



- **Title:** Designing Civilian Conservation Corps Style Tinwork and Woodcarving
- **Developers:**
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- **Lesson Grade Level:** 4-8, probably adjustable up or down
- **Length of Lesson:**

□ **Overview of this Collection-Based Lesson Plan**

- **Park name:** Bandelier National Monument
- **Theme:**
 - The Civilian Conservation Corps [CCC] in Bandelier National Monument made tin and wood objects in particular styles due to their historical and cultural context and intended uses.
- **Essential question.**
 - Why did the Civilian Conservation Corps [CCC] program at Bandelier produce the particular kinds and styles of tin or wooden objects that they did?
- **Relevance**
 - This lesson demonstrates how objects can serve as primary sources for learning about the Bandelier CCC program, the enrollees, and cultural aspects of the time. By examining and possibly drawing several wood and tin objects produced by the CCC, students will also have the opportunity to experiment with traditional New Mexico design motifs.
- **Museum collections used in this lesson plan:** CCC tinware and woodwork in the Bandelier NM collections.

□ **National Educational Standards**

National Standards for Art (5-8)

Visual Art

Content Standard 4: Students describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts.

Social Studies - Culture

Middle Grades

c. Explain and give examples of how language, literature, the arts, architecture, other artifacts, traditions, beliefs, values, and behaviors contribute to the development and transmission of culture.

New Mexico Educational Standards

New Mexico Standards for Art

Content Standard 3: Grade 5-8

A. Explore the characteristics of works in two or more arts disciplines that share similar subject matter, historical periods, or cultural contexts.

Content Standard 5: Grade 5-8

B.1. Demonstrate how history, art and culture can influence each other in making and studying works of art.

Content Standard 6: Show increased awareness of diverse peoples and cultures through visual and performing arts.

Visual arts

Grade K-4

A. Identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, time, and places.

□ Student Learning Objectives

After completing the activity, students will be able to:

- Identify uses of selected tin and wooden CCC objects
- Recognize traditional New Mexico design motifs on those objects
- Recognize the connection between the objects and their cultural background
- Create and design their own similar objects decorated with those motifs

□ Background and Historical Context

In 1933, in the depths of the Great Depression which followed the stock market crash of 1929, President Franklin D. Roosevelt approved the establishment of a work program called the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). In this program, men between the ages of 18-24 were hired to do work related to public facilities. A CCC camp was approved for Bandelier National Monument, and the enrollees arrived in November of 1933. Over the next eight years the crews built the park road, the distinctive Pueblo Revival buildings for the Lodge and the Park Service museum and offices, furniture and light fixtures for those buildings, and worked on trails, landscaping, and archeological preservation.

The use of pierced tin to make decorative and usable objects such as lamps and mirror frames has long been a traditional craft in northern New Mexico. It really flowered with the arrival of the American military in the mid-1850s, since they brought large amounts of food and other materials stored in tin cans. When the cans were empty, the metal became available to local craftspeople. They came up with original and sometimes elaborate designs for the items themselves, and then decorated them by piercing or stamping designs into the surfaces. The designs often resembled ones used in traditional wood carving, also a long-time craft in the area.

Besides completing the needed projects, and giving the enrollees a much-needed income, the purpose of the CCC program was to provide jobs which would teach them skills they could later use in the regular job market. Most of the Bandelier enrollees were of Spanish background, from the northern New Mexico area. Thus, teaching the CCC men tinwork or wood carving was a benefit in several ways, as beautiful objects were produced and the men learned skills they could use to make a living, while also showing respect for their culture and traditions.

Because there were so many enrollees in the Bandelier camp, the supervisors who taught the skills could take the time to be sure that things were made well. If an enrollee made a mistake while carving a piece of wood, the piece was discarded and he began again. The enrollees acquired a strong work ethic and pride in their work, and the park gained a large collection of beautiful, well-made, hand-crafted items.

Objects made of wood included bed frames, dressers, chairs, stools, benches, and couches, as well as carved beams, corbels, and built-in shelves. Tin items included table lamps, many different kinds of hanging light fixtures, and frames for mirrors. The shapes of the fixtures, as well as the designs pierced into the tin, reflected long-time tradition as well as pieces original to Bandelier. On both, common designs included scallops, wheels, sunbursts, rosettes, angles, and curves. Some were highlighted with paint.

For both woodwork and tin, the pieces were carefully designed on paper, including the decorations, before the actual work was begun. Rulers and straight-edges kept lines straight, while circles, scallops, and rosettes might be planned with the use of a compass. Sometimes a template was made if a design was going to be used several times, so all the repetitions would match. It took careful planning as well as good craftsmen to make these beautiful items.

□ Museum Collection Items Used in this Lesson Plan

- [CCC Wall Sconce, BAND 21894](#)
- [CCC Wall Sconce, BAND 21933](#)
- [CCC Desk Lamp, BAND 16645](#)
- [CCC Carved Corbel, no number](#)
- [CCC Bench, no number](#)

□ Materials Used in this Lesson Plan

- *Similar items.* If the teacher wishes to display a modern-day example of similar work, tin pieces can be acquired from import stores such as Jackalope, while shops and galleries in northern New Mexico, especially around Chimayo, offer locally-made tinwork and woodwork. Probably the CCC enrollees and their descendents have been instrumental in keeping these crafts alive.
- *Art-making materials:*

Straightedges, compasses (optional)
Plain paper, patterns or tracing paper
Pencils/colored pens/markers
For vocabulary words: flip chart paper/ whiteboard/ chalkboard

- *Technology:*
Computers with printers and internet connection to access the Web.

□ **Vocabulary**

On a large chart, create a word and concept list with students as lesson unfolds. Write definitions with student input as words come into use during the lesson. For reference:

Civilian Conservation Corps - a jobs program by the federal government, beginning in 1933, to provide work for young men while providing workers to do public works projects to benefit the country

Corbel - a heavy piece of wood used to spread out the weight of roof beams, etc, often seen as a cross piece at the top of an upright beam used to support a porch or roof

Culture - a group of people who share traditions, beliefs, and customs. Sometimes the word is used to mean the traditions, beliefs, and customs themselves, and things or activities related to them.

Enrollee - one of the young men employed by the CCC; they learned skills, accomplished jobs, and earned \$1/day

Great Depression - the period of history following the Stock Market Crash of 1929 in which the bottom had dropped out of the economy in the US and elsewhere, and millions of people were unemployed

Motif - a design, or part of a design, that is a unit recognizable on its own

Public facilities - such things as parks, roads, and trails built for the public's use and enjoyment

Pueblo Revival - a style of architecture often seen in New Mexico, characterized by thick adobe or faux adobe walls, flat roofs, heavy lintels over windows and doors, and a handmade appearance

Rosette - a design commonly seen in wood- or tinworking, similar to a sunburst, with a circular outline with rays coming from the center to the edge

Tips for Teachers:

Before doing these activities, you will need to:

- Print out enough copies of the museum item photos (approximately equal numbers of each item) so the total equals the number of students, plus a set to put on the board. Laminate them if appropriate.
- Trace or Xerox motif patterns from item photos and/or images in books if you want the students to trace patterns rather than working free-hand.
- Useful web addresses:
 - www.nps.gov/band - Bandelier National Monument website
There are also general scenery photos of Bandelier on the web at photo.itc.nps.gov/storage/images/index.html.
 - www.cr.nps.gov/museum - location of museum collection materials from Bandelier and other park areas

Lesson Implementation Procedures

Activity 1 - Introduction

Tell the students that the class is starting a series of lessons on crafts done by the Civilian Conservation Corps in Bandelier National Monument in the 1930s, including photographs of actual items from the park collection. Their goal is to learn all about these crafts by closely examining these objects; they will also design similar objects of their own. Share student learning objectives with the students. At the end of the lesson they will assess the quality of the learning by looking at their designs as compared to the originals.

Ask students what they know about the Civilian Conservation Corps, traditional New Mexico woodcarving and tinworking, and Bandelier National Monument. Record their answers on the board or chart paper.

Either read the background material to the students, make copies for each individual to read themselves, or summarize for the students in terms that fit their prior knowledge. Discuss content and any questions.

Bring out the photos of the items. Ask students their ideas of what each item is and what it was used for. Discuss how the items and their decorations fit into New Mexico craft traditions, and ask if any students are already familiar with these crafts.

Activity 2 - Answer the “essential question” and explore design motifs.

Review material covered in last section of Activity 1

Pose the “essential question”: When the CCC made tin or wooden objects, why did they make them the way they made them? Ideas should include both the practical aspects of how they were made, and also the reason they chose the particular types of design elements that were used.

Have enough copies of the item photos for each student to have one. Have students look closely at the items to separate out the different design motifs and copy each onto their paper. When finished with one item, trade photos with another student until all have worked with photos of all items.

Activity 3 - Design items using their own arrangement of motifs

Pass out the photos so each student can choose which item they wish to work with.

Have each student draw the item as if it were a plan for a craftsman to make the article. On the drawing, have the student put their own arrangement of motifs seen on the museum items.

If desired, have students go onto the internet or use reference books to find other items and motifs that can be used for other design plans, or pass around copies of other items from the Bandelier collection.

If appropriate, elements of mathematics and geometry may be built into making the plans accurate.

Wrap Up Activity and Evaluation

As appropriate, collect students' sheets showing the museum items and their own designs and display along chalktray or elsewhere.

Plan a display for the classroom, or, preferably, in the hallway or other public space. In this display, plan to include object photos as well as students' original designs.

As an essential part of the display and the activity evaluation, have the class work together to write captions for the pictures, including an explanation of the display, the decorative elements, and the historical background.

□ Extension and Enrichment Activities

Extension Activity 1:

Materials:

- Mat, poster, tag, or cardboard; teacher may want to pre-cut into needed shapes
- Aluminum foil, preferably heavy duty
- White glue
- Masking or clear tape
- Pencils (dull points)
- Patterns, tracing paper, or blank paper

Procedure:

Using the item photos or the students' original designs, make cardboard-and-foil models of the items:
On plain paper, draw an accurate plan of each piece required to construct the desired item. Include the designs that will be on each piece, using patterns made on plain or tracing paper. Patterns may come from museum objects, the students' original objects, or other sources. Use this plan to cut pieces from mat/tag/cardboard. Label each piece so they won't get mixed up. Cut foil to cover each piece, and fasten to the correct side of the piece with white glue. When dry, place the proper design pattern over the foil on each piece and secure with tape so it won't shift positions. Use a dull-pointed pencil to trace along each design line so it will make dents into the foil below. Be sure to trace all lines before removing the pattern.

Fasten the pieces together to make the 3D item. Add some of these items to the display.

Extension Activity 2

If the teacher did acquire present-day tinwork or traditional woodcarving pieces, compare the craftsmanship and design motifs between the CCC pieces and the contemporary ones.

Extension Activity 3

Invite a craftsperson who works in woodcarving or tin to visit the classroom to do a demonstration and answer questions.

□ **Resources**

Bibliography

Cohen, Stan: The Tree Army, A Pictorial History of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942. Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, Missoula, Montana, 2003

Coulter, Lane and Dixon, Maurice, Jr., foreword by Ward Alan Mingi: New Mexican Tinwork 1840-1940. University of New Mexico Press, 2004.

Dickey, Roland F; illustrated by Lloyd Lozes Goff: New Mexico Village Arts. University of New Mexico Press, 1970

Flynn, Kathryn A. Treasures on New Mexico Trails – Discover New Deal Art and Architecture. Sunstone Press, Santa Fe, NM 1995

Melzer, Richard: Coming of Age In the Great Depression, The Civilian Conservation Corps Experience in New Mexico, 1933-1942. Yucca Tree Press, Las Cruces, 2000

Robertson, Edna and Nestor, Sarah, Artists of the Canyons and Caminos - Santa Fe, the Early Years. Peregrine Smith Inc. 1976

Wroth, William, ed. Furniture from the Hispanic Southwest, Authentic Designs. Ancient City Press, Santa Fe, NM

Available from Bandelier National Monument (call 505-672-3861 x 513 to request):

Self-Guided Walking Tour of the Bandelier CCC Historic District

Video: Promises Kept...The New Deal Art of New Mexico, 24 minutes, KNME

Related Organization:

The National New Deal Preservation Association, PO Box 602, Santa Fe, NM 87504-0602
(505) 473-2089, FAX (505) 473-3985 newdeal@cybermesa.com www.newdeallegacy.org

□ **Site Visit**

- *Pre-visit:* Before the visit, have students visit the institution's website for an overview or provide brochures and other written/visual materials about the site. Have the class come up with questions to guide the visit. Work with park interpretive and museum staff to arrange the visit with challenging activities.
- *Site visit:* At the site, have students select at least two objects to analyze. Provide "How to Read an Object" sheets, including a plain sheet to make a detailed sketch of the objects. For younger students, develop a "scavenger hunt" object list to encourage close observation skills.
- *Possible sites:*
- Bandelier National Monument- Has the largest group of CCC structures in the National Park Service, with some hand-made furniture and tinwork still in use and visible to the public. For group reservations, call 505-672-3861 x 517 at least two weeks ahead. For information on educational activities, call 505-672-3861 x 513.
- Shenandoah collections of CCC materials.
- Shops/galleries in Chimayo and surrounding area: Espanola Chamber of Commerce, (505) 753-2831, FAX (505) 753-1252 www.espanolanmchamber.com email: chamber@espanola.com
- Millicent Rogers Museum, 1504 Millicent Rogers Rd, Taos, NM 87571, (505)758-2462, FAX (505) 758-5751 email mrm@newmex.com
- El Rancho de las Golondrinas, 334 Los Pinos Rd, Santa Fe, NM 87507, (505) 471-2261, FAX (505) 471-5623 email: mail@golondrinas.org
- The Albuquerque Museum, 2000 Mountain Road NW, Albuquerque, NM 87103, (505)243-7255, FAX (505) 764-6546 email MNason@cabq.gov
- Museum of Spanish Colonial Art, 750 Camino Lejo, Santa Fe, NM 87505 (Museum Hill), (505) 982-2226, FAX (505) 982-8486
- National Hispanic Cultural Center, 1701 4th Street SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102, (505)246-2261 FAX (505) 246-2613, www.nhccnm.org

Post-visit:

See extension activity list for ideas for post-visit student presentation ideas.

Virtual visit:

Virtual visit. If a park or institution has a website that provides a virtual visit, assign an activity that guides students in their exploration of the website, and leads them to related websites for more depth.