



The
Civilian Public Service
A proud American tradition



THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

CPS Camp No. 111, Mancos Colorado

Unit ID: 1

Operating agency: SSS

Director: Charles Thomas



Opened: 7 1943

Closed: 2 1946

**Total number of workers who worked in this
camp: 364**

Civilian Public Service

The Civilian Public Service was a program of the United States government that provided conscientious objectors with an alternative to military service during World War II. From 1941 to 1947, nearly 12,000 draftees, willing to serve their country in some capacity but unwilling to perform any type of military service, accepted assignments in work of national importance in 152 CPS camps throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.

Summary:

CPS Camp No. 111, a Bureau of Reclamation camp in Mancos, Colorado operated by the Selective Service System, opened in July 1943 and closed in February 1946. In this first government operated camp, the men performed work utilizing a variety of skills to construct a dam, clear a reservoir site, and improve irrigation systems to open ten thousand acres of farm land.

Location Description:

Mancos was the first of three government operated CPS camps, located at Jackson Gulch, four miles up a twisting dirt road from Mancos, Colorado in an isolated part of the state. Not far from the Four Corners area in southwest Colorado, the town lay in the Mancos River Valley at nearly seven thousand feet elevation.

The people:

On July 1, 1943, eighty-one men transferred into the camp, some by their own choice and others without choice. If an assignee elected to serve at a “non-religious” camp, he was sent to Mancos. By 1945, one hundred and fifty-two men made up the camp. With respect to religious affiliation, the men at Mancos reported a diversity of religious affiliation when entering CPS, with a significant number reporting no religious affiliation.

The work:

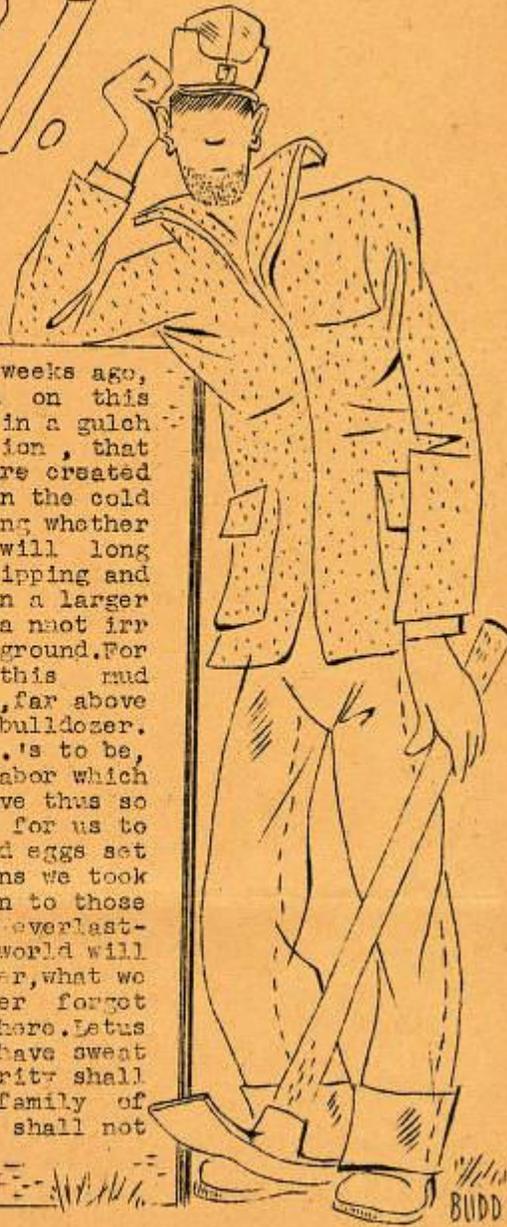
The work required a variety of skills, including the use of heavy machinery. The men constructed an earth dam, cleared a reservoir site and improved irrigation systems to open ten thousand acres of farm land.



Early excavation work at damsite, July 1943.



C.P.S. G.I.



Four score and thirty-seven weeks ago, our government brought forth on this mesa a new project, conceived in a gulch and dedicated to the proposition, that all conscientious objectors are created evil. We are now ensnared in the cold snow and mud of the mesa, testing whether this project or the G.O.'s will long endure. we are all together slipping and slodding as we do this, but in a larger sense, we cannot cultivate, we ca nnot irrigate, we cannot ha rrow this ground. For those great snows which make this mud here, have made it impossible, far above the poor power of all but the bulldozer. It is rather for us, the G.O.'s to be, enslaved here by this menial labor which they who are in power, have thus so freely advanced. It is rather for us to be here sickened by the fried eggs set before us that from these cans we took our nourishment; nor no devotion to those cooks, for our stomachs have an everlasting measure of commotion. The world will little note nor long remember, what we build here, but we shall never forget the eggs and beans we a t here. Let us resolve, that we shall not have sweat in vain; that we and our posterity shall have freedom, in the world family of states and that this thought shall not perish from our ideals.

BUDD

The night the machine shop burned down.



Dormitories at CPS Camp No. 111



Loading up trucks to head back to the project. [John] Budd Steinhilber in foreground. Man behind Budd, George Barbarow[?]. Far left is Forrest Leever.



Steel re-bar bending crew. Budd Steinhilber is doing the heavy work on the bending lever (left), while the Amburgy brothers (Wayne and Claude) in the captain's hats, and others look on.





Heading back to work through the snow after lunch break.

