blow the whistle. But there was a certain way, that sometimes it had a real mournful sound. And if the train whistle started like that, you could look around and see all the women coming, filing out of their houses and going flying down to the railroad track, because that always meant that some disaster had happened. Sometimes it was something very serious. Sometimes maybe someone would've gotten killed. Sometimes maybe they had had some kind of an accident. But anytime that the mournful sound of the whistle came, why, you could see women running down to the railroad track to see what had happened. We were living up there. My father didn't have a lot of education. But that was a good job, a good-paying job, being the brakeman on the railroad. So they thought everything was fine.¹⁰¹

Beck's memories of her father working on the railroad that brought the timber into Cherokee are illuminating of the many facets of life for the Eastern Band in the 1920s. First, for Beck's father working as a brakeman on the railroad was a good paying job. The wages earned from the logging industry helped to support Eastern Band families in a way that the agriculture that was prevalent on the reservation did not. However, the logging companies presence also brought another specter for the Eastern Band and that was danger. Disasters became a constant worry for Eastern Band women and split open the delicate fabric of their daily lives. But, as Beck says because of the wage labor and the stability that these wages brought Eastern Band men and women endured the inherent danger of this type of work.

Another job that men could do in relation to the lumber industry was working in the Ravensford Mill that was built as a result of the 1918 land sale. Helen (Nations) Evrett, a

¹⁰¹ Lucille Beck, interview by Jill Breit, June 28, 2005, transcript, Ravensford, North Carolina Land Exchange Oral History Project, 2004-2005.

member of the Eastern Band talked about her father's work at the mill in her 2005 interview: "He [her father] worked at the lumber mill, he was a lumber stacker. They know how to stack that lumber for it to cure and everything. There is a knack to it, you have to know how."¹⁰² The Ravensford area functioned well as an area for logging because of the access to resources, however as a direct result the area felt the consequences of logging much more than other areas on the boundary. Everett remembered how they used the pond to float the logs:

And now at Ravensford there was a big old pond just as you come across that cement bridge there on the upper side. There's a pond there. That's where they floated them logs that they'd brought in, you know, to the sawmill. And the sawmill was built right in here. And the foreman or the boss man or whoever they were lived on this side.¹⁰³

The Ravensford Lumber Company became a major facet of Eastern Band life and established a precedent of wage labor that would act as a precursor to the government welfare of the nineteen twenties. In an interview with Katie Jessan, an elder of the Eastern Band who lived in Ravensford as a girl, she reflects how her mother made baskets and traded them at the Ravensford Company Commissary: "she [her mother] would come down Saturdays to trade her baskets, you know, for groceries."¹⁰⁴ The lumber company not only did business with Eastern Band men through labor and wage exchange but also through business transactions with Eastern Band women for their trade goods. Many of these facets

¹⁰² Helen (Nations) Everett, interview with Rachel Baum, August 6, 2005, transcript, Ravensford, North Carolina Land Exchange Oral History Project, 2004-2005.

¹⁰³ Katie Jessan, interview by Kevin Murphy, July 15, 2004, transcript, Ravensford, North Carolina Land Exchange Oral History Project, 2004-2005.

¹⁰⁴ Helen (Nations) Everett, interview with Rachel Baum, August 6, 2005, transcript, Ravensford, North Carolina Land Exchange Oral History Project, 2004-2005.

can be seen replicated in the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division program of the 1930s.

CHAPTER 3: “THE EMERGENCY CONSERVATION WORK HAS MADE IT
POSSIBLE”

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PROBLEM OF INDIAN ADMINISTRATION

On the national level, the 1920s did see a new turn in the treatment of Indian Affairs.¹⁰⁵ A new emerging Indian Reform movement took hold that “challenged the basic premise of assimilation and instead emphasized cultural pluralism and the right of group self-determination.”¹⁰⁶ In 1928 a team led by Lewis Meriam published a report entitled *The Problem of Indian Administration*. The main findings of the report included that the government was not adequately appropriating funding for Native Americans, there was too much power in the administration of the Office of Indian Affairs leading to corruption, and most groundbreaking the report “charged administrators with emphasizing the management of Indian property over improvement of the quality of Indian life.”¹⁰⁷ This report in addition to a report conducted by the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs led to the resignation of Charles Burke in 1929--ending an era of boarding schools, assimilation, and mismanagement of the entire bureau. Charles Rhoads succeeded Burke in 1929 and

¹⁰⁵ Christine Bolt, *American Indian Policy and American Reform: Case Studies of the Campaign to Assimilate the American Indians* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987). Bolt’s study is a great overview of the reform movement up to the Red Power movement.

¹⁰⁶ Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race, and Reform* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005). Maddox argues for a strong Native born intellectual reform movement as early as 1893, however her narrative ends in 1910. Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 5-7.

¹⁰⁷ Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 14.

attempted to implement many of the changes laid out in the two reports.¹⁰⁸ Rhoads successfully lobbied for larger appropriations, closed boarding schools, and improved Indian healthcare. However, Rhoads was for the most part unsuccessful in making widespread changes. His political connection to President Herbert Hoover resulted in his inability to bring about permanent change.¹⁰⁹ The Hoover administration did not place Native Americans in their priorities for economic recovery.

THE REFORM MOVEMENT

New leaders emerged in the Indian reform movement that fought against the pervasive belief that Indians were a dying race. One of these leaders was John Collier, a native Georgian and son of a former Atlanta mayor. He left Georgia and moved to New York City to work for the People's Institute, which was a community center housing a variety of programs offering different services designed to benefit the community. The institute targeted the immigrant and working class communities in New York to teach classes on everything from English, physical education, ballroom dancing, botany, and bookkeeping. During his time in New York City, Collier became deeply influenced by the social workers and educators of the progressive movement. These reformers sought to correct the issues facing immigrant communities in large cities. The core theoretical belief that Collier developed during his time in New York was that communities were the "nuclei

¹⁰⁸ For history of the Office of Indian Affairs prior to the 1920s consult: Laurence F. Schmeckebier, *The Office of Indian Affairs: Its History, Activities, and Organization* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1927). Paul Stuart, *The Indian Office: Growth and Development of an American Institution, 1865-1900* (Ann Arbor: UMI Press, 1978). Stephen J. Rockwell, *Indian Affairs and the Administrative State in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹⁰⁹ Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 14-16.

for a society that would respect cultural differences and promote citizen participation in public decisions.”¹¹⁰ Even though Collier appreciated the work of the People’s Institute he became very concerned about the cultural loss immigrants forewent in moving to the United States. Collier’s theoretical ideas did not find an outlet in New York City and he left in 1920 for the California State Housing and Immigration Commission. He did not last a year in this position before coming into conflict with a strong Nativist group, the Sons of the Golden West.

Collier then accepted an invitation by his friend Mabel Dodge, an active artist who had married a Taos Pueblo man by the name of Antonio Luhan in 1923. Collier thrived in Taos and considered it to be the ideal community that represented the culmination of what he had learned in New York and California. He believed that: “Taos Pueblo also offered something valuable to the United States; it could teach Americans that preservation of Native custom and tradition did not necessarily yield negative consequences for the mainstream society.”¹¹¹ While it seemed preserved, the Taos community was in danger. New Mexico senator Holm Olaf Bursum proposed a bill in Congress that disputed Taos Pueblo land and water rights. If the bill passed, it would legitimize non-Indian claims to Pueblo lands. Collier campaigned against the bill visiting Pueblo towns, publishing articles, and rallying stakeholders. Collier became a key supporter in the unification of all Pueblos

¹¹⁰ Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 12.

¹¹¹ Peter Iverson, *“We are Still Here”: American Indians in the Twentieth Century* (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, 1998), 60.

to an All Pueblo Council that sent representatives to Washington.¹¹² Collier garnered national support for the Pueblos and made contacts that would later prove helpful in his public service. He became an active advocate of American Indians and a major figure in the American Indian Defense Association that subsequently supplied many of the leaders of the Office of Indian Affairs. He believed in the need for tribal organizations and felt that good tribal structure could solve the issues facing Native Americans.¹¹³

A NEW DEAL FOR NATIVE AMERICANS

John Collier replaced Rhoads in 1933 as Commissioner of Indian Affairs and immediately shook up the administration by appointing like-minded intellectuals who held his views on the need for reorganization of Native groups. Many of these leaders came from the Indian Defense Association including Ward Shephard, Walter V. Woehlke, and Jay B. Nash, who would become the first Director of the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division. Collier immediately set to work on reversing prior legislation and gaining appropriations for Native Americans. Collier's project became known as the Indian New Deal. Collier's Indian New Deal involved many of the struggles he had fought against in his rise to the government position. The "Indian New Deal" had three central elements: "the economic development of the reservation, and the Indian land base, the organization of Indian tribes to manage their own affairs, and the establishment of civil and cultural rights for Indians."¹¹⁴ The legislation addressed the end of allotment, the re-organization of tribal structure, and the protection of tribal funds. The bill, Wheeler-Howard measure, drafted by

¹¹² Peter Iverson, *"We are Still Here": American Indians in the Twentieth Century* (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, 1998), 60-61.

¹¹³ Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 14.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

Senator Burton K. Wheeler and Representative Edgar Howard, had six sections that included an end to allotment, funding for new land, empowerment for Indians to write constitutions for local self-government and economic corporations. Collier argued that the bill would usher in an era of tribal self-determination allowing communities to be semi-autonomous of the federal government.

Historians of the Indian New Deal have analyzed the effectiveness of the legislation since the 1980s. Graham Taylor, the first major historian to examine the Indian New Deal or the formal legislative name, The Indian Reorganization Act, did not analyze John Collier or his policies but instead focused his criticisms on the implementation of the program especially the restoration of Indian resources. Taylor argues that the crux of the problem was the limited powers of the Office of Indian Affairs: “by making the transfer of lands from individual to tribal ownership voluntary, and by restricting the appropriations for land consolidation and purchases.”¹¹⁵ The result of the lack of appropriations was that “some Indians were hurriedly pushed into a system of organization with which they felt unfamiliar, while others found the powers that they were given more limited than they felt had been promised.”¹¹⁶ The next and most established study of this period is by Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty*.¹¹⁷ Deloria and Lytle’s main critique of the Indian Reorganization was

¹¹⁵ Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934-1945* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 30-31.

¹¹⁶ Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism*, 31.

¹¹⁷ Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984). Deloria and

the lack of appropriation of funds to fully institute Collier's policies. They also argue that historians should not attribute the birth of self-determination with this legislation. Christine Bolt in *American Indian Policy and American Reform: Case Studies of the Campaign to Assimilate the American Indians* examines the legislation from the eyes of policy makers. She argues that "to genuinely understand [the reformers] history one needs to know what sustained their confidence and how far their policies failed because they were misconceived, supported by the self-interested, misapplied, or opposed."¹¹⁸ Peter Iverson, influenced by the movement in Native American history to study on the tribal level, argues that "Indian history is an extremely complex subject, and the tremendous range of Indian experiences make any generalization suspect."¹¹⁹ As a result, he analyzes how particular tribes either accepted or rejected the Indian New Deal programs.¹²⁰ The latest study on the Indian New Deal is Jennifer McLerran's work: *A New Deal for Native Art: Indian Arts and*

Lytle's own contribution to field was to trace "the roots of the idea of self-government to discover how and where it relates to the present aspirations of Indians and Indian tribes."

¹¹⁸ Christine Bolt, *American Indian Policy and American Reform: Case studies of the Campaign to Assimilate the American Indians* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 4. While her narrative focuses on the policy makers and the reformers and she does not want to belittle their efforts she does acknowledge the negative implications of their work: "I have aimed to indicate the damaging impact of underfunded, coercive reform, which took little account of Indian wishes and diversity." It is important to note the large literature on Indian Policy and administration of which this thesis draws on: George Pierre Castile and Robert L. Bee, *State and Reservation: New Perspectives on Federal Indian Policy* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1992). Frank C. Miller, *The Problem of Indian Administration* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1971). Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: The Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1790-1834* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

¹¹⁹ Peter Iverson, *"We are Still Here": American Indians in the Twentieth Century* (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, 1998), 3.

¹²⁰ Iverson, *"We are Still Here,"* 94-95.

Federal Policy: 1933-1943.¹²¹ McLerran looks at the Indian New Deal through the lens of the objectives of cultural revitalization and Native art. In her conclusion, McLerran places responsibility for both the successes and failures of the Indian New Deal squarely on the shoulders of Collier. She argues that while his intentions were “noble” he had “decidedly Occidental leanings [that] may have influenced his actions in ways potentially detrimental to those he wished to help.”¹²² McLerran argues that Collier still saw Native Americans as an “other,” that he still argued for the federal government to speak for Native American tribes instead of allowing them to speak for themselves. While Collier’s policies had national significance for Native Americans both positive and negative, locally Collier’s programs did change tribes, individual Native lives, and the relationship of tribes to the federal government.

THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS-INDIAN DIVISION

Collier created the CCC-ID through his appeal to FDR for a separate unit of the CCC to aid Native Americans. The Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division covered all three of Collier’s missions within the Indian New Deal. The impetus to establish the CCC-ID was the result of how the policies around the prior legislation, the CCC, were established. State quotas dictated how many men they could enroll in the CCC. Given the limited slots, the states did not include Native Americans in their enrollment. The CCC-ID functioned out the Office of Indian Affairs under the leadership of John Collier through

¹²¹ Jennifer McLerran, *A New Deal for Native Art: Indian Arts and Federal Policy, 1933-1943* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2009).

¹²² McLerran, *A New Deal for Native Art*, 225.

appropriations by the Public Works Administration.¹²³ Collier and the Office of Indian Affairs “assumed total responsibility for administration, enrollment, work planning, and work supervision as well as day-to-day operations for the Indian CCC projects.”¹²⁴ The first Director of the CCC-ID was Jay B. Nash for a short time followed by Daniel Murphy.¹²⁵ Murphy served twenty years with the agency prior to his appointment as the superintendent of the Osage agency in Oklahoma. Along with Murphy, Jay P. Kinney was in charge of the production program, Ernest R. Burton directed employment, and Mary-Carter Roberts edited the periodical *Indians at Work*. *Indians at Work* highlighted the work of the CCC-ID, and ran from August 1933 to June of 1945, outliving the CCC-ID itself.¹²⁶

The central tenant of the CCC-ID was self-sufficiency, that if the government trained and gave Indian men the skills necessary the tribes could be more successful in the future. One of the biggest differences between the CCC and the CCC-ID was how the administration on the local level functioned. Instead of the U.S. Army managing the camps and the work, the reservation’s tribal council and chief in cooperation with the Bureau of Indian Affairs agent administered the camps. However, issues such as pay rates would go

¹²³ John Collier served as Commissioner of Indian Affairs (the office that would later be under the Department of the Interior, and become the Bureau of Indian Affairs) from 1933-1945.

¹²⁴ Jolley, “*That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace*,” 121. Calvin W. Gower, “The CCC Indian Division: Aid for depressed Americans, 1933-1942,” *Minnesota History* (Spring 1972): 5.

¹²⁵ Nash only served as director for one year and then Murphy served for the rest of the existence of the CCC-ID. Assistant Commissioner William Zimmerman also took on a significant leadership role with the CCC-ID after John Collier became busy with the implementation of the Indian Reorganization Act.

¹²⁶ Calvin W. Gower, “The CCC Indian Division: Aid for depressed Americans, 1933-1942,” *Minnesota History* (Spring 1972): 5.

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 seventeen and thirty-five and they could be married. The CCC-ID camp structure did not take on the same structure as the CCC camps. They could be structured in three ways. There were camps with single men, married camps where families could reside, and nonresidential camps where men were allowed to live at home with their families and travel to work. The most prevalent of the three were the residential camps, because of the varied ages of the enrollees and their marital status. The CCC-ID ended on July 2, 1943 after serving eighty-five thousand Native American men and appropriating seventy-two million dollars.¹²⁷

A CCC-ID FOR THE EAST

Harley Jolley describes the desperate situation on the boundary at the outset of the program: “With their woodland treasure depleted, with agriculture offering at best a submarginal existence, and with no industrial plants to provide jobs, the 3,622 Cherokee on the tribal roll desperately needed an economic boost.”¹²⁸ The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians qualified for a Civilian Conservation Corps- Indian Division as a result of its status as a federally recognized tribe. The Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division program with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians began in 1933. The area where the Eastern Band CCC-ID worked included all of the Qualla Boundary, a tract of 3,200 acres outside of the reservation, and parts of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.¹²⁹ As mentioned

¹²⁷ Jennifer McLerran, *A New Deal for Native art: Indian arts and federal policy, 1933-1943* (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 209), 200-202.

¹²⁸ Jolley, “*That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace*,” 122.

¹²⁹ Proposed Emergency Conservation Projects, June 22, 1933, Cherokee, N.C.; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I, Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

earlier there were three types of CCC-ID camps. The non-residential camp worked best for the Eastern Band, first because the men lived so close to their work sites and their need to sustain small farms while still working for the CCC-ID.¹³⁰ The main reason the administration at Cherokee chose not establish residential camps was the fear that it would disrupt the economic, social, and cultural lives of the enrollees: “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.”¹³¹ The administration of the CCC-ID in Cherokee believed that ending the main source of income in Cherokee-agriculture-would disrupt the already delicate economic situation. The CCC-ID was the only New Deal program that supported Native communities: “the CCC-ID is the only relief work available to the Cherokee Indians as they are not allowed to participate in any of the WPA projects in Swain and Jackson Counties.”¹³² For the Eastern Band, the CCC-ID brought major changes that radically impacted the reservation and left legacies that still resonate today. The CCC-ID gave the Eastern Band wage labor, tourism, and revitalized lost traditions.

¹³⁰ R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent to J.P. Kinney, Indian Office, Washington, D.C. May 20, 1933; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA. “They all have their homes convenient to the localities in which the work that we would propose to do is to be found.”

¹³¹ R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent to J.P. Kinney, Indian Office, Washington, D.C. May 10, 1933; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

¹³² C.M. Blair, Superintendent to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., Jun. 27, 1940; File No. 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

ADMINISTRATION

The Cherokee CCC-ID functioned through the superintendent of the agency, the tribal council, a small administrative staff, and twenty hired Eastern Band members who worked in staff positions such as foreman, sub-foreman, tractor operator, trail locator, stone mason, and clerk stenographer. Another practice of the CCC-ID was to consult with the Eastern Band about the projects that the CCC-ID worked on. The first superintendent of the Cherokee CCC-ID wrote openly about the past issues of the Office of Indian Affairs 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.”¹³³ In an effort to correct this oversight, the superintendent carefully introduced projects onto the reservation by calling an annual meeting of the Tribal Council to discuss the proposed projects of the CCC-ID for the coming year.¹³⁴

While the practice of consultation with Tribal Councils occurred on the ground, the administration in Washington did not approve of this practice. Collier placed more emphasis in his program on moving the responsibility of management from the federal government to the Native tribes than on creating a collaborative program. In a letter to one of the superintendents at Cherokee he described what he expected: “encourage the Tribal

¹³³ R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., June. 6, 1933; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

¹³⁴ R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington D.C., Jun. 5, 1933; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA. “There was a little delay in submitting this until we could get the tribal council together for a discussion of the needs here.”

council and the chiefs to assume as much responsibility as possible.”¹³⁵ The superintendent at Cherokee understood that tribal self-governance took time and that the federal government should transition gradually. 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.”¹³⁶ While the policy of Collier and the Superintendent seemed similar and produced the same end they did not have the same intention.

The CCC-ID hoped also to strengthen the tribal government structure of the Eastern Band. Collier wrote significantly about the importance of placing responsibility on the tribal structure. One way that the administration of the CCC-ID at Cherokee placed responsibility within the tribal government was to hire the Chief Jarrett Blythe as the “additional sub-foreman that will place additional responsibility on the Indians themselves.”¹³⁷ Their choice to make him the sub-foreman reinforced his authority as Chief. However, by bringing in the tribal governmental structure into their own program they co-opted the Eastern Band governance. By becoming an integral part of the program, Blythe demonstrated his personal and professional approval of the program at Cherokee. For the administration of the CCC-ID, this was a political maneuver to give them more

¹³⁵ R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., June. 6, 1933; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

¹³⁶ John Collier, Commissioner, to R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent; Cherokee, N.C., Jun. 9, 1933; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

¹³⁷ William Zimmerman, Assistant Commissioner to R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent, Cherokee N.C.; Jul. 11, 1933; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

power within the reservation. This way of using the Eastern Band to gain social and cultural approval for the program occurred often especially in relation to the labor practices of the CCC-ID.

LABOR PRACTICES

A letter received in 1935 by the Superintendent of the Eastern Band demonstrates the prevalence of the CCC-ID program on the boundary: “I want you to let me know this job down there on ECW [CCC] in Snowbird. 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.”¹³⁸ The superintendent of the CCC-ID wished to promote an economically sustainable and self-determined Eastern Band through the labor practices of the CCC-ID. While the CCC-ID received half of the pay that 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 at Cherokee, the superintendent received strict instructions to spread wages out to as many 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.”¹³⁹ A hundred and fifty men worked per month, however they were only allowed to work two weeks per month to stretch the income to as many people as possible.¹⁴⁰ In many cases this meant paying enrollees less and providing more work to many. Even when

¹³⁸ Jolly, “*That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace*,” 125.

¹³⁹ John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs to H.W. Foght, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C., Oct. 3, 1934; File No. 50809, 1936, Cherokee 220; Box 1; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁴⁰ Jolley, “*That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace*,” 124.

money began to be scarce for the CCC program, the agency made the effort to try to spread out the work:

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.”¹⁴¹

Instead of following in the practice of paying a few sufficiently, the CCC-ID paid many but not very much. As money for the CCC-ID dwindled in 1937, the administration split the month into three shifts of ten calendar days each.¹⁴² In 1938, funding became even more restricted and they reduced the number of enrollees to twenty-five men. The lack of steady wages caused Cherokee men to rely heavily on different venues 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. A letter in 1937 from the director of CCC-ID programs, Daniel Murphy 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%

¹⁴¹ C.M. Blair, Superintendent, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington D.C.; Jan. 12, 1938; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁴² Jolley, “*That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace*,” 123.

to supervising and facilitating skilled workers, and 20% for materials and supplies.”¹⁴³ It was a goal of the superintendents to budget so that their costs were kept down and so the enrollees were the central profiteers of the program. In 1938, the superintendent of the Eastern Band calculated the cost per enrollee to be \$1,015.¹⁴⁴ In addition to wages, enrollees received: “subsistence, clothing, (and repair thereof), transportation, and hospitalization and medical treatment.”¹⁴⁵ The CCC-ID provided necessities to a depressed region of the United States.

While the CCC-ID program and therefore the United States government should have been responsible for the safety of the enrollees, this was rarely the case. One such case was an accident that occurred in 1934 when a warehouse under construction by the CCC-ID fell on six enrollees. A report sent to the director of all CCC-ID reports the extent of 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.”¹⁴⁶ The Commissioner of Indian Affairs inquired about the status of procedures, not the health of the enrollees. The administration

¹⁴³ D.E. Murphy, Director, Indian Division, CCC to C.M. Blair, Cherokee, N.C., Nov. 1, 1937.

¹⁴⁴ C.M. Blair, Superintendent to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., Apr. 15, 1938; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁴⁵ E.J. Armstrong, Commissioner to C.M. Blair, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C., Nov. 1, 1937; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁴⁶ John Collier, Commissioner to R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C., Mar. 26, 1934; File No. 51009-1936 Cherokee 410; Box 3; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

of the CCC-ID cared greatly about how the program looked bureaucratically in the eyes of the federal government.

However, there were times when the administration of the CCC-ID chose to defend the enrollees over the offending party. This occurred in the case of Sibbald Smith, an Eastern Band member and an enrollee in the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division. Smith was involved in a court case that took place in 1934. In 1934, a couple of the CCC-ID enrollees sued one of CCC-ID administrators, Mr. Denton. They sued him because they believed that he had “discharged Indians from E.C.W. without a proper hearing.”¹⁴⁷ In a letter to the Superintendent of the CCC-ID, John Collier informed the Superintendent and the enrollees of the Eastern Band CCC-ID that the administration supported the lawsuit.¹⁴⁸ The main way the administration supported the case was allowing enrollees to have paid time off to act as witnesses in the case against Mr. Denton. Sibbald Smith was one such enrollee who acted as a key witness in the case against Mr. Denton. The administration in Washington articulated that: “it is our opinion that Mr. Smith should be reimbursed for his salary as well as expenses in connection with the trial.”¹⁴⁹ While this could have been an outlier case when the administration sided with the Native American tribe rather than their

¹⁴⁷ John Collier, Commissioner to R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C.; May 25, 1934; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

¹⁴⁸ “Also, note that the letter states we are unwilling to recommend continuance in view of the charges made. If Mr. Denton can present proof that no discrimination was made and that the charges are unfounded, reconsideration will be given.” John Collier, Commissioner to R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C.; May 25, 1934; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

¹⁴⁹ Memorandum to Miscellaneous; Washington D.C., Nov. 26, 1937; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

own employee, it demonstrates that the United States government could at times see the Native Americans as laborers deserving of fair treatment in the work place.

Another example of the United States government taking care of its employees was how the CCC-ID reported when the Eastern Band fell on particularly hard economic times. The Superintendent's ability to stay informed stemmed from the surprisingly open relationship he had with the enrollees. Enrollees reached out to the CCC-ID administration if they were not receiving enough work to make ends meet. In response, if the superintendent could not respond with more work he appealed to Congress for greater appropriations. One such case is demonstrated in the winter of 1940, when the superintendent made appeals to Congress for larger appropriations. These appropriations became necessary because of the harsh winter conditions; the temperatures that winter dipped below twenty degrees. For the Eastern Band the consequences of these temperatures were widely felt: "the Indians have suffered greatly from loss of foodstuffs...canned fruit and vegetables, potatoes and other root crops have frozen."¹⁵⁰ Because of the lack of available staple crops that should have sustained the Eastern Band through the winter, the superintendent received more appeals for work than ever before. This demonstrates that the superintendents did try to stay informed of the economic circumstances of their enrollees and to try to give them as much work as possible. However, the ability for the superintendents to distribute work evenly across the enrollees became difficult. Appropriations for Roosevelt's programs trailed off in the late 1930s. An example of the dramatic change in financial ability of the CCC-ID is that in the early years of the program,

¹⁵⁰ Mr. C.M. Blair Superintendent, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington D.C., Feb. 20, 1940; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records, 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

the program paid enrollees for their weekends in addition to their pay. However by 1940, this practice had ended, instead the CCC-ID routinely had crews work ten days straight with no time off on the weekend.¹⁵¹

PERMANENCE VERSUS A QUICK FIX

Members of the Eastern Band used the CCC-ID program to receive training that they previously would not have received as a result of a lack of access to education and training on the reservation. Much like the CCC, the CCC-ID program allowed for training and education of Eastern Band enrollees. The enrollees learned a variety of vocational abilities necessary for blue-collar work. The positions the CCC-ID aimed for its enrollees to do included clerks, telephone operators, blacksmiths, warehouseman, and cleanup man.¹⁵² One enrollee attended the Red Cross National Aquatic School, this school taught a number of skills including swimming and diving, life saving, canoeing, boating, first aid and accident prevention.¹⁵³ The CCC program economically supported the training of enrollees. In the case of the enrollee who received Red Cross National Aquatic training, they annually attended the training in Brevard, North Carolina.

¹⁵¹ D.E. Murphy, Director, Indian Division, CCC to C.M. Blair, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C., Jun. 5, 1940; File No. 53809, 1936, Cherokee 250; Box 2; 1000 General Records, 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA. "In connection with your practice of making payments to enrollees for idle Saturdays and Sundays, you are advised that the office will interpose no objection in view of the necessity for working your crews in ten-day shifts. We realize the difficulties which would be encountered by rigid application of the "three-day" rule."

¹⁵² C.M. Blair, Superintendent to D.E. Murphy, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., Feb. 23, 1942; File No 50809, 1936, Cherokee 220; Box 1; 1000 General Records, 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁵³ Mr. C.M. Blair, Superintendent Cherokee Agency, to Sgd. D.E. Murphy, Director, Indian Division, Washington, DC, Aug. 10, 1940; File No 50809, 1936, Cherokee 220; Box 1; 1000 General Records, 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.



Figure 6 American Red Cross National Aquatic Schools
 Courtesy of Bangor Community, Digital Commons

The CCC also sent enrollees to the Foreman Training School in York, South Carolina in the same year. In the year 1940, the CCC-ID spent seventy-five thousand dollars on training alone.¹⁵⁴

While all CCC-ID enrollees were eligible for training, the program took a particular interest in young Eastern Band men. They became very suspicious when the young men did not take up the same agricultural practices as their fathers. The lack of interest in agriculture among young Eastern Band men is demonstrated in this excerpt from a letter written by the superintendent in 1939:

I have read with some considerable interest Mr. Parcher's memo of July 28 to you on the subject of approval of our project for enrollee training along agricultural lines. I do feel that that is a very important type of training for Indian young men. Some of those who come to our camp have agricultural resources, but either do not know how to utilize them or have lost all interest for some reason or other. This may mean that for all of their lives they will be the drifting seasonal laborer

¹⁵⁴ Mr. C.M. Blair, Superintendent Cherokee Agency, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, DC, Aug. 3, 1940; File No 50809, 1936, Cherokee 220; Box 1; 1000 General Records, 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

on and off relief rolls as private employment becomes scarce.¹⁵⁵

The CCC-ID wanted to train young enrollees to be less reliant on the wage labor that had become an entrenched economic system on the boundary from the logging in the 1920s to the CCC-ID program. However, the CCC-ID realized that it would not be around forever and they needed an economic system where they would not have to rely on the government. The federal government did not want to economically support the Eastern Band, they wanted them to be financially stable. The training also acted as a source of social reform for the CCC-ID enrollees. From the training, enrollees learned the importance of agrarian life and creating a domestic space for their family. The largest hope of the administrators of the CCC-ID was that the program would allow the Eastern Band to be independent of government welfare. The administration also hoped to teach the Eastern Band how to better utilize the natural resources of their reservation. This was a main part of the Indian Reorganization Act and John Collier's own desire to see Native Americans make use of their resources. The superintendent wrote in the same letter as the one above, that if they could "again interest these young Indian men in utilizing Indian land resources, and if we can show them means and methods by which they can make a decent living in that field, I think we will be doing a great amount of good."¹⁵⁶ He argued that if they could

¹⁵⁵ Alida C. Bowler, Superintendent to D.E. Murphy, Director of CCC-ID, Washington, D.C.; Aug. 8, 1939; File No 50809, 1936, Cherokee 220; Box 1; 1000 General Records, 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁵⁶ Alida C. Bowler, Superintendent to D.E. Murphy, Director of CCC-ID, Washington, D.C.; Aug. 8, 1939; File No 50809, 1936, Cherokee 220; Box 1; 1000 General Records, 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

teach the young Native Americans how to utilize their resources they would become more independent from the government.

The Cherokee CCC-ID began to support one of the most economically depressed regions of the United States and give the community the tools necessary for economic sustainability. In choosing projects for the CCC-ID, Collier gave specific advice to the Superintendents that they should “keep in mind that productive work of the greatest permanent value should be carried out as far as possible.”¹⁵⁷ The superintendent of the CCC-ID believed that the agricultural training would have much more of a lasting effect on the reservation than previous projects of the Eastern Band: “It will be good that will be more lasting than fences, charcoal, truck trails, etc.”¹⁵⁸ While previous projects improved the built environment of the Eastern Band such as the building of roads that made parts of the reservation more accessible especially to logging, the building of fences to make agriculture easier, and the planting of trees to deforested land, they was not an immediate return on investment. The superintendent argued that the legacy of the CCC-ID was the training of young men for professions and as a result a more economically sustainable community and tribe.

Unfortunately, the administration in Washington did not approve of the agricultural training. John Collier and his colleagues argued that agricultural training was not an effective and efficient use of funds:

¹⁵⁷ John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs to H.W. Foght, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C., Oct. 3, 1934; File No. 50809, 1936, Cherokee 220; Box 1; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁵⁸ Alida C. Bowler, Superintendent to D.E. Murphy, Director of CCC-ID, Washington, D.C.; Aug. 8, 1939; File No 50809, 1936, Cherokee 220; Box 1; 1000 General Records, 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

[It is] Not necessary to submit a project of this kind when we already have an enrollment program approved for this fiscal year. In submitting this there is a considerable change that the plan for training enrollees along agricultural lines will become confused in the minds of CCC officials with the development of farm land for Indians. As you know, we are not allowed to do any development of individually owned farm tracts.¹⁵⁹

The federal government could not understand the connection between improving individual property and creating a self-sustaining economy. The CCC-ID did not commit to investing money to sustain Native American tribes in the long run.

AGRICULTURE

For most of the CCC-ID enrollees, the program did not solely sustain their economic needs. Chief Blythe often wrote to the Superintendent that for most of the enrollees the CCC-ID wages only acted as a supplement to another wage whether it be farming or selling timber. The enrollees first gained the necessary income from small agricultural farms on their land. Most of the enrollees already had farms prior to the CCC-ID, and in the establishment of the organization administrators structured the projects and work so that the enrollees could still tend to their farms. The administration only made men work for the CCC-ID after their planting or harvesting was over: “Now that the farm work is over we can well work them full and straight time.”¹⁶⁰ The agriculture on the reservation

¹⁵⁹ Alida C. Bowler, Superintendent to D.E. Murphy, Director of CCC-ID, Washington, D.C.; Aug. 8, 1939; File No 50809, 1936, Cherokee 220; Box 1; 1000 General Records, 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA. He continues: “It is the thought of those responsible for the CCC program that farm work of that nature should be done by the Indian owners themselves and that CCC funds should be used for general conservation and land improvement projects.”

¹⁶⁰ R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington D.C., Nov. 23, 1933; File No. 50809, 1936, Cherokee 220; Box 1; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

took place most often in the bottom land or as an inspector in 1933 classified it, “meadow.”¹⁶¹ Farmers concentrated planting around the bottomland because of the rich sediment that came from the streams that ran along the fields. Also, the bottomland had already been cleared because of the years of farming and could not be a source for logging. A report from the time stated that less than one acre out of ten on the reservation was suitable for agrarian use.¹⁶² However, the inability to use most of the land on the reservation was also the result of the acidity and the hard to toil soil in Western North Carolina. A lot of the land had been used up and the Eastern Band did not have access to nutrients that could re-vitalize the soil.

Eastern Band farmers used the steep slopes as insurance for when they needed to clear new land when their old land wore out. However, the lumber boom of the early twentieth century created hillsides with little to no vegetative cover. Because there were no trees or root systems to absorb water and hold the soil, the land was inundated with washouts.¹⁶³ The concern about the state of the soil on the reservation was a high priority for the CCC-ID. In an inspector’s report published in 1933, he concluded: “From an erosional standpoint, these are too steep for cultivation. In a few years, the surface soils will all be washed away and rather severe gullies formed.”¹⁶⁴ This process of soil erosion

¹⁶¹ Report on a Preliminary Examination and Recommendation for Erosion Control, June 21, 1933; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I, Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁶² Jolley, *“That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace,”* 122.

¹⁶³ Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, 114-115.

¹⁶⁴ Report on a Preliminary Examination and Recommendation for Erosion Control, June 21, 1933; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I, Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

took place at a far faster rate than this inspector even realized. Another report remarked on how “Most of the land being farmed on the reservation is subject to erosion. On more than half the farms the fields are small and are too steep to terrace. The general practice is to farm such a field for several years and then clear another field, letting the first grow up in weeds and briars.”¹⁶⁵

The Eastern Band also lacked a strong presence of livestock on the reservation. In the same inspection as mentioned above, the inspector general remarked about the large absence of livestock on the reservation: “Most of the families on the reservation have some livestock, even if only a steer for work, a pig for meat, or some chickens.”¹⁶⁶ Because the Eastern Band did not have access to a large quantity of quality feed they were not able to sustain a large body of livestock and hence did not have manure to sustain soil fertility.

In the years leading up to the 1920s, agriculture declined on the reservation as a result of the soil erosion making them more dependent on wage labor from timber companies and the CCC-ID. The establishment of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park caused even more concern because the amount of available land diminished. Prior to the park, if the Eastern Band was in a dire economic situation and needed to purchase land either as a tribe or individually they could potentially buy it from a neighbor or even a company. The National Park significantly diminished this possibility.

¹⁶⁵ Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

¹⁶⁶ Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The CCC-ID program conducted extensive work for the National Park Service. In March 1942, C.M. Blair asked for a considerable increase in funding because of 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.”¹⁶⁷ The Eastern Band fought fires on both the federal land and their own land. The Eastern Band prioritized the fighting of forest fires not just because of the loss of safety but also because of the loss of timber resources for economic gain. The National Park Service relied on the CCC-ID to help them protect their lands from forest fires. However, the Eastern Band gained equipment in exchange for fighting fires for the NPS. 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.”¹⁶⁸ 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.”¹⁶⁹ Their

¹⁶⁷ C.M. Blair, Superintendent to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington D.C., Mar. 17, 1942; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

¹⁶⁸ C.M. Blair to Commissioner, January 20, 1942; File No. 58806 1936 Carson 346; Box 1; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁶⁹ C.M. Blair to Commissioner, January 20, 1942; File No. 58806 1936 Carson 346; Box 1; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

Justification for this request is not for larger quarters but because Barnett Knob Lookout is located near the new Parkway where it will be visited by many tourists and outsiders. The present structure is not very presentable compared to other units in this area. The donations by the Park Service were requested by us because of the present cooperative fire protection we have with them. They have for the past several years paid the salary of our Lookout Man and therefore feel that they can afford to donate some of the material required.¹⁷⁰

The National Park Service relied on the CCC-ID to support their fire suppression efforts, and in turn the CCC-ID felt that they could call on the National Park Service to supply them with materials. The Eastern Band felt that they had a mutual relationship with the National Park Service because of the economic stability they received from the tourist industry that blossomed after the creation of the National Park.

The establishment of the National Park created a prosperous tourist industry on the boundary. The CCC-ID furthered this tourist industry through performing projects that encouraged and allowed more tourists to visit the Eastern Band. One of these projects was a road from Big Witch to Soco Gap that would act as “a very scenic route for many tourists who desire to travel the less travelled routes.”¹⁷¹ The CCC-ID worked extensively on making the reservation more accessible to the outside. Superintendent Spalsbury commented about how this process occurred: “trails should be constructed along each

¹⁷⁰ C.M. Blair to Commissioner, January 20, 1942; File No. 58806 1936 Carson 346; Box 1; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁷¹ John Collier, Commissioner to R.L. Spalsbury, Cherokee, N.C.; Apr. 19, 1934; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

“branch” or little valley leading into the hills.”¹⁷² The Eastern Band hoped that the National Parks would draw tourists to want to see the natural beauty on their reservation. One oral history from Yolanda Saunooke shows how much the Eastern Band began to economically gain from the tourist industry. She explains that her uncle: “would tie my mom when she was still maybe one years old on his back go to town come back and have fifty dollars and say let’s go to the store and get what we need. That was the good take that my family had on it because they knew that without the tourists it would be hard. But, if they weren’t here they could still survive we knew what to do. It would be rough but we could do it.” While some historians have argued that the tourist industry was exploitative, many Eastern Band members felt the economic benefits of the tourist industry.¹⁷³ Also in 1941, the Eastern Band began to contemplate the building of a museum dedicated to telling the history of the Cherokee. In doing so, the first group they contacted to help consult with them on the project was the National Park Service. This began with a meeting between the Eastern Band CCC-ID and Conrad Wirth from the National Park Service.¹⁷⁴

The National Park Service also contracted out enrollees from the CCC-ID. In 1942, the CCC-ID furnished five enrollees “to assist in operating the United States Park Service

¹⁷² R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent to J.P. Kinney, Indian Office, Washington, D.C. May 10, 1933; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

¹⁷³ Christina Taylor Beard-Moose, *Public Indians, Private Cherokees: Tourism and Tradition on Tribal Ground* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2009).

¹⁷⁴ D.E. Murphy to C.M. Blair, Washington, D.C. Nov. 7, 1941; File No. 52609-1936 Cherokee 346; Box 1; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA. “Mr. Conrad Wirth of the National Park Service and I have been planning to visit Cherokee Agency in connection with the proposed museum and excavation of a mound near the Agency. We had hoped to be able to go this week, but budget and other matters interfered.”

Nursery at Ravensford, North Carolina.”¹⁷⁵ In exchange for the workers, the CCC-ID received “free of charge enough seedlings and transplants to equal the wages and subsistence of the enrollees that were engaged on such work.”¹⁷⁶ The CCC-ID enrollees also received training through the NPS: “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.”¹⁷⁷ The NPS training supported the tourist industry through teaching Eastern Band members how to plant rhododendrons that would in turn be sold to tourists.

The work of the Eastern Band CCC-ID for the National Park Service, also gave the CCC-ID the opportunity to come into contact with the regular CCC. As the earlier anecdote from my oral history interview with Yolanda Saunooke demonstrated, the CCC and the CCC-ID regularly played a baseball game against one another. CCC regulations charged corps area commanders to create athletic programs in their camps. Sports that commanders

¹⁷⁵ Co-operative Agreement with the National Park Service; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁷⁶ D.E. Murphy to C.M. Blair, April 1, 1942; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁷⁷ C.M. Blair to the Commissioner, Cherokee, N.C., March 23, 1942; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

chose to play in their camps included “Baseball, boxing, and basketball.”¹⁷⁸ These activities became tremendously popular “often producing intense rivalries between them.”¹⁷⁹



Figure 7 Civilian Conservation Corps Baseball Team
Courtesy of Great Smoky Mountains National Park Archives

PROJECTS ON THE RESERVATION

Through better utilization of Native American resources, Collier hoped that Native communities would be more self-sustaining. Collier advised superintendents to choose projects that would better utilize natural resources for economic gain on the reservation. Projects undertaken by the CCC-ID included: construction of bridges, garages, lookout cabins and towers, telephone lines, latrines and toilets, utility buildings, trail shelters, fences, guardrails, dikes, levees, struck trails, check dams, foot and horse trails, erosion control activities, field planting and seeding, improvement of forest stands, nursery

¹⁷⁸ Jolley, “*That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace*,” 43.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

operations, combating forest fires, reducing fire hazards, development of public picnic grounds, forest education, establishing boundaries, preservation of trees.¹⁸⁰

One of the projects undertaken by the Cherokee CCC-ID was a project to better utilize their land resources. They first 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 preparation of the outlets for the terraces so that “the runoff water will not cause the formation of a gully.”¹⁸¹ The CCC-ID also worked extensively on building dams to try to redirect water out of the already formed gullies. A project report describes the construction of a dam: “Early in March, the erosion control crew completed their task of making log check dams.”¹⁸² In looking at how to both solve the problem of soil erosion through plants that would create root systems and enriching the soil, the CCC-ID investigated a couple of options. First, they looked into limestone, however, they found that “it will take on average 4 tons of limestone per acre to correct this condition.”¹⁸³ In addition to the cost of the limestone, it cost a dollar and fifty-seven cents per ton to ship and that on average had to be hauled eight miles. As a result, they realized that, “very few can afford this cost,

¹⁸⁰ Jolley, “*That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace*,” 123.

¹⁸¹ Report on a Preliminary Examination and Recommendation for Erosion Control, June 21, 1933; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I, Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁸² Narrative Report for February, March, April, and May 1934; Cherokee, N.C.; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁸³ Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

dependence must be placed in soil improvement crops that are tolerant to the acid soil.”¹⁸⁴

As a result, the CCC-ID instead chose to plant lespedeza, a legume that has root nodules that are embedded with bacteria capable of nitrogen fixation from the air into a soil-bound form.¹⁸⁵ The process of planting the lespedeza included filling bags “with soil having some grass seed mixed with it to help start vegetation on these spots.”¹⁸⁶ One letter described the varied success of these efforts: “The increase in lespedeza planting is helping to some extent but on too many of the farms the roughage is the tops and leaves from the corn crop.”¹⁸⁷ The CCC-ID also took on projects to try to further livestock on the boundary. One way they did this was to eradicate a weed known as giant staggerweed that was “deadly poison to the cattle and each spring many Indians lose one or more head from this

¹⁸⁴ Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

¹⁸⁵ Narrative Report for February, March, April, and May 1934; Cherokee, N.C.; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA. “The bare steep slopes were planted with black locust seedlings and the more gentle slopes with lespedeza service seed. This work is now in this section and the results are being watched closely by many.”

¹⁸⁶ Report on a Preliminary Examination and Recommendation for Erosion Control, June 21, 1933; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I, Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁸⁷ Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

cause.”¹⁸⁸ To solve this issue the CCC-ID undertook to “eradicate this weed, by pulling and destroying the roots.”¹⁸⁹

Chief Jarrett 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.”¹⁹⁰ The current recreational facility for young people was built in 1939 and was not accessible to most of the reservation. Blythe believed that investing in a building for young Eastern Band members was important because: “Most 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.”¹⁹¹

The CCC-ID also worked on a project to improve the horticulture on the reservation. Previously, the Eastern Band relied on wild fruits such as berries to sustain their diet. However, this was not a profitable or sustainable practice in the eyes of the

¹⁸⁸ Production Supervisor to R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C., Apr. 2, 1934; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁸⁹ Production Supervisor to R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C., Apr. 2, 1934; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁹⁰ Jolley, “*That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace*,” 126.

¹⁹¹ Jolley, “*That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace*,” 126.

federal government. A report issued by the Inspector General explained that: “Each year some trees are planted. These are ordered by the individual Indians, mostly from a salesman for Stark Bros., who works in a store on the reservation. A few men have purchased small quantities of other fruits, with the intention of increasing their plantings by propagation from these plants. Four farmers have been increasingly cutting their grapes, one having rooted and set out 400 cuttings in 1938.”¹⁹² Even as they tried to train the farmers to furnish “sufficient fruits and berries for the homes, with a surplus of quality products for sale.”¹⁹³ The Eastern Band retained their traditional partiality to a diet of wild berries. “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 such inferior to that of the wild berries. No attempt has been made to expand the planting of berries, except raspberries, on account of the profusion of the wild growth.”¹⁹⁴ Blackberries and raspberries proliferate in clear cut areas. Another factor that made wild berries so accessible is that disrupted forests are the perfect ecosystem for berry bushes.

In addition to horticulture, the CCC-ID worked to try to reinstitute some of the natural species that had seen a decline on the boundary. One of the ways they did this was

¹⁹² Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

¹⁹³ Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

¹⁹⁴ Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

through stocking the streams with fish. In the fall of 1939 alone, “more than 45,000 brook and rainbow trout were planted in the streams on the reservation.”¹⁹⁵ Brook and Rainbow trout are both native to Western North Carolina. However, the main reason the CCC-ID chose these particular fish was their desirability for recreational fishing. The Eastern Band hoped that the tourists would view Cherokee as a place to come fishing especially because the National Park was off limits to fishing as well as hunting. The CCC-ID also attempted to stock the reservation with deer, however “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.”¹⁹⁶

LOGGING

The superintendents of the CCC-ID realized that cutting off the timber industry completely was not economically viable for the Eastern Band. Logging had become even more profitable as an industry with the invention of pulp.¹⁹⁷ However, the superintendents were conflicted about whether money from the CCC-ID program could sustain the growth of the timber industry on the boundary. In deciding what could be done, the superintendents laid out strict parameters of the extent to which the money could be used: “It is not felt that the CCC funds are applicable to the building of bridges or trails for the purpose of carrying on of commercial logging operations. However, it appears from your

¹⁹⁵ Moris Burge to D.E. Murphy, February 13, 1940; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁹⁶ Moris Burge to D.E. Murphy, February 13, 1940; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁹⁷ Pyne, *Fire in America*, 152. “By the 1930s, chemists had developed methods for converting the fast growing southern pine into pulp.”

letter that if certain bridges and trails were constructed it would contribute to the protection of the forest in permitting the cutting by the Indians of the dead chestnut and the salvaging of the material. On the ground of forest improvement, bridges and trails may be constructed for this purpose.”¹⁹⁸ Any work by the CCC-ID had to support the efforts of fire suppression through the clearing of rotting chestnuts, killed by the chestnut blight. While clearing blighted chestnut trees for profit was successful at first, the market became inundated which “rendered them unmarketable.”¹⁹⁹ Harley Jolley explains the reality of the overburdened chestnut market: “For a people who had depended upon the forest for their livelihood, this oversupply was as economically blighting as the chestnut virus to the forest.”²⁰⁰

An example of a project that the CCC-ID undertook that supported the timber industry was the work on the Bigwitch-Soco Gap trail to convert it from a horse trail to a truck trail. The CCC-ID chose the Bigwitch-Soco Gap trail because it opened the way for the logging of “The largest, most valuable, and most inaccessible, supply of forest products on the Qualla Boundary.”²⁰¹ However, there were times that the CCC-ID overstepped their boundaries and used an enrollee and the resources of the CCC-ID for economic gain. In

¹⁹⁸ D.E. Murphy, Superintendent to C.M. Blair, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C., Oct. 8, 1941; File No. 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

¹⁹⁹ Jolley, *“That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace,”* 122.

²⁰⁰ Jolley, *“That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace,”* 122.

²⁰¹ Production Supervisor to R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C., Apr. 2, 1934; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA. “In order that this supply may be made more accessible for utilization, and better fire protection afforded for this area, it is proposed to change the Bigwitch-Soco Gap horse trail to a truck trail.”

1941, the director of the CCC-ID in Washington sent a letter to superintendent in Cherokee instructing him to stop the practice of using enrollees and equipment to scale timber: “In his report on his visit in July to your agency, Mr. George D. Bixby stated that a CCC enrollee had been used for the scaling of timber at your agency and that the operation of a pickup had been charged to overhead. It is not felt that the CCC funds are applicable to the carrying on of regular forestry operations of this kind either as wages or for the operation of equipment. You should arrange to discontinue such practice.”²⁰² The challenge of economically supporting the reservation while still remaining within the boundaries of the aims of the CCC-ID resulted in fluctuating approaches to projects involving logging.

FIRE!

As Stephen J. Pyne argues in his cultural study of fire, “The fire history of the South is in good part a history of its fuels.”²⁰³ With the lumber industry collapsing little by little in the late 1920s, problems plagued the South of what to do with the barren landscape, “To remove fire was to unravel the fabric of the rural South.”²⁰⁴ In Southern forests, fire existed naturally to “keep the annual growth in check.”²⁰⁵ The presence of corporate industrial logging “created a necessity for fire protection that had not previously existed.”²⁰⁶ Fire protection prior to the CCC consisted of wardens who would rally able-

²⁰² D.E. Murphy, Director of CCC-ID to C.M. Blair Superintendent, Washington D.C., Sep. 23, 1941; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

²⁰³ Pyne, *Fire in America*, 145.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 151.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 145.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

bodied settlers and in effect was an extension “of the volunteer fire brigade and a formalization of those forces already in existence to protect ranches, mills, and farms.”²⁰⁷ Because of this haphazard practice and the increasing need for firefighting, government regulation seemed the natural solution, but at what cost. The Civilian Conservation Corps dramatically changed fire protection and prevention. The CCC trained entire crews that claimed firefighting “to be a moral equivalent of war.”²⁰⁸ The lack of any system of firefighting in the South until the 1930s resulted in the Civilian Conservation Corps deep involvement in the issue. “Not until after the CCC experience was it considered preferable to hire fire crews who could do project work than to have project work crews interrupt assignments to fight fire.”²⁰⁹ Pyne argues that “The regular firing of the woods prevented the fuel buildups that encouraged episodic fires elsewhere, and the fire history of the South is remarkable for the absence of conflagrations until the advent of industrial forestry in the 1930s.”²¹⁰

Firefighting on the reservation took a different form than on park land because on the reservation the Eastern Band attempted to solve two solutions, the fighting of wildfires while at the same time trying to preserve their resources for industrial logging as an income for their tribe. The cycle of intensive logging and the hindrance of natural seasonal burnings caused a constant cycle of large-scale fires that created widespread damage to the reservation. In a narrative report in 1934, the production supervisor for the CCC-ID

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 362.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 361.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 362.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 146.

reflected on the scope of the fire danger for the Eastern Band, “The spring fire season was not very bad. The worst fire-which burned about 600 acres-was of an incendiary origin. The other fires were confined to smaller areas and were caused by carelessness from brush burning.”²¹¹ With the establishment of the CCC-ID, the protection of forests against fires and the conservation of remaining forests became a major priority.

Fire suppression and the creation of a permanent fire protection system was a major aim of the CCC-ID. Chief Blythe wrote about the successes of the CCC-ID in fire suppression: “Our mountains are very beautiful and the Emergency Conservation appropriation has made it possible to protect our forests from fire which is the most destructive thing with which we must contend. The roads and trails which are being built will make it possible to transport men to a fire very quickly and it also makes some of the highest mountains accessible for automobiles.”²¹² The CCC-ID approached the mission of fire suppression from a couple of angles. They first hired and trained enrollees to be fireguards.²¹³ At the height of the fire season-which ran from April till June-it was believed to be “essential to have five fire guards and one lookout on duty.”²¹⁴ Because forest fires

²¹¹ Narrative Report for February, March, April, and May 1934; Cherokee, N.C.; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

²¹² Progress Report, Cherokee, N.C.; Sep. 2, 1933; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

²¹³ C.M. Blair, Superintendent, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., Nov. 19, 1937; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

²¹⁴ Harold W. Foght, Superintendent, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., Apr. 5, 1937, File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

can move so quickly the CCC-ID concentrated extensively on accessibility. To further the work of fire suppression the CCC-ID also built look out towers to watch for fires, in 1934 Foght wrote a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs pleading the case for the necessity of these towers, “A tower at this point would greatly aid in the detection of forest fires on the eastern edge of the Qualla Boundary.”²¹⁵

The CCC-ID also worked to prevent fires through thinning patches of trees, “it is believed that we should carry out two thinning plots in two yellow pine stands. These stands, which are now about 12 to 16 feet high, are natural reproduction in old fields. The growth is very dense, and should be thinned. The plots in question are upon Indian holdings, but the Indians who claim the areas are willing that these thinnings be made. Fire lands should be built around each plot, after the thinnings are completed.”²¹⁶ The thinnings opened up the canopy to allow for more growth and the fire patches were to address the slash left over from the thinnings. Because underbrush allows fire to spread quickly, they did not want to leave a lot of slash that could act as fuel for a fire.

Another way that the CCC-ID helped to prevent the spread of forest fires was the work they undertook on chestnuts. The chestnut blight, a fungus that embeds itself in the trunk of the tree, ravaged the North American species and left four billion American chestnut trees dead in its tracks. Chestnut blight arrived in Western North Carolina in

²¹⁵ Harold W. Foght, Superintendent to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., Sep. 24, 1934; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

²¹⁶ Harold W. Foght, Superintendent to Harold W. Foght, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C., Dec. 18, 1934; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

1925.²¹⁷ The early twentieth century disease left the species almost non-existent in the eastern United States by 1940. The dead chestnuts left in the wake of the Chestnut blight caused an even deeper problem, fires. The production supervisor reflected on the startling situation with the chestnuts: “The American chestnut is fast dying off. The tribal sawmill is cutting all of the chestnut possible in order to utilize it before it becomes valueless.”²¹⁸ In cutting down and processing the chestnut, the CCC-ID worked to preserve the chestnut they were cutting down not only for economic purposes but also to be used on the reservation:

It was the understanding when this project was approved that it contemplated the saving of chestnut for avid wood, etc. We doubt the wisdom of going through the woods merely to cut the trees without saving the material in them. It is true that they constitute some fire danger but these dead trees certainly will not interfere seriously with the growth of timber and it is felt that CCC funds can be used more profitably on other projects than in the cutting down of such trees without the utilization of the material therein.”²¹⁹

While trying to salvage the chestnut, the CCC-ID also looked to introduce new types of trees to act as a replacement for the chestnuts. The superintendent remarked about the plight of the reservation as a result of the chestnut’s absence: “Now, our chestnut is gone. A considerable inroad has been made into the other timber on the Reservation. It is

²¹⁷ Daniel S. Pierce, *The Great Smokies: From Natural Habitat to National Park* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 24-25.

²¹⁸ Production Supervisor to R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C., Apr. 2, 1934; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

²¹⁹ C.M. Blair Superintendent to D.E. Murphy Director of CCC-ID, Cherokee, N.C., Sept. 23, 1941; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

now necessary to greatly restrict the amount of timber that may be cut and the revenue to the Indian people from this source will be more than cut in half next year, for this reason, it is absolutely necessary that some source of income be provided for them in order to keep them from facing actual want.”²²⁰ The chief argued that while progress was made in planting new trees, there are still small quantities of timber and as a result fewer sources of income through the lumber industry. When the CCC-ID began to plant trees they looked for species that could withstand a possible blight. The CCC-ID first tried “new experimental plots of exotic tree species.”²²¹ They especially looked for species that “could be counted on, in the future, as a possible pulpwood supply, lumber, and poles.”²²² Some of the species they tried included the Norway pine, Norway spruce, and Englemann spruce.²²³ The CCC-ID targeted areas where the cutting of chestnut led to openings in the canopy.²²⁴

²²⁰ C.M. Blair, Superintendent to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., Jun. 27, 1940; File No. 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

²²¹ Production Supervisor to R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C., Apr. 2, 1934; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

²²² Production Supervisor to R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C., Apr. 2, 1934; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

²²³ Production Supervisor to R.L. Spalsbury, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C., Apr. 2, 1934; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

²²⁴ Harold W. Foght, Superintendent to Harold W. Foght, Superintendent, Cherokee, N.C., Dec. 18, 1934; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE CULTURAL LIVES OF THE EASTERN BAND

Because the CCC-ID's goal was to secure self-determination among tribes they also worked on improving the social and cultural lives of the Eastern Band. The CCC-ID at one point attempted to build a swimming pool for the Eastern Band, in a letter to the Assistant Commissioner the Superintendent discusses the building of the swimming pool, "The site of the proposed swimming pool seemed to me adequate, provided there is a restriction of some sort of diving."²²⁵ However, the CCC-ID abandoned the swimming pool project,

The site of the proposed swimming pool was examined and after considerable discussion it was agreed that for the present the project should be abandoned. Considerable floodwater passes the area in question and at the same time of our visit well over 100 feet of water was flowing by the site. The dam as proposed would have limited the depth to slightly over 5 feet of water which is not enough for safe swimming pool operation where diving is contemplated. A completely enclosed pool could be constructed at this site but the expense might be prohibitive."²²⁶

The CCC-ID program contributed in other ways to the social and cultural lives of the Eastern Band. Reports of projects of the CCC-ID show the involvement of the CCC-ID in the Cherokee Indian Fair that still occurs every fall. The administration of the Cherokee CCC-ID argued that their role was to "work with the Indians in charge of the various

²²⁵ Memorandum to Mr. Murphy, Washington, D.C., File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-194; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

²²⁶ Memorandum to Commissioner, Washington, D.C., Jul. 25, 1941; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-194; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

departments in planning and carrying on the fair.”²²⁷ The purpose of the CCC-ID involvement in the Cherokee Indian Fair was two fold. First, through establishing an administrative structure the CCC-ID wished to make this event a permanent feature of Eastern Band cultural life and establish the bureaucracy necessary for its continuance. Second, the CCC-ID also used the Cherokee Indian Fair as a way to teach social reform especially to the tribe’s children. They wished to “work with all Indians over the reservation in having the greatest number and best quality of exhibits.”²²⁸ One of these exhibits demonstrated the importance of livestock, “In addition to the livestock building being started, additional equipment was purchased for displaying poultry, and removable shelves and tables were built for use in the buildings.”²²⁹ While the CCC-ID showed respect and acknowledgement of this deeply Eastern Band tradition and wanted to continue it, they also wanted to change it to fulfill the goals they felt were lacking on the reservation.

The CCC-ID worked heavily with the schools, especially with the younger enrollees who were still in school. The CCC-ID “arranged in conjunction with school officials so that enrollees could attend school and work a scheduled slot with the CCC projects.”²³⁰ One of the projects that the CCC-ID conducted in cooperating with the schools

²²⁷ Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

²²⁸ Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

²²⁹ Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

²³⁰ Jolley, “*That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace*,” 124.

was called club work: “Club work among the boys and men has been conducted in cooperation with the teachers in the various schools. The teachers of the home making department and the assistants at the outlying day schools work with the girls and women to reinforce notions of gendered divisions of labor. This is necessary as there is no regular extension organization at this agency. Regular meetings are held to work on school projects and to discuss farm projects and problems.”²³¹ The participation of the CCC-ID in programs with the schools demonstrated the desire of the federal government to use the CCC-ID program not only for the current of age generation but for future generations as well. However, it also demonstrates that the CCC-ID was meant to impact the entire reservation and institutionalize a wage earning, more domestic, and more educated population. The federal government believed they were saving this backwards population from their rural isolation. The lessons this club work taught the children included “Improvement of farm and home conditions especially through the boys and girls. Development of leadership among the younger Indians, improved relations between the Indians and the surrounding communities.”²³² Not only were they teaching the Cherokee boys that they needed to farm to sustain their community and support their family, but they were teaching girls stereotypical home making skills. The CCC-ID taught Cherokee children about the need to conform to the traditional Euro-American views of the family. The CCC-ID hoped to teach the children that a family should be able to sustain itself

²³¹ Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

²³² Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

through farming and run by the woman of the house. This gendered rhetoric materialized during the Cherokee Indian Fair when they would have “separate classes for exhibits of the boys and girls at the annual fair.”²³³

The CCC-ID also concerned itself with the retaining of the handicraft tradition within the Eastern Band. The same report of projects gave a report on the current state of handicrafts:

Handicraft work is done by a large number of Indians over the reservation. Some make only a few articles during the year, while others spend most of their time at it and depend on the sale of their product for a livelihood. For several years the various handicrafts have been taught at the schools. Improvement in quality out on the reservation is more difficult. The Indians have been able to sell their products as fast as they are finished with no premium being paid for better quality of workmanship.²³⁴

The CCC-ID not only wanted to preserve the handicraft tradition through teaching it in schools but they also wanted to expand it into an industry for the Eastern Band. The CCC-ID thought that if the handicrafts of the Eastern Band were better quality, it would expand not only the industry but also the rates that they could charge for the crafts: “In teaching at the schools, quality of the articles is being stressed. The results were evident at the fair,

²³³ Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

²³⁴ Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

when a good proportion of the premiums were won by students.”²³⁵ The CCC-ID also revitalized the game of Stickball on the reservation.



Figure 8 Stickball Game at the Cherokee Fair
Courtesy of Great Smoky Mountains National Park Archives



Figure 9 Stickball Game at the Cherokee Fair
Courtesy of Great Smoky Mountains National Park Archives

²³⁵ Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

The CCC-ID also wanted to adapt some of the methods that the Eastern Band used in creating their handicrafts, one of these being the dies that they used. The CCC-ID encouraged the return to vegetable dies in place of the synthetic dies that had become common within the Eastern Band. “Last year additional work was done with vegetable dyes and in reviving spinning. Trials have been conducted with various clays and methods of mixing and burning in the pottery department.”²³⁶

The encouraging of the continuation, preservation, and expansion of the handicrafts with the Eastern Band shows that the CCC-ID was willing to accept the preservation of Eastern Band traditions if they had an economic benefit. By the late 1930s, the “Western” as a genre had popularized a stereotype of Native Americans as a sellable product. The CCC-ID realized that Native American baskets, jewelry, and headdresses could sell in their tourist industry because of the widening popularity of the cowboy and Indian genre. Crafts created a source of income for the reservation especially as the tourist industry boomed in the wake of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Chief Blythe talked about the biggest resources of the Cherokee: “probably one of the greatest sources of wealth the Cherokee Indians possess is scenery. Because of the heavy increase in tourist travel in this region. We should develop our reservation in every way possible to attract the tourist trade.”²³⁷

²³⁶ Project Descriptions, Cherokee, N.C.; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II, Box 2, 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

²³⁷ Jolley, “*That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace*,” 126.

GUARD DUTY: TO A WIDER INCLUSION IN THE AMERICAN NATION

Another kind of work that the enrollees could be assigned to was guard duty. However, the use of the enrollees for this type of work was highly controversial. D.E. Murphy sent a hasty telegram to Washington in December of 1941 asking if he could use enrollees for guard duty. Not only did he ask about guard duty but he also wanted to train the enrollees for a “full time basis defense work dealing principally with first aid and guard subjects this includes two hours daily on infantry drill and manual of small arms approval.”²³⁸ D.E. Murphy sent a letter to D.C. Foster, the last superintendent of the CCC-ID at Cherokee discussing this work, “We cannot authorize the use of enrollees for guard duty or the release of an entire group of enrollees from work projects to be ‘trained on full time basis for defense work dealing principally with first aid and guard subjects.’ As we advised you in a recent letter, enrollees may be used on patrol work but under no circumstances should they be armed. We cannot authorize and departure from our present regulations covering enrollees and work projects without approval of the Director.”²³⁹ Murphy’s desire to train the Eastern Band enrollees for guard duty went above and beyond what the kind of training the position would have required. Murphy wanted to train his enrollees for combat. He does not give any evidence that he is training them for war, however the timing of this quickly sent telegraph says something about Murphy’s long term intentions for these men. This telegraph, wired thirteen days after the bombing of

²³⁸ Transcription from Signal Corps, United States Army, Dec. 19, 1941; File No. 58806, 1936 Carson 346; Box 1; 1000 General Records 1933-1944| Records of the Indian Division Record Group 751, NARA.

²³⁹ D.E. Murphy, Director of Indian Division, to D.C. Foster, Superintendent; Cherokee, N.C.; Dec. 26, 1941; File No. 58806, 1936 Carson 346; Box 1; 1000 General Records 1933-1944| Records of the Indian Division Record Group 751, NARA.

Pearl Harbor could have been an undercover hope to send these men into a war that was ever looming in the horizon. However, the administration's lack of desire to send these men to war could have stemmed from a variety of factors. The United States government use of American Indian soldiers is quite well known through the Navajo code talkers. However, American Indian involvement in the war did not come until much later on. The administration's wish to keep firearms out of the hands of American Indians could have had a racial tone. Not until later, would the United States government and the army see the abilities and the possibilities of including American Indians in the war effort.

THE END OF THE CCC-ID

In April of 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."²⁴⁰ With the restriction, the CCC-ID at Cherokee began to curtail the projects they undertook. The Superintendent encouraged, that "if you can present projects which will meet these requirements, you should do so."²⁴¹ 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."²⁴² Chief Jarrett Blythe wrote in a reflection

²⁴⁰ D.E. Murphy to Paul T. Jackson, April 27, 1942; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

²⁴¹ D.E. Murphy to Paul T. Jackson, April 27, 1942; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

²⁴² D.E. Murphy to Paul T. Jackson, April 27, 1942; File 21348-122 Cherokee 344 Part II; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944; Records of the Indian Division; Record Group 75; NARA.

about the work of the CCC-ID for the Eastern Band: “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.”²⁴³ 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 of 1942 the Cherokee CCC-ID spent \$594,000.000 of federal funds. Per member they expended \$164.00 or “approximately \$10.40 per acre of tribal land in conservation improvements.”²⁴⁴

²⁴³ Progress Report, Cherokee, N.C.; Sep. 2, 1933; File No. 21348-33 Cherokee 344 Part I; Box 2; 1000 General Records 1933-1944, Records of the Indian Division, Record Group 75, NARA.

²⁴⁴ Jolley, “*That Magnificent Army of Youth and Peace*,” 127.

CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION

Discussions over a possible land exchange between Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Eastern Band started as early as March of 1931. Superintendent J. Ross Eakin, the first superintendent of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, opened discussions with the BIA superintendent at Cherokee about a possible land exchange. He wanted to exchange a small area of bottomland along the Oconoluftee River for a large area of mountainous country at the northern tip of the Cherokee reservation. While these parcels of land were not equivalent in acreage, they did have the same appraised value. Eakin wanted access to the Straight Fork and Ravens Fork streams for trout fishing. He argued that the Eastern Band would gain potential farm land close to the town of Cherokee. However, this land exchange never occurred.²⁴⁵

Again in 1934, Eakin attempted to renew discussions of a land exchange with the next BIA superintendent, Harold W. Foght, a major player in the CCC-ID program at Cherokee. However, now Eakin was dealing with new conditions because the Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier had set a new policy that any land exchange with a Native American group had to involve an equal amount of acreage on both sides. With this new policy talks stalled.²⁴⁶

In 1936, a new directive dramatically changed the direction of these talks. The Secretary of the Interior authorized Eakin to work with the Eastern Band on obtaining a right-of-way through the Cherokee Reservation for the Blue Ridge Parkway. The right-of-way would have run through the Cherokee Reservation beginning at Soco Gap and

²⁴⁵ Anne Mitchell Whisnant, *Super-Scenic Motorway: A Blue Ridge Parkway History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 183-187.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 189.

descending down Soco Creek to the town of Cherokee. When the talks started the tribe was overwhelmingly optimistic about the project, it would bring jobs for building the highway and more tourists to the reservation. However, tribal members went cold when they learned that the right-of-way would consist of easements nearly 1,000 feet wide. Also, once built the NPS would only allow limited commercial development and no access for residents along the route. Eakin hoped to use the bargaining chip of the bottomlands to try to reach a compromise with the Eastern Band. This time in addition to Superintendent Foght of the BIA, the Principal Chief Jarrett Blythe joined in on the conversations. While the representatives from the Park and Eastern Band came up with a compromise, when it was sent back to the Tribal Council they rejected the land exchange by a narrow vote.²⁴⁷

The Secretary of the Interior, Secretary Ickes finally came up with a solution he thought would be more attractive to the Eastern Band. He proposed that the parkway be directed across the northern part of the reservation instead of down Soco Creek. The federal government would pay the tribe \$40,000 dollars for the right-of-way and the tribe could use this to buy the Boundary Tree Tract from the park, a highly desired parcel for the Eastern Band. Also, the state would build a commercial highway over Soco Gap and down Soco Creek. While more Eastern Band members welcomed this idea, there was still enough opposition to strike down the idea. As a result, Representative Zebulon Weaver (D-NC) drew up a bill that would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to condemn the right-of-way. The Cherokee would still receive the same offer, however it would be forced upon them. Under threat of this legislation, tribal opinion finally turned. The tribe held an election in the fall of 1939 that resulted in the removal of two council members who had

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 189-191.

been the parkway's staunchest opponents and in February 1940 the Tribal Council approved the exchange. Congress passed the Weaver bill that authorized the exchange in June of 1940. The Cherokee acquired the Boundary Tree Tract in 1943, which effectively moved the park entrance one half mile further away from the outskirts of the town of Cherokee.²⁴⁸

The exchange between Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in 1940 was the culmination of twenty years of tribal and federal government relations. While there still existed major opposition to federal government policy, there was enough support from a majority of Eastern Band members that when it came time to officially make a decision the supporters of working with the federal government won. In the twenty years prior, the Eastern Band had undergone major economic, social, cultural, and political changes that allowed them to approach the talks about the land exchange in a much more positive way. The existence of the National Parks and the work of the CCC-ID in building access roads and investing in the cultural revitalization of the handicraft tradition helped to create a flourishing tourist industry on the boundary. The 1950s and 1960s would see the largest growth of the tourist industry on the reservation. This was also the precursor to the Eastern Band achieving tribal gaming and opening Harrah's Casino, one of the most successful tribal casinos in the country. However, there were and still are major issues on the boundary and with the federal government. Other than tourism, there has not been another industry that has acted as a source of labor since the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division. Today, the Eastern

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 196-197.

Band struggles with maintaining a population of young people on the boundary because of the lack of industry.

On the other side, federal government policy towards Native Americans had undergone dramatic changes as well. The Indian New Deal demonstrated to the federal government the importance of Native American participation in their own governance and sovereignty. They realized that Native Americans not only could but that they 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. However, as the story of the land exchange demonstrates, there were and still are major issues in how the federal government approaches Native American tribes.

Congress was willing to use eminent domain to take over Native American land. Even though the Eastern Band did consent to the right-of-way, their hand was forced because of the threat of Congress. The federal government continues to function in a reactive way towards Indian policy. Instead of putting in place policies that hinder issues between the government and tribes, the federal government waits until a major issue arises and then attempts to alleviate the situation by using force to make the tribes consent. Federal agencies are also complicit in the treatment of tribes. The National Park Service has a history of mistreatment of Native American tribes and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is no different. This project spurned out of the issue that the Great Smoky Mountains National Park does not interpret the history of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and they do not collaborate with the Eastern Band today. Federal government

policy towards Native Americans today consists of alienation and detachment. Because of the government's fear of being embroiled in a controversy with tribes, they do not hinder or support the work of tribes.

The ties between Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Eastern Band eventually withered away. Since the CCC-ID, the two groups have done very little together. However, these twenty years of interwoven conversation, collaboration, and sometimes controversy allow us a window into the complicated relationship between these two groups. While it may not have set the tone for the rest of the twentieth century, it demonstrates that the two could not have existed or persisted without one another. The logging industry, the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division, and the land exchange all happened. The Eastern Band has a dynamic twentieth century history that is vital to our understanding of Appalachian history and the creation of this diverse region of the United States.

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