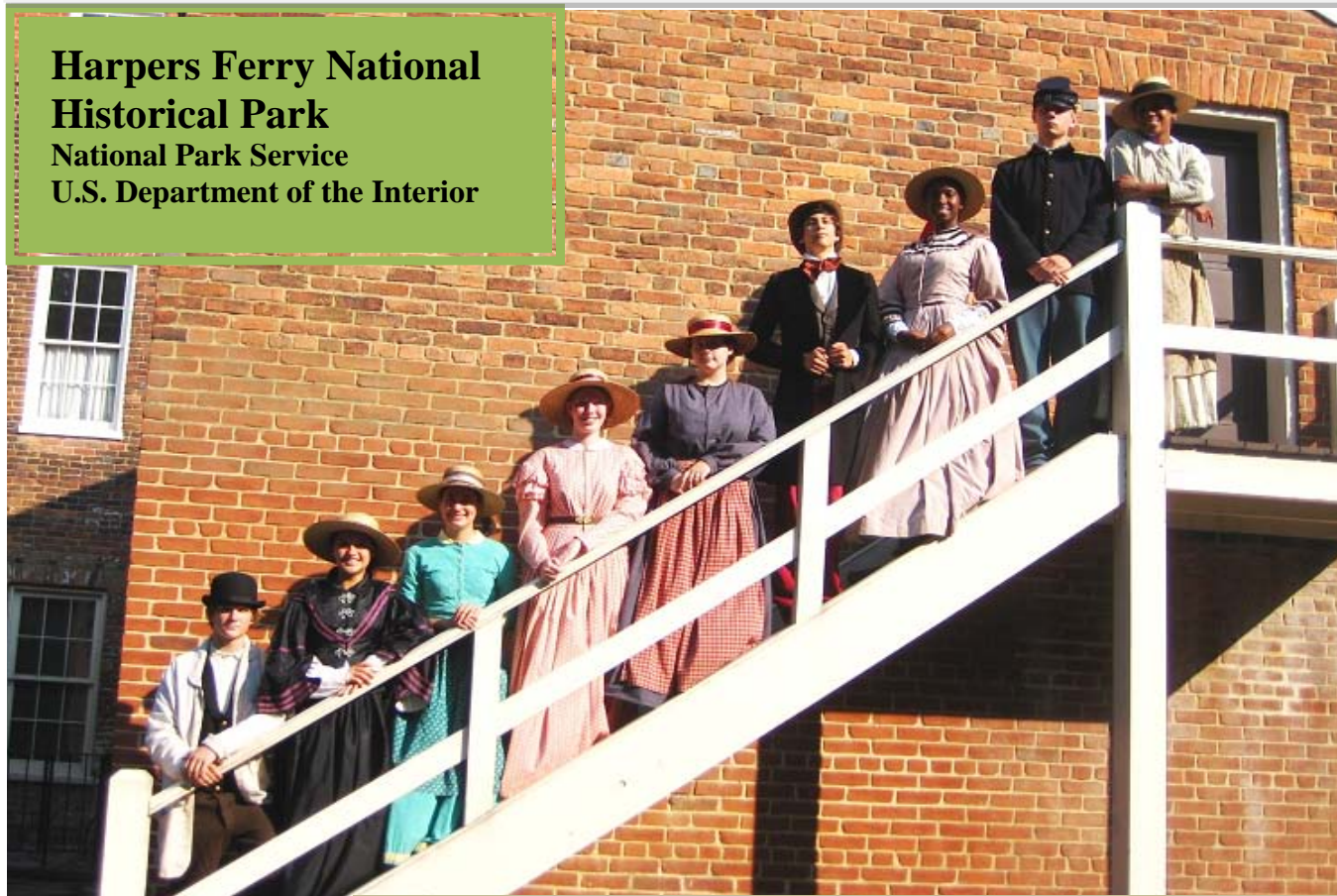


Youth Conservation Corps August 2010

By Samantha Zurbuch

**Harpers Ferry National
Historical Park
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**



Living History YCC: (L to R) Kyle Parker, Jessica Trevino, Rachael Diniega, Elizabeth Conant, Jennifer Korcsmaros, Giovanni "Jack" Fleri, Lauren Baylor, Christopher Miller, & Mika Burdette



This summer Harpers Ferry National Historical Park chose 20 students, ranging in age from 15 to 18, from Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia to work in its eight week Youth Conservation Corps Program (YCC). Schools represented include Clarke County High School, Fairmont State University, Hedgesville High School, Jefferson High School, Martinsburg High School, Musselman High School, Potomac Falls High School, Washington High School, Woodgrove High School, and the University of Virginia.



Visitor Services YCC's: (L to R) Sade Twyman & Brian O'Leary

This year's YCC group includes two work leaders who are back for a second summer of work with the program. Giovanni "Jack" Fleri, a senior at Jefferson High School, joined the Living History Division again, with his experience from summer 2008. When asked if he sees his work with YCC related to any career goals he said "I want to be a park ranger in my future." Sharing knowledge with the visitors is his favorite part of the YCC program. He has learned that visitors are "like a sponge, and soak up the information you give them."

Also a work leader this summer, John Rickards returned to the Education Division. Rickards' least favorite part of his job is the severe heat. "Good money and history" are the main reasons he wanted to work with the program. While he doesn't see his job as relating to future career goal or plans, Rickards

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The history of Harpers Ferry has few parallels in the American drama. It is more than one event, one date, or one individual. It is multi-layered, involving a diverse number of people and events, decisions and actions that influenced the course of our nation's history. Visit Harpers Ferry and step into history.

**Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
P.O. Box 65
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia 25425**

**Visitor Center
304-535-6029**

**Harpers Ferry Historical Association
Bookshop
304-525-6881**

**Harpers Ferry NHP Home Page
www.nps.gov/hafe/**

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Interested in Volunteering at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park? Please contact Jessica Liptak at (304) 535-5017, or at Jessica_Liptak@nps.gov



Education YCC's: (L to R) Jessica Glennie, Ryan Callahan, John Rickards, & Rebecca Kelly (not pictured: Melissa Canfield)

said, "I have learned many things about John Brown." Meeting new people is his favorite part of his job with YCC. Rickards will begin his senior year at Washington High School this fall.

Rebecca "Becky" Kelly, who will start 10th grade this fall at Jefferson High School, also works with the Education Division. Her work consists of working with kids, teaching them about Harpers Ferry. She said, "I applied to work with YCC because it's a good opportunity and I wanted a structured summer." She commented that she likes the Jr. NYLC days the best. Hedgesville High School student Ryan Callahan wanted to work with YCC for extra cash, but he said, "I like many more things than just my paycheck." He also said he has learned a lot on John Brown.

The Maintenance Division YCC work group has done a wide variety of work this summer, including trimming trees, digging up foundations, working on the grounds and trails, and much other outside work. Daniel "DJ" Park said he has learned how to change a saw blade and how to identify many different trees and bushes. His favorite part of the experience has been meeting all of the workers and helping. Brothers Andrew Cook and James Cook are also working with the Maintenance Division. Andrew said, "I wanted to work with YCC to make bank." James Cook also said he wanted to work with the YCC to make money, and said that one thing he has learned while working is not to forget his lunch. James Rice is the fourth YCC working with the Maintenance crew this summer. He was unavailable for comment.

Working with Visitor Services this summer are YCC's Brian O'Leary and Sade Twyman. Twyman said she applied for YCC to learn about history of Harpers Ferry and to gain experience working for the National Park Service. In relation to her future career goals, she said, "I would like to go into law enforcement and be a police woman." O'Leary's favorite part of his job is meeting visitors from all over the world. His least favorite part

is cleaning waysides. In his time at Harpers Ferry NHP he has learned how to greet visitors, sell books, and gives directions, answer phones and questions. He wanted to get the experience of working in a National Park and said he has learned about the history of the Civil War and Harpers Ferry.



Maintenance YCC workers move a load of rocks for drainage on a slope near the Cavalier Heights bus barn: Above left (L to R) Andrew Cook, James Rice, James Cook, & Daniel "DJ" Park, then (Right) the group breaks for a short breather.



Living History YCC members staff an exhibit at the Dry Goods Store (L to R) Kyle Parker, Mika Burdette, Elizabeth Conant, & Jennifer Korcsmaros

Living History's YCC group is the largest of all divisions this summer with nine student workers. Mika Burdette, who will be attending Fairmont State University this fall, works with living history, interpreting how it would be to live in the 1800's and staffing exhibits. Mika said, "While the 1800's was a very different time from today, society still shares a lot in common with the time period." Burdette said she applied to the program to learn about U.S. History and improve her public speaking skills. She said it has been a very enriching, enjoyable, and fun experience for her. Jefferson High School student Jessica Trevino describes her typical day as watering the garden of heirloom plants, dressing in period clothing, and going to her assigned place. While working at the park she said she has learned how to bake pies, Harpers Ferry history, sewing skills, and has improved her public speaking.

Working with great people and getting to meet a wide array of visitors have been highlights of the Living History YCC experience for Christopher Miller. He has learned about military drills and how to load a period rifle. He sees a career in the social sciences or history ahead of him, and values his YCC experience as being related to his future goals. Washington High School student Jennifer Korcsmaros enjoys bringing the past to life during her work with the YCC. While speaking publicly and putting herself back in time have been challenges for her, Korcsmaros said she likes her job and the dresses she gets to wear. She commented, "I never in the world thought that this would be so fun."

Rachael Diniega, who will attend the University of Virginia this fall as a freshman said that her favorite part of her YCC experience has been learning the personal stories of people who lived here in the 1860's and how they lived. Other highlights for her include cooking and eating 1800's recipes, firing an 1841 Mississippi Rifle, and trying to do laundry on a washboard. One challenge she said she has experienced is keeping the visitor interested and finding the balance between giving too much information and too little. She summed it up by saying, "This has been one of the most interesting, enriching, and coolest summers I've ever had."

Making food for the Union soldiers during artillery week was YCC member Lauren Baylor's favorite experience. She said she has learned important communication skills that she will take with her when she leaves. While retaining information about each exhibit was a challenge at first, she said that now it seems like the town is a second home. Elizabeth "Beth" Conant wants to be a history teacher, and sees her YCC job as great preparation, especially in helping her speaking skills. At first it was difficult for her to acclimate herself to the layers of the dress, but is now used to it. She enjoys the food element of the experience the most, both the cooking and eating. Kyle Parker was drawn to apply for the YCC due to his interest in history and thought that Harpers Ferry would be a great place to work. He feels he has developed people skills from his YCC work, and most enjoys educating people about history.

Through their interest and dedication this year's YCC members have learned and accomplished great things. The park hopes that it will continue to attract bright young talent for many years to come, and thanks these students for all they have done and continue to do to preserve and conserve our natural and historical resources.



Left (L to R) Visitor Services YCC members Sade Twyman & Brian O'Leary answer a visitor's questions at Cavalier Heights Visitor Center. Above (L to R) Education YCC: Rebecca Kelly, Ryan Callahan, Jessica Glennie, & John Rickards.