

# A Story of the C's...and a Job

A True Story of How CCC Training Helped One of Many to Find His Work in the World

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(Editor's Note: This is a true story, the names, dates and places of which are well known to the author.)

On a small, rather remote farm of the far west, a strong, clear-eyed youth just entering his teens, lay in the shade of a tree during the noon-day respite from the hayfields. Through half-closed eyes he was gazing out from beneath the torn brim of the hat which half covered the blue of the sky overhead. The farm home lay in silence as it rested during the mid-day heat. But within the heart of the boy there was turmoil and unrest. In his almost rebellious mood he could not see why his lot had to be cast with the lives of these happy, honest, hard working people in whose midst he had grown from childhood. His soul was filled with a burning desire to be up and away to the land of glamorous adventure. Within him there surged the longing to taste of the forbidden fruit of sin and vice. And as he continued to gaze at floating clouds overhead, there came into being some half-formed plan of leaving the old for the untried and the new. In secret he packed some of his things and hid them, awaiting an opportunity to slip unnoticed away. Little did he dream how keenly he was some day to regret it all. Nor did he know how much suffering and remorse he might have spared himself had he shared his ambitions with another who had trod the path before him. No; the hot, unreasoning, impetuous blood of youth was coursing through his veins and he was yearning to try his own wings.

One day he was sent to a distant pasture to drive home some cattle. No one noticed that he went to the house and to his room before leaving on his errand. But a very troubled and worried household waited in vain for his return. Oh, the anguish many a mother's heart is called to bear because of thoughtless impulsive youth. Days followed days and the months grew into years but still no word came to the folks at home. What to them were months of patient waiting were months of drifting about for him. Many a rosy anticipation and fair illusion were shattered by cold, stern reality. Fain would he have returned to his home but pride would not let him. In his melancholy mood he began to frequent questionable places and to associate with crime-hardened men who patronized these dens. Thus ever on and down he went or was carried.

One night as he was returning home late from a party he was injured in an automobile accident. A few days later as he lay in the hospital there swept over him the desire to revisit the scenes of his boyhood. After weary days of hitch-hiking and uncomfortable nights in box cars, he at last neared his native village.

The dusk of a summer evening was over the land as the traveler paused in his tramp along the country road to listen to the lusty voice of a farmer as he sang at his evening chores. Such a flood of memories swept over him that he was still standing there when the farmer emerged from the barn. There seemed no resisting the warmth of the cordial invitation to come in and spend the night. The mantle of the years seemed to drop from his shoulders as he shared in the simple life of these people. Within his breast was a sense of satisfaction and content that had not been

his for many a long, weary month.

He did not leave the next morning nor the next. He seemed to slip naturally into the home life of this old couple. Ere long he was sharing the quiet life of the community as though he had never known anything else. As the months stretched into years he began to have special interests and there were plans now in his mind of that little home he hoped soon would be his. His were joys untold as he worked and saved. Then one day his dream came true and there dawned a new day in his life.

Hid away from the busy world and its troubles he was not aware of the great changes taking place in the affairs of men. Not until after a daughter came to that home did the father begin to realize that all was not as it had been. Driven by that stern master, necessity, he at last ventured forth again into the busy life of that world he had left. Great was his surprise to find such an economic crisis staring him squarely in the face. His inquiries for employment were greeted with a smile or short laugh. "Listen to the fellow" was often the only reply. Finally after weary days of search some one directed him to where applications for enrollment in the CCC were being taken. This was all new to him but at least it offered a place to sit for awhile and his feet were tired.

Many a fact gleaned from this interview carried back to that little wife waiting at home. After much weighing and discussion of their affairs it was finally decided that the little mother and daughter would carry on as best they could while the father should go to a CCC camp.

He soon adjusted himself to the life of the camp. He was assigned with a road construction crew. He took a special interest in the road working machinery and applied all his spare time to mastering the "hows and whys" of its operation. He was an interested as well as apt pupil in the classes of the educational program of his camp and he availed himself of the full benefit of this opportunity. The check which was sent each month not only kept the little home together but provided means of paying off a few debts which had accumulated in spite of strictest economy.

Soon after he had returned to civilian life there was a call for someone to run a special piece of machinery, which had just been received by the county unit of the state highway maintenance garage. Thanks to his CCC training and study he was able to secure the job. The coming of winter meant a reduction in maintenance crews but he was kept steadily busy. No matter what piece of machinery was needed he knew its operation and upon several occasions he was the only one who did. Within a year he was one of the two men kept on a year-around salary.

Conditions in this home are much changed and greatly prospered but still they are thankful to the CCC's; not only for the brief period of relief but for the chance it offered for future betterment. They both affirm again and again had it not been for the knowledge and skill acquired while an enrollee, theirs would not today be so favored a lot.

Reports have it that Enrollee Milarski of Camp Ahsahka is called the "walking alarm clock" by his buddies.