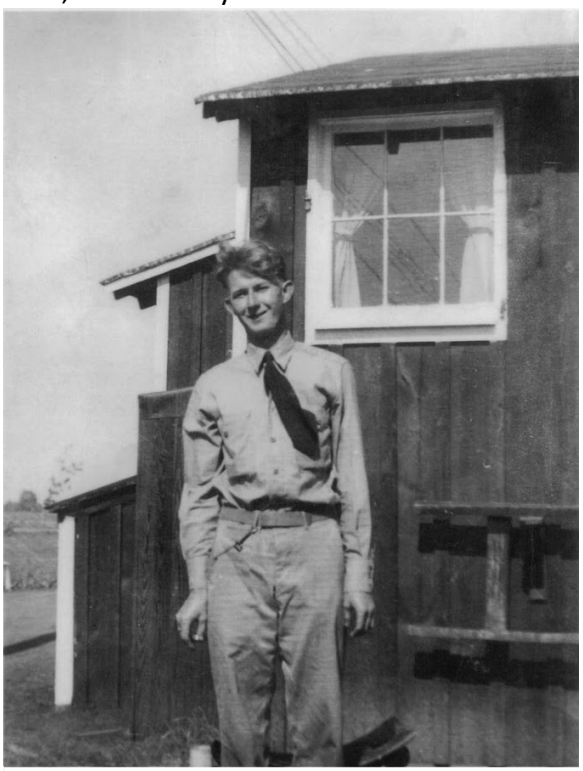
Six of the Hamlin CCC Camp's "Graduates"

Al Chike and I were friends for many years and other than my great grandfather Lester Oatman, he was one of the first CCC enrollees I ever met. But I didn't know that until Al passed away. He might have told me he worked in our CCC camp when we had occasion to chat, but if he did, it obviously went in one ear and out the other. Mary Smith had not yet turned me on to the Hamlin CCC site. When I did finally get started working on reclaiming Hamlin's CCC camp, Al was gone, and I sure could have used his help!



Al Chike standing at the rear of Barracks #5, back entrance and coal bins on the left side of the photo.

Al was a very popular Town of Hamlin volunteer. He helped everybody, especially the ladies of the fire department during the yearly carnival. Al could always be found near their food booth sitting behind a card table selling several different sets of raffle tickets.

After Al died, his daughter and son-in-law had heard about my work at the CCC site and gave me the few photos Al kept from his Hamlin CCC adventure. They told me that Al never said much about his CCC experiences, but they did have one story they thought I might be interested in.

I have no way to "fact check it," but I have many reasons to believe that it is 100% true.

Al lived nearby (in Albion, as I recall) and after signing up for the CCC, Al was sent to the Hamlin camp. He fit right into the program here and his mother quickly put her $25 per month share of his earnings to good use. But at the end of six months the rules said Al had to leave the CCC to make room for another needy young man[1] - just when Al was enjoying himself and his mother was getting used to the extra money!

According to family legend, Al's mother wrote a note and sent Al to register at one of the Letchworth CCC camps. The note said, "Please accept my son's application to join the CCC. Be advised that this Albert 'S' Chike is not the other Al Chike."

It worked! Al and his mother were in the CCC for another six months. However, a couple

[1] The short six-month enlistments were a problem nationwide. Shortly after Al's experience, the CCC administration extended the enlistments to 12 months. Not long after that, they extended them again. Before the CCC program was discontinued, enlistees could stay in for two years.

of weeks later, Al and a bunch of other young men were transferred….to the Hamlin CCC camp! Many years later, Al told his daughter that he was extremely nervous about walking back into the Hamlin camp but said that they just "kind of ignored me and assigned me to a barracks."

I have always had full access to Mary Smith's photo collection, but the photos Al's family passed on to me were the start of my own collection. I think the photos were taken during his second tour of duty in the Hamlin camp and they have contributed greatly to my education about the Hamlin CCC camp. One of Al's photos shows him after exiting the Recreation Building by the south door. He has a towel across his shoulders, something in his hands, and he looks like he is on the way to the shower room. (But the shower room was a long way off in the opposite direction.) He is standing in the middle of what we call Second Street - the street that passes in front of the five CCC administration buildings. Behind Al is the big barn[2] associated with the old 968 Moscow Road farmhouse.



It is that photo that told us where to start clearing Second Street! At that time, we didn't know for sure where anything in the camp was, but Al got us off to a real good start. In the photo, the little window under the peak of the barn was directly over Al's right shoulder. Because the barn was still there, I simply walked over and measured the distance from a spot on the ground under the window at the peak of the barn roof, to the edge of Moscow Road. Then I measured that same distance from Moscow Road down the entrance road into the camp and we started lopping! As we worked, we uncovered the large rocks and other things shown in Al's photo.

Another of Al's photos is used every time I give a tour of the site. In the photo, Al (on the left) and four of his friends are posing in front of Barracks #5 on Third Street, the street that goes by all of the barracks. The guys are standing and kneeling to the left of the photo and behind them, in the background on the right side of the photo, is the Mess Hall.



Before each tour, I put five wire flags in the ground where Al and his friends gathered as they posed over 70 years ago. When the

[2] The CCC used the barn in the winter to cut stone for drinking fountains and fireplaces. The Park didn't order the barn taken down until 2009.

tour begins, I take the tourists to where the cameraman was most likely standing when the picture was snapped and hold up an enlargement of Al's photo for all to see. I tell them to look at the flags in the ground and "mental in" the line of barracks that are no longer there. Then I tell them to "mental in" the Mess Hall "way back there" - and I point out the spot with my arm. Then I let the enlarged photo circulate amongst the tourists. There is always much chatter and some oohs and ahhs as they mentally take the site before them back in time.

I use a set of other old photos similarly around the rest of the tour.

Al also contributed the only known photo of something going on at the sawmill. We had a photo of the front of the sawmill from a distance, but Al left us a photo of him rolling logs through an opening in the side of the sawmill using a peavey. His photo was instrumental in our figuring out the layout of the sawmill after we found the cement structure that held the four-foot saw blade. It is only fitting that Al will be forever remembered by that photo because it is displayed on the interpretive sign in front of the sawmill site.





CCC participants, Al Chike is on the left in the second row.



CCC Group in front of the south side of Barracks V. Al Chike is fourth from the left in the front row.

George Weissinger attended an afternoon CCC presentation I was giving at the Sweden Senior Center in Brockport a few years ago. George sat somewhere near the middle of the audience and Park Manager Jay Bailey was at the back of the room videotaping everything I said and put up on the screen. About halfway through my program George jumped up and turned around to face the camera. He raised his cane high in the air and shouted, "I'm here to tell you that the best six months of my life were the six months I spent in Hamlin's CCC camp." Then he sat down to enjoy the rest of my presentation.

Right after I finished talking I rushed over to George and asked if I could visit him where he lived and ask him questions about his Hamlin CCC experience. George obliged and the next day I got to sit with him at his kitchen table in his apartment. I brought along some enlargements of photos Mary Smith and I had of the camp to see if he could tell us something we didn't know about them. He reacted immediately to a picture of a few CCC guys lolling around on the cots in what we thought might be Barracks #4.



"That's me," he almost shouted. "And that's so and so, and so and so. That's the barracks bully lying there." He pointed to the fellow at the bottom right looking into the camera.



Barracks #4, left to right: ?, ?, Sackel (laying down), George, Al Chike, ?, ?, Ronnie Ware (laying down), Drew, Hartman.

George told me that he might very well have been the shortest guy in the barracks, but he had grown up in downtown Rochester in the pool halls. He said he had learned to handle himself quite nicely in any situation. When he introduced himself to the guys in the barracks the day he arrived in camp, he was warned about the "barracks bully." George said, "You want me to take care of him?"

> George told me not to tell anyone but the first thing he did when he went into a new pool hall was to scout out the location of a back window, just in case!

"Can you?" they asked.

Sure enough, when the bully made his appearance, it didn't take him long to start picking on George, the new guy from the city. But the show didn't last long. George had him on the floor crawling out from under a

cot in nothing flat. From that day forward, Barracks #4 had no bully!

George loaned me his Hamlin CCC photo collection so that I could copy them - photos of him and his newfound friends who also worked with the trucks in the Department of Interior's garage. You can tell by the photos that he really did enjoy his six months there and his buddies appeared to enjoy George's being there.

The strange part is that George, like Al Chike, never told any of his family about the CCC experience. I was being told things his granddaughter was thrilled to hear when I got around to passing them on to her and her family. It was beginning to look like the CCC guys all appreciated what the program did for them and their families, but it was not something they talked about. The CCC was not even mentioned in his obituary.

This nagged at me with every CCC enlistee I learned about. Was it just something they were expected to do because of the times? They seemed to treat any fun they had as something that was not part of the program. But every CCC enlistee I got to talk to told me they were very proud of what they accomplished. It was not like boy scout camp where you were expected to have stories to tell to prove that you had gotten your money's worth. It was almost like they felt afraid to admit that they had fun while being on welfare.

Don Mannara was 91 years old when he was "dragged to the CCC site" by members of his family so that I could give him a tour of the Hamlin CCC. It was late in the year but there was no snow on the ground. Everyone was bundled up and Don complained the moment he got out of the car that he didn't understand why they brought him out here. Everyone heard him say at least once, "It was so long ago I can't remember anything about being here."

But the tour began as they usually do. I gave my history of the CCC spiel and showed everyone the photo of Al Chike and friends when we stopped in front of the five wire flags.

Don listened but didn't have a thing to say. Then we passed by the front of the Recreation Building which was outlined in clothesline and I showed the tourists a couple of old photos - one of the outside of the building and one of the stage on the inside of the building.



As we rounded the SE corner of the roped in Recreation Building, I heard Don actually gasp. "I can't believe it's still there," and he stopped dead in his tracks. Everyone else had wandered ahead.

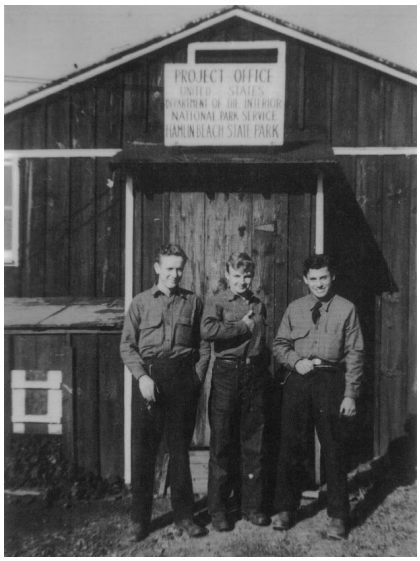
Don stood staring at a flagstone walkway that started just outside the back door of the Recreation Building (the door at the rear of the stage - behind the sofa in the old photo) and ended at Second Street. Every flat stone was still in place - just as they were when Nick scraped the six inches of dirt off them. The walkway was expertly laid out and had survived over 70 winters. It gracefully fanned out when it reached Second Street and no one had trouble seeing exactly where the walkway ended and Second Street began.

Don just kept staring at it. I went back to where he was standing and yelled for everyone to come on over to the walkway. I announced that Don was about to take his first walk, in over 70 years, down an old familiar sidewalk.



The crowd gathered, the cameras came out, and Don strutted down the walkway, beaming from ear to ear. There was even some applause. After that, Don had something to say at every stop on the tour!

Two stops later he had something to say about a photo I held up of the CCC Project Office. Three CCC enlistees were shown standing in front of the little building and the guy in the middle had a proud grin on his face and one hand was stuck inside his shirt like a little Napoleon. The guy didn't look a day over 13-years-old and I reminded everybody that you had to be 17-years-old to get in the CCC.[3] Don spoke up and told everyone that there were "kids" like him in all of the barracks. But nobody said anything. Don said there were a couple of underage boys in his barracks.



By the time the tour got to the north end of the camp, Don had told us that when he joined the CCC, he had three brothers in the navy and five brothers and two sisters at home. To help make ends meet, he delivered home grown veggies in his car. We heard about his early assignments at Letchworth, Arkport, and West Almond, before ending up in Hamlin for a second tour of duty.

When the tour got to the 13-bay garage Don was telling us he learned to drive truck driving for the CCC. He remembered hauling logs from Letchworth to the Hamlin sawmill, Medina sandstone from the quarries, and delivering stone fresh from the Hamlin CCC rock crusher to the park site. All of this from a guy who was heard earlier complaining that he couldn't remember anything about being in the Hamlin camp!

Near the end of the tour, we gathered on the cement floor at the NW corner of the camp. Don began telling us about how he enlisted in the Navy when the war started and how the CCC helped him prepare for it. But as we stood there, Don had another memory flash! He looked down and pointed to what he excitedly identified as oil stains. "I used to come here after work, and they would let me use the lathes to work on my model collection. That's the oil that was always dripping from the machines," he told us.

Until that moment, we had been trying to convince ourselves that the Blacksmith Shop must have sat here. Don's revelation got my brain working. Lathes in a blacksmith shop? Not hardly! This must be where they made replacement wheelbarrow handles, axe handles, shovel handles, and pickaxe handles from ash trees that grew all over the area! This must have been the Tool Repair Shop!

And now you know the whole story of what led up to an earlier mention of this event.

[3] In some cases, a needy mother of a family with a 13-year-old son might live next door to a family that DID have a healthy 17-year-old young man. In desperation, the needy mother would write a letter to the CCC Board asking them to give her son special consideration because they couldn't find his birth certificate. "It had been lost in a fire," or something similar. The letter might also say "He looks young for his age just like his father always did," or something to that effect. In such cases, the CCC Board often just looked the other way.

Then everyone headed for their cars. Many of the younger folks looked a little pooped. But not Don. He was stepping along like someone half his age. Don had had a wonderful time. In fact, he came back to the site two more times with friends he himself got turned on to the history of the place. Like many other CCC graduates, after 70 years he finally realized that he had been part of something that was really extraordinary - something that showed what this country could do when the chips were down.

After his last visit to the site, when he was about to get into the car that brought him, Don turned around and scurried back across the Recreation Hall site and stopped in front of the flagpole. He put legs together, stood up straight, and saluted the flag. Then, smiling proudly, the now 92-year-old guy hurried back to the car. He died a few months later.



1Don Mannara (CCC camp graduate), his son, neighbor and Ed during Don's first tour.



George Lake was another one of those young men who lived the CCC experience but didn't talk much about it. It was just something that had to be done and that was it. He simply did what he had to do. No "thanks" were necessary!

But after word got out about the clearing going on at the Hamlin CCC camp, many people got to thinking differently about the CCC program. Most people now saw the CCC program as another American triumph over a very dire situation.

Hazel Lake, George Lake's widow, was one of those people. I first saw 92-year-old Hazel being guided around the partially cleared Hamlin CCC camp. Her daughter was helping her navigate around stumps and woodchuck holes. Under her arm she held a long, folded once, eight and one-halfx26-inch antique photo taken with a special lens. It was one



Center section of Hazel's folded photo. George Lake, smack dab center, Group CCC picture

of those photos the CCC took every six months of the 150 or so young men who worked in the camp during that enlistment period - kind of like one of those old grade school class photos but of a much larger class.

I interrupted their "self-tour" and Hazel proudly showed me the photo. Her husband's face, along with a few others, was right on the crease because he was in the middle of CCC Company 1252 as it assembled in front of the Mess Hall of Camp S. P. - 53, Hamlin NY (S.P. = State Park). George's face was all crinkled up because of the fold but Hazel took a 3x4 snapshot out of her pocket to show me what he really looked like. In the snapshot, George is standing near the flagpole on a snow free January day, with Barracks #1 and #2 in the distance behind him.



George Lake, January 1937.

George lived in Medina, NY, and had joined the CCC in 1936 while he was courting Hazel. He promised his girlfriend that he would come home every weekend to visit her. But Hamlin was not just down the road from Medina. It was 30 miles away, but George kept his promise. Every Friday after work he'd sign out of camp knowing he had to be back Sunday evening. Sometimes he'd get a ride from someone who worked at the camp and sometimes he'd hitchhike. Quite often, he didn't make it back in time and he'd be

assigned a lot of extra KP duty. But George didn't mind. It was worth it!

Once he walked the entire way. He wore out his shoes and the bottoms fell off halfway back. When he finally arrived at camp, very late, he put on the tops of his shoes - without the bottoms - and laced them up. He was embarrassed and didn't want anyone to know what had happened.

Five-foot-five-and-a-half George told his family that he enjoyed camp life and did pass along to them one or two memories. He was very strong for his size and fit right in with the rest of the guys. To be, as we say, "cool" like the other guys, he'd hold a sledgehammer out at arm's length, raise it high in the air, and while staring right at it, slowly lower it down to touch the hammer to his forehead. He and his friends even got involved in camp politics and blew the whistle on one of the camp officers who was selling the good eggs that came into the camp and feeding the men "cold storage eggs" that were often spoiled or had chicks inside. But, he said that he also missed his sweetheart and after one six-month assignment, he was ready to go home.

A few days before mustering out, George was working in the kitchen (KP duty again) and was told to fix up a meal for the camp Commander. Since the Commander was an officer, George fixed up the tray to look extra appetizing. When the Commander got the meal, he demanded to see whoever it was that prepared it!

George went to the Commander, thinking he was in some kind of trouble. Instead, the Commander asked him to cook for him on a regular basis. George explained that his hitch was almost up, but the Commander asked him to re-enlist for another year. George was flattered but said he had been gone from home long enough.

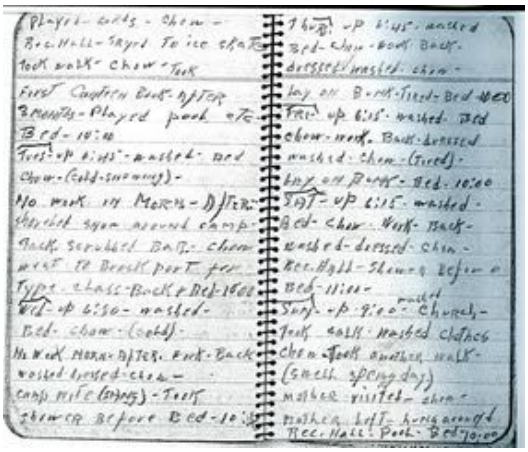
And that's why Hazel was at the Hamlin CCC site. George had passed away in 2003 and she just wanted to see where he walked from all those weekends in 1936 - just to be with her. She wanted to see where he was standing in those two CCC pictures she had of him. I took her to the exact locations, and I could tell it meant a lot to her to be able to stand where her George had stood.

Hazel visited the site with different family members two more times after that, that I know of. I gave the tours, but I think she can probably give a tour without me now. Shortly after her first visit she had the long photo professionally repaired and had a copy made for me. If the Park ever gets around to turning the old farmhouse at 968 Moscow Road into a museum and visitor's center, you'll be able to see that photo!

Jimmy Giancaterin lived in Rochester but, somehow, a rather large collection of memorabilia he had carefully saved from his 18-month CCC experience ended up in the next town to the west of the Hamlin CCC camp. Less than a month before it burned to the ground, Cora, who lives in Kendall Mills, bought a shopping bag full of "stuff" that had been sitting for many years in the attic of a residence in downtown Kendall. She thought it might contain some antique postcards she could add to her husband's collection. Finding none, she prepared to toss the bag into the garbage. But first she looked up my telephone number.

"Are you the guy who has been working at the old CCC campsite in Hamlin?" she asked. I told her I was, and she explained how she had come by the bag of odds and ends. "I was about to throw it all away," she said, "when I noticed the address on some letters - some guy in Barracks #5, Hamlin, New York. Are they something you might be interested in?" I raced to Cora's house before she had a chance to change her mind! We had yet to clear the ground where Barracks #5 had once stood but we'd get right to it now!

The bag contained a treasure trove. There were a total of 140 letters and cards, all addressed to James Giancaterin (jin-katter-inn), a member of C.C.C Company 1252, S.P. 53 in Hamlin (S.P. = State Park). The bag also contained two small, shirt pocket size, spiral bound notebooks that turned out to be diaries. Jimmy G, as some of his CCC buddies called him, always had a pencil with him and he made an entry in the tiny diaries every day he was in camp. (He was in the CCC for three hitches - one and a half years.) Besides a priceless collection of the twelve page newspapers the CCC boys published in camp once a week, there were black and white negatives of 60 photos, three framed photos taken in an arcade, a belt and buckle from a military uniform, CCC patches, some beaded handicrafts and several personal documents that had to do with the before, during and after of his enlistment in the Civilian Conservation Corps. I have never heard of a CCC collection as complete as this one!



Jimmy G lived on Emerson Street in Rochester and had dropped out of school in 1937 at the beginning of his junior year. He was a good student, but his father had recently died in a local glass factory accident and his mother, who spoke only Italian, was left to support him, a brother and a sister. A CCC enlistment would pay him $5 a month and $25 a month would be sent directly to his mother. He chose the Hamlin camp so he could occasionally visit his family on weekends.

He settled into camp life quickly. It wasn't long before he was singing solo in front of all 186 of his fellow CCCers on Camp Night, working on the weekly newspaper staff, enjoying the nickname "Lady Killer," operating a jack hammer in the Hulberton quarries

(mining the Medina sandstone for the State Park buildings), riding in the back of a truck Tuesday evenings to take a typing course in Brockport, and taking full advantage of everything else CCC camp life offered the young men who had signed up to help their country survive the Great Depression of the 1930s. When his family came to camp to visit, he proudly gave them a tour of the lake front to show them what the CCC was accomplishing in the Park. When U.S. Army officers at Fort Dix in New Jersey became short of office staff, a very deserving and qualified Jimmy G was sent there, on loan for a few weeks, to help them out.

But, as part of what is appearing to be a local CCC tradition, Jimmy G never told any of this to his own kids. All his future wife ever knew was that he was in the CCC - period. There never were any reunions with the guys he shared the camp experiences with and, as I have said before, that seems to be the way it was with almost all of the CCC "graduates" I have ever talked to or researched.

But did you notice how very important it was for him to preserve those memories of the things that gave his life new direction and meaning in those troubled times? Just living them and remembering them wasn't enough for Jimmy G. He stuffed all of that memorabilia into the big paper bag and stashed the bag in Kendall. Not even close to his home! But it was safe. And it just sat there for 70 years until Cora rescued it and handed it to me!

It wasn't until one of his daughters stumbled across a story in the Suburban News about finding the letters that I got the rest of the story. He had three daughters and two sons, and his daughter Sandy called me right away. Then Sandy and her husband Tom hurried to my house to see for themselves what I had. Her father had died in the 1970s and she did not own one single thing that her father had ever touched! She was "blown away" with what she learned about her "Dad" as she sat at my dining room table, going through that pile of "stuff!"

I made copies of everything in the bag I could for Sandy. She understood that I wanted to keep the originals (in a fireproof container) for viewing in a museum the State has promised to help us build (someday!) in the old farmhouse at the CCC site. But I did give her a couple of items that her Dad had touched. A few weeks later Sandy hosted a dinner party at her house and one of her sisters and one of her brothers attended. My wife and I were the entertainment. They all learned about a part of their father's life they didn't know existed.

My knowledge of the Hamin CCC camp leapt forward with leaps and bounds because of Jimmy G's collection. His meticulous diaries told me a lot about camp life in a barracks that no one had ever mentioned. He even dated for me changes that were made to the camp that no one else had records of (e.g. plywood added to inside walls, new sinks in the washroom, additions to the Education Building). What went on in camp over the holidays? Check out Jimmy's diaries!

Jimmy G heard that there was a CCC camp near the west coast that was close to the Golden Gate Bridge. He got it in his head that he could be the first member of his

family to actually see that landmark. At the end of his second tour of duty at the Hamlin camp he transferred to the CCC camp in Lovelock Nevada. Jimmy then wrote and asked his Mom if she would sign over one of her allotment checks to him so he could buy a camera and finance the hitchhike to the Golden Gate. She was as excited as he was and off he went!

Jimmy G's family and I have prints of all 60 of those photos.

Jimmy kept up his diary in the Lovelock camp and snapped the last few pictures left on his camera when he got back to Emerson Street in Rochester. Sometime after that, he stashed that bag in Kendall, joined the Navy, raised a family, took up bowling as a hobby and never looked back on the CCC. Unfortunately, he learned to smoke while in the CCC and died of emphysema in the 1970s.



Jimmy G on the way to Nevada.



Chester Terpin pre-WWII.

Chester Terpin did the best job ever of covering up the fact that he was once in the CCC. In fact, Chester Terpin and his CCC story would never have come to light if it had not been for Jimmy G's story coming to light, first.



There was a large rock, a boulder in the bushes behind the Hamlin Beach State Park's new office building and Park Manager, Jay Bailey, wanted to know if it had anything to do with the CCC. Local lore had the rock being part of an Indian legend and Jay was in favor of showing it off to the public, but first, he wanted to make sure it was not an undocumented grave marker.

It did look a little strange. According to the legend, for some reason, a pre-glacier Indian chief sat down hard on the rock, and it took the shape of his behind. The rock was in fact about the height of a chair and the top was contoured like an old iron tractor seat.

But after chipping away at the face of the rock, someone with not a lot of stonework practice behind them, had chiseled the name "TERPIN" across the front. And there were no other boulders like it anywhere in the area. If it was a grave marker, I would be more inclined to think it was a gravestone for a pet rather than a human being. But I told Jay I'd check it out.

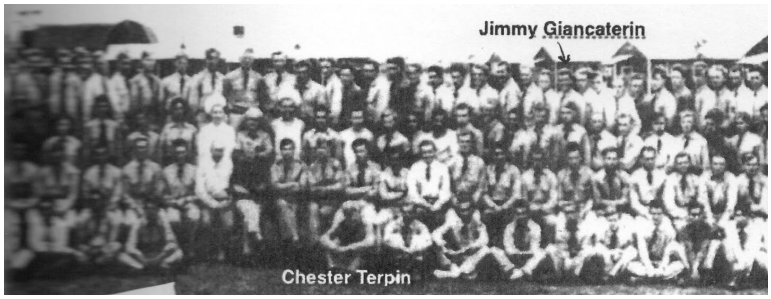


There were no Terpins in the Rochester phone book using that spelling. That led me to believe that there might have once been a dog in the neighborhood by the name of Terpentine. He could be buried there and the chiseler spelled it wrong and simply never finished the engraving job.

Then I recalled seeing one of those long and narrow group CCC photos hanging on the wall of Mary Smith's history center. It looked a lot like Hazel Lake's antique photo, but Mary's was a lot fancier. Hers was surrounded by other camp photos, and, unlike Hazel's, this one had a list of the names of all the guys in the photo. I had never given it a close look because it was too high on the wall, but with the Terpin rock thing going around in my mind I climbed up on Mary's filing cabinets and gave the picture a closer look.

Would you believe it! "Chester Terpin" was in the list of names. There was no way of knowing which guy he was but while going

over the names I also saw "James Giancaterin" listed! What a coincidence. I did manage to find Jimmy G standing in the back row.[4]



I raced home and got out my collection of the Hamlin Special CCC newspapers Jimmy G had sorta "left to me." I checked all of the articles titled "New Arrivals at the Camp." Sure enough, in the April 27, 1938, issue, a Chester Terpin "from the Buffalo area" was mentioned. My wife got on her computer and found three or four Terpins listed south of Buffalo.

I wrote a "Dear Terpin Family" letter and sent a copy of it to each of the addresses. I also enclosed a rather poor copy of a part of that long photo hanging on Mary's wall. Before the week was over, I had a reply announcing, "Chester Terpin was my father!" I got in touch with Chester's family and arranged for them to come to Hamlin for a tour of the site.



Terpin Family

When Pat, Chester Terpin's daughter, got out of the car and walked over to the "Terpin Rock" sign where I was waiting for her and the rest of the Terpin family, she had a very surprised look on her face. "For a minute I was shocked," she said. "You look just like him and he was short like you are." We were off to a great start!

Everyone in the family took turns sitting on "Chester's Rock" and posing for pictures. I heard someone call it "Chester's inspiration seat." And then the stories about Chester began and kept coming until the main event of the day was over - a tour of the CCC camp site.

As a teenager, Chester had been "running the numbers" for some mobsters in Buffalo. His mother was afraid he could be killed and told him to sign up for the CCC "or else." He ended up in Hamlin's CCC camp but didn't fit in right away. His very severe acne made him so self-conscious that he never looked you in the face if he had to talk to you. But one family member remembered Chester telling them that in six months the acne went away. Diet and fresh air? It doesn't matter. Chester became a new kid. He's the little blond guy sitting on the grass in the front row of that long group photo. His daughter Pat spotted him immediately when she looked at the copy I mailed to her.

[4] There had to have been at least 12 of those long group photos taken in the Hamlin camp. Mary and I have only seen two. What are the odds that one of those had been hanging on the wall of the North Star History Center for years and had BOTH Jimmy Giancaterin AND Chester Terpin in it?

While we were walking his kids told me that every summer Chester Terpin took them camping at State Parks but only the ones the CCC had worked on. They never knew why but over the years he "hit them all" and then started again at the top of the list the following summer. He was doing that with his grandkids when he died of a heart attack in his daughter's driveway at the age of 59.

No one in his family had any photos of him in the CCC camp and the best I could do was to show them exactly where Chester was sitting on the ground when that long picture was taken. But we didn't need pictures. As we walked around the camp they learned more and more about their father as they saw what the camp had to offer young men like Chester Terpin.

I brought along the original of that photo for the tour and had a wire flag in the ground marking the spot where Chester sat for it. I also put a flag in the ground where Jimmy G was standing in the photo.

Chester Terpin only had a fifth grade education and his kids knew it. But they also knew that he was an excellent carpenter, mason, electrician, mechanic, and cook! They told me he built himself a 75-pound pull bow from a stick of wood, hand carved an entire ornate staircase, had a stove in his kitchen smaller but similar to the ones in a CCC Mess Hall, built the only Medina sandstone backyard barbecue in Buffalo (and other sand-stone things), hand sewed big things (tents) and little things (hunting clothes), had to have a shower so he built one in his cellar, built the entire house they grew up in, knew all about privies, was a pool shark and shuffle board champ, loved to make apple pie in huge sheets, and one of his favorite desserts was "Artificial Ice Cream," a favorite of the cooks in the Hamlin CCC camp. His kids marveled at his talents but never thought about where he learned all that. Until that day! When I showed the Terpin family the Education Building and listed some of the courses taught there, one of his daughters blurted out for all to hear, "I always wondered how he could help me with my algebra with only a fifth grade education!"



Chester Terpin in WWII.

I have read a lot about Roosevelt's CCC program and its 4,500 camps but I have never read about any enlistee who took away from the program as much as Chester Terpin did. He wanted all the program had to offer and I never heard of anyone who got more.

Jerry Kaczov was identified in a couple of pictures at camp. After the CCC he enlisted in the Army and became a decorated WWII soldier.

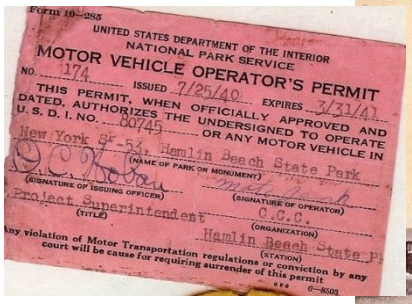


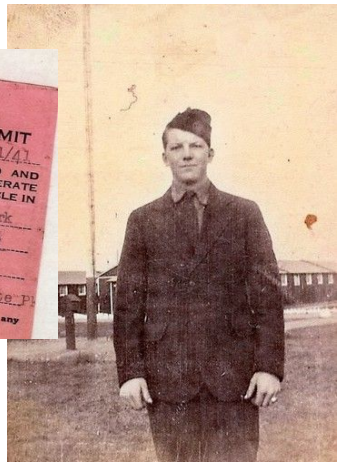
He is pictured here at the rear of the Army Garage, (looking south).



Jerry Kaczov, worked in the kitchen for a while. Graduates from the west were astonished to see hot dogs on the menu. For entertainment, Jerry told them he was rounding up dogs for dinner. Jerry is on the parade grounds with the barracks behind him. The camera is facing north.

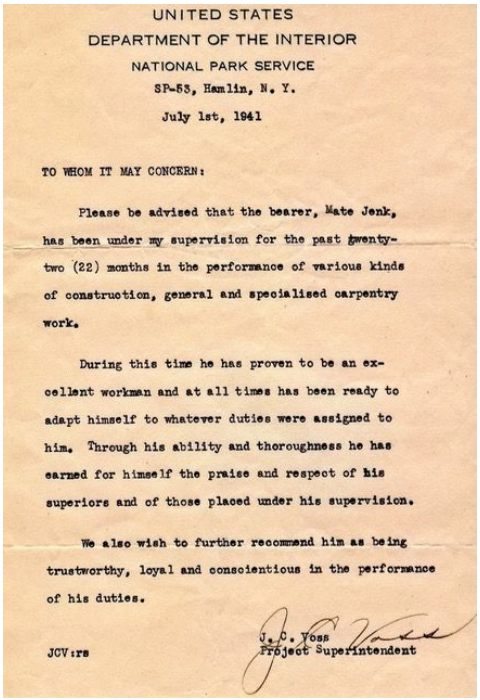
Mate Jenk (Matty) was also at the CCC camp in Hamlin. He was enrolled in the CCC on October 16, 1939, and was honorably discharged on June 19, 1941, to accept employment. He earned his operator's license to drive trucks in Hamlin Beach State Park and he had a lot of pictures of himself working with the CCC trucks. His grandson lives in Garland, NY, and shared an album of pictures and information from his grandfather's time in the CCC at Hamlin. We think he stayed local. He did attend the first Hamlin CCC reunion in 1980.


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATOR'S PERMIT
NO. 174 ISSUED 7/25/40 EXPIRES 7/31/41
THIS PERMIT, WHEN OFFICIALLY APPROVED AND DATED, AUTHORIZES THE UNDERSIGNED TO OPERATE U. S. D. I. NO. 8045 OR ANY MOTOR VEHICLE IN
New York SP-53, Hamlin Beach State Park
(NAME OF PARK OR MONUMENT)
(SIGNATURE OF ISSUING OFFICER)
(SIGNATURE OF OPERATOR)
Project Superintendent
(TITLE)
C.C.C.
(ORGANIZATION)
Hamlin Beach State Pk
(STATION)
Any violation of Motor Transportation regulations or conviction by any court will be cause for requiring surrender of this permit





Mate Jenk standing by the sign at the west entrance to the camp. Notice the farmhouse at 968 Moscow Road in the background.


UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
SP-53, Hamlin, N. Y.
July 1st, 1941

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Please be advised that the bearer, Mate Jenk, has been under my supervision for the past twenty-two (22) months in the performance of various kinds of construction, general and specialized carpentry work.

During this time he has proven to be an excellent workman and at all times has been ready to adapt himself to whatever duties were assigned to him. Through his ability and thoroughness he has earned for himself the praise and respect of his superiors and of those placed under his supervision.

We also wish to further recommend him as being trustworthy, loyal and conscientious in the performance of his duties.

JCV:rs

J. C. Voss
Project Superintendent


CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS
1980 Reunion
CO. 1252 SP-53
HAMLIN BEACH, N. Y.
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1980 1 P. M. to ?
V F W POST - HAMLIN, N. Y.
Buffet Dinner 5:30 No. 50
COMPLIMENTARY

Ed Wagner was in charge of the construction going on at Hamlin Beach State Park. In 2009, he was still alive and living in Florida.



Ed Wagner, Second in Command, feeding a deer[5] outside of the Department of Interior building.



We are assuming that Ed is working for the Department of the Interior. He is standing in the parade ground with the barracks behind him. Camera is facing north.

[5] The deer was raised from a baby after its mother was killed on Moscow Road. Its favorite food was cigarette butts. It eventually wandered away.