

Jamboree Cabin
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Nov 2004

Staff Week, 1951, I was to be the new handicraft director, and there was to be a new cabin for it. There had been money left over from the 1950 Jamboree, the first since the war. The funds did not totally reach, but enough to ensure the purchase of a prefabricated cedar cabin, for about \$1400. A stack of prefabricated white cedar vertical squared small trunks, smooth on the inside, peeled on the outside, chimed together with a lath between in sections about six ft long lay in a pile by a whitened cement raw pad against the red clay of the dug out hillside in front of Tall Timber site.

A year earlier this had been the far edge of the camp development, Lost Battalion site, large tents in a row the farthest from the center camp, parade ground and the dining hall, now we were beyond that, up against the blackberry bushes and the yet unseen small pines poking up in the tall grass, unmowed now for a couple of seasons since the pines were set on this long sloping meadow, formerly a hay meadow that stretched from the tree line down to the bend in the creek, where a shallow ford took the road through the camp into the new property beyond. The new farm added in 1948 had doubled the camp size. A couple of years before, in 1947 I had camped here for the first time, in a pair of round pyramid tents at a new site called the Ford Site. The farmer used to drive through to his farm across the ford, past us. That summer he had just harvested the hay from this long sloping meadow which now was crowned by the new dig for the Jamboree cabin.

Wendell Stribley, the council Executive, asked me to help him with the beginning of the erection of the cabin, all day we slowly cut a rabbit in a six by six timber which was to be bolted down as a base plate for the sections. The saw was only a small table saw, of craft variety, about an 8 inch blade given the year before as part of a set of tools, saw, grinder, and drill press, under cover behind the trading post. Now it was powered up at the barn and we slowly inched our way along the long timbers, first one cut, and then another, then finally on each a chamfer of 45 degrees off the corner. We took the better part of a day and a half to inch this small stalling motor along the long timbers, trying to keep them steady against the struggling blade. Finally, this done, we set them over the bolts and had a perimeter beam ready to receive the sections. My father joined us for a couple of days, helping in his carpenter's acumen to set the sections on the beam, spike them securely to the base, and brace them upright until we had corners secure and could put up the ties and rafters. It was hot work, and pleasurable, to be working with my father, something that I had not done, as did my other siblings on Dad's barns, and farm buildings about the county. It went quickly, walls, with preset windows and doors, a counter for craft sales, and finally a roof, paper, and shingles nailed around the rounded members of the roof line. There was as yet no chimney, though there was a stack of brick, pavers from the streets of Freeport that awaited a kitchen chimney, and a fireplace, already recessed into the cement slab. There was good smell, fresh wood, a pine and cedar smell, and something of the musky smell of the oiled nails from the nail keg. Later there would be a brass plaque on the chimney, Erected by the Freeport Lion's Club.

The identification with erection and money given to finish the purchase of the pre fabricated cabin troubled my father, he felt that erected meant built, and I could not dissuade him for years to come that he had not been cheated out of recognition. I thought many times of adding a plaque reminding all that the construction was done by Lyle, Ray, and Wendell, but that never happened. Now the cabin has been replaced, and the need for such memory is gone. I missed most of Staff Week labor that year, completing the details of the cabin and moving in the handicraft supplies that had been ordered for the season. Don Teasdale was the Assistant Handicraft staff, and the Trading Post operator, where most of the materials were sold, then brought to the cabin for making, putting together, directions, and further fun. When the Trading post was closed, Don was with me in the cabin helping the gulches with their projects. I had met Don a couple of years earlier, in 1848, he was the camp bugler, and I was assistant Cook, Junior Staff, my first year. We shared Staff again in 49, and I skipped 50 to work in the Canning Factory to make money for college. I returned to the Staff in 1951, realizing that I could not earn enough during the summer to make any difference. I had a job in the clothing store in Platteville, which carried my school expenses.

The handicraft program was loud, noisy, filled, and bursting with gunchers making things. I made up free craft things, neckerchief slides, plaster casts, and all manner of silly things to take hands and time away from the little scouts. We sang a lot, and did crazy things; handicraft became so popular we opened in the evenings, as this new venue in the camp took off. At a given signal visiting staff men would writhe, in spasms and jerking in imitation of an electrical shock. We explained that we had the bed electrically wired to keep gunchers off of it. Skipper Johnson was the Field Executive for the Illinois part of the Council, and a craftsman in his own right. He scrounged craft materials all winter, left over leather from the coach works in Freeport that made custom limousines, collected plaster casts. I made plaster slides, carving the original, and Skipper supplied me with a wonder material, liquid red rubber to make my own molds. I made molds of all sorts of things, mostly useable for neckerchief slides, a flat loop of coat hanger wire inserted in the wet plaster, then water color painted, and shellacked. The scout could have a finished product in an afternoon. I made a slide for Wetassa, one for the Philmont guys, after the Philmont patch, and an indian profile, Mohawk haired indian face. We did the lace lanyards and all sorts of ad hoc leather things. Behind us was Tall Timber, tall second growth aspens and locusts, tall and high shading over the new tent site. The ground was covered with maidenhair fern, a distinctly formed flat fern, single stalk, and flat plate like round frond. We had water in the fireplace depression because there was a hole yet in the roof. I put in coke bottles with maidenhair ferns as a kind of indoor garden, and whatever else was growing about, black-eyed Susan, horse nettles, a kind of indoor garden in the floating pond inside the cabin. Rain brought mud flowing over the back stoop, for the red bank of disturbed earth was against the cabin. Arrow guys would labor to move it back, but it was a lot of dirt to move, and remained a hazard, until graded back some years later.

On good nights Don and I would sleep on the porch overlooking the turn of the creek, cool evenings and good talk on the flat cool slab. In the distance the Korean War was

raging, college emptying that year as Veterans were recalled, and Draftees left school for the war. Here it was quiet, though Elders were easily recalling the war just ended. Scouters leaving camp on Wednesday night for National Guard Duty and returning. Distant drums of war. It was a simple camp, noisy meals, songs and campfires, and a few programs other than the lake swimming sessions, boating and canoeing. Camp was getting away from home, living in large army green tents, army surplus material, smelling of oil and paraffin in the hot summer sun.

The campfire ring up on the hill was new, the trail threading along the familiar pathway just past the gash of the new power line across camp put added in 1948. The locust forest was new, barely ten years old, and mostly sun filled short growth about the size of your wrist. The trees betrayed the furrow of their setting in 1937 in contours across the bare hills of the newly acquired farm and headquarters cabin. Bells jingled as the Dancers dressed for the Arrow ceremony. We kept the costumes behind the counter, and moved out into the canoes tethered along the creek, to enter the ring singing around the bend at the Wednesday night campfire. The costumes were meager, some breechclouts, several bonnets, and a new war shirt made in Freeport for the Chief. It was hot, heavy, and seemed something of a craft wonder in the middle of all of the makeshift forms of the rest. It was said to have been made by either Skipper Johnson or the scouts of the Wakikanza dancers in Chuck Hancock's Freeport troop. On the back was a large beaded Wetassa badge, the Thunderbird of the new patch, beaded by Rex Zier, of the dancers. The Arrow was moved to Wednesday night when the camp week was shortened from seven days to six, leaving Saturday afternoon free. In my first years the coming and the going were done on the same Sunday afternoon, great confusion, and great fun as one troop was exiting as another was coming in.

The summer was a good one, and memories mix now in these later years, At the end of the season Skipper Johnson, camp director and real craftsman, asked me if I would like to go to Philmont with the Cavalcade being prepared. Because of my work in Handicraft they would split the busload of Philmont guys into three crews instead of two, and I could have a crew, and go at no cost. I jumped at the chance. Several other staff members were going on this month long tour by bus, Killer Miller from the kitchen, and Phil, from maintenance, the Flying Squad. We started at Hanover and camped across the country, S. Dakota, Wyoming, Teton's, Yellowstone, Salt Lake, and a week on horseback, a cavalcade at Philmont. I closed the season with an inventory, in my head making plans for a larger and better season next year. In the winter, I was visited in Platteville by Bob Paton, field executive, who said he would be the Camp Director next year, and would I be his Assistant Camp Director.