

“THE HISTORY OF CAMPING IN THE SUSQUENANGO COUNCIL”

TUSCARORA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION DINNER,
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THE ORIGINAL SCOUT COUNCIL IN BINGHAMTON WAS ORGANIZED BY THE BINGHAMTON ROTARY CLUB IN 1918. NEEDING AN AREA TO PROVIDE CAMPING EXPERIENCES, THE COUNCIL'S FIRST SCOUT CAMP, CALLED CAMP SPALDING, WAS DEVELOPED ON CINCINNATUS LAKE, NEAR SMITHVILLE FLATS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE ENDICOTT, VESTAL, JOHNSON CITY AREA WAS SERVED BY A COUNCIL KNOWN AS THE ENDICOTT FAIR PLAY COUNCIL, AND THEIR CAMP WAS CAMP KIAMESHA, LOCATED ON HIGHLAND LAKE NEAR WARREN CENTER, PA. MANY OF YOU MAY BE MORE AWARE OF CAMP KIAMESHA NAME SINCE HARRY DEYO KEPT THE NAME ALIVE AS TROOP 203 CONTINUED TO USE IT EVEN WHEN THEY MOVED THEIR SUMMER CAMPING OPERATION TO WINTER UNIT #2 AT TUSCARORA AFTER THE CLOSING OF CAMP KIAMESHA.

IN 1934 THE TWO COUNCILS WERE MERGED AND BOTH CAMPS CAME UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE THREE COUNTY SUSQUENANGO COUNCIL. BOTH CAMPS SERVED SCOUTING FOR WELL OVER A QUARTER OF A CENTURY. I DID NOT ATTEND RESIDENT SUMMER CAMP AT EITHER OF THE CAMPS AS A BOY SCOUT. HOWEVER, I DID VISIT SPALDING, AS A CUB SCOUT, WHEN WE WOULD DELIVER MY BROTHER TO SUMMER CAMP. LOCATED IN THE NORTHERN EDGE OF THE COUNCIL, IT COULD BE REACHED ONLY BY A LONG, ONE LANE, DUSTY ROAD. I REMEMBER THERE BEING A STAFF MEMBER AT EACH END OF THE ROAD SERVING AS TRAFFIC DIRECTOR. THEY USED THAT PROCEDURE WHERE THE LAST CAR IN THE LINE WOULD CARRY A RED FLAG TO TELL THE PERSON AT THE OTHER END TO SEND THE CARS THE OTHER WAY. NOWADAYS, I GUESS WE WOULD USE TWO WAY RADIOS OR CELL PHONES.

IN ANY EVENT, SCOUTING WAS GROWING AND MORE AND MORE BOYS WANTED TO GO TO CAMP, AND THE EXISTING FACILITIES AT BOTH CAMPS HAD BECOME INADEQUATE. CAMP SPALDING, DESIGNED TO SERVE 75 BOYS PER WEEK WAS OVERRUN WITH REGISTRATIONS OF OVER 180 BOYS PER WEEK. IT CONSISTED OF ONLY 90 ACRES OF LAND WITH ONLY ABOUT 30 ACRES SUITABLE FOR CAMPING. THE WATERFRONT WAS POOR AT BEST, LOCATED ON A MUCK-BOTTOM LAKE WHICH DROPPED OFF STEEPLY. I DON'T REMEMBER THAT MUCH ABOUT KIAMESHA ALTHOUGH I DID SOME WEEKEND CAMPING THERE. I DO REMEMBER THAT AT BOTH CAMPS, THE SECLUSION HAD BEEN DESTROYED BY EXTENSIVE BUILDING OF SUMMER COTTAGES. AND, AFTER 25 YEARS OF OVERUSE THE BUILDINGS WERE IN DESPERATE NEED OF REPAIR. BOTH PROPERTIES WERE HARD PRESSED TO MEET THE STATE HEALTH REGULATIONS AS WELL AS THE CAMPING STANDARDS OF THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA, EVEN IN THOSE DAYS.

IN THE LATE 40'S, VARIOUS COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL BEGAN TO STUDY THE PROBLEM FROM EVERY ANGLE AND CONCLUDED THAT NEITHER OF THE EXISTING FACILITIES COULD BE DEVELOPED SATISFACTORILY TO MEET THE CAMPING NEEDS OF THE GROWING COUNCIL. IT WAS APPARENT THAT A NEW CAMP SITE WOULD HAVE TO BE FOUND.

THE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BOARD AUTHORIZED THE CAMPING COMMITTEE, WITH MR. GEORGE SAVORY AS CHAIRMAN, TO BEGIN A SEARCH FOR A NEW CAMPSITE. MR. SAVORY, THE VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, AND THEN SCOUT EXECUTIVE ARTHUR F. BAKER INSPECTED A NUMBER OF SITES, NONE OF WHICH SEEMED TO FIT THE BILL. WHEN ART BAKER MOVED ON IN 1950, MR. DWIGHT D. CRISP BECAME OUR SCOUT EXECUTIVE AND THE SEARCH FOR A NEW CAMP INTENSIFIED. ACCORDING TO THE RECORDS, IN EXCESS OF 25 SITES WERE STUDIED. IRA REYNOLDS WAS A MEMBER OF THAT CAMPING COMMITTEE AND SUGGESTED THAT THE COUNCIL LOOK AT THE MERRILL PROPERTY ON PAGE POND ROAD IN GULF SUMMIT. NOW THE STORY HAS IT THAT THE LOCAL GIRL SCOUT ORGANIZATION HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR A CAMP ALONG IN THE YEARS BETWEEN 1918-1920, AND THAT THE MERRILL PROPERTY WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION. APPARENTLY THEY EVEN WENT SO FAR AS TO DRILL A TEST WELL OF OVER 100 FEET DEEP AT A SITE NEAR OUR CURRENT DINNING HALL. FORTUNATELY FOR US, THE WELL PRODUCED NO WATER AND THEY PROCEEDED TO LOOK ELSEWHERE FOR THEIR CAMP. THEIR MISFORTUNE TRULY LED TO OUR GOOD FORTUNE. THE CAMPING COMMITTEE ULTIMATELY NARROWED THEIR CHOICES TO TWO SITES. THE SKY LAKE PROPERTY, CURRENTLY OPERATED BY THE WYOMING CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, AND THE MERRILL PROPERTY ON PAGE POND ROAD. THE SKY LAKE PROPERTY ALREADY HAD A NUMBER OF BUILDINGS ON IT WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE EXTENSIVELY RENOVATED OR DEMOLISHED. AS A RESULT THE COMMITTEE ULTIMATELY DECIDED ON THE UNDEVELOPED MERRILL PROPERTY.

THE SITE WAS ACCLAIMED BY THE ENGINEERING SERVICE OF THE BSA AS BEING ONE OF THE BEST NATURAL SITES AT THAT TIME IN THE UNITED STATES. DESCRIBED BY THE BSA (as quote) **"THE OVER 500 ACRE TRACT OF LAND NEAR THE VILLAGE OF GULF SUMMIT IN THE TOWN OF SANFORD SURROUNDS A BEAUTIFUL 35 ACRE SAND BOTTOMED SPRING FED LAKE. THE TRACT IS VIRGIN COUNTRY, BLANKETED BY SECOND GROWTH TIMBER. IT ABOUNDS IN ALL THE FEATURES NECESSARY FOR AN OUTSTANDING CAMPING PROGRAM AND IS EASILY ACCESSIBLE FROM ALL SECTIONS OF THE COUNCIL"**.

IN AUGUST OF 1952, THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE SUSQUENANGO COUNCIL AUTHORIZED THE PURCHASE OF THE MERRILL PROPERTY AT A COST OF \$49,000. PLANS WERE IMMEDIATELY SET IN MOTION TO DEVELOP THE SITE. LOCAL ARCHITECTS ALONG WITH THE ENGINEERING SERVICE OF THE BSA DETERMINED THAT \$243,000 WOULD BE NEEDED TO ACQUIRE THE PROPERTY AND DEVELOP A CAMP WHICH WOULD MEET PRESENT NEEDS AND PROVIDE FOR FUTURE EXPANSION. A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN WAS APPROVED BY THE

UNITED FUND AND A COMMITTEE CHAIRED BY STEWART MORSE, WHO WAS LOCAL BANKER, WAS FORMED. THE CAMPAIGN KICKED OFF AT THE ENDICOTT-JOHNSON RECREATION CENTER IN ENDICOTT IN FEBRUARY 1953. IT WAS AN OVERWHELMING SUCCESS AND CONSTRUCTION AT THE SITE GOT UNDERWAY IMMEDIATELY WITH THE GOAL OF OCCUPANCY FOR THE SUMMER OF 1953. CAMPS SPALDING AND KIAMESHA WERE IMMEDIATELY SOLD TO ADD TO THE FUNDS NECESSARY TO CONSTRUCT THE NEW CAMP. THE NEW CAMP OPENED TO A FULL CAMP ON JULY 1, 1953 AND THE DEDICATION CEREMONY TOOK PLACE ON JULY 16, 1953. AS I NOTED, I WAS STILL A CUB SCOUT THAT FIRST YEAR AND WOULD HAVE TO WAIT TILL 1954 TO GO TO SUMMER CAMP AT TUSCARORA AS A BOY SCOUT, I DO REMEMBER RIDING ALONG WHEN WE TOOK MY BROTHER TO CAMP THAT FIRST YEAR.

HOWEVER, THE RECORDS SHOW THAT THE FIRST MAJOR EVENT AT THE NEW CAMP WAS ACTUALLY IN THE FALL OF 1952 WHEN THE SUSQUEHANNA, PA DISTRICT, NOW THE DELAHANNA DISTRICT CONDUCTED ITS FALL CAMPOREE ON THE SITE. AN INTERESTING NOTE, THIS DISTRICT WAS FORMERLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE COUNCIL LOCATED IN SCRANTON, PA. I WORKED WITH A PERSON AT LINK WHO HAD A PHOTO OF THE CABIN WHICH WAS LOCATED AT THE SITE OF THE WATERFRONT. HE AND HIS TROOP CAMPED IN FRONT OF THAT CABIN THAT FALL.

IN A HISTORICAL ACCOUNTING OF THE AREA PROVIDED BY CHARLIE WRIGHT THE CAMP RANGER FROM 1953-1983, AND THE MERRILL SISTERS AND THEIR GRANDDAUGHTER, AND SEVERAL FORMER SCOUTERS FROM THE COUNCIL THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WAS GLEANED;

- THE ORIGINAL PLOT OF 585 ACRES CONSISTED OF FOUR FARMS AND WAS HEAVILY FORESTED IN THE YEARS 1880-1890. A FIRE BETWEEN THE YEARS OF 1906-1908 DESTROYED ABOUT 70% OF THE FOREST FROM EAST TO WEST ACROSS THE CAMP. IT WAS SAID THAT IF YOU STOOD ON THE WESTERN HIGH SPOT AND LOOKED EAST OVER THE PROPERTY YOU WOULD HAVE SEEN NOTHING BUT A FEW SCARRED TREE TRUNKS. A CHERRY TREE THAT CHARLIE CUT WHILE CAMP RANGER BORE A FIRE SCAR 4 INCHES DEEP IN THE RINGS OF THE STUMP.
- IN THE LATE 1800'S, AS THE STORY GOES, A MR. PAGE WAS DRIVING HIS TEAM OF HORSES AND A LOAD OF TIMBER ACROSS THE LAKE. THE ICE GAVE WAY AND THE HORSES AND SLED WERE LOST. WE ASSUME THAT THE LAKE (POND) WAS NAMED AFTER MR. PAGE.
- ONE OF THE FARMS WAS AT THE SITE OF WINTER UNIT #5. THE STORY GOES THAT A MR. COON, A VETERAN OF THE CIVIL WAR, WAS GIVEN A LAND GRANT AT THE END OF THE WAR AND HE SETTLED THERE AND STARTED HIS FARM AND RAISED A FAMILY. WHEN HIS WIFE PASSED AWAY AND A FIRE DESTROYED THE BUILDINGS HE MOVED ON. ALL THAT REMAINED WAS THE WELL. MR. COON USED TO RAISE POTATOES AND CART THEM TO THE GULF SUMMIT STORE WHERE HE SOLD THEM FOR 10CENTS A BARREL.

- A MR. EUGENE P. MERRILL WHO, IN THE EARLY 1900'S, ALSO OWNED THE SKY LAKE AND DEER LAKE PROPERTIES PURCHASED THE MAIN 585 ACRES IN 1918. HE ERECTED THREE CABINS FOR HIS SONS. ROLLAND'S CABIN WAS AT THE SITE OF THE WATERFRONT AND WAS TORN DOWN AT THE TIME OF THE CAMP CONSTRUCTION. PETER'S CABIN WAS NEAR COUNCIL POINT AND BURNED DOWN IN MAY OF 1953. AND ARTHUR'S CABIN WAS NEAR SUMMER UNIT #12 WHERE THE REMAINS OF THE FIREPLACE CAN BE SEEN.
- THE LAKE WAS ON A HIGH ELEVATION AND ACTUALLY EMPTIED IN TWO DIRECTIONS. MR. MERRILL WANTED TO EXPAND THE LAKE AND BY SO DOING WOULD CHANGE ITS PRIMARY OUTLET FROM THE SOUTH WHICH FLOWED INTO THE DELAWARE RIVER WATERSHED, TO THE NORTH AND THEREBY FLOWING INTO THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVER WATERSHED. THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY USING TEAMS OF HORSES AND A LARGE SCOOP TO CREATE A DAM AT THE SOUTHERN OUTLET. THIS DAM WAS LATER EXPANDED WITH BULLDOZERS INTO OUR CURRENT PARADE FIELD.
- THERE WERE UP TO 8 STONE QUARRIES IN THE AREA OF THE CAMP PROPERTY WITH 4 OPERATING AT ANY ONE TIME. THE QUARRIES SUPPLIED FLAGSTONE AND BUILDING STONE FOR SIDEWALKS AND CURBING FOR NEW YORK CITY. THE STONE WAS HAULED BY CART TO GULF SUMMIT AND THEN TAKEN BY RAIL TO NEW YORK CITY. GULF SUMMIT AT THE TIME WAS A SMALL VILLAGE COMPLETE WITH A GROCERY STORE, AND EVEN A HOTEL.

THE VISIONARY BEHIND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAMP TUSCARORA WAS SCOUT EXECUTIVE DWIGHT D. CRISP. UPON HIS RETIREMENT IN 1966, THE DINING HALL WAS DEDICATED "IN RECOGNITION OF HIS INSPIRING LEADERSHIP OF THE SUSQUENANGO COUNCIL". THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN TO ONEONTA COUNCIL'S CAMP HENDERSON WILL SEE A REMARKABLE SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE TWO COMPS. MR. CRISP CAME TO BINGHAMTON FROM ONEONTA, AND TUSCARORA IS VERY SIMILAR TO HENDERSON IN DESIGN.

AS MENTIONED BEFORE, CONSTRUCTION OF THE FIRST BUILDING PHASE OF THE THEN UNNAMED CAMP COMMENCED IN EARLY 1953 WITH; THE DINNING HALL, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, TRADING POST, HANDICRAFT BUILDING, RANGER'S HOUSE, WINTER UNIT #1, THE ORIGINAL SHOWER BUILDING, SIX SUMMER UNITS, THE WATERFRONT ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE LAKE, AND THE CAMPFIRE AREA ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE LAKE. I REMEMBER CHARLIE TELLING OF ACTUALLY HAVING MOVED INTO HIS HOUSE THAT FIRST SPRING DURING THE CONSTRUCTION BEFORE THE SIDING WAS EVEN ON IT. THE MAIN WATER SUPPLY FOR THE CAMP WAS FROM A WELL BEHIND THE DINING HALL WITH GALVANIZED PIPES GOING OUT TO THE OTHER VARIOUS BUILDINGS AND CAMPSITES. IN FACT IN THAT FIRST WEEK OF CAMPING, THE WATER PIPES DID NOT YET REACH THE CAMPSITES.

WITH THE ORIGINAL PURCHASE OF THE PROPERTY THERE WAS THE AGREEMENT THAT MR. ARTHUR MERRILL COULD CONTINUE TO USE HIS SUMMER CABIN ON THE 5 ACRE PLOT ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE LAKE UNTIL HIS DEATH, AND THAT THE SCOUTS WERE NOT TO WALK IN FRONT OF THE CABIN ON THEIR WAY AROUND THE LAKE TRAIL. AS SUCH, THE SCOUTS ESTABLISHED A TRAIL THAT WENT AROUND THE CABIN. DAVE HARDER, WHO IS NOW BROOME COUNTY SHERIFF AND IS CURRENTLY A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BOARD, IS A FORMER LODGE CHIEF OF THE ORDER OF THE ARROW. HE LED THE EFFORT TO BUILD THE TRAIL UP THE HILL AND BACK DOWN BYPASSING THE CABIN. THIS TRAIL AROUND THE COTTAGE BECAME KNOWN AS "HARDER'S HIGHWAY". WHEN MR. MERRILL PASSED AWAY IN 1961, THE CABIN WAS DISMANTLED. I REMEMBER MEETING MR. MERRILL ONE WEEKEND AT A SPRING OA FELLOWSHIP AS HE DROVE HIS CAR PAST THE OUTDOOR CHAPEL WHERE WE HAD A GROUP OF OA CANDIDATES WORKING.

IN 1953 WHILE CONSTRUCTION WAS UNDERWAY, MR. CRISP FORMED A COMMITTEE WHICH CONDUCTED A "NAME THE CAMP" CONTEST. THE FINAL NAME "TUSCARORA" WAS SELECTED AS IT WAS THE NAME OF AN AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBE IN THE AREA, BUT ALSO THE NAME OF THE LOCAL MOUNTAIN. BOTH CHARLIE AND MRS. MERRILL CLAIM THAT VARIOUS NATIVE AMERICAN ARTIFACTS HAD BEEN FOUND ON THE PROPERTY, AND RUMOR HAS IT THAT THERE IS AN OLD BURIAL GROUND ON THE PROPERTY. WE DO KNOW THAT WE ARE CLOSE TO AN OLD NATIVE AMERICAN TRAIL THAT LED FROM THE DELAWARE RIVER THROUGH THE FINGER LAKES REGION TO SENECA LAKE. BY THE WAY, IT IS SAID THAT CHARLIE WRIGHT'S CHOICE FOR A NAME WAS "CAMP WOODLANDS".

CONTINUING NOW WITH THE DETAILS OF THE EXPANSION:

- 1953, ONE OF THE FIRST OF SEVERAL "MAJOR" PROJECTS WAS UNDERTAKEN BY THE ORDER OF THE ARROW LODGE. THAT BEING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE OUTDOOR CHAPEL LOCATED ALONG THE TRAIL BETWEEN UNIT # 1 AND THE COUNCIL POINT. THE OA PLEDGED TO PROVIDE ALL OF THE MONEY AND LABOR FOR THIS EFFORT WHICH WAS COMPLETED AND DEDICATED IN 1959. HOW MANY OF YOU HERE TONIGHT EARNED YOUR "WHITE OA NECKERCHIEF" FOR PUTTING IN 100 HOURS OF SERVICE ON THE CHAPEL PROJECT??
- 1954; THE HEALTH LODGE, SUMMER UNITS 7 & 8, WINTER UNIT 2, THE RIFLE RANGE AND THE PICNIC PAVILION WERE CONSTRUCTED. ALSO IN 1954, CONSTRUCTION OF THE OA CEREMONIAL RING BEGAN.
- 1955; WINTER UNITS 3 & 4 WERE BUILT ALONG WITH SUMMER UNITS 9 & 10.
- 1956; SUMMER UNITS 11 & 12 WERE BUILT. THESE ARE THE ORIGINAL 12 UNITS WHICH HAVE BEEN REARRANGED OVER THE YEARS WITH SOME BEING SHUT DOWN AND OTHERS BEING BUILT TO REPLACE THEM.
- 1957; WINTER UNIT #5 WAS BUILT AT THE SITE OF MR. COON'S FARM.
- 1962; WITH A MAJOR GIFT FROM THE ORDER OF THE ARROW, CONSTRUCTION BEGAN ON THE NATURE LODGE WHICH WAS

DEDICATED TO GEORGE S. TATE, A FORMER PRINCIPAL OF NORTH HIGH SCHOOL IN BINGHAMTON.

- 1964; THE WOOD FRAMED PORTION OF THE RANGER'S SHOP WAS CONSTRUCTED
- 1965; THE COUNCIL OBTAINED THE PORTION OF LAND EXTENDING NORTH FROM THE BOUNDARY LINES OF THE ORIGINAL CAMP EXTENDING EAST OF PAGE POND ROAD AND SOUTH OF LAUREL LAKE ROAD WHERE THE FAMILY CAMP IS NOW LOCATED
- 1967-1970 ADDITIONAL PROPERTY WAS ADDED THROUGH THE PURCHASE OF THE DECKER FARM ON CONNER ROAD TO THE EAST, AND LATER THE MARTIN FARM. ALSO THE PROPERTY WEST OF PAGE POND ROAD BOUNDED BY LAUREL LAKE ROAD AND NOONY HILL ROAD. STILL LATER THE PROPERTY OWNED BY THE TAXE FAMILY ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE CAMP AND LATER THE WARZBACK PROPERTY BROUGHT THE FINAL LAND HOLDINGS TO APPROXIMATELY 1150 ACRES. MUCH OF THE CREDIT FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE PROPERTY SHOULD GO TO A FORMER EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER AND BINGHAMTON ATTORNEY DICK BORDEN. DICK WAS ALSO THE SCOUT MASTER OF TROOP 3 IN BINGHAMTON. HIS VISION WAS THAT THE CAMP PROPERTY SHOULD LOGICALLY BE BORDERED BY THE SURROUNDING ROADS. AS SUCH, HE WOULD KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE NEIGHBORS AND WHEN THEY WERE READY TO SELL OR WHEN THEY PASSED AWAY HE WOULD APPROACH THE HEIRS ABOUT PURCHASING THE PROPERTY. FORTUNATELY, THE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BOARD SUPPORTED HIS EFFORTS AND WOULD WORK TO FIND THE FUNDS TO PROCURE THE PROPERTIES.
- 1968-69 THE 204TH ENGINEERING BATTALION OF THE NATIONAL GUARD, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF COL. JIM BARTON, CONSTRUCTED THE DAM AND POND AT THE FAMILY CAMP.
- 1971-1972 THE FAMILY CABINS WERE ADDED.
- 1972 THE MEDITATION CHAPEL WAS CONSTRUCTED ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE LAKE NEAR THE WATERFRONT. IT WAS DEDICATED TO ARTHUR J. FARRELL A FORMER CAMP PROGRAM DIRECTOR WHO PASSED AWAY IN 1970 WHILE WORKING AT CAMP.
- MID 70'S THE ROTARY OUTPOST CAMP WAS ESTABLISHED UP THE ROAD FROM WU #2 ON THE WAY TO THE PLATEAU.
- IN THE EARLY 70'S A NEW WELL AND STORAGE TANK WAS INSTALLED AT THE TOP OF THE HILL EAST OF THE DINING HALL.
- 1981 A NEW SHOWER BUILDING WAS CONSTRUCTED ALONG WITH THE WASTE WATER DISPOSAL SYSTEM FOR THE DINING HALL, WHICH TOOK THE WASTE WATER DOWN THE HILL PAST THE RIFLE RANGE, AND ELIMINATED ANY CONCERNS OF DAMAGING THE QUALITY OF THE LAKE WITH RUNOFF.
- 1982 THE CAMPMASTER BUILDING WAS CONSTRUCTED AND THE CAMP NOW HAD A "WELCOME CENTER TO GREAT SCOUTS, SCOUTERS, AND VISITORS. THE CAMPMASTER CORPS WAS ORIGINALLY STARTED IN THE MID 60'S. SOME OF THE FOLKS INVOLVED IN THAT ORGANIZING GROUP

INCLUDED: JACK MORTON, BUD WILLIAMS, PERHAPS DON AND/OR CLYDE BROWN, MYSELF, AND A COUPLE OF OTHERS THAT I CAN'T REMEMBER RIGHT NOW. FOR THE FIRST COUPLE OF YEARS WE WERE LOCATED IN THE HEALTH LODGE, THE THINKING WAS THAT AT LEAST THERE WAS A GAS HEATER THERE. BUT THE LONG TREK THROUGH THE DEEP SNOW PROVED TO BE TOO TIME CONSUMING TO GET DOWN TO THE PARKING LOT TO GREET OR TO CHECK OUT UNITS. WE THEN MOVED TO, AND FROZE TO DEATH, IN THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. NO MATTER HOW MUCH WOOD YOU PUT IN THE FIREPLACE, YOU STILL COULD NOT HEAT THAT BUILDING. CHARLIE WRIGHT BUILT AN "A" FRAME SHELTER AT THE END OF HIS DRIVEWAY TO GIVE US SHELTER WHILE WE WAITED FOR THE TROOPS TO ARRIVE. DURING THE COLD WINTER MONTHS OF THE MID 70'S THE CAMPMASER CORPS MADE A COMMITMENT THAT THEY WOULD EVENTUALLY BUILD THE NEW FACILITY. CHARLIE DEAN WAS OUR CHAIRMAN THEN AND HE LED US IN RAISING THE MONEY NECESSARY TO MEET THE COMMITMENT OF FUNDING THE BUILDING AND ESTABLISHING A PERMANENT MAINTENANCE FUND. CONSTRUCTION BEGAN IN THE FALL OF 1982 AND WE MOVED IN DECEMBER.

- 1984 THE CENTER LODGE AT WINTER UNIT #2 WAS STRUCK WITH LIGHTENING AND BURNED TO THE GROUND. IT WAS REBUILT THE FOLLOWING YEAR.
- 1993: A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN SAW THE TOTAL RENOVATION OF THE KITCHEN AND DINING HALL ALONG WITH THE ADDITION OF HANDICAPPED RESTROOMS, THE REFURBISHMENT OF THE HEALTH LODGE, THE TOTAL REPLACEMENT OF THE RANGER'S RESIDENCE, THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAINTENANCE BUILDING, THE CONVERSION OF THE NATURE LODGE TO A MULTI PURPOSE YEAR ROUND TRAINING FACILITY.

IN THE MID 70'S, WITH THE CAMP AT APPROXIMATELY 1500 ACRES PLANS WERE DRAWN TO CHANGE THE CAMP TO BECOME "TUSCARORA SCOUT RESERVATION". THESE PLANS INCLUDED THE ADDITION OF THE FAMILY CAMP AREA; A NEW MAINTENANCE CENTER AND A SECOND FULL RESIDENT CAMP UP ON THE AREA KNOWN AS THE PLATEAU UP THE ROAD BEYOND WINTER UNIT #2. WHILE A PORTION OF THE FAMILY CAMP WAS BUILT AND THE MAINTENANCE CENTER WAS ALSO CONSTRUCTED, THE SECOND CAMP DID NOT MATERIALIZE. PART OF THIS WAS DUE TO THE DECLINE OF MEMBERSHIP IN SCOUTING AND THE OVER CAPACITY OF CAMPING FACILITIES ACROSS THE REGION. ADDITIONALLY, I THINK THERE HAS BEEN A MAJOR SHIFT IN LONG TERM, AND EVEN SHORT TERM CAMPING. WHEN WE WERE SCOUTS IT WAS MOST COMMON THAT A BOY WOULD GO TO CAMP FOR TWO AND SOMETIMES MORE WEEKS IN THE SUMMER. MOST SCOUTS NOW GO FOR ONLY ONE WEEK. ALSO WHEN WE WERE IN THE TROOP A MAJORITY OF TROOPS CAMPED 12 MONTHS A YEAR AND EACH DISTRICT HELD AT LEAST ONE IF NOT TWO DISTRICT CAMPOREES AT CAMP TUSCARORA EACH YEAR.

I WOULD BE REMISS IF I DIDN'T MENTION THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE THAT THE OTAHNAGON LODGE ORDER OF THE ARROW HAS PLAYED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAMP TUSCARORA. THE LAST FIGURE I HEARD, A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO, WAS APPROACHING \$50,000 IN REAL MONEY, PLUS THOUSANDS OF HOURS OF MANPOWER. THE LIST BEGINS WITH THE OUTDOOR CHAPEL AS MENTIONED EARLIER, AND CONTINUES WITH FUNDING WATER WELLS FOR OVERNIGHT CAMPSITES, FLOATS AND DOCKS FOR THE WATERFRONT, THE KICK-OFF CONTRIBUTION FOR THE NATURE LODGE, OVENS AND OTHER KITCHEN EQUIPMENT, BENCHES ALONG THE TRAILS AND AT THE COUNCIL POINT, HEATING UNITS IN THE HEALTH LODGE AND KITCHEN, WOOD COOK STOVES FOR THE WINTER UNITS, THE BBQ PIT AT THE PAVILION, AND I'M SURE OTHER ITEMS I'VE MISSED. BUT THE DEDICATION OF THE BROTHERS WITH THEIR PHYSICAL LABOR AT CAMP AS WELL AS THEIR CONSTANT CAMP PROMOTION EFFORTS IS MOST NOTEWORTHY. WE OWE THEM A GREAT DEAL OF GRATITUDE.

IN ADDITION TO ALL OF THE FACTS AND FIGURES REGARDING CAMP TUSCARORA I THOUGHT I WOULD END WITH A FEW TIDBITS ABOUT WHAT IT WAS REALLY LIKE TO CAMP AT TUSCARORA OVER THE YEARS;

- CARVING INTO BUILDINGS OR TREES WAS OF COURSE NOT SCOUT LIKE BEHAVIOR, AND YOU KNOW CHARLIE WAS A STICKLER, AND RIGHTLY SO. IF JIM BARTON WERE HERE TODAY, JIM WAS MY SCOUTMASTER; HE WOULD VERIFY THAT OUR TROOP, 211 OF ENDWELL, HAD TO PUT IN 100 HOURS OF SERVICE AT CAMP IN THE MID 50'S BECAUSE ONE OF OUR SCOUTS HAD DEFACED A WHITE BIRCH TREE AT THE WATERFRONT. ACTUALLY I THINK HE MORE THAN DEFACED IT. HE STRIPPED ALL OF THE BARK AS HIGH AS HE COULD REACH TO USE FOR SOME PROJECT HE WAS MAKING FOR THE OA. CHARLIE CUT THE TREE DOWN ANYWAY SINCE IT WAS IN THE WAY OF ONE OF THE ENTRANCES TO THE WATER FRONT.
- I REMEMBER WORKING AT THE OA CHAPEL ALONG WITH SKIPPER BERRY AND A GROUP OF CANDIDATES. IT WAS RAINING SO HARD THAT SKIPPER HAD HIS PIPE TURNED UPSIDE DOWN SO THE RAIN WOULDN'T KEEP PUTTING IT OUT.
- I REMEMBER OUR FAVORITE TROOP CAMPSITE WAS THE STONE QUARRY UP ON THE HILL BEHIND OLD SUMMER UNIT #1. JIM BARTON WOULD TELL SOME WONDERFUL CAMPFIRE STORIES ABOUT THE CREATURES THAT USED TO LIVE IN THOSE HILLS AND QUARRIES.
- I REMEMBER CLEON BELLOMY AS THE UNIT LEADER OF UNIT #8. CLEAN WAS A BLACK MAN WHO LIVED IN NORWICH AND SPENT HIS ENTIRE SUMMERS AT CAMP. HE WAS ALSO AN INSTITUTION WITH THE ORDER OF THE ARROW DANCE TEAM AS WELL AS CAMP STAFF. OF COURSE I ALSO REMEMBER SKIPPER BERRY ON THE RIFLE RANGE, AND SPIDER HYATT AT THE HANDICRAFT LODGE.
- I REMEMBER BEFORE THE HEALTH LODGE WAS BUILT WE HAD OUR MEDICAL RE-CHECKS ON THE PORCH OF THE HANDICRAFT BUILDING AND THEN HEADED DOWN TO THE WATERFRONT FOR OUR SWIM CHECKS.

- I REMEMBER THE STRAW TICK MATTRESSES. THE STRAW TENT, ACTUALLY CHARLIE USED TO BUY HAY INSTEAD OF STRAW SINCE IT COST LESS, WAS LOCATED AT THE SPLIT OF THE ROAD BETWEEN SUMMER UNITS 1 & 2. IF YOU WERE AT CAMP LATER IN THE SEASON YOU COULD TAKE YOUR MATTRESS THERE AND GET SOME MORE HAY TO FILL IT UP AFTER HAVING BEEN MASHED DOWN BY THE PREVIOUS OCCUPANTS.
- I REMEMBER CHARLIE'S CONSTANT ADMONITION "KEEP OFF OF THE GRASS" AS WE LINED UP AT THE DINING HALL BEFORE MEALS.
- I REMEMBER THE MOST SOUGHT AFTER POSITION ON CAMP STAFF WAS THAT OF BUGLER. THE BUGLER'S TENT WAS ON THE KNOLL RIGHT ABOVE THE DINING HALL PARKING LOT. HE HAD A LARGE MEGAPHONE MOUNTED ON A POLE INTO WHICH HE STUCK THE END OF HIS BUGLE INTO THE SMALL END AND WOULD POINT THE LARGE END, FIRST TOWARD SU #1 END OF CAMP, THEN TOWARD THE WATERFRONT, THEN TOWARD THE PARADE FIELD END OF CAMP. I BELIEVE THAT DICK GREET, A SCOUT FROM TROOP 211, WAS THE BUGLER ONE OF THOSE EARLY YEARS.
- ANOTHER MUCH SOUGHT AFTER POSITION ON CAMP STAFF WAS THE "RANGE CREW". THEY GOT TO EAT IN THE BACK OF THE DINING HALL AND ALWAYS GOT 2ND'S AND EVEN MORE. ALTHOUGH, AS YOU WOULD EXPECT, CHARLIE WORKED THEM HARD, HE ALSO TOOK CARE OF THEM. MY BROTHER WAS ON THE RANGER CREW.
- WHO DOESN'T REMEMBER THE KINDLING BOXES IN THE LEAN-TOS THAT NEVER WERE FULL ENOUGH WITH THE RIGHT KIND OF WOOD TO SATISFY CHARLIE?
- I REMEMBER JIM COREY, AS OUR CAMP DIRECTOR, LEADING SONGS IN THE DINING HALL. BILL BARRON WAS TO HAVE BEEN THE CAMP DIRECTOR BUT ILL HEALTH PREVENTED HIM FROM DOING THE JOB. SOME OF YOU WILL REMEMBER JIM AS OUR SCOUT EXECUTIVE FROM 1969 UNTIL HIS RETIREMENT IN 1983. ACTUALLY, JIM HAD COME TO SUSQUENANGO COUNCIL THE FIRST TIME AS A DISTRICT EXECUTIVE IN 1952 AND WAS ASSIGNED TO CAMP BY MR. CRISP TO MAKE SURE THOSE FIRST FEW SEASONS WERE SUCCESSFUL IN LIGHT OF BILL'S ILLNESS. JIM ALTERI WAS THE BUSINESS MANAGER. SOME OF YOU WILL REMEMBER HIM AS A PROFESSIONAL, AND AFTER HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE BSA HE WENT TO WORK FOR THE UNITED WAY.
- I REMEMBER THE PICNIC PAVILION WHICH WAS ALWAYS PACKED FULL OF "STUFF" WITH NO ROOM FOR PICNIC TABLES. THAT ALL CHANGED IN THE EARLY 60'S WHEN THE OA STARTED RUNNING CHICKEN BBQ'S ON SATURDAY NIGHT.
- I REMEMBER THAT THE CAMP FEE WAS \$14 DOLLARS MY FIRST YEAR. CAMP FEES WERE COLLECTED AT THE AD BUILDING WHEN YOU CHECKED IN. IN THE MID 60'S I USED TO HELP COLLECT CAMP FEES ON SUNDAY AND THEN WOULD BRING THE MONEY TO MR. CRISP'S HOUSE ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF BINGHAMTON ON SUNDAY NIGHT, SOMETIMES TRANSPORTING 3 OR 4 THOUSAND DOLLARS.

- I REMEMBER THAT CAMP RAN FROM SUNDAY AFTERNOON TO SUNDAY MORNING. THAT THE DINING HALL WAS FAMILY STYLE FEEDING. THAT EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT THERE WAS A BOARD OF REVIEW IN THE DINING HALL, AND THE LADIES FROM THE SCOUT OFFICE CAME IN AND TYPED ALL OF THE CARDS THAT NIGHT, AND YOU RECEIVED YOUR AWARDS AT THE CAMPFIRE ON SATURDAY NIGHT.
- I REMEMBER CAMPING AT WU#5 ONE JANUARY IN THE MID 60'S WHEN I WAS AN EXPLORER ADVISOR WHERE WE HAD TO BREAK A TRAIL THROUGH THE DEEP SNOW ALL THE WAY FROM WINTER UNIT 2. WE STARTED OUT AT THE PARKING LOT AT AROUND 7:30 AND BY THE TIME WE GOT TO WINTER UNIT #5, TOWING ALL OF OUR GEAR ON TOBOGGANS, IT WAS MIDNIGHT!
- I REMEMBER HARRY DEYO'S MOVIES OF ALL OF THE OA PROJECTS AT CAMP.
- I REMEMBER CHARLIE TELLING OF THE TIME, IN MID SEPTEMBER ON A WARM SUNNY AFTERNOON AFTER THE SUMMER SEASON OF CAMPING WAS CLOSED, THAT HE WAS WORKING UP AT THE FAR END OF CAMP AND AS HE RETURNED HOME AT THE END OF THE DAY HE DECIDED TO STOP AT THE WATERFRONT AND GO FOR A SWIM, AS I GUESS THIS WAS A FREQUENT PRACTICE OF HIS. WITH NO ONE IN CAMP, AND NO SWIMMING TRUNKS IN HAND, HE SIMPLY THREW HIS CLOTHES ON THE BEACH AND WENT FOR HIS SWIM. SOON HE HEARD A VOICE AND LOOKED TOWARD SHORE ONLY TO SEE SOME SCOUT'S MOTHER STANDING THERE. APPARENTLY HER SON HAD LOST SOMETHING AT CAMP AND SHE HAD COME TO TRY TO RETRIEVE IT. AFTER SOME EXPLAINING THAT IF SHE WOULD JUST HEAD DOWN TOWARD THE ADMIN BUILDING HE WOULD BE THERE IN JUST A MINUTE HE WAS ABLE TO GET OUT OF THE WATER AND GET DRESSED.
- I ALSO REMEMBER THAT CHARLIE HAD A TENT NEAR THE OLD SHOWER BUILDING. HE STAYED IN THAT TENT ALL DURING SUMMER CAMP. HE WOULD LEAVE THE TENT UP AFTER CAMP AND STILL USE IT IN THE FALL. YOU SEE, EVEN THEN WE HAD A PROBLEM WITH THE PORCUPINES. HE WOULD OCCASIONALLY SLEEP IN THE TENT, AND DURING THE NIGHT IF HE HEARD THE PORCUPINE CHEWING ON ONE OF THE LATRINES IN A SUMMER UNIT HE WOULD TAKE HIS SAWED OFF CANOE PADDLE, AKA CLUB, AND GO AND ELIMINATE THAT PORCUPINE.
- I REMEMBER THE THOUSANDS OF TREES PLANTED BY SCOUTS OVER THE YEARS. ON OA FELLOWSHIPS, GOPHER DAYS, AND JUST REGULAR WORK DAYS WHEN TROOPS WOULD GO TO CAMP TO PERFORM SERVICE. SOME YEARS AS MANY AS 10,000 TREES AND SHRUBS.
- I REMEMBER MY FORMER CAMPMASTER PARTNER CHARLIE DEAN AND HIS CARDBOARD OVEN CATCHING ON FIRE WHEN WE WERE STILL USING THE AD BUILDING FOR THE CAMPMASTER FACILITY.
- ALONG THAT SAME TIME, CHARLIE DEAN AND I USED TO GO TO CAMP FOR A WEEK IN THE FALL WHILE CHARLIE WRIGHT WENT ON VACATION. BECAUSE WE DIDN'T HAVE A SHOWER IN THE AD BUILDING I WOULD GO TO THE WATERFRONT AND TAKE A BATH IN THE LAKE AT NIGHT BEFORE GOING TO BED. ONE NIGHT, ABOUT 11:00 I WAS IN THE WATER WHEN I

HEARD THIS GOSH AWFUL NOISE THAT SEEMED TO BE ABOUT 10 FEET FROM ME. SCARED TO DEATH, I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO TRY TO RUN ACROSS THE TOP OF THE WATER TO GET TO SHORE. IT TURNS OUT THAT A LOON WAS SWIMMING NEAR BY AND DECIDED TO LET ME KNOW HE WAS THERE. IF YOU'VE NEVER HAD THAT EXPERIENCE I DON'T RECOMMEND IT.

- I REMEMBER THAT LONG DRIVE TO CAMP WHICH INCLUDED GETTING STUCK BEHIND THOSE MILK TRUCKS AS THEY SLOWLY CLIMBED UP TUSCARORA MOUNTAIN BEFORE ROUTE 17 WAS BUILT.
- HOWEVER, ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES OF THAT OLD ROUTE WAS THE ROOT BEER STAND JUST THIS SIDE OF WINDSOR WHICH WE WOULD BEG OUR PARENTS TO STOP AT ON THE WAY HOME FROM CAMP.

I'VE MENTIONED SOME FOLKS ALONG THE WAY WHO WERE KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF CAMP TUSCARORA.

- CERTAINLY THE COMMUNITY LEADERS WHO HAD THE VISION AND COMMITMENT TO RECOGNIZE THE NEEDS OF THE GROWING SCOUTING ORGANIZATION.
- MR. MERRILL WHO WAS WILLING TO SELL US THAT VALUABLE PROPERTY AS A PART OF THE INITIAL CAMP.
- GEORGE SAVORY, WHOM I HAD THE PLEASURE TO WORK WITH PERSONALLY IN MY EARLY YEARS AS AN ADULT SCOUTER, AND HIS CAMPING COMMITTEE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH A MAJOR UNDERTAKING.
- IRA REYNOLDS FOR SUGGESTING THE COMMITTEE LOOK AT THE PROPERTY IN THE FIRST PLACE.
- DWIGHT CRISP AS THE VISIONARY OF THE FUTURE OF CAMPING FOR THE SCOUTS IN OUR COUNCIL.
- CHARLIE WRIGHT FOR HIS 30 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE AS THE FIRST RANGER FOR THE CAMP. WHAT A LEGACY
- TO THE DICK BORDENS, CLEON BELLOMYS, SKIPPER BERRYS, SPIDER HYATTS, HARRY DEYOS, JIM BARTONS AND OTHERS MENTIONED EARLIER OR WHO SHOULD HAVE BEEN MENTIONED WHO SET THE EXAMPLE OF LEADERSHIP FOR US WHO FOLLOWED.
- TO THE ORDER OF THE ARROW WITH THOUSANDS OF HOURS OF PHYSICAL LABOR AND THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS OF HARD EARNED CASH TO HELP DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN CAMP.
- AND THERE ARE HUNDREDS WHO HAVE DONE AND CONTINUE TO DO EXTRAORDINARY SERVICE TO SUPPORT THE CAMPING PROGRAMS AT TUSCARORA. DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS AND PROFESSIONS ALIKE TO KEEP DWIGHT CRISP'S AND GEORGE SAVORY'S CAMPING COMMITTEE'S VISION ALIVE. SOME ARE SCOUTERS, SOME ARE SIMPLY INTERESTED COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS, SOME ARE CONTRACTORS BY PROFESSION GIVING OF THEIR EXPERTISE, AND OTHERS ARE THE SCOUTS THEM SELVES WHO HAVE MADE CAMP WHAT IT IS TODAY AND WHAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO BE TOMORROW.

I THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO REMINISCE ABOUT MY YEARS AT CAMP TUSCARORA. I HOPE I'VE SUCCEEDED IN FILLING IN SOME AREAS OF THE HISTORY OF CAMP WHICH YOU MAY NOT HAVE KNOWN.