



**NOTE:** No photos of the Gibsonville Camp have been found, so the images presented here are typical of the camps of the time. Tent camps were converted to wooden structures for year around use and so was Gibsonville's Camp.

On April 1, 1940 the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) District Headquarter at Fort Bragg requested that Gibsonville provide water to CCC Camp NC-SCS-33 #1497-C (1). Lieutenant J.W. Sample was in charge of the existing CCC Camp SCS-13-#1497-C in Alamance County which was black unit. This unit was supposed to move to Gibsonville, but on April 2, 1940 it was announced that a new unit SCS 33 was being sent with 200 white young men. (2) On June 4, 1940 the existing SCS Unit 13 moved to Gibsonville with 165 black men and no white unit was created here. (3) This is confirmed by the fact that Isaac Woodard Jr, a black man, was stationed at Gibsonville. (4) His life story should be read for the terrible events that happened to him after he left the US Army in 1946. They highlight the grievous conditions that black people endured here in America.



Tent camps with wood plank floors were typical of the initial housing.

In addition to water, the new camp had electricity provided by the local power company, plus dining and recreational facilities. The Gibsonville camp was located ½ mile west of the Downtown Depot Greens off Church Street (NC 61 North). Forest Drive was the access drive for the camp. The tents were replaced with

wood frame buildings on concrete foundations to make the camp more habitable in the winter months. There is no trace of the camp now, since this area is a housing subdivision. The CCC Camp was not the Guilford County Prison Farm because it started in 1935. (5) There was a combination water meter on Church Street at corporate limits, a 2 inch and a ¾ inch tap which was used for billing purposes. (6)



Camps had wooden Army style barracks with separate dining and support buildings.

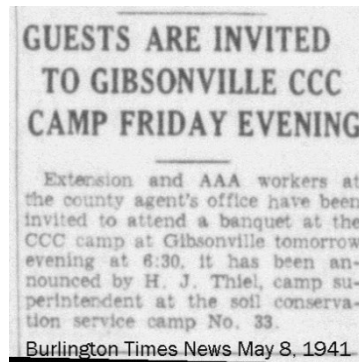
The Town sent the proposed water contract to Fort Bragg on April 18, 1940 and 44,395 gallons water was provided starting on April 22, 1940 for the month of April. Water usage continued at an average of over 300,000 gallons per month which for 200 men would be using 50 gallons per day. Current US average home water consumption per person is 100 gallons per day, so the CCC usage makes sense knowing that they did not have flush toilets or other appliances. The Oct 1941 water billing dropped down to 20,000 gallons, which coincides with the correspondence that indicated the camp closed in Oct 1941. (7) The Burlington Times News article announced the camp closure effective November 1, 1941. (8) Water usage continued at about 20,000 gallons per month until April 1942. This indicates that there were likely some caretakers still on site.



CCC Camp work crews had some equipment, but soil conservation camps used mostly manual tools.

Lt Sample was transferred to Fort Bragg on Jan 29, 1941 to start training nonmilitary leaders for CCC units, since the US was mobilizing more Army Reservists into the armed forces in 1940. (9) He was replaced by Lt G.B. Simpson who arrived in camp in Oct 1940. Mr. H.L. Thiel was the Camp's civilian Superintendent. (10) On Dec 1, 1941 the town notified Fort Bragg that they knew the CCC camp was disbanded and that the Camp Commander used to handle the water bill payments. The town continued to send bills for water service until April 23, 1942. It was noted in the May 5, 1942 letter from HQ District "I" CCC Office of the District Quartermaster in Charleston SC which formally cancelled the water contract, that the camp had been dismantled as of April 23, 1942. (11)

The young men who lived and worked at the camp were responsible for providing soil conservation assistance to local farmers for a 25 mile radius area around Gibsonville including Guilford, Alamance, and Rockingham Counties which included over 281 farmers participated in the Haw River Basin District. The CCC men provided tree planting, erosion control, forest firefighting, contour grading and gully control all as part of their soil conservation mission. The camp held several open house events for the community including banquets to encourage local farmers to implement better soil conservation practices. It is unlikely that these were mixed race events, since it was still 1941 and segregation was still firmly institutionalized.



Each unit's identification number described the purpose and composition of their unit. Gibsonville was unit SCS-33 #1497-C: (12)

1. Project: SCS – soil conservation service
2. Company number: 33
3. Unit Number 1947 – unique number was changed when the camp site moved, but Gibsonville's unit changed Company numbers from 13 in Alamance to 33 here and kept the unit #1497.
4. Unit type: C for colored, V for veterans (white), X for mixed unit

After the camp had closed and the US entered World War II, the Town of Gibsonville was still trying to settle the water accounts with the CCC. By then the previous chain of responsibility through Fort Bragg had been overcome by the war, so the Town was searching for a new entity to pay the bills. (13) In addition to the monthly water bill after Nov 1941 the town was seeking to get the \$0.90 payment from Oct 1941, which was to be paid for by the local camp commander's funds, but they could not find him. (14) That in itself is a subject for speculation. Why did the local camp commander need to pay personally for 7526 gallons of water and how did the Town know exactly what he consumed. Eventually by May of 1942 all accounts had been settled and the camp disappeared. (15)

## References:

1. Letter dated April 1, 1940, from HQ District "A" C.C.C. Office of the District Quartermaster, Fort Bragg, NC by Guy C. Cheatham, CCC Assistant District Quartermaster to Town of Gibsonville.
2. Burlington Times News April 2, 1940.
3. Burlington Times News June 4, 1940.
4. Reference to Isaac Woodard Jr being at Gibsonville Camp

[https://books.google.com/books?id=w\\_Mqj6UuRgQC&pg=PT631&lpg=PT631&dq=gibsonville+north+carolina+blinded+williams&source=bl&ots=pEJ5F7WfAC&sig=iAbsFIYPHYvG9tZlkf3qLHxbnRM&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiw4uHvhKXKAhULMz4KHRScASEQ6AEIMjAD#v=onepage&q=gibsonville%20north%20carolina%20blinded%20williams&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=w_Mqj6UuRgQC&pg=PT631&lpg=PT631&dq=gibsonville+north+carolina+blinded+williams&source=bl&ots=pEJ5F7WfAC&sig=iAbsFIYPHYvG9tZlkf3qLHxbnRM&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiw4uHvhKXKAhULMz4KHRScASEQ6AEIMjAD#v=onepage&q=gibsonville%20north%20carolina%20blinded%20williams&f=false)

5. <http://www.gbsonc.com/detention-centers/sheriff-s-prison-farm>
6. Letter dated April 18, 1940 from Gibsonville Town to CCC Assistant Quartermaster, Fort Bragg, NC.
7. Letter dated December 1, 1941 from Gibsonville Town to Quartermaster District "A" CCC Fort Bragg, NC
8. Burlington Times News October 29, 1940.
9. Burlington Times News January 29, 1941
10. Burlington Times News May 8, 1941.
11. Letter dated May 5, 1941 from HQ District "I" CCC Quartermaster, Fort Moultrie, SC to Town of Gibsonville.
12. [http://www.ccclegacy.org/CCC\\_Camps\\_North\\_Carolina.html](http://www.ccclegacy.org/CCC_Camps_North_Carolina.html)
13. Letter dated January 24, 1942 from HQ District "I" CCC, Fort Moultrie, SC to Town of Gibsonville.
14. Letter dated February 5, 1942 from Gibsonville Town to HQ District "I" CCC, Fort Moultrie, SC.
15. Letter dated February 12, 1942 from HQ District "I" CCC Fort Moultrie, SC to Town of Gibsonville.

## LINKS:

1. [http://www.ccclegacy.org/CCC\\_Camps\\_North\\_Carolina.html](http://www.ccclegacy.org/CCC_Camps_North_Carolina.html)
2. <http://www.gbsonc.com/detention-centers/sheriff-s-prison-farm>
3. <http://newspaperarchive.com>



Background information from [http://www.ccclegacy.org/CCC\\_Camps\\_North\\_Carolina.html](http://www.ccclegacy.org/CCC_Camps_North_Carolina.html)

## Civilian Conservation Corps

Preserving America's Natural Resources  
1933-1942



America was in the grip of the Great Depression when Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated in March of 1933. More than twenty-five percent of the population was unemployed, hungry and without hope. The New Deal programs instituted bold changes in the federal government that energized the economy and created an equilibrium that helped to bolster the needs of citizens.

Out of the economic chaos emerged the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The goal was two-fold: conservation of our natural resources and the salvage of our young men. The CCC is recognized as the single greatest conservation program in America and it served as a catalyst to develop the very tenets of modern conservation. The work of America's young men dramatically changed the future and today we still enjoy a legacy of natural resource treasures that dot the American landscape



The Corps itself continued to be popular. Another election year attempt by the President to reduce its strength precipitated a reaction reminiscent of the congressional revolt of 1936. Despite a well-meaning attempt at economy, Congress, with an eye to the folks back home, added \$50 million to the CCC's 1940-41 appropriation. Also, the Corps remained at the current strength of about 300,000 enrollees, Congress would never again be as generous. Other problems were developing within the Congress related to the defense of the country. Inevitably, the priority and prestige of the CCC suffered with each crisis. Those congressmen who had opposed FDR's "New Deal" gained strength some calling for termination of the Corps.

By late summer, 1941, it was obvious the Corps was in serious trouble. Lack of applicants, desertion and the number of enrollees leaving for jobs had reduced the Corps to fewer than 200,000 men in about 900 camps. There were also disturbing signs that public opinion was slowly changing. Major newspapers that had long defended and supported the Corps, were now questioning the necessity of retaining the CCC when unemployment had practically disappeared. Most agreed there was still work to be done, but they insisted defense came first.

The bombing of Pearl Harbor had shaken the country to its very core. It soon became obvious that, in a nation dedicated to war, any federal project not directly associated with the war effort was not a priority. The joint committee of Congress authorized by the 1941-42 appropriations bill was investigating all federal agencies to determine which ones, if any, were essential to the war effort. The CCC was no exception and came under review late in 1941. It was not a surprise that the committee recommended the Civilian Conservation Corps be abolished by July 1, 1942.

The CCC lived on for a few more months, but the end was inevitable. Technically, the Corps was never abolished. In June 1942 by a narrow vote of 158 to 151, the House of Representatives curtailed funding. The Senate reached a tie vote twice. Finally, Vice-President Harry Wallace broke the tie voting to fund the CCC. It was a valiant effort, but it didn't work. The Senate-House committee compromise finished it with the Senate concurring in return for a House action authorizing \$8 million to liquidate the agency. The full Senate confirmed the action by voice vote and the Civilian Conservation Corps moved into the pages of history.