

Only Negro In White CCC Camp Tells Why 'I'm Glad I'm A Negro'

NEW YORK, Dec. 16—(ANP)—Arthur Lee Taylor, who was the only man in a white CCC camp until his discharge a few months ago to attend college, says, "I'm glad I'm a Negro," in an article printed in the December issue of the CCC Magazine. Taylor lists his reasons why.

Taylor was a member of Co. E, 2890, Nacogdoches, Tex. After his discharge, he came to New York and because of his musical ability is now a professional singer with Glenna Institute.

In his article, Taylor says:

"When I joined the CCC, two years ago, my mother said: 'You have made a pretty good record here in your home town. But 'pretty good' won't get a colored boy anywhere. You will have to be 'the best.'"

"My mother was right and she was wrong. Right in urging me to do my best . . . wrong when she said that 'pretty good' wouldn't be good enough.

"I was a long way from being the smartest Negro in the world, or the smartest man in the company with which I was stationed. But I found that my officers and companions stretched points in my favor . . . perhaps because they were reluctant to have it said that they were prejudiced because of my color.

"My themes were only fair, but were invariably chosen for recitation on 'open house' nights. Whenever inspectors or dignitaries visited camp, it was my work they singled out for praise. And all encouraged me in my singing by telling me that my voice was made for classical songs.

"I wasn't fooled. I think I see the motivating reasons behind their kindness more clearly now. Anything that I did was magnified. They wanted me to feel at home . . . perhaps to show me off. Had I been white I would have been just another enrollee.

"CCC and camp days are behind me now, and I still prefer my own colored skin. It keeps me tolerant. Certainly it keeps me from being tempted to say: 'I'm free, white and 21 . . . and let's go. . . .' I shall never be tempted to mistake an accident of birth for an achievement on my part.

"And so I say . . . leave me as I am with my loves, hopes, and emotions. My emotions come to me folded in rich laughter and throbbing with the simple music of my people. I share my sorrows with others . . . others share theirs with me.

"Being white could add nothing to my understanding. If a group that after 70 years of freedom, not only refuses to bemoan its fate, but produces from the cotton fields and swamplands a Booker T. Washington, a Paul Laurence Dunbar, a George W. Carver, a Roland Hayes, a Marian Anderson, a Jesse Owens or a Joe Louis, then let me say, simply, 'I'm glad I'm a Negro.'"