Cleveland, Ohio
(Congregationalist)

Excerpts from article which appeared in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, June 29, 1941

Young "Parson Jim" set down his wheelbarrow, wiped the sweat out of his eyes and pointed across the expanse of cinders, slag and refuse. "Over there," he said, indicating the left, "will be the volley ball, basketball and paddle tennis courts. And over there" — pointing to the right — "will be the play space for small children. This is the ball diamond where we're standing."

This is the Schaufller work camp, where students from half a dozen colleges are converting an ugly old dump into a playground for children who never had one before.

The playground-in-the-making is in the industrial "Praha district," one of the great melting pot areas of the East Side of Cleveland. Twenty-one nationalities mix there, with Czechs, Slovaks and Poles predominating. Two churches and two schools are in the district, along with 12 pool rooms and 16 salons. The juvenile delinquency rate is high yet these Praha boys are as normal, intelligent and healthy as boys in other districts.

Parson Jim sat down comfortably on his wheelbarrow load of dirt. "What do I think the work campers are getting out of this?" he asked. "Well, for one thing they are getting the satisfaction of doing a worthwhile job. These young people are here because of a religious impulse. They feel that their religion calls them to be of service where there is need. They want a practical religion.

"This work camp lets them see what the world outside the campus is like. They are discovering things there which they have read about but which have never been brought home to them.

"Manual labor is a real, hard fact. By voluntarily submitting ourselves to the discipline of seven or eight hours of hard work a day we work campers identify ourselves with those people who likewise labor with their hands. Whatever interest these students have in laboring persons will be a real one after this, not merely an academic interest. We know laborers not as part of a problem, but as men and friends.

"Another valuable lesson comes from the discipline under which the campers live. A work camp is a small, democratic community. Its members live cooperatively, sharing work and responsibility. They make the rules by which they abide."

The work camp had its roots in the ferment of the depression. Young people at Christian youth conferences had long felt that Christianity was not practical enough, that somehow or other religion had failed. They were impatient to put ideals into action.

Dr. Raymond C. Clapp, retiring president of Schaufller College, went to William Greenbaum, president of the Acme Foundry Co., which owns the large tract of dump land next to its plant. Greenbaum readily turned over the land for the work camp playground — "the least that we could do for such a splendid project," he said. Tools and equipment were solicited from merchants. The city department saved a great deal of preliminary hand work by leveling the grounds with a bulldozer, grader and
The work campers, all of whom enrolled through the Congregational youth organization, should feel right at home living in Schaufller dormitories. Although the college, which trains young women for religious and social work, has always accepted students from any faith and is supported by many denominations, it has been closely identified with Congregationalists.

Hudson, Ohio (I.S.S.)

This has been a full and exciting week for us, with a trip to Cleveland and a visit by Bob Lane the two outstanding events. The Cleveland trip was an all-day one. We visited the Richman Brothers’ Clothing factory, a non-union factory with working conditions among the best in the country. We were especially amazed at the rock-bottom prices for food served in the cafeteria run by the company. In the afternoon we visited Swift’s Meat Packing Company; we went in suntanned, and came out from the slaughter house green. We saw the Cleveland Public Library, were shown all the city maps and charts of the Regional Planning Association, and finally joined the Schaufller Congregational Work Camp in their college living quarters. After giving us supper the Schaufller group took us to see the playground they are building out of an old dump, and later we all gathered for a joint bull session on the differences between our two work camps and on the value and implications of work camps in general.

To make up for the work-time lost in going to Cleveland we put in overtime on several days, with the result that during the week we have completed the building of a stone incinerator and the reroofing and staining of a cottage. We have finished painting and putting into order a cottage to be used as a dispensary. (As we painted the front door “the Doc” moved in through the back.) We also repaired the dormitory and have nearly finished painting the barn.

The third week at the HIGHLANDER WORK CAMP drew to a glittering close last night, as the campers followed a blazing sun as it drifted below the horizon in a brilliant sunset. From a point overlooking, for miles around, a neatly planned valley hundreds of feet below, the campers fed salads, toast, fried chicken, and enjoyed an enjoyable picnic supper, hiked it back to camp and pulled the covers over a third delightful week at Highlander.

The week opened with an all-day trip to Cherokee National Forest and Ducktown. As our caravan of cars joined by one of a national forester, rolled through the forest, the campers watched the gradual but steady disappearance of all life from what a mile back had been a thin spread of low vegetation, from what a mile farther back had been a sparse covering of trees, from what still farther back had been rank with a growth of massive trees of every type. This was the approach through Cherokee to Ducktown. Occasionally the forester punctuated our journey with explanations of what might otherwise have been ignored or not understood. Here in Ducktown, with nothing but flaming red gullies for thirty miles around, in years past, sulfuric acid fumes from the Ducktown copper mine killed every vestige of vegetation in the entire surrounding locality. Now the fumes that destroyed life are reaping fat profits as the industry’s rich by-product. As we motored through what appeared to be a one saloon ghost town out of a wild west yarn, we passed a shanty with the sign swinging in front of the door: Beauty Shoppee. Beauty BLOOMS here.

We drove back through the forest, topped off the day with a swim in a tree-flanked lake, feasted on a grand picnic supper, and headed for home.

Wednesday we visited Chickamauga Dam of the Tennessee Valley Authority, while Friday we piled into a truck to supplement a past week’s intensive study of Grundy County with an intimate view of the lay of the land, visiting the home of a poverty-ridden farmer and later
This week has brought us many interesting visitors, Sr. Sieberling, of the Sciberling Rubber Co., and his personnel manager presented us with an employer's point of view, discussing especially unions and labor legislation.

The agricultural agent of Summit County very ably explained the function of the AAA to our limited agricultural intelligences, and a journalist told us about the Newspaper Guild. On Saturday evening we did barn dances, with the help of several people from Cleveland.

As a fitting climax to the week, Bob Lane arrived on Sunday morning to stay through Monday evening. We discussed work camps with him, trying to decide for ourselves their importance and their future. And in the evening we had an extremely interesting lecture and discussion on the Jewish religion, led by a Jewish philosopher working in social welfare. New faces even appeared among the campers. One camper had to return to his job, and two new ones arrived. Last but not least, the Yugoslavian University Club held a Sunday picnic on our lawn and the camp ressembled a very happy and crowded metropolitan park.

Hazel Baxt, Reporter

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BURNSVILLE, N.C. (Presbyterian)

On June 27 one of the two Presbyterian Work Camps in the United States opened here at Mine York Community, five miles from Burnsville, for a five-week stay. The campers, nine of them, under the direction of Robert Huir and Isabelle Miller, are living in the church building which dates back approximately 150 years. Eight different states and nine colleges claim the members—the states: California, Minnesota, Kansas, Illinois, Indiana, Alabama, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania; the colleges: Macalester, Mt. Holyoke, Illinois Wesleyan, Kansas University, Maryville, Ursinus, Indiana Univ., Univ. of California, and the School of Foreign Service of Georgetown University.

The minister of Yancey...
Mine Fork Community, Burnsville

County, Paul Merkle, a graduate of Princeton Seminary, and his summer assistant, Tom Evans, also of Princeton, are spending time at the camp and living with the camp family.

The group is working on two projects—the erection of a much-needed church at Mine Fork and leadership and supervision of Daily Vacation Bible Schools in the adjacent parishes.

The rising bell is at 6 in the morning. After breakfast prepared by the campers themselves, devotions are led by a member. When dishes are done and early morning chores are over the members scatter to work on the church or to get to their various Bible schools. Dinner is prepared by the campers and served at 12:30. In the afternoon more work is done on the church and visits are made to the homes in the community. Supper at 6 o'clock when there are usually one or two or three local guests, is a relaxing hour. The group is divided into three committees: religious, social and economic. The evening hours are spent in study of the problems of this area.

Recent guests of the group have been: Cameron Hall, head of the Dept. of Social Education and Action of the Presbyterian Church; Paul Doral, pastor of the Blue Spring Larger Parish in the Cumberland Mountain Presbyterian; William Cline, director of the Alpine Rural Life Center in Tennessee; Mr. and Mrs. John S. Lefevre, Sunday School missionaries in the Burnsville area of the French Broad Presbyterian; Mr. and Mrs. Crouse, who are county agent and nurse.

Evening devotions are held at nine o'clock.

Equipment for the camp, such as cots and kitchen utensils, and a station wagon for field trips, has been lent by the Asheville Farm School at Swannanoa, N. C. The residents of Mine Fork have contributed greatly to our enjoyable stay here and daily gifts are brought to the camp family. We have an abundance of cherries, cabbages, apples, beans, potatoes, dawberries, and blackberries.

Thirty ministers and their wives were guests of the camp recently; they are attending the school for ministers at Farm School and their parishes are in North Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee and Mississippi, Kentucky.

Ruth Verna, Reporter

FELICIA WORK CAMP
(Associated Junior Work Camps, Inc.)

Work on the old farmhouse is progressing favorably. The upstairs rooms are nearly completed with the installation of the insulating board. The cellar of the house has a new set of concrete sills, the walls have been pointed up, and a new front porch of fieldstone has been put in place. Painting of the outside of the house has begun, and an old two-story playhouse (converted years ago for such purposes out of an ice-house, and now unsafe) is being demolished. Brush clearance is progressing at a good rate around the barn.

Three of the girls are helping the regular staff take care of the present group of Felicia campers, boys and girls from 6 to 9 years of age.

Our two recent trips have been to industries in the surrounding area along the Hudson Valley. We have been through the Firth Carpet Factory, the carton and printing plant of the National Biscuit Company, a furniture factory and a dye factory. The contrasts in working conditions, machinery, etc. have stimulated several discussions.

Last Saturday we had a country dance party with the staff of the regular camp and had a wonderful time together.

We had a grand discussion based on Orson Welles radio drama, "His Honor, the Mayor". It deals with the problem of what should be done with citizens who openly sympathize with anti-democratic forces. Though we all agreed on the larger meaning of the concept, democracy, we were unsure of what do, either to stifle the opposition or to let every person talk himself out.

Jeremy Newman, Reporter
MAULDIN, S. C. (I.S.S.)

The chief feature of the past week at the Mauldin Work Camp has been the visit here of the work camp leader, Dick Gothe. His presence, of course, inspired the campers to even harder tasks and to even greater exhibitions of their strength and skill. The new projects—painting several rooms in the teachers' living quarters and hauling rocks for a floor for the new school building—are progressing quite satisfactorily.

One of the most interesting parts of the recent study program was a visit from some of the labor organizers in the nearby textile mills. Most of the campers found it very interesting to hear, among other facts, that only one large and two small mills out of twenty-eight in the city of Greenville, S. C., have any sort of labor organization outside of a possible company union. And this in spite of the presence of CIO organizers in the city for the past several years.

Another extremely interesting discussion was one with the local Baptist minister. The Reverend Mr. Berry is considered a liberal preacher and he does take more interest in social problems than is usual among Southern clergymen. At the time however, he cannot see any truth in a theory of evolution which contradicts the first six chapters of a divinely inspired Bible.

The problem of moving stones in a 1910 (approximately) model truck with home-made wooden floor-boards and no hood over the engine, has been an engrossing one. The first day, the clutch passed on somewhere in the wilderness; in the next two days the rear tires came off at locations a sufficient distance from civilization to make for a pleasant walk home.

The most important field trip recently was a visit to a large farm in the vicinity, where the group was able to learn a good deal about the methods of both the large farmer and the tenant sharecropper.

Now that the work camp is nearing its end, the campers are virtually all coming to a full realization of what can be gotten from a judicious mixture of work, study and play, fastened together by group cooperation.

Abner Gold, Reporter
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BLACK MOUNTAIN, N. C.

A special feature at the Black Mountain College work camp is the practical training to students of architecture. Besides the architectural students from the college, there are a number of graduate students from architectural schools, some of whom are required to have several months practical experience. The work program, providing housing for the college this coming fall, includes the construction of three buildings.

One of the main values for the architectural student lies in the chance to work with actual materials of construction. But perhaps just as important as learning of the materials is the learning of mistakes, and of everyday difficulties—things which look good on paper but which prove to be very impractical in actuality.

The students are given freedom under the guidance of the supervising architect on such jobs as designing the interiors of studies, and they are allowed, as far as it is practicable, to work out their own methods for excavating, flooring, interior carpentry, among other things. Such work gives one a sound appreciation for the old and established way of doing things. It doesn't take much actual work to discover that the old builders had excellent reasons for doing what they did. The contact with actual construction helps the students correlate the designer's and builder's points of view.

Much of the responsibility of the construction lies with the architectural student in charge of each building. These students work on both the drafting plans and the construction. The students have a chance to stay on a job and watch it progress, and also to work on varied jobs.

Maude Dabbs, Reporter