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drought on the farm economy.

"The possibility that, despite the good intentions of a gentler kinder nation and so forth, President Bush might be playing Hoover to Reagan's Coolidge is a disturbing one," McElvaine said.

In the face of the country's worst economic depression, however, FDR's programs meant millions of otherwise unemployed people had productive public work. New Deal jobs meant parks and schools could be built and those workers would not be put on relief, or "the dole," as welfare was commonly called.

Records, which are incomplete, indicate there were about 1,300 workers employed in the county through WPA in 1935, including 175 working on Urbana streets and 169 on sewers. A 1935 survey showed the average age of street and park workers in the WPA was just under 40 — ranging from 18 to 72.

THE PAY WAS \$48 per month.

About 1,100 men were employed in Champaign County in 1936; the county received roughly \$1.3 million for 40 projects that year alone, when there were about 1,500 people unemployed in the county. Another 650 men worked on 25 projects in 1937.

In addition to some schools and other buildings, there were road and street improvements, sanitary sewers and sewage disposal systems, storm drainage systems, 15 acres of parks in Champaign-Urbana and various other projects throughout the county.

Other examples include a \$105,000 wing of Burnham Hospital built in 1937, the pavilion at Hessel Park in Champaign, and improvements to the Fisher water works, Fisher High School, Longview High School, county hospital and county courthouse.

Jim Barrett, associate history professor at the University of Illinois, said two buildings on campus are striking examples of the New Deal — the north portion of the Illini Union facing Green Street and Gregory Hall on Wright Street.

"Both the Union, and Gregory Hall, for a lot of students, symbolize the campus, because they spend so much time there," Bar-

rett said. "They were both constructed with WPA money and unemployed workers."

GREGORY HALL WAS built in 1940; Eleanor Roosevelt attended the first anniversary of the the Illini Union building in 1942.

The county received a WPA \$10,000 grant in late 1936 to hire 120 unemployed women to go into the homes of needy families to care for invalids and elderly. The average pay was about \$47 per month.

New Deal programs "made all the difference," according to Mark Leff, assistant professor of history at the UI. "Those programs made it possible to live more decently than they otherwise would be able to do."

"The legacy is significant," Leff said. "Everywhere you look, there is something to show how they helped the community."

Likewise, the proposed legislation would establish federal jobs in hospitals, nursing homes, day care centers, parks and recreation and other programs.

FEDERAL BENEFITS, INCLUDING college loans, would be tied to national service under the Citizens Corp legislation. Volunteers to the Peace Corps or VISTA programs from the John F. Kennedy era also would receive such benefits.

Simon has sponsored legislation under the Guaranteed Job Opportunity Act that is modeled after the WPA.

He also will co-sponsor legislation under the American Conservation and Youth Service Corps Act, which is modeled after the old CCC, the most popular of FDR's programs.

Speaking of the proposed program, Simon said there are 150,000 people age 16 to 24 in Illinois who are unemployed; nationwide, there were an average of 2.5 million unemployed in that age group.

"This is a plan to turn a national liability, our unemployed youth, into a national asset," Simon said. "Young people needing work would be offered that work — serving in projects that in turn will help conserve other assets, our public lands, and in community service work that will enrich our community life."

Simon said the idleness of young people is an even greater problem now than when Roosevelt launched the CCC.

FROM 1933 TO 1942, there were more than 100 CCC camps in Illinois, with an average of about 54 operating at any one time.

Kickapoo State Park, before the New Deal, was almost inaccessible to visitors. CCC workers planted trees, created roads and trails and built camping, picnic and recreation areas. They developed 1,620 acres of prime recreational area on former mining ground west of Danville.

Until the start of World War II, when many CCC boys enlisted, there were more than 2.5 million civilian corpsmen working in conservation, forestry, park development and recreation construction.

Organized along military lines, the young men were clothed and sheltered by the Army and supervised by military officers after working hours.

Wages were \$30 a month — a dollar a day — with \$20 to \$25 being sent to each man's family.

Andy Kmetz of 1715 West Haven Drive, C, is proud to have been in the CCC.

KMETZ, A RETIRED Air Force colonel and former personal director at the university, said the CCC workers were young men, mostly from big cities or farms, who had no prospects for work.

"They were young people ready to come out on the labor market, but nothing was there," Kmetz said. "A period of destitution set in. The common, hardworking, average people, they were the ones who got it first. People still had their values of home and family, but there was no work to support them and the desperation was there."

At a time when federal parks had badly deteriorated through years of neglect and when the Midwest farmland had been turned into a "Dustbowl" because of erosion, the CCC construction crews also provided valuable public service, Kmetz said.

"There was tremendous pride among the CCC boys," Kmetz said. "They felt like 'I'm doing something useful. I'm helping my family, sending money home.'"