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## Review of: *John D. Burkholder's Diaries Written During His Civilian Public Service: Camp 45, Skyline Drive, Luray, Virginia – November 1, 1944 through May 1, 1946*—John D. Burkholder

Steven Yoder

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Review of: **Burkholder, John D, (Regina Christman Martin, trans.; Darvin Martin, ed.). 2020. *John D. Burkholder's Diaries Written During His Civilian Public Service: Camp 45, Skyline Drive, Luray, Virginia – November 1, 1944 through May 1, 1946. Morgantown PA: Masthof Press; Copyright Historic Impressions, Brownstown PA. Pp. 434. \$20.00.***

By Steven Yoder  
Beachy Amish-Mennonite

The book opens with a lengthy introduction by the editors to the history of the Civilian Public Service camps during the 1940s that came to be known simply as CPS camps. The diary begins November 1, 1944, a few months after John D. Burkholder started his service on July 4th at Camp 45. The diary ends abruptly on May 1, 1946. I cannot find exactly when his time of service ended but the editor reports that the camp closed at the end of June of the same year.



### John D. Burkholder's Diaries

Written During His  
Civilian Public Service

Camp 45  
Skyline Drive, Luray, Virginia

November 1, 1944  
through  
May 1, 1946

was even part of their day. Burkholder tells of camp life and of young men in a dorm. They pull tricks like dumping beds, short sheeting beds, and more.

Burkholder was often a Sunday School teacher and wrote of both Mennonite and Brethren ministers who came to preach on Sundays. There is a brief mention of some tension between the Mennonites and the Brethren. He was concerned that the Brethren church be given fair representation so wrote some Brethren ministers requesting them to come and preach at the camp.

The editor ends the book with an extensive history of the Shenandoah National Park and Camp 45 as well as the work the CPS men accomplished.

There is also mention of other CPS camps in places such as mental hospitals. This is very informative, interesting, and well done.

If you are a descendant of John D. Burkholder or have family who worked with him in the Shenandoah National Park, you would find this book valuable as it tells, albeit briefly, of the young men's work

and life at "Camp 45". It is not a book to read just for pleasure if you have no interest or connection to the workers or care nothing for the history of the Shenandoah National Park.

The layout of the book is a series of photographs of Burkholder's actual diary on the left page with the text transcribed on the right page. It is extensively indexed with numerous footnotes explaining who the people are that he references.

It is a diary and Burkholder simply reports the facts; what he did each day; the weather; fire risk; what they ate; etc. He comments a fair amount on his work as an office secretary to Park administrators. He says very little about the work crews' activities except the firefighting work they were called to do. He does mention that classes in short hand and accounting were offered.

I found no comments of Burkholder's feelings of being away from his new wife or other topics. He does mention the mail he received from his wife, his family, and friends. He describes his first Christmas there and the celebration; Santa Claus

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