

Did You Know? Edwardsville had CCC Camp from August 1935 to July 1941

by Mary Westerhold of the Madison County Archival Library
September 9 2015 11:45 AM



EDWARDSVILLE - Did you know that Edwardsville had a CCC Camp from August of 1935 until July 1941? The CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) was part of President Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal" programs. Established in March of 1933 as part of the Emergency Conservation Work Act, its purpose was to put young, unemployed men to work while improving federal, state, and private lands. The men were paid a monthly salary, most of which was required to be sent to relatives at home. The camp provided room and board along with employment.



Did you Know?

A Glance Into Ed/Glen History

The camp in Edwardsville was named Camp Wheeler after William E. Wheeler III, a former resident of Edwardsville who died during World War I and whose family had a long history in Edwardsville. Funds were raised by the Edwardsville Chamber of Commerce to assure the establishment of the camp and leases were obtained from local land owners for the location in the Home Addition in Edwardsville.

Several buildings were erected including barracks, a mess hall, housing for the officers who administered the camp and other administrative buildings. The principal work of the CCC Camp in Edwardsville was to assist Madison County farmers with soil conservation efforts, but the operating needs of the camp, such as food and coal, were a much needed boost to the local economy.

The first notices that the camp was to be closed began appearing in local newspapers in 1940. When the camp finally was abandoned after six years in July 1941, much conservation work had been completed and the local economy had improved. The dismantling of the camp began soon afterward and was completed by veterans from World War I. According to an article in the Edwardsville Intelligencer in January 1942,

nearly all of the buildings in the camp had been razed and sent to Carlinville for storage. Evidence of Camp Wheeler's existence quickly disappeared as the property reverted to private land owners.

If you have any comments about this please post them below or any other photos of this time to News@riverbender.com

Photo courtesy of the Madison County Historical Society

Photo: CCC Camp in Edwardsville.