

The North of Camp by Ron Spielman,  
July 6, 2016 for the  
80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Canyon Camp Reunion

Five years ago at the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary we celebrated the acquisition of the Wiley Property where some of you will be camping tonight. Great Stargazing up in the meadow. In the early Fall of 2004 before Denny Pratt had his kidney transplant we had several meetings to discuss ways of buffering camp or acquiring additional lands to serve as buffer. I have an aerial photo procured by Dr. Inman that shows the relationship of various parcels. The Wiley property was a key as it bordered Broadway the length of our East Boundary & it encompassed a significant portion of the Apple River. The Wiley Family of Rockford acquired the land in 1936.....same time as Canyon Camp was dedicated. Mrs. Wiley was an active member Of the Rockford Writers Guild and the land was regarded as very special and inspirational to the writers, poets and painters that regularly visited the land. Mrs. Wiley named the property "Cuddle Down." Wiley's had a son Marshall W. Wiley who was born in 1945 and he grew up making trips to the land and exploring the Apple River and became an avid fisherman. Marshall's career took him all over the world with the US Foreign Service, but primarily to the Middle East. He was in Cairo at a time when we had no formal Embassy nor consulate. I believe he functioned as an attaché out of the Danish Embassy. He was ultimately our Ambassador to Oman & was Ambassador at the time of the ill-fated rescue mission during the Carter Administration when they hoped to rescue the Iranian prisoners. Ambassador Wiley was against the attempt & he went fishing the day of the rescue attempt so as to be "not available" when the press made inquiry.

For brief periods Marshall & his wife Marjorie actually lived on the property & sent their kids to local schools. Marshall's assignments overseas were not compatible with living on Townsend road & they settled out East closer to Washington & returned for brief visits. Marshall was only 53 when he died in January of 1998. I made a few extra copies of "Lessons for the Future" delivered by Marshall Wiley at University of Dubuque in 1994.....very interesting vision given what has and is transpiring in the Middle East.

It took us several summers to make initial contact with Marjorie Wiley via her attorney, John Cox in Galena. One summer she was in the mobile briefly, but fell & broke I think a leg... immediately transported back East. Our initial hope was that Marjorie would be amenable to an extensive gift of the property to BSA. Nope, not to be a gift. Don Kinney came out & we walked the Apple River with Don walking in the water as Marjorie & I walked the Rocky and uneven East bank. We took Marjorie to lunch at The Cove & chatted. Marjorie had visions of great value because of the Apple River. Like always we had no cash to purchase even a fraction of the farm. So, we began working with Jerry Paulson & NLI headquartered in Rockford. Jerry brought numerous connections and the needed process. A family in Galena had given the Nature Conservancy significant dollars to focus upon preserving the Apple River corridor. In addition, NLI worked with the Doris Duke Foundation and the Illinois Clean Energy Foundation. Jerry garnered a significant pool of assets to get Marjorie to acquiesce to a sale that would preserve/save the entire Wiley Farm.

Ultimately, we received two pieces of the Wiley farm. Nine acres at the intersection of Broadway & Townsend with all the buildings and a property line connecting with the West boundary of the Apple River is owned outright. A little over 34 acres located directly across

from our back entrance is ours subject to a preservation easement. Our skin in the game or capital used to acquire the land was to grant a conservation easement over roughly 80 acres of our owned lands bordering the East side of Coon Creek and Broadway on the East. The NLI conveyed the balance of the Wiley Land to the Illinois DNR. The total of these transactions preserving lands and the Apple River corridor were indicative of Jerry Paulson's connections and his deal-making skills. Jerry has since retired.

So, in 80 years the total acreage of Canyon Camp has more than doubled and today our camp is nearly 330 acres. With Lee Binkley & Dick Reynolds at the helm We provide a summer camp program that provides 800 Cubs, Scouts and Scouters the opportunity to experience much of the camp property and to go home having been influenced by the less visible Spirit of Canyon Camp. We always are short on the finances needed to maintain and improve the camp. Yet, we're blessed by the voluntary efforts of Gene Nott, John Wurtzel and many others who dedicate their Time, Talent & Treasure to maintain this facility. There remains a strong and dedicated cadre of volunteers molded by the efforts of the Held's and Dietmeier's as their role models. We are hopeful another 8 decades of young scouts will experience The Spirit of Canyon Camp within these Canyon Walls.