

Shmanners 523: Civilian Conservation Corps

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[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis: And you're listening to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear.

Travis: How are you?

Teresa: I'm doing fine. You know.

Travis: Excellent.

Teresa: Yeah. I mean, what is there to complain about?

Travis: So much.

Teresa: We've got the sunshine...

Travis: There's so much to complain about— Are you kidding me?

Teresa: ... and the summertime.

Travis: It's hot, to start.

Teresa: [laughs] I wasn't asking for a list of complaints.

Travis: Oh, it was rhetorical?

Teresa: Things could be so much worse.

Travis: But things could also be better.

Teresa: I mean, always. But—

Travis: We're at a perfect medium. [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] It could be like it was in the 1930s, which is what we're gonna talk about today with the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Travis: I don't know enough about history to say if it would be better— Is that the Great Depression?

Teresa: Yes, yes. That's the Great Depression.

Travis: And I'm gonna use context clues here to say, not a happy time.

Teresa: No. We talked about it a little bit last week.

Travis: Unless it was like, "It's great! This is great."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "My depression is awesome."

Teresa: Nah.

Travis: No.

Teresa: Nah.

Travis: They should have called it the bad depression.

Teresa: They should have. Well, great as in “great and terrible.”

Travis: Oh. As in big.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: A *big* depression.

Teresa: Last week, we read the scrapbook of Kit Kittredge, who was going on a trip on the rails to visit her brother in the Civilian Conservation Corps. Now, she won a contest.

Travis: And was fake.

Teresa: Y— No, this is all fake, except— [laughs]

Travis: Yeah. If you didn’t listen to that episode...

Teresa: No, that’s not real. [laughs]

Travis: ... then you’re like, “What? I don’t know this person.”

Teresa: It’s an American Girl Doll. [laughs]

Travis: She was an American Girl Doll come to life in a haunted doll kind of way.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And this haunted doll rode the rails!

Teresa: No, she won an essay contest. And she entered the contest for a chance to win a chance to go and see her brother.

Travis: And then she ended up meeting FDR.

Teresa: She did! And we're gonna talk about FDR.

Travis: And they fought.

Teresa: No, they didn't fight.

Travis: They arm wrestled.

Teresa: No.

Travis: And then *she* became president, when she won!

Teresa: She got a autograph. I mean...

Travis: Basically the same thing.

Teresa: So let me refresh you on the Depression, okay? It was a massive economic downturn that began in 1929 with the Great Stock Market Crash.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Yeah, the roads were icy. The stock market was driving home, wasn't paying— It was on its cell phone. Crashed.

Teresa: Such a mood today. Let me explain to you why it crashed in 1929. Because the '20s are known around here as the Roaring Twenties.

Travis: That's true.

Teresa: Everybody is having lots of fun, and lots of prosperity, and—

Travis: Lots of lions.

Teresa: Lions?

Travis: Roaring.

Teresa: Oh. Oh, okay.

Travis: That was the last one. I wasn't gonna do it, 'cause you had already said in kind of a mood.

Teresa: [wheeze-laughs]

Travis: But then you said Roaring Twenties, I was like, "The time of lions!"

Teresa: Oh! Yes.

Travis: And then I was like, "Don't say anything."

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: "Don't— It's dumb."

But then my brain was like, "Well, now you gotta say it, 'cause you're thinking about it so much." And then it was the Roaring Twenties, 'cause there was lions.

Teresa: I did not make the "roaring" thing. Sorry.

Travis: I know. I know.

Teresa: That was *me*! That wasn't even— That was me.

Travis: No, I don't think anyone else did either.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It was just stuck, and I had to say it.

Teresa: And everybody seemed to think that this prosperity was just the

beginning, right? This is the new way of doing things, where it's gonna be great, right?

Travis: But they were living on borrowed— It was basically borrowed money, and borrowed time.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: More people were investing in the stock market than ever, but they weren't doing it with real money, okay? So what would happen is, people would take out loans to do things like— I mean, as little things as much as refurbishing their house or whatever, right? The idea was, "We're always gonna have money, so I'm gonna take out a loan, so that I can do the things I want now. And I'll always have money, so I'll always get to repay it," right? And the banks made this so easy to do.

Travis: And we've learned in life that that always works. That *always* works.

Teresa: Always works. It always works. No, never works. The banks made it really easy to do, and they were giving out money that does not really exist left and right. This was called buying on the margin. So you didn't even need real money to invest in the stock market; you could use the loan that you took to invest. And nobody ever really thought about what happens if the market crashes, and then we don't actually have real money to pay the things we need to pay.

And so people kind of lived in this bubble for a long time, right? And the government did kind of see it coming. They started to raise interest rates to keep people from taking out all of these loans. But because it was right after World War I, everybody else around the world was like, "Oh, America's raising interest rates. We should also probably raise interest rates." And a *lot* of countries were still in recessions from the war. And so that was depressing their economies as well, right?

So it was all kind of like... They were trying to do the right thing, but the sentiment wasn't there. People were still existing on money that isn't real. And so they *thought*, when it started to take a little bit of a turn, that it

would just recover. It had had these little turns before, and by the end of the day, it would be fine.

Travis: Yeah. What could go wrong?

Teresa: But then...

Travis: [gasps]

Teresa: October 24th 1929, the bell rings at the New York Stock Exchange. And the traders are freaking out. They are attempting to unload—

Travis: Is it called Black Monday? Is that what it was called? Black something?

Teresa: Something like that, yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: They are unloading whatever stock they possibly can. That pushes off the responsibility, right, to others. And so this panic becomes infectious, and people are scrambling to make the sales so that other markets – the stock ticker that sends the prices to other parts of the country, right – they can't keep up. Everything is going so fast that from Chicago to California, stock brokers are trading based on prices that are four hours old or more. And there's no way to catch the inaccuracies until it's too late.

Travis: It was a real cascade...

Teresa: Right.

Travis: ... of bad.

Teresa: There was a temporary halt when a couple of wealthy men tried to steady the market by flooding it with actual, real money. But the damage was already done. So Monday is the 28th, and that's when there was a run on the stock exchange.

Travis: This was Black Monday.

Teresa: Yes, this was Black Monday. Over the weekend, banks called on clients to pay their loans in full. And nobody had that money. And even if people did have money in the bank, they wanted that money to stay safe, because the idea that the banks could use their money to settle other people's debts was unsettling to them. So there was runs on banks, too. People were pulling out their money from the bank, just like in *It's A Wonderful Life*, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Everybody's trying to get their money out, because they don't have faith in what the bank is going to do with the money and give it to other people.

Travis: But instead, everybody steals George's honeymoon money!

Teresa: Oh, no!

Travis: They're real turds about it. Especially that one guy, who's like, "I have 43 dollars in there," or whatever he says.

Teresa: Yep. "And I want 43 dollars!"

Travis: He's a turd.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay.

Travis: I mean, sure, eventually they all give him money. But it's like, did you guys pay him back for *that* money he gave you? Send him on his honeymoon? Come on!

Teresa: Come on, guys.

Travis: He gave you the money once. He has kids.

Teresa: Give George Bailey a break.

Travis: He can't go on his honeymoon now that he has kids! This is messed up.

Teresa: Everybody is...

Travis: It's a horror movie.

Teresa: ... scrambling to try and cover for this money that doesn't exist anywhere. The Dow loses more than 12 percent of its value, so no one is *buying*, but everyone is selling, right?

Travis: So it's just sitting there.

Teresa: So people are getting into fistfights and stuff on the floor. And everything just keeps hemorrhaging money.

Travis: And that's gonna do it for this week.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Thank you, everybody. No.

Teresa: Uh—

Travis: The end. And it never got better.

Teresa: Some of the people who were trying to take on these loans were farmers, who were trying to mechanize their farming, right? Because still, at this point, a lot of people were making money as *small* farmers, right? Not big, industrial stuff. So they didn't have huge equipment. They were doing a lot of it by hand, but if you wanted to keep up and be competitive, you needed to buy this equipment. So you took out a loan with your land and farm as collateral, right? And then, when you couldn't pay back your loan, you lose your farm, you lose the way of making any money.

Travis: Hey, can I just throw this out, 'cause this is also stuck in my head?

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: Robocrop. It's like Robocop, but it's like a farmer who gets injured and then turned into partly a robot. Robocrop.

Teresa: But why is the *farmer* the robot, but it's Robocrop? That sounds more like it's the—

Travis: You think robot corn would be better?

Teresa: The machine that you eat? 'Cause it's a—

Travis: Robocrop. Well, 'cause the movie's called *Robocop*.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But this would be Robocrop. Because he's a farmer.

Teresa: We'll keep workshopping it.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: We'll keep workshopping it. Okay.

Travis: It's gonna be a lot lower stakes than *Robocop*.

Teresa: Okay. Yes, yes. Obviously.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But this also influences the amount of land that is not being tended to properly. And so the Dust Bowl happens.

Travis: Oh, my gosh.

Teresa: In 1932, everyone was like—

Travis: I don't know why I just reacted to that like this is the first time hearing about it.

Teresa: [laughs] Yeah, first time hearing about the Dust Bowl.

Travis: What? Aw, man!

Teresa: By 1932, America was in the pit, right? They needed some kind of release valve, but nobody really knew what to do until FDR!

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Before FDR—

Travis: Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Teresa: That's right. He was elected after Herbert Hoover left office, because nobody had any confidence in him anymore. If you had an empty pocket, and you pulled out your flag, it was a Hoover flag, right?

Travis: And you got to Hooverville, where it was unhoused people living in shantytowns and stuff like that.

Teresa: Right. If you couldn't access food, and you had to hunt your own groundhogs to eat, it was a Hoover hog.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Everything—

Travis: And people would say, "This sucks, like a Hoover."

Teresa: "Like a Hoover."

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: [laughs] I don't know if that's true. But anything that people could, to demonstrate their lack of confidence in Hoover, they did. And it was all over the papers. It was common knowledge that everybody felt it was really his problem. FDR comes in, and he is like, "Let's try and do something different. Let's—"

Travis: A New Deal, if you will.

Teresa: "Let's have a New Deal." He had done something similar in New York when he was governor. And he had called it the Temporary Emergency Relief Administration, which he started early in 1932. And the idea was, quote, "To use men from the list of the unemployed to improve our existing reforestation areas."

So he's like, "The government has a duty to take care of its people, but we're not just gonna give people handouts," right? "People want to work. We're gonna give them jobs."

Travis: And not just that: there are jobs that need *done*, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So that's the pairing of it.

Teresa: But also jobs that big corporations aren't making money doing, right? So the idea wasn't that the government's gonna employ all these people, and steal them from the big cats, right? And the big cats will get angry about it.

Travis: But not real big cats.

Teresa: No, the—

Travis: You mean fat cats?

Teresa: The fat cats. Sorry.

Travis: Not big cats.

Teresa: [laughs] I mean, big, but also fat?

Travis: That's where the lions come in!

Teresa: [bursts out laughing]

Travis: I knew it!

Teresa: We've brought it back. We brought it back. So he made it specifically for conservation and public facilities work, so that it was more attractive to everyone to be like, "Well, these are just menial jobs, and it's not gonna affect our *industry*."

Travis: It's labor.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: It's labor and beautification, you know? It's like you said, conservation, right?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: So it's not *building* buildings. Construction. That's the word I was looking for.

Teresa: This is what FDR said about the program, to try and get it to the vote: "I propose to create the CCC to be used in complex work, not interesting with normal employment or confining itself to forestry. The preservation of soil erosion, flood control, and similar projects. I call your attention to the fact that this type of work is definite, of practical value, and not only the prevention of great present financial loss, but also a means of

creating future national wealth.” So he really kind of sold this hippy agenda, right? He was like, “Let’s make things better in the world.”

Travis: But also, I like that he pointed out, “It’s definite,” right? This isn’t indefinite work. This isn’t like, “Yeah, you’re gonna keep— This job will go on forever.” It’s like, no, this is a specific project that will reach completion, and then there will be other things you’ll need to do. You’ll need to find something else to do.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So this isn’t like, “Yeah, we’re just giving people indefinite money forever.” It’s like, no, this is going to be a good step up for things.

Teresa: Exactly. It was a social program that wasn’t intimidating, and it didn’t look like a bailout. And so this was supervised jointly by the Departments of Labor, who did the recruiting; the Department of War, that provided military leaders to run the places where the camps would be, where people would be working; Agriculture and Interior. They organized and supervised the work projects.

So on April 5th, 1933, the president signed an executive order that established the Civilian Conservation Corps as a government organization. And now, they needed people.

Travis: And now, it’s time for a word from another Max Fun show!

[theme music plays]

[ad plays]

Brea: Hi, my name is Brea Grant, and I host *Reading Glasses* and *Reading Smut*. And I’m here with Max Fun Member of the Month Nick Ray.

Nick: Thank you so much.

Brea: What episode would you recommend to a new listener, who’s just jumping in for the first time.

Nick: Oh, definitely the one where it’s like, “Let’s talk about *Reading Glasses*.” [laughs]

Brea: Oh. [laughs]

Nick: ‘Cause as someone who started listening, what, seven years in? Even I was like, “Oh, that’s why we say that.”

Brea: [laughs] Oh, my God, Mallory's gonna love that you said that. 'Cause she really was like, "We gotta tell people more about ourselves."

I'm like, "We just talk about ourselves every week!"

What would you say to other people who are considering supporting Maximum Fun shows?

Nick: I would say, if you want to keep listening to content that you enjoy, and you want to support the creators, oh, no. I just won't get a Starbucks once a week, and I can give you guys ten bucks a month? Sounds good to me!

Brea: I love that. And listen to Nick. Nick's a librarian; he knows what he's talking about, so...

Nick: [laughs]

Speaker: Support the shows you love, including this one. Check the show notes for a link, or go to MaximumFun.org/join.

[ad changes]

Brenda: Hi, there. Sorry to interrupt your podcast listening time. I know you're doing the dishes right now. It's okay, I don't— Don't worry about it. You might not know me, but I'm Brenda, and I'm here to tell you about the podcast I host with my good friend Austin. It's called *Secret Histories of Nerd Mysteries*, and we cover all kinds of pop culture topics. Like, did you know that there was a real-life replica of the *Simpsons* house in Las Vegas, Nevada? Or that Flint, Michigan was once home to an indoor amusement park themed around the automobile?

If those things sound interesting, you should definitely check us out every Tuesday on Maximum Fun, or wherever you get podcasts. Goodbye. You can get back to your dishes now, it's fine.

[ad break ends]

Travis: Okay, we're back. But they couldn't find anyone.

Teresa: No, that's not true.

Travis: And the whole thing fell apart! And that's the end of the episode.

Teresa: That's not true. I'll tell you— Let me give you some of the stats, okay?

Travis: Give me the stats.

Teresa: The rules were, single men between the ages of 18 and 25, whose families were already, quote, "On relief," meaning that it was for the poorest of the poor, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And then, when you were admitted, you were given issued clothes – surplus from World War I, right – training—

Travis: A free tank.

Teresa: Nope.

Travis: No.

Teresa: Nope, no tanks. Training, and food with room and board, right? And you're guaranteed a payment of at least a dollar a day. Here's the thing, though. Number one, a dollar a day had the buying power of 25 dollars today.

Travis: So not huge.

Teresa: Not *huge*, but it added up over time, and you didn't expenses! Right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Your food was being paid for, you were sleeping in usually a tent or a barracks for free, so you didn't have rent. You didn't need to buy your clothes or shoes. The government was taking care of all of your expenses, so it was almost pure profit. So you could save up to do things, *and* you had to send most of it home. It was taken out already, and it had to go home.

Travis: It also— It's almost like, when these people were at home, 18 to 25

and their family— So if they were living at home with their families, right, them at home represents *negative* money to the family. Right? A mouth to feed, someone to take care of, space that they were taking up. So it wasn't just a zero money, right? They were *costing* money at home. And then you send them away, and it's not costing them anything to have room and board, not costing them anything to buy clothes, not costing them anything to eat. *And* they're sending money home.

Teresa: Exactly. For an example, you could buy a dozen eggs for seven cents, and a new pair of shoes for \$1.50, and five gallons of gas for one dollar, right? So this money was so important to be sent back home to their families. Because you could keep some of it and save it up, because you didn't have to spend it on anything I guess, unless you had some kind of time within doing your job, to I don't know, go bowling or whatever. Who knows whatever you would spend it on. But you were there, that's where you lived. From 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, you worked every day.

Travis: I love that your thoughts went to bowling. It was probably cigarettes.

Teresa: Cigarettes and booze.

Travis: They were probably buying cigarettes.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It was the 1930s. Everybody was smoking.

Teresa: Okay. Over the course of the nine years of the program, they employed three million people, operated 2,500 camps across the country, taking about 500,000 people at a time. All of these whippersnappers needed people to keep them in line, and one of the people who did this was General Douglas MacArthur. That one, that guy.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Was in charge of a lot of these camps. And the military also provided all the equipment, the shovels, and whatever else they needed.

And so it was a tight ship. Reveille, which is the wake-up call for anybody, is at 6:00 AM. Roll call, calisthenics, then breakfast by 8:00. Then you had to get on the line, and start doing whatever it is you were gonna do for that day. Some examples are creating trails, planting trees, farm work, digging dams, irrigation canals, laying drain ditches, which—

Travis: Covering up alien presence on Earth.

Teresa: [chuckles] Which they did for *84 million* acres of farmland.

Travis: Not the alien part.

Teresa: No, the ditches.

Travis: Yeah, the ditches. They would dig through the ditches. They would burn through the witches.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Slam in the back of the Dragula. All of these things, thanks to FDR.

Teresa: There was a group doing soil conservation, which meant that they were moving heavy rocks and stuff, and replacing these not barren, but not organized lands. They were planting trees!

Travis: And trees are good, right?

Teresa: Trees *are* good.

Travis: Okay. Just checking. Didn't know where we were at in 2026 on trees, vis-à-vis trees-à-trees.

Teresa: They planted upwards of three billion trees over nine years.

Travis: Billion? *Billion*, you say?

Teresa: Billion.

Travis: Bi— Buh?

Teresa: Billion, with a *B*.

Travis: Billion trees. That's a lot of trees.

Teresa: They built fire watch-out towers. They fought forest fires. And—

Travis: With their bare hands!

Teresa: [laughs] With their shovels.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: None of this was mechanized! It was all hand labor.

Travis: Not like Robocrop.

Teresa: That's right. Oh, that's what we're getting to, right?

Travis: Robocrop?

Teresa: Yeah. It's not a person, it's a *machine* that replaces the people.

Travis: Well, he's part— Now, I could see here, you don't understand it. He's *part* machine, part farmer, all crop. No, see, that doesn't work.

Teresa: No, that's not it. No, 'cause you eat crops. Okay, we'll keep working it. They also launched the American ski industry!

Travis: What?

Teresa: Yeah! So downhill skiing didn't really catch on in America until the '30s, and the reason is the Civilian Conservation Corps built the first ski runs in Vermont.

Travis: Okay!

Teresa: Pretty awesome, right?

Travis: Yeah, I could see how that would help. [laughs]

Teresa: Totally.

Travis: Well, yeah. There wasn't a lot of skiing before, because there wasn't a place to do it.

Teresa: There wasn't a place to do it.

Travis: And then they made it, and they were like, "We should start doing it here."

Teresa: We get to 1942, and the outbreak of *World War II changes the nation's priorities. So now, instead of people planting trees and digging ditches here in the US, they were sent overseas to fight.

Travis: And let's be honest, it was really good for the American economy, right? I'm not an expert on this, so I'm not saying— And trust me, I know exactly what I'm talking about. But you have to imagine, because the war was happening overseas, there was a lot of artillery and weaponry and stuff being manufactured *here*, and then sent there, right?

But there wasn't a lot of devastation and destruction happening here. So it wasn't like our business are being bombed, our homes are being bombed, we gotta rebuild all this, right? So suddenly, there is this boom in stuff needing to be made, and shipped, and sent, and all of this stuff, without the downside of being at war.

Teresa: Right. So over those nine years, if you've ever been into a hurricane shelter, or a trail, or lodge, or a pavilion, or even some of the swimming holes in the American state and national parks, they were all built by these young men. Places like Big Ben National Park and Great Smoky Mountains National Park are here today for us because of them.

Travis: I love that place!

Teresa: Countless other national parks and other things were preserved, and cleaned up, and made—

Travis: Curated.

Teresa: Curated, exactly, by the Civilian Conservation Corps. They created a whopping 711 state parks, and spent a collective 6.5 million hours fighting forest fires.

Travis: That's a lot.

Teresa: It's a lot! Like I said, three billion trees, so much so that they were nicknamed Roosevelt's Tree Army.

Travis: Well, that and the ents. His ents that he used to fight in World War II.

Teresa: Oh, those were the tree people. Yes.

Travis: Got it.

Teresa: Got it. [chuckles]

Travis: Don't act like you don't know more about *Lord of the Rings* than I do.

Teresa: I don't know if I know more. I just couldn't place it for a second.

Travis: Okay. I would say no—

Teresa: I don't know more, I don't think.

Travis: We know equally.

Teresa: Sure, sure.

Travis: For two people who have never read the books.

Teresa: [laughs] That's not true! I've read the books.

Travis: See, this is what I'm saying! I haven't!

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: So you *do* know more about it!

Teresa: I guess so. [laughs]

Travis: You *guess* so.

Teresa: It's not an encyclopedia knowledge that I have.

Travis: No, but you've read the books!

Teresa: I've read—

Travis: So inherently...

Teresa: I've read the books.

Travis: All I know is from movies and listening to Brennan Lee Mulligan exist.

Teresa: [laughs] He knows more. He definitely knows more.

Travis: He knows more about a lot of things than a lot of people.

Teresa: I've mentioned all of the great stuff that they did, but I think that one of the reasons why it works so well is again, they had to send home much of the money.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And so you are sending this money home to these small towns, which is pumping into their economies, keeping their stores open, keeping people fed, keeping things like that going. So it wasn't just these people saving and hoarding the money that the government was giving them.

Travis: Or spending it, you know, I don't want to say frivolously, 'cause I don't want to assume. But if that's the idea of, there was no "Hard day work, I need to let off steam or unwind" use of the money.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: It also wasn't company scrip, you know?

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: It wasn't like, "Well, we're providing for 'em." It was like— Yeah.

Teresa: It was spendable everywhere. So when you sent it home, it reinvigorated small town America. And I think that that probably helped, before we had the World War II war machine that you were talking about. Right? It wasn't that people couldn't find work. It was that there wasn't work to be had, until you started sending stuff overseas for the war.

There is a museum in North Dakota of the Civilian Conservation Corps. They interviewed a handful of alums in 2015, and every single one of them had a interesting and fond memory to share. They talked about building the roadways and getting to drive a small bulldozer that everybody wanted to...

Travis: Oh, yeah, man! Are you kidding?

Teresa: Was like, fighting over and wanted to drive.

Travis: I'd love that! Get to drive a bulldozer.

Teresa: Yeah, pretty cool! Others recalled when the weather would get

poor, and they would gather around their wood stoves in their tents to play poker, and there was a real sense of camaraderie. And saying, quote, "We were cold, but we never got sick." Because it was in the interest in the government to keep people healthy, so that they could keep doing the work. So everyone was fed a lot of food, and mandatory rest, and kept clean, and all that kind of stuff, right?

And everything that undercurrents these stories is the amount of pride that these men had in this undertaking, right? They made deep bonds with their friends, and they felt like they were *accomplishing* things. Which was so important for this time, when things felt so bleak, things felt like even the soil has given up on America, right? But we were able to get everything back together.

Former CCC boy Owen Beaman looks back and said, "I look at it now, and I think that it was probably the best thing that ever happened to us young people that didn't have a job. It was a good deal. I think Franklin Roosevelt knew what he was doing. It was a tough life in the '30s, and if you could find any CCC, he's proud to have been of it."

Travis: I think that's awesome. And I think you're awesome. And I think a lot of people are awesome; I'm gonna name 'em now.

Teresa: Hey!

Travis: Like Alexx. Thank you, Alexx.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Our researcher, without whom we could not do the show. Thank you to Rachel and Gino, our editors, without whom we could not do the show. And thank you to you for listening. You're the robot to our farmer, making us together Robocrop.

Teresa: Hey!

Travis: What else, Teresa?

Teresa: We always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Also, thank

you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group. If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group today... [simultaneously] Shmanners Fanners.

Travis: [simultaneously] Shmanners Fanners.

Teresa: As always, we are taking your topic submissions, and your questions, and your idioms. Send it all to us, shmannerscast@gmail.com, and say hi to Alexx, 'cause she reads every single email.

Travis: And that's gonna do it for us, so join us again next week!

Teresa: No RSVP required!

Travis: You've been listening to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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