

By the Blazing
Council Fire's
Light

Memories of Camp Tosebo
Volume Two

By Tosebo Alumni
Edited by David Wallace

Dedication

Much of the reason for the success of Camp Tosebo came from the commitment of the Staff to provide facilities and programs that would foster growth for young boys. That commitment wasn't just one or two summer vacations from college. As more of the early history of Tosebo unfolds, the dominance of "General" Johnson cannot be overlooked. We dedicate this second volume to his forty-one summers at Tosebo.

At the reunion of 2005, camper Bob Freeman reminded us of the people we must remember as part of this experience. We also dedicate this volume to our parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, who got us to Tosebo. Whether we begged to come to Camp or were reluctant to leave the comforts of home, their generosity in providing this experience has enriched our lives forever.

Tosebo alumni are saddened by the loss of two special men from our history. Ross Taylor, who passed away in February of 2009, was the grandson of founder, Noble Hill, and owned and operated Camp Tosebo with his wife, Doris, for ten years. In July of 2009, former camper John Dexter died at age 94. John was a student at Todd School and camper at Tosebo from 1921 to 1933. Alumni will always remember his gift for telling stories of his experiences at Tosebo and Todd School.

Introduction

With the success of Volume One, more stories from more alumni soon began to arrive. It fascinates me what guys remember, but I suppose that is the attraction of summer camp. Camp Tosebo wasn't the "unique greatest of all summer camps for boys," despite what some of us may proclaim. Every boy who came to Tosebo had to put something into the experience to get something in return. Many did, and for them Camp Tosebo was a special place to be. The variety of memories promoted in these stories, pulled from 40, 50, 60, 70, even 80 years ago, may sound familiar to your own summer memories, whether it was at a camp or just summer fun away from the cares of school.

Prologue

It was never difficult for me to be excited about Camp Tosebo. After all, I am sort of the camper who never left (even if many of you thought that was Steve Buckingham.) However, even with our cottage so close by, the thought of actually owning the place was pure fantasy. Fantasy sometimes becomes reality, and with the vision, creativity, and hard work of Kris and Steve, Kim and Joe, Martha and Mark, and my wife, Fran, we have found great satisfaction in preserving the essential character of Camp Tosebo so that others may also enjoy it. These stories are like puzzle pieces and we enjoy how so many different memories can come together to give all of you a glimpse of Tosebo camping.

DDW
September 2010

Tosebo Timeline

1892 – Noble Hill purchased the **TO**dd **SE**minary for **BO**ys located in Woodstock, Illinois. The name is changed to Todd School for Boys, but the Camp name come from the original name. Hill already had property in Wisconsin for a camp, but the desire for “big water sailing” prompted Hill to look to Michigan.

1894 – Clubhouse built as a one story community center/dance hall to promote the development of the Red Park summer cottages.

1896 – Beehive (Turner cottage) built as a private residence. Purchased by Tosebo in 1943

1905 – Crow’s Nest (Littler Cottage) built

1910 – Welcome House (Cron Cottage) built as a private residence. Purchased by Tosebo in 1912

1912 – Noble Hill purchases Clubhouse and property to the west and Boathouse with Portage Lake Frontage. Noble brings boys up from the Todd School for the summer.

1914 – A.E. Johnson (The General) starts his forty-one summers at Tosebo.

1925 – Cabin 1-2-3 built facing the tennis court.

1929 – Anthony “Coach” Roskie hired at Todd School and begins 42 year career at Tosebo.

1931 – Cabin 4-5-6 built facing the flagpole

1934 – Indian Council Ring created with assistance from Chief Whirling Thunder (Winnebago Tribe)

1939 – Boathouse dragged from water (on cribs) to current location

1945 – Craft Shop built

1945 – Noble Hill turns operation of Tosebo over to his daughter, Carol Fawcett.

1953 – Todd School closes.

1955 – Carol Fawcett turns operation of Tosebo over to her son, Ross Taylor.

1963 - Camp Tosebo sold to Hal and Jan Tonkins

1973 – Camp Tosebo sold to Pat Allmand

1977 – Camp Tosebo closes as a summer boy’s camp.

1983 – Camp Tosebo purchased by Dr. David Wild for a family retreat.

1995-6 – Restoration of the Clubhouse, Welcome House and Trunk House done by David Wild Jr. and Lulu Garagilo. Clubhouse operates as a bed & breakfast with Dan & Marie Baker as hosts.

2004 – Camp Tosebo purchased by Tosebo Clubhouse LLC

2005 – First ever Camp Tosebo Reunion held with “boys” who attended Tosebo over six different decades.

2008 – Tosebo truck restoration begins

2009 – Second Tosebo Reunion held. Truck makes grand entrance to delight of everyone. Again the Council Fire gathering is special for all.

2010 – Restoration of the Tom Thumb Miniature Golf Course

*Editor: This poem is the source for the motto painted on the fireplace mantle.
We can only assume that these verses expressed the sentiments of Tosebo's
founder, Noble Hill*

Nobility - Alice Cary (1820-
1871)

True worth is in being, not
 seeming,
In doing, each day that goes by,
Some little good—not in dreaming
Of great things to do by and by.
For whatever men say in their
 blindness,
And spite of the fancies of youth,
***There's nothing so kingly as
 kindness,***
And nothing so royal as truth.

We get back our mete as we
 measure--
We cannot do wrong and feel right,
Nor can we give pain and gain
 pleasure,
For justice avenges each slight.
The air for the wing of the sparrow,
The bush for the robin and wren,
But always the path that is narrow
And straight, for the children of
 men.

'Tis not in the pages of story
The heart of its ills to beguile,
Though he who makes courtship to
 glory

Gives all that he hath for her
 smile.
For when from her heights he has
 won her,
Alas! it is only to prove
That nothing's so sacred as honor,
And nothing so loyal as love!

We cannot make bargains for
 blisses,
Nor catch them like fishes in nets;
And sometimes the thing our life
 misses
Helps more than the thing which it
 gets.

For good lieth not in pursuing,
Nor gaining of great nor of small,
But just in the doing, and doing
As we would be done by, is all.

Through envy, through malice,
 through hating,
Against the world, early and late.
No jot of our courage abating
Our part is to work and to wait
And slight is the sting of his
 trouble

Whose winnings are less than his
 worth.

For he who is honest is noble
Whatever his fortunes or birth.

Tosebo Memories

The summers that I spent in Michigan at Camp Tosebo for Boys as one of the “staff brats” were some of the best times of my life. What I know of my first summer is only what I have been told. I spent my first birthday, June 21, 1922, on the boat crossing Lake Michigan from Milwaukee to Manistee. I am told that my father took me to the upper deck of the boat for my nap. By the time we reached the Michigan shore I was as red as a lobster.

I vaguely remember living in the large southwest corner room in the Clubhouse. Still later my sister, Doris, and I occupied the small room next to it. I have distinct memories of going across to the room with the big porch to play with Bette Hill, another “staff brat.” She was just six months older than I and we had great times together during the time we grew up at camp and the Todd School, where our fathers worked.

Bette, her sister Joan, and I were often taken to the beach to play in the water and the sand. I had one doll that the water would not harm so I would take her to swim too. In rainy weather we played with our dolls or other games on the big screen-in porch. Although the Clubhouse still had gas jets for lights, the building had electricity and running water in the bathroom by the time we lived there. The place for drying our swimming suits was the attic. It was almost like going into a sauna as we climbed those stairs to hang our suits to dry.

In the early years, the first floor kitchen had a kerosene stove with a supply barrel outside above the back door. Each winter local residents would cut ice from the lake and fill the icehouse in the side of the hill with ice and sawdust. This was our refrigeration.

The kitchen crew consisted of cooks and dining room waitresses from Todd School. During the summer they lived in rooms above the trunk room in the annex. There were only a couple of times in all my years at Tosebo that I ever got into those quarters. We did get to know those people well when we visited the kitchen for snacks or to help shell peas or some other job we could do. A problem developed once when Bette, Joan and I found where the prunes were stored and enjoyed them for snacks. A time or two the cooks came up a little short on having enough. After that we were forbidden to help ourselves from the pantry.

The Vista was the cottage directly across the road from the Clubhouse. This was the summer home of Mr. and Mrs. Noble Hill, Bette and Joan’s grandparents. They had acquired this cottage many years before when Red Park was just getting started as a community of cottages. Carol and Roger Hill grew up here and Noble Hill conceived the idea of having a boy’s camp. Mr. Hill looked for various sites that would be suitable for a camp, but was finally persuaded to establish the camp right there in Red Park. For a great many years the Vista was also the camp office. The cottage was aptly named, as there was a beautiful vista of the lake from the large wrap around porch.

The house called Welcome House was the Cron cottage and was, as such, off limits. Along the road next to this cottage was a long washstand with basins for

campers. The water supply was a spigot on the side of the Clubhouse. This was where the boys washed up before meals. The wash water was tossed on the ground after they had washed.

The Cron cottage was one of the first acquired by the camp and became the home for the Roger Hill family. Bette and Joan shared a second floor bedroom in this cottage. It was not many summers before this building was finished off with beaverboard and the ceiling enclosed. This kept the bats from flying around too close. The floor of Bette and Joan's bedroom was decorated with splatters of paint on the brown floor. There was a screened side porch that served as our play area away from the mosquitoes and the rain. I had great fun playing with Bette and Joan in this cottage. During the time that the Roger Hill family lived in this cottage it was known as "Skipper's Cottage." It was renamed Welcome House after the Hill family no longer came to camp.

Carol Hill Taylor Fawcett and her two boys, Noble and Ross Taylor, moved into the room with the big porch in the Clubhouse. I believe that at this time she had been widowed for a second time, or at least came without her second husband. The boy's father, Ross Taylor Sr., had died of an embolism when the boys were quite young. When the senior Noble Hill retired from active duties at Todd School, Carol would accompany her father to Ventura, California and return with him each summer. The younger Noble (called Nobby) and Ross grew up at camp enjoying the swimming, sailing and water activities. In addition, Nobby had quite a collection of railroad timetables including some of the car ferries that crossed Lake Michigan. When Ross became an adult, he was camp owner and director, but that was many years later.

Across from Skipper's cottage was the Turner cottage. The Turner family lived in Manistee where Mr. Turner worked, but the rest of the family spent most of the summer in their cottage. The older son, Jack, was the same age as Bette and me, and we would frequently play in their yard with him. The play yard was fenced in, as their younger son, Bobby, was still a toddler. They had a slide and a swing in the yard along with a sandbox. Play on this equipment filled many hours for us. Sometimes we got in the Turner automobile and pretended we were going on a long trip. Jack, of course, was at the wheel. This cottage also had a big screen porch that was fun to play on – and got us out of the mosquitoes. We used to say that the mosquitoes were patriotic and were gone by the 4th of July.

When the Turners no longer came to the cottage, it was purchased by the camp and became the summer home of Carol Fawcett, and was named the Beehive. By this time Nobby and Ross were old enough that they stayed on the Hill as campers and later counselors. They enjoyed their summers at Tosebo just as their mother and uncle had before them.

Toward the lake from the Clubhouse was the Noud cottage. I don't recall the time when people lived there, but I do remember the big porch that Bette and I would slip off to play on. It also had a continuously flowing fountain in the front. The water was clear cool water from an artesian well. Bette and I often played in the water there. It was a great place to float sticks and pretend they were boats.

These are the buildings that I remember until the Littler cottage was purchased and we had a summer home up on the Hill.

Mildred “Mickey” Johnson
Daughter of A.E. “The General” Johnson
1922- 1955

It just wouldn't be Camp Tosebo without....

The big bell on the icehouse – better than any watch for telling time
Singing in the Truck – so many songs
A scratchy record playing Reveille– up for exercises
Totem Pole, Totem Pole, forgive my stupidity – never repeated
Buddy Checks during free swim – raise those arms up
Enamel basins and gritty soap at the washstand – hands and faces
The small bell in the dining hall – a silent moment of prayer
Blue boats – paddling, splashing, and sinking
Hunting for frogs at Sandy Point – catch and release
A quart cone of A&W root beer from Skip Sage – only 25 cents
A chorus of “Get your elbows off the table...” – try to catch a counselor
The Saturday trip to Onekama – the Dairy Delight and the drugstore
The mysterious, secret language of OB – Hobow obarobe yoboobu?
Hoppers, slop pans, and silverware buckets – dining room efficiency
Searching for the High Behind – today look in the Game Room
“We are Table number 3, where is Table 7?” – pay attention, you're next
Picnic suppers on the Hill – hot dogs, chips, and bug juice

The sun always shines – and it really does

And so much more...- what was special for you?

A Trip to Tosebo

The trips that were made between the end of school at Todd and the beginning of the camp season each had their own incidents that will always be remembered. Soon after the horses were part of the program at Todd School, it was decided that they should be used throughout the summer at Camp Tosebo. In 1930, trucks for transporting animals were not all that good, and it we decided to use an alternate method for getting the horses from Illinois to Michigan. They were trucked from Woodstock, Illinois to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where the animals were loaded onto a steamship of the Pere Marquette line. It was probably the VIRGINIA, as this was in the days before the car ferries. I remember watching as seven horses were led one by one up the gangplank into the hold of the ship. Some went willingly while others were skittish about walking above the water. I recall seeing the horses all bedded down with straw on the floor of the hold.

Our Studebaker was loaded, along with the camp truck full of other gear. Finally the ship was loaded and the time had come to leave the harbor. Before we left the harbor there was time for dinner in the dining room. It usually seemed right to have a lake trout dinner. I have since realized that this food was obtained on the mainland, but it seemed appropriate at the time.

I have always enjoyed being out on the upper deck to watch as we left the breakwater and the lighthouse behind us and headed out into the big Lake. Before long we would no longer be able to see land, but there was always a big flock of gulls that would follow the ship out ready to pick up any food parcels that were dumped overboard. I'm sure the wastes from the galley were disposed of this way.

Soon it was time to get to bed. We always had a stateroom that I shared with my sister and mother. The trip was long enough to get a good night's sleep. By the time we woke up we would be in Ludington, Michigan, which was as far as the VIRGINIA went at that time.

The trip from Ludington to camp was a harrowing one. The truck that had to be hired for this jaunt had stake sides that were only about 3½ feet high. The horses were loaded with their heads hanging out on either side. As we proceeded down the highway, the hungry horses kept reaching out as if they wanted to get a hold of some of the green grass that passed before their eyes along the roadside. For those of us who were following in the car, this was a breath-holding experience.

At last, after what seemed like an eternity, we reached camp and the horses were unloaded and tied to the trees on the unmowed lawn next to the Clubhouse. Now there was the immediate problem of what to do with the animals. As yet there were no stables or corral on the campgrounds. That was to be the pre-camp project for the summer. A pasture about a mile from camp was rented until the horses

could be properly cared for on the camp grounds. These beautiful rolling hills were covered with sufficient grass to keep the sand in place and serve as food for the horses.

Adults in camp would ride the horses to this pasture. I dearly wanted to be able to ride the little old pony, Maxie, but my parents overruled me, as I was just a youngster. And anyhow, it wasn't very lady like, I do remember seeing my brother Wallace riding Firpo. The pony was small enough and my brother was tall enough that it seemed his feet would touch the ground as he sat astride the mount. He led Maxie behind him on this expedition.

Now came the time to get the camp in order. In addition to the usual opening of the cabins and putting up the tents, there was the construction of the stable and the corral. I was too young to help with that, and I was required to help with opening our cottage along with my sister. However, I did find time to go with Dad in the camp truck, as he would obtain the necessary building materials from the Noud Lumber Company in Manistee. I enjoyed these rides in the camp truck.

After Bette Hill arrived at camp, she and I occasionally took bridles with us and hiked to the field where the horses were pastured. There we would catch Maxie and Pedro, (Pedro was somewhat considered to be her pony), bridle them and generally have a good time riding bareback over the hills. I have never been able to pass that field without recalling the fun we had during the pre-camp period of that year.

Finally the barn was finished and the horses were brought back to the campsite for the boys to use in their class period, and for trail rides during the rest of the summer. At first I got little chance to ride as my father always admonished that "camp is for the campers" and I was "not to take the campers' time." As the summer wore on, I was finally permitted to have my name rotated with the camper's names for trail rides. That was heaven for me!

In the years following this first year, the horses were transported all the way from Woodstock to Camp Tosebo by regular livestock truck. It seemed to be a much more practical and safe. We were never directly involved with that part of the trip again.

Mildred "Mickey" Johnson
Daughter of A.E."The General" Johnson
1922-1955

Weather Forecast

The other night, it rained steadily until morning. By the time I left the house, however, the rain had abated. I looked up at the sky and saw a confusion of clouds hovering at different altitudes, some threatening more rain, and some looking quite benign. I also observed in one corner of the sky "a patch of blue the size of a

Dutchman's breeches." I chuckled to myself at the realization that the only time I'd ever actually heard that expression was a couple of summers more than thirty years ago, voiced often in the vicinity of home plate while gazing up at the turbulent sky and trying to determine the viability of beginning a scheduled softball game. It was a favorite expression of Mr. John from Freesoil, Michigan, but others adopted it as a result of his influence, and here I am, all these years later, still calling to mind his words every time I see enough blue sky to approximate the square yardage required to assemble the pants (or is it underwear?) favored by ethnic Netherlanders.

Ken Lacey
1968-1976

There is Nothing So Kingly As Kindness

Every Sunday morning most campers gathered in the Clubhouse for the church service...and at least during my nine years, we were fortunate to hear Reverend Keiser speak to that parable.

For many of those years, the Keiser family was part of the Tosebo Family. First Linc as a camper, then Vic as a counselor, then their mom and dad, he as the guest Reverend and their mother Amanda as a fun, children oriented leader of fun songs and activities. They had purchased the cottage just past the Beehive and quietly and respectfully were there to do whatever to help out. I was fortunate to know them both then and in my years at Grinnell College. During my recent trip to Tosebo, Linc, Vic, the Wallace's and I shared many memories...but as the Keisers had preceded the Wallace's, it was for us "older" campers to "fill in the blanks."

The quoted parable is exactly what the Keiser family was all about, and that is why they fit in so well. In reflection, that is also how I would remember Coach, General, Carol Fawcett and almost everyone from my camping years. Reverend Keiser was able to relate to all, and regardless of your religion speak to us as campers or counselors bringing the message to us in a meaningful way. Would that the rest of the world been able to share that experience, maybe things would be better.

Fred Meyer
1946-1954

Long Ago, but So Similar

I greatly appreciated receiving the DVD with all the photos of the campers of 1938, as well as the group photo. So many years have passed since those photos were taken that there were only a few faces that I recognized, although there were

many more names I remembered. Still, the photos, and the recollections of the campers that you sent to me by email evoked a flood of memories. Thanks for all your efforts in maintaining the memory of Camp Tosebo. If my memory is correct I believe I was a camper there from 1936 until 1944. In my final year, again if I remember correctly, I was a junior counselor with my major responsibility being care of the horses. In one of the recollections from a camper in the mid-1950s the name of one mare, Dolly, was mentioned. She certainly must have been ancient by then because I remember Dolly clearly, since I not only cared for her at camp but at Todd School as well (1936-1947).

In reading the recollections it pleased me that so many traditions from my period as a camper were passed down to those who came later – all the way to the time that the camp was closed. Of course people like Coach Roskie, General, and others were the ones responsible for the continuity. I choose not to repeat them here, but thanks to those who took the time to put them in writing.

I do remember pranks like carrying the bed of a sleeping camper out and placing it in front of the tennis court. I also remember putting the hand of a sleeping camper in a basin of water with the expectation that he would piss in his bed. Another great one was to go into a tent while it was raining and run your finger over the canvas above a bed. For some reason it would start leaking. Am I wrong about this? I also remember a prank that was played on me.

While at the bathhouse, standing in front of one of two basins, one to wash my hair and the other to rinse, while I was washing my hair (with my eyes closed) someone poured peroxide into the rinse water basin. Unaware of it, I dried my hair and started down to the lake. Some campers coming up inquired why I now had red hair (my hair naturally was black) and I then learned what had happened. While I am reminiscing I must also mention my relation with Noble Hill. The General was an imposing figure to me, as he obviously was to most of the campers. I had to deal with him throughout the year, since I attended Todd. Noble Hill, while I was a camper, came to Tosebo in the summer from Ventura, California. To me he was an extraordinarily austere individual, and I never remember him without a tie. On Sunday afternoons we were obliged to stop by his house across from the clubhouse (The Vista) and pick up a little strip of paper with a religious passage or a homily typed on it that we were to read at evening vespers. I dreaded knocking on the door to receive one. Sometimes I couldn't work up the nerve to do so, and I skipped. Then, along with other campers, when my time came to read my homily, I would recited what was written over the fireplace "There is Nothing so Kingly as Kindness." At each vesper you could hear that read at least four or five times.

Another difference between today and 68 years ago, when I was a camper, is the lack of fear of litigation. As several others noted, we would pile into the back of the truck and go to Onekama with little or no concern about our safety. I also remember, at a very tender age, walking down to the lake alone, and crossing the road (then unpaved), that went to Onekama. Another example was how permissive the counselors were in letting us use boats and canoes. At least once, and probably several times, we paddled unsupervised to a hotel on Portage Lake north of the

entrance to Lake Michigan. Later, it must have been during World War II, I remember that several of us bought (I don't know where we got the money) an ancient Dodge truck from a boathouse in Onekama where it was used to haul up boats. It had no tires, but we cranked it up and got it to camp undoubtedly greatly deteriorating the quality of the road. We parked it behind the stable and drove it up and down the trail behind it. Shortly after we ran it into a tree and put it permanently out of commission. These are only a few of the examples I can remember where we gave ourselves license to do things that would never be permitted today.

I will close with an anecdote that also comes from another era, and would not be tolerated today. I must have been about ten years old, and while playing softball umpired by Coach Roskie, I hit a ball down the third-base line. He maintained it was a foul ball and I believed it a fair one. I was really mad, and in my anger I struck him. Being very short, I wound up hitting him in the crotch. He grabbed me, turned me upside-down, and began beating my head against the baseball plate. Mind you, I deserved everything I got, but can you imagine a counselor doing that today. Yet who knows, if he hadn't punished me that way today I might be a Nobel laureate.

Finally, the frequent mention of Its a Long, Long Trail a Winding up to the Camp on the Hill touched me greatly. So many things have transpired for me during the almost 70 years that have passed since I sang that song, but it still evokes so many happy memories.

Once again thanks for your efforts to maintain the memory of Camp Tosebo.

Mort Winsberg
1936-1944.

A New Place and a New Friend

It was the first day of my first season at Camp Tosebo and my parents knew that I was somewhat ambivalent about being left alone among all those strangers who called themselves campers. It wasn't that I longed to spend summer at home in the city where our ball field was a frequently traveled street and the nearest thing to a swimming hole was the overcrowded, chlorine reeking public pool. There was nothing in Detroit to make summers attractive. Tosebo had everything to offer; yet I clung onto my father in desperation. Ross Taylor immediately recognized my fear and patiently walked the camp grounds with my family and me and surreptitiously led us to the beachfront where he suggested I change into my swimming trunks.

Standing at water's edge I was fascinated with those little rectangular boats propelled by a hand-held paddle within the confines of the swimming area. Ross encouraged me to "give it a try." Assuring me that I wouldn't sink or drown, Ross fetched me a boat to sail and I became initially engaged in Tosebo activities.

Incidentally that was my very first boat ride, and only one of the hundreds of “firsts” I would eventually experience on those hallowed grounds near Onekama.

Another young boy paddled up next to me and asked if I wanted to race. We were off! So were my parents. At the end of my first day’s sailing adventure and after having changed back into my standard green T-shirt and shorts, I realized my parents were gone. Fear resided no longer within me because my racing partner was my new best friend. James Larson and I remained close friends all the years we spent at Camp Tosebo. We were cabin or tent mates, members of the same tribe and activities group and maintained contact by mail during the off-camp season. Jim reminded me during the 2005 reunion; “We were inseparable.” Tosebo means a lot to me, and the friends, experiences and fond memories of camp life are, like Jim Larson, inexorably inseparable from whom I am.

Murdoch Campbell
1957-1961

Council Fire Script

(Editor: For over forty years the Council Ring was Tosebo’s most sacred place, a place where the boys demonstrated Native American dances learned after hours of instruction and practice. Steve Buckingham, a camper and later counselor, from 1953 until 1972 shared the outline of the ceremony and has added his (skb) own recollections to this information.)

1st Council Fire (from coach's notes dated July 11, 1970 and a later, undated note by an unknown author):

1) Blackfeet - Crow trail [skb - I think this trail started at the lookout and passed by the location of the crow's nest before heading towards to the council ring.]

Chippewa - Snake trail [skb - started at the craft shop and proceeded to the old archery range and then up the hill to the right towards the council ring.] Medicine man beats drum while Indians walk to Council Ring.

2) Medicine Man brings in the flagstaff.

3) Fire lighting ceremony

A. Four dancers - "Winds"

North - [skb - painted green];

East - [skb - painted orange];

South - [skb - painted red];

West - [skb - painted yellow].

B. Medicine man brings in the magic wood to fire lighters.

C. After winds are lighted - Medicine man take lighted torches.

D. Medicine man brings in the coals for the fire from the last council fire - he says, "Ho to the south wind" standing north and the campers say "How!"

4) Explain to the campers - They should not step on the white stones, don't try to blow out the torches, and the council ring is out-of-bounds except to show the ring to guests, parents, or when you are practicing dances.

5) Explain the symbols [skb - I've attached a scan of the symbols]

Horse - journey;

Tepee - temporary home;

Crossed arrows - friendship;

Sun - happiness.

6) Demonstration of the different steps we will do this summer

A) Toe Heel;

B) Cheyenne step (flat foot);

C) Crow Hop;

D) Canoe step;

E) Joy step;

F) Stomp step;

G) Double toe.

7) Give campers their Indian name - Medicine man needs names.

8) Boy chief's talk to his tribe - Blackfeet first, then Chippewa.

9) War Bonnet Dance - digging up the hatchet [skb - The hatchet was left in the ground over the winter. Coach had a particular stone he used to locate the buried hatchet at the start of the camp season. The hatchet was found before the council fire and buried superficially with loose dirt over the hatchet to insure quick and easy retrieval.]

10) Talk by Chief North Star - Hal Tonkins in 1970.

11) Chief Bill (Tuscany) will chant the Indian prayer.

12) [skb - The exit torches were lighted just after the chant. Coach (Chief White Cloud) dismissed the guests and campers by tribe, all walking the trail directly to the craft shop.

From the note by the unknown author (edited):

1) Fire lighters come forward;

- 2) The magic wood was distributed to the firefighters who held their hands behind their backs;
- 3) Say the first set of lines (I bring warmth to...);
- 4) The firefighters pick up rattles, gourds, and dance [skb - toe heel] towards the fire and back;
- 5) Repeat, shaking gourds and rattles [skb - there were also sticks with silver rattles about the size of quarters. Coach always beat the drum harder at this point to raise the excitement level and encourage the fire to light.];
- 6) [skb – I think there may have been one loop of double toe once the fire ignited;
- 7) Say lines;
- 8) Walk back, pick up torches, light from the fire, walk back and light the torch, saying lines one at a time [skb – the firefighter step to the edge of the circle and held out the torch for later collect. This was always exciting if you were seated opposite the wind with the torch above your head.];
- 9) The medicine man collects the torches
- 10) Firefighters say lines along with the audience;
- 11) [skb – I think the firefighter then left the council ring by walking on the outside of the ring.]

Some lines I remember:

Spirit hot, spirit hot, forget us not, forget us not;
As the days grow old, keep, us from the cold;
In the darkness of the night, give us light, give us light.

Some lines I think I remember, where they belong I'm not sure, but maybe at 6) which is just after the fire lights:

The fire is a symbol of warmth;
The fire is a symbol of happiness;
Two more lines.

Maybe the others will be able to help with corrections to my notes or add their own.

I don't know the history of the beaded bag, but I held it in high esteem along with the flagstaff, firefighter's four feather headdresses, Coach's drum, the medicine man's headdress and tunic, and Coach's leather outfit head-to-toe.

Steve Buckingham
1953-1972

Tosebo Summers

Camp Tosebo was a second home to me almost from birth. I was a very tiny six month old baby when my very young parents slung me in a hammock upon a very unseaworthy motor boat, called the TOSEBO, and putt-putted across the Lake

Michigan from Chicago to Portage Lake. Mother and Dad loved Michigan. She, because she had spent many happy days there with Dad, before they were married, and he, because when he first set eyes on Portage Lake, he was deliriously happy to be allowed to be “messing about in boats.” This true love for sailing never diminished, and grew stronger as he grew older.

This then, their happiness at Tosebo, segued into mine. At first we lived in the Clubhouse, at the top of the stairs, to the left, in the corner room. This was my parent’s bedroom. I slept out on a wonderful screened sleeping porch. Later when Bette joined our family, she slept out there with me. Here we went to sleep to the cheery sounds of the many bird songs, and the rustling of the white birch leaves. Often, the last sound I would hear as I dropped off to sleep was the haunting cry of the whippoorwill.

For the first three years of my life I was an only child. I spent much of my time with my mother. Mother loved babies and while I was very young we had much fun together on the beach and walking the peaceful and beautiful Tosebo grounds. When Bette arrived mother was busy with her and I had more freedom to roam unattended. Before I was six, the age of the youngest campers, I was allowed to wander around Red Park, the camp grounds, and down to the lake. The first thing I would do when we came to camp every summer was rush up the Hill, go up through the woods to the little gazebo that Grandpa Hill had made. From the gazebo one had a grand vista of Portage Lake and Lake Michigan. What a glorious feeling! I loved to be alone in the woods. I loved the little creatures that scampered around and under the fallen leaves. I loved to hear the bird songs and watch them dive and sweep among the branches of the trees.

I loved to climb trees. While Grandpa forbade climbing trees on the Todd School campus, it was approved of at camp. Often when mother and the other ladies sat under a tall tree, watching a nightly baseball game, I watched high above them at the top of the tree.

Every camper was assigned to an Indian tribe, Blackfoot, Shawnee, Cheyenne, and Chippewa. Early on I was assigned to be a Chippewa. My loyalty never varied. I chuckle when I see photos like this one of me among the many braves, squaws and papooses, wrapped in my “Indian blanket?”

It is a far cry from the fur blankets of the true Native Americans. Mine was an early American quilt. Native American all right, but not Native American Indian!

When I became old enough to join in the daily activities of the boys my age, I gladly worked and played along side of those youngest campers. I went to camp even before Coach Roskie became so important to it. I joined swimming classes and learned to swim there. Portage Lake is the most crystal clear lake I have ever seen and I have seen many on my trips around the United States and Europe. Portage, because many sparkling clear streams feed it, and because it is an arm of Lake Michigan, is a very cold lake. Much as I loved swimming in it, I often came out blue and shivering. Then I was happy to warm up with hot cocoa and graham crackers, always distributed at the Clubhouse following the afternoon swim.

I joined the basket weaving classes and made my very own basket. I took boating lessons and could row a boat and paddle canoe with ease. I was a shy child and did not go to drama classes, but I did enjoy playing Indian around the campfire every Saturday night. The only very big difficulty I had at camp happened every Sunday evening after supper. Everyone, counselors and campers, met in Clubhouse for a vespers service. We sang songs and then everyone was asked to get up and recite a verse from the Bible. "Jesus wept" was not allowed. Having to do that in front of the whole camp was traumatic for me, and my stomach would ache before my turn and long afterwards.

In July 1926, Mother was very pregnant. Because we were soon to become a family of five, we were given our own cottage. Today it is called the Welcome House and we were very happy to be welcomed into it. On July 26th, after Mother walked part of the way in the street toward Manistee, with Dad driving the car beside her, the pains finally started to come faster and Mother allowed him to drive her to the Manistee hospital where Roger Jr. was born. Fortunately, Mother had a nursemaid to tend to the baby, so he did not interfere with my camp life.

Across the gravel behind the house that was to become the Kiva (now the Beehive) when Aunt Carol lived there, was a babbling brook that fascinated me. I caught crawfish and polliwogs and brought them back to our house where Mother had a little pond built where I kept many animals, including snakes. Mother always had bunches of flowers around in our summer home. I remember tall bunches of gladiolas, in so many varied colors that made the rooms cheerfully ablaze.

We had a wind up Victrola in the living room. We also had one in Wallingford Hall back at the Todd School. I remember two records in particular that I played over and over again. One was called "When Henry Ford Apologized to Me." In it I remember the line, "I've thrown away my little Chevrolet and bought myself a Ford coupe." I had no idea what the song was about until much later, as an adult, I learned about Henry Ford's anti-Semitism. As a child at Tosebo, the world and all its problems were unknown to me.

The other record I loved was called "Two Black Crows." In it, supposedly, two black men told each other jokes in a fake Southern dialect. They cracked me up and I rolled on the floor time and again when I played the record. It was only much later that I understood the stereotypes the record promoted and that discrimination of any kind is wrong.

I was always very welcome to call on my grandfather and Cousin Nellie who lived across the way in the Vista. Grandpa loved to sit on the porch of the Vista watching the comings and goings of the campers and the Red Park residents, while admiring the stunning view he had of Portage Lake. While he had gone to sea at a very early age, I think it turned him off of sailing forever. He was as much a landlubber as I was.

Cousin Nellie, his second wife, was a wonderful little lady and we all loved her. She was not five feet tall, but could be a towering strength for those who needed her. I loved to have her tell me of her days as the wife of a Wyoming

rancher. During those times, she was pregnant five times and five times her husband went to seek the doctor. All five times she gave birth alone, before the doctor could arrive. Another proof of her strength and resilience was the fact that she was the driver in the family. Grandpa never learned to drive. Every summer she would drive them from California to Michigan and back again. No grand highways in those days and no motels and few gas stations. When you read about traveling Route 66 back then, you realize that auto travel was just slightly more comfortable than the covered wagon. Cousin Nellie was truly a pioneer lady.

Every summer the older campers took a canoe trip down the Manistee River. When they returned, they raved about their adventures. I longed to take that trip with them, but co-ed camping was not undertaken back then. Mr. Johnson always drove the boys over in the Tosebo truck, and I began asking him to let me, at least, go and see them launch their canoes in the river. After much pleading, he made a compromise with me. Many others have written about "The General." What a truly remarkable man. He had come to work for my grandfather while my father was still a student at Todd School. My husband and I were his students and my children knew him as the kind old man who still made Todd and Tosebo run efficiently.

He had three children, Doris, Wallace, and Mildred (who everyone called Mickey). Mr. Johnson said he would take Mickey, my sister Bette, and me in his own car to let us see where the canoes were launched. We packed a box lunch and ate along the riverbank. As it began turning dark we were reluctant to go back to camp. We were having so much fun, so Mr. Johnson said the three of us could sleep in the car. All too soon we realized that sleep would be impossible. We were being eaten alive by mosquitoes. It was Mr. Johnson's motto, "Children learn by doing."

I read, with interest, many of the letters and stories of former Tosebo campers. All of them tell about the utter freedom we all felt at camp and the connection to Nature. I didn't know it then, but I think we all felt it, how we humans are an intrinsic part of Nature and our souls soar when we get close to it. Would that every child could have a golden Tosebo summer.

Joanne Hill Styles
Granddaughter of Noble Hill
1920-1945

A New Experience in a New Country

Editor: While "Googling" I found an interview with James Ingo Freed done by the Art Institute in Chicago. Freed was a Tosebo camper and later became a renowned architect long after his two summers at Portage Lake. I found the interview interesting, not so much on how Tosebo influenced his future career, but how world events reached across the ocean and brought a young refugee to a place very far from home. Freed went on to be a partner with I.M. Pei in New York City and had several

major buildings to his credit, including the Holocaust Museum in D.C., the Javits Center in NYC, and the San Francisco Library.

Blum: Shall I assume that because you and your family were Jewish that you left Germany because of Hitler? You said you came here when you were nine and a half years old and settled in the Chicago area because that's where you had family.

Freed: I was brought over by my uncle Berthold who was an American citizen. I had another uncle and aunt who were American citizens living in Chicago. I was actually brought over, I discovered lately, under a program that was also, I believe, part of the Jewish assistance programs. There was a woman who committed herself to be responsible for the lives of the people she had saved. I found out recently while working on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum that a number of people had committed themselves financially, emotionally and socially to take care of the people that they brought over. They underwrote their expenses. One day I was supposed to meet this woman and I was picked up by her in a big black limousine. I became very ill in the car because the car was moving so smoothly. I had never been in a car that moved so smoothly. It made me ill and I had an upset stomach and I had to step out of the car. I knew that all the cars in those days would stop and start and bang around, but this was a perfectly smooth car that looked like a black whale to me. I think that she was the one who did something very nice for me. She underwrote summer camp for me. She said, "This little boy must have some camp experiences." I was sent to Camp Tosebo, which was a summer camp for the Todd School for Boys. It was a private school, although they did not have very many distinguished alumni. Orson Wells was the only distinguished alumni that the Todd School for Boys ever had.

Blum: And you?

Freed: I did not bring them any fame. In my opinion, I never did. At any event, I was at Todd School for Boys camp for two summers. It was really a remarkable experience. This was really privileged living. They had a Land Cruiser, which was a big bus that had berths in it so you could just get in it and travel somewhere else. We drove up to the head of Lake Michigan and we went to the New York World's Fair, I think. It was 1939 or 1940. We got to go to New York. It was really exciting.

Blum: When did you learn to speak English? You have said when you came that you knew no English.

Freed: I learned about as much as I could learn. I learned how to swim which was much more important to me.

Blum: Did anyone around you speak German to you?

Freed: No, but I'll tell you, when I first went to this camp, I was a rather disturbed child, as you can well imagine. Little boy being so overcome that he wanted to participate in all the evil things... In any case, I went to Camp Tosebo, and had an upper berth. I was too young, too stupid, and too unable to speak English to defend myself, so I had an upper bunk. One night, I fell out of my bunk and onto a table. I could have killed myself. Someone said that I had been singing in my sleep and that it sounded like "God Bless America." I used to refuse to eat any ice cream. I used to think it was horrible and I hated the taste of it. So they told me that during my first summer there I had to learn to eat ice cream before I was truly an American. The second summer I learned to eat ice cream. We went to see some interesting things. We went to see the House of David. On the shore of Lake Michigan there was a little town that had the House of David, where they had their own way of making furniture. They were bearded men who made furniture and played baseball.

Blum: Were they Amish?

Freed: It was a colony like the Amish, but they were not Amish. They were called the House of David. The men all wore long beards and baseball caps. That was the first time I ever saw baseball caps. They were all baseball players, not major leaguers, but one level down from there. They were very interesting because when I went there they had their own iconography, their own imagery that they projected and I became very sensitized to that. When you went there, there were all these men in long beards playing baseball. This was near Portage, Michigan.

James Ingo Freed
1938-1939

Oral History of James Ingo Freed, interviewed by Betty J. Blum ©2000, The Art Institute of Chicago, used with permission.

Saturday Nights

Saturday nights have always been special at Tosebo. First, the major league softball game followed our supper. These teams were made up of the upper grade and high school boys. The counselors played on the teams too, with the counselors from the other tribes acting as umpires. Before the summer was over, there were some really good rivalries between the tribal teams.

After the ballgame it was time for the weekly campfire. These campfires were one of the earliest traditions started at Tosebo. Even as a young child I recall going to the campfire ring adjacent to the tennis court. There was a fire built in the center with the stage at one side of the area.

The early stage was nothing more than a curtain stretched on a pole between two trees. More often than not the scenery were the trees out behind and the lighting was done with flashlights when needed. The “play” was the production of whatever group had dramatics that week. When I was still young enough to be in the youngest group, Bette Hill and I would often be characters in the “drama.” These were typical primary grade level shows, sometimes with corny punch lines, and often ending in giggles whether planned or not. The stage with walls, a raised floor, and electric lights was built in the 1930’s. The permanent curtain replaced the old pole and the productions became more professional. This was after I had ceased my participation in those dramatic productions

After a few rounds of singing familiar camp songs, the chiefs (campers of high school age) of the tribes, would read off the honors that his tribe had won that week. Also this was the time that various patches and awards would be given out. The chief of the tribe that had the most honors got to go first. Also, after the reading of the honors and giving out the awards was finished, the tribe with the most honors got to toast their marshmallows first.

There were various methods of toasting marshmallows. Some people would get the marshmallows on fire and then pull the black shell off so they could consume the gooey inside. Other campers would find a nice spot where the coals were just right and very carefully toast their marshmallows to a puffy, golden brown ball of perfection.

When the marshmallows were gone, we all formed a ring around the dying fire to sing “Taps.” On the lines “from the lakes, from the hill, from the sky,” all of us would raise our arms to the proper position and slowly bring them down for “all is well.” That was the signal that it was time for the camper to quietly head for their tents for bed.

As a young girl I would have to go quickly to get to the Crow’s Nest before the boys started to undress. However, as I got older, this became one of the best times as a couple of us would watch the fire until it finally died down and was out. There is something peaceful and fascinating about watching the last embers in a fire that had earlier been so large. In the background the whippor-wills would be giving us their evening song and as we stirred the ashes to make certain the fire was out, we knew that another Saturday night program was over and it was time to leave.

Mildred “Mickey” Johnson
Daughter of A.E. “The General” Johnson
1923-1955

Sunday at Tosebo

Sundays at Camp Tosebo were always made into something special with a schedule that was quite different. In the early years the campers always wore “whites.” During the week, khakis were the uniform of the day, but on Sunday it

was quite a sight to see the boys all dressed up. In later years, this was a time for clean green uniforms. Sunday morning was also the time for changing the sheets on the beds. Unless it was raining, the cots were all moved out of the tents and in the bright sunshine, the beds were properly aired and the new sheets made into them. When the tents were all in order, Dad (The General) would go to each one and inspect it. As a young girl, I got to tag along behind him as he completed this chore. There came a time when he had to say that I was getting too old for this activity.

In the years before the bathhouse was built, Sunday morning was the time that every camper had to use soap during morning swimming in the lake. That was the bath for the week. After the bathhouse was built and hot water became available, Saturday became the weekly bath day.

Dinner on Sunday was usually nicer than the rest of the week. Very often we had chicken and biscuits or something equally nice. Since the boys were in their "whites" and later in clean uniforms, and the rest of us all in our Sunday best, the meal seemed special and formal.

During the rest period, each camper was required to write at least one letter. It was assumed that this would be a letter home. The stationary and stamps were provided by the Camp. Without some kind of push such as this, there probably would be little contact with the folks back home. After the afternoon rest period, the schedule was relaxed with time for boating, swimming, or just taking it easy. Supper would be a simple sandwich meal so the cooks could have the afternoon and evening off.

Finally, it was Sunday evening that was special for me. We would always have vespers in the Clubhouse. As long as Mr. Noble Hill ran the Camp, he was the one that led the service. He was a very tall, slender and dignified man that carried himself with a "kingly" manner. He did love the boys and was an excellent educator. Although he always looked so right in his white shirt and tie, he was also very capable of swinging an ax or a scythe. The vesper service would include singing, bible verses, and a short meditation. The hymns used were many of the familiar ones the boys knew from Sunday school back home. One that came to have a great deal of meaning for me was Now the Day is Over and even now, whenever I hear that hymn, I can visualize the Clubhouse and sitting next to my father singing that particular song.

After Mr. Hill no longer came to Camp from his home in California, it became father's duty to conduct the vesper services. I have fond memories of those services. I recall particularly the one he gave that was based on the recording by Paul Robeson of "I Am an American." It emphasized the idea that all people are equal. We may not have attended a formal church service during the summer, but the Sunday vesper services filled that need.

Mildred "Mickey" Johnson
Daughter of A.E. "The General" Johnson
1922-1955

Underwearman!

The bell rang every morning followed by a bugle calling Reveille. We dressed and assembled at the hill for calisthenics and then spread out in a loose line to "police" the grounds on the way down the hill to the wash basins where we would wash our faces and brush teeth. We would then file down to the "octagon," a gathering spot outside the meal hall where we would "practice the fine art of conversation" while awaiting the bell announcing the call to breakfast. After our meal and some announcements, we were due back at our tents and cabins to make our beds and prepare for inspection. On certain days of the week, we would stop at the trunk house along the way to get fresh clothes. Some people take comfort in such routines. Others find it stifling. Take Underwearman, for example. Benny Taylor was a camper that observed these routines just like the rest of us. He even blew the Reveille on his bugle. But when Darla would issue his roll of fresh clothes, a transformation would occur. Look! Over there on the root-rutted path up the hill! It's...It's... UNDERWEARMAN! Yes, Underwearman! Camp shorts jangling with all the clips and hardware bouncing to the furious tempo of his dance! The unmistakable hysterical laugh reminiscent of a wild bird or a jack hammer! Undershorts worn as proudly as Batman's cowl! The pied piper of younger campers, all mirthfully chasing him, trying their best to pull off the headgear! There he goes! Get him! GET HIM! Meanwhile, back at the Hogan...All the beds are made except one. Everyone's clothes are in order, ready for inspection...except for one. All present and accounted for...except....The missing camper, beet red and sweating from exertion, bursts into the building to face the exasperated criticism of his campmates. When will he ever learn? Why did it take him Five years to earn the 100 honor shield that most earn in three? When will he stop being Underwearman? You might as well ask, When will he stop being Benny? Long live Underwearman!

Ken Lacey
1968-1976

My Aunt Carol – Carol Hill Fawcett

Carol Fawcett was the older of two children born to Noble and Grace Hill, founders of Camp Tosebo. Carol's younger brother Roger was my maternal grandfather making Carol my great aunt.

Noble Hill owned and operated the Todd School for Boys in Woodstock Illinois before he founded Camp Tosebo. When Noble retired he left the school to his son Roger known to all as Skipper Hill and Camp Tosebo was left to his daughter Carol. Carol was known to campers as Squaw Blue Bird but to me she was always Auntie Carol my friend and confidant.

Whenever I think about Aunt Carol and I think about her a lot, words like eccentric, eclectic, engaging and endearing come to mind. Truthfully, there are no words to describe Carol. She was one of a kind and beyond description. If ninety percent of how we communicate were non-verbal then one would have to be in her company to experience the sunshine and optimism she radiated. She simply didn't deal in negativity. None of us in the family can remember her ever whining about the slings and arrows life dealt her. On the contrary she had a way of circumventing difficulty, her own and mine. On more than one occasion aunt Carol would swoop in and rescue me from my disciplinarian. Given the fact I was not an easy child Carol recognized my need for a personal advocate. Her Henry J became my hideaway and her lap my safest haven.

Growing up I was a frequent visitor to Camp Tosebo. Time spent with Aunt Carol held special meaning for me. On long walks she would extol the virtue of all living things. "Trees can hear you," she would say. "Don't kill insects or small creatures indiscriminately they may be a loved one come back to us." "Where we are walking now belongs to Native Americans." "We took the land from them," You must honor their lost ways." Then she would give me a silver and turquoise trinket gotten no doubt from a soulful Native American selling handcrafted wares at some western train station. Years later those baubles came to be known as Fred Harvey jewelry because they were sold by natives outside Fred Harvey restaurants which were located in train stations across the country. Ironically, today Fred Harvey jewelry is considered quite valuable and I still wear Aunt Carol's gifts daily as a reminder of all she meant to me.

On sunny days we might head to the lake for a rowboat ride. It was not unusual for Aunt Carol to stand up in the boat, throw her hands to the heavens and address the sun lovingly. She would then proceed to thank Mother Nature for our bountiful blessings not the least of which was eatable food at the Tosebo table that day. Aunt Carol was committed to honoring nature and Native American lore. Each week she would don a full Native American buckskin costume complete with headdress and attend Tosebo campfire councils. There was no pretending, her allegiance was sincere. She taught me reverence for nature and for me there is no place more spiritual than camp Tosebo. Aunt Carol played a pivotal role in my development and I'm sure that can be said by many.

Melinda Tarbox Reitman
Great Granddaughter of Noble Hill

A Woman Ahead of Her Time

Many campers were not aware of it, but until her son Ross began running the Camp, Carol Hill Fawcett (Squaw Bluebird) was in charge...and while the administration was in the very capable hands of Coach and General, she was the

power behind them. As was so beautifully expressed by her niece Melinda, her gift to us all was not only her dedication to us as campers, but in trying to make the world a better place in which to live.

In my years as a counselor, I was fortunate to have spent occasional time listening to her....just listening. The subject mattered not. While I was not yet mature/worldly enough to appreciate some of her thoughts, I knew...just knew, that I was in the presence of a remarkable woman. Yes...different...some would characterize her as strange, not because of what she said, but for her actions that in retrospect were her beliefs and how she chose to express them.

It was not unusual when, very involved in “whatever” in the woods surrounding the camp, you might observe her, fully dressed in her beautiful Indian dress, headband in place, dancing to the tunes only she could hear. In the nine years I knew her, she was one that always appeared to be at peace with the world,

Strong, but allowing those around her to “run the store,” her focus was on the spiritual...and she tried in all she did to communicate that and her love of nature and the wonderful aspects of the Native American culture to all of us.

While I do not know, I think so much of what we all took away from Camp was because she and Coach shared that inner peace that characterized the Native Americans. Certainly it was a critical part of our camping experience, and their mutual reinforcement of that aspect of camping is certainly something that imprinted all. In her quiet unassuming way, much of what Tosebo was all about was just a part the legacy of Squaw Bluebird.

Fred Meyer
1946-1954

Staff Brats

I am Helen Thomas Williamson, Mickey’s younger daughter, also known as Papoose Buttercup. I have enjoyed and appreciated the pictures and information you have sent about Tosebo. It is wonderful to know that the history of the camp are still remembered and being preserved! Not often the case when a camp closes. Good for you!!

I was at camp for all or parts of the summers until I was 7 so have many early, but fond memories. Because Grandpa died so soon after leaving the camp, many of my memories of him also revolve around Tosebo. I especially appreciated seeing the picture of the restored camp truck. The back looks so much shorter than I remember! (I guess that happens when you are so little.) Grandpa (A.E. Johnson) used to take the laundry into town in big barrels in the back. We got to ride along and our job was to tap on the window to alert him if any of the items were blown out by the wind. It actually did happen a few times. One summer we were hauling hay back to the camp when we found a small mouse among the bails. We got to keep it as a pet, but when it was time to leave it "ran away" so it didn't come home

with us. I think I understand that now. I also remember once riding in the truck with the boys to a pancake dinner in town. They had a black woman dressed up like Aunt Jemima. I actually thought it was the real Aunt Jemima from the syrup bottle. Again, I was pretty small. I also remember trips into town with the campers, including going to the store. My meager allowance would only give me enough to buy small things like candy or peashooters. I think I went through a lot of peashooters in those years!

I was sad to hear that the Vista is gone, though am not surprised. We had many wonderful family memories there. The best part was the wrap-around porch. The porch swing in the back was a super place for FOB (rest) time. My grandmother and I used to wash that porch and sweep it off with our brooms. I used the fireplace broom, which I called my "silly broom". I still have it today by my fireplace. The curtains between the hallway and the living room made for a great stage. I hate to think of the number of performances we put the adults through. Fishing over the stair railing was strangely fun, though now I can't imagine why. One time when all of the other adults went into town for the evening, Grandpa stayed back to babysit. I will never forget him making popcorn over the fire with the popcorn popper lid off so the popcorn would shoot out into the room. We had more fun trying to catch it in our mouths. We cleaned everything up so the retuning adults would never know. Grandpa was always seen as the stern schoolmaster, but to us he was really a softy! I always wondered about the mysterious room upstairs in the back with the outside staircase where the counselors would sometimes go. (The counselor's lounge.) Finally, one year as we were closing Grandpa had the door open and I discovered it was just a room with regular furniture in it. Disappointing!

I, too, remember catching frogs in the creek behind the Vista and Grandpa having the cook make fried frog legs for us for dinner. I still enjoy them on the rare occasion I see them on a restaurant menu, although now I could never catch a frog to cut off the legs. I also remember enjoying sitting in the gazebo on the road on the way from the Vista to the lake. I would imagine it is gone now. We really appreciated when the boathouse was remodeled to include a dressing room for the ladies in the upper level. Prior to that we always had to wear our suits to the lake. Playing on the sand, swimming in that nice clear water, riding in the saucers, what more could you ask for? For me as a little one, big memories are trudging up the HUGE (or so it seemed) hill to go up to the tent ground area, the LONG (or so it seemed) walk to the lake, and the fun of getting up very early to walk with Grandpa down to the horse area to turn on the pump. He used to use his pocketknife to make flowers petals out of the skin of an orange. We would pull off the rind piece by piece and eat the orange. I remember the Club House - playing caroms and listening to the boys play on the piano (whatever that God-forsaken song is that keeps repeating and goes on forever). The nurse's office was on the second floor and at least once a year I would have to go up and be treated for the horsefly bites. I still have a picture of the outside of the Club House I drew in crafts one day.

In terms of camp activities, the drama section was the best for me. It was fun to be up on that "cool" stage. As the only girl in my group, I always got a plum part. My brother borrowed one of my skirts at times to be the girl when it was his group's turn to perform. I can still do one step of the Indian dances that we learned. I liked riding the horses, but never got out of the corral. I was always envious of the kids that got to go on the trail rides. Our last summer there they told me I would be good enough the following summer. I told them that we wouldn't be back the next summer because Grandpa wasn't coming back. From the reaction of the two counselors, I may have shared information that was not yet common knowledge. Oops! Archery was fun, too, except that I always seemed to scrape my arm with the bowstring! I feel very lucky to have been exposed and able to participate in all of the activities provided. It has made for great memories.

Does sassafras still grow in the area? We used to harvest the bark to make sassafras tea. I still like it better than root beer anytime!

I have no illusion that any of this actually adds to the history of the camp for you, as they are the personal memories of a non-camper, but I have enjoyed writing them down. Thank you for this opportunity to share!

Helen Thomas Williamson
Granddaughter of A.E."The General" Johnson
1948-1955

TOSEBO goes to Hollywood

It seems like whenever a newspaper or magazine writer wanted to do a feature on Camp Tosebo, one of the most common themes was that Orson Welles attended Tosebo. While these stories are fun to read, they suffer from a lack of actual facts. Orson Welles did attend the Todd School for Boys and Roger Hill is credited with mentoring and encouraging Welles in his interests in theater and radio. Welles did visit Camp Tosebo in July of 1932 and we see his signature in the register books. It is also interesting that Welles paid tribute to Todd School and Coach Roskie in his 1946 movie thriller, "The Stranger," starring Welles, Edward G. Robinson, and Loretta Young.

In the late 1940's, Jerome Kattan attended Camp Tosebo. He went on to become a character actor (Kip King) in several films and is also the father of former SNL regular Kris Kattan. Jerome was featured in several of his son's films like "A Night at the Roxbury" and "Corky Romano" and appeared in many TV series like Dagnet, Mr. Ed, My Three Sons, Different Strokes.

In the mid 1960's, James Lurie attended Camp Tosebo with his brother, Fred. James appeared in several episodes of "Law and Order", "Buffy the Vampire Slayer", and "Picket Fences." Today, he is active doing commercials, narrations,

and other promotions for The History Channel, PBS, Discovery Channel, and National Geographic.

Were there others? Probably, but there were also doctors, lawyers, engineers, educators, husbands and fathers who all got life lessons at a little camp in the north woods of Michigan.

Editor

The Long Camp Trail

On this early August evening, I had become engaged in an engrossing game of caroms in the Clubhouse with one of the campers. Mother and Dad had gone up the Hill earlier in the evening before darkness fell.

The sound of the bugle giving the call of Tattoo meant that all the campers had to head up to the Hill to get ready for bed. I had to wait until after Taps sounded as the tent grounds were forbidden to me between Tattoo and Taps. After all, the boys were changing and getting ready for bed!

At last Taps sounded and I could head up the Hill, through the tent grounds to our cottage. Since I had been down since suppertime and when it was still daylight, I had no flashlight with me. There must have been no moon as it was very dark outside. I was able to get just past the Trunk House without difficulty, but as the trail continued, I could see nothing and I had to go through that stretch of woods to get home.

I realized that the path was free of leaves, so that as long I didn't hear the crunch of leaves underfoot I was still on the path. I felt like a blind person as I put one foot in front of the other. Occasionally I would stray from the path and hear the leaves as I stepped on them. Quickly I found my way back to the silent path. It seemed like a great distance until I finally spotted what looked like a mouse hole in the woods. This was the trail opening to the Hill and the tent grounds. With my eyes fixed firmly on that spot, I moved quickly to the relatively lighter tent grounds. Now I could finally see the lights of our cottage above the Craft Shop. It was simple to follow the path now to the comfort of our cottage.

Needless to say, after this experience, I usually made certain that either I had a flashlight or I was with someone who did. As dark as I was, I have to admit that now enjoy a walk in the woods without a light

Mildred "Mickey" Johnson
Daughter of A.E."The General" Johnson
1922-1955

The Truck

“Well yes, I went to Camp Tosebo, but it was so long ago, I really don’t remember much about it,” the voice on the telephone said.

“How about the Boathouse, or the Council Fire, or Coach Roskie, or the truck,” I replied.

“Oh, the truck, that was a great truck. We had such fun all packed in there, singing songs on the way to town,” – and that starts the memories flowing... Many alumni may have forgotten their counselor’s name or even what years they attended, but almost all remember the old camp truck. When we purchased Camp Tosebo in 2004, I was curious what happened to the truck and quickly found out that Dr. Wild had kept it and taken it back to his farm in Onekama behind the Fairgrounds. First a phone call and Dr. Wild told me that a 1942 1 ½ ton Chevrolet was a rare item and he intended to restore it and he certainly didn’t want to sell it. Then annual letters followed in hopes that he would part with what I considered an important Tosebo artifact. Finally in September of 2008, I received permission to remove the truck from his farm, with a warning that it was in “pretty may be quite a disappointment.” Sunk in the mud, nearly up to the frame, and home to generations of mice and squirrels, just getting it out of the field was a challenge for the tow truck. It was, however, mostly intact. The paint was almost entirely worn off. The door panels showed the faint outline of “The Todd School,” but you had to know what you were looking at to even see it. The wood box on the back lasted just long enough to photograph and measure, and once removed, the truck looked like something that might still have some life in it. After a few inquiries, I learned about Dan Kowalski in Manistee. A visit to his body shop didn’t exactly inspire me with confidence, but I had to realize that restorations like this are better done by a craftsman than a businessman. Kowalski’s shop is a museum of cars and car parts. He kept telling me he couldn’t hire anyone to clean it up because he’d never be able to find anything! So Dan started on the truck body and the engine went to Brian’s Auto Parts, also in Manistee. Good friends, there was from the start, some sense of competition about which shop would have to wait for the other one to finish. As it turned out, both had their struggles along the way and as the Reunion of 2009 approached, I wasn’t sure if we were going to have a “grand entrance” or not. The truck generated a good deal of interest in Manistee. Several old timers made Dan’s shop a regular stop in the morning to monitor the progress, and as I visited I met folks who had sold food to the camp, or boarded horses for the camp, and even someone who owned the sailboat NIP, after the camp was done with it. (*Note to self: Do not go looking for that restoration project*) I drove the truck from Manistee back to our cottage in Red Park just one week before the June reunion. It was my first experience with “double clutching” and after a few gear crunches I got the hang of it pretty well (Sometimes!)

Dave Wallace

1960,61, 64, 65, 67, 2004-present

The General's Cottage or the Crow's Nest

I shall never forget the first time that I saw the cottage in which I was to spend many of my summers. This cottage, which was located on top of the Hill above the tent grounds, had belonged to the Littler family. Before it became our place, it had a fence around the grounds. The best wild strawberry patch was found here. Bette and I would slip in through the gate and really enjoyed the berries although we did not know we were trespassing.

Just inside the fence was an open garage. This became the shelter for our car after we lived in this cottage. I was still a preschooler in the 1920's when the camp acquired the property and the cottage became our summer home. It was exciting to climb to the top of the hill and see this house. The first floor was actually one big room with a divider made of vertical birch log, which created a living and dining areas. Before we moved in this divider was removed. At one end there was a fascinating cobblestone fireplace. We were to spend many delightful evenings in front of this fireplace.

The inside of the cottage was unfinished which was typical for cottages of that vintage. There were some kerosene lamps there that must have been the only light source for the previous occupants. On one wall beside the front door the Littler family had recorded the dates of the various visits they had made to their cottage. We, as the Johnson family, continued this tradition with our names and visit dates.

There was a small kitchen with an old kerosene stove and shelves with some dishes on them. I have forgotten what the water supply was although I do recall that there was no running water and have since wondered if the Littler's had to carry all their water up the hill or not. The toilet was a little outhouse behind the cottage. My mother always disliked this type of facility so it was very high on the priority list that we should have an indoor bathroom.

The second floor had a large room with a divider to make it seem like two bedrooms. My brother, Wallace, had the one at the top of the stairs when he wasn't staying in one of the tents. The bedroom was small and actually served as a hall to the larger one that my sister, Doris, and I occupied. At the far end there was a fireplace similar to the one downstairs. When we first came it was operating, but since we didn't feel like we needed it and to make to other fireplace work better, we soon cemented it closed.

I recall being able to see the sky through the holes in the roof. The first repair that was done was to put a new roof on the house. This was done with rolls of tarpaper, since a cottage in the woods did not require a fancy roof. I can remember the smell of the tar that dad used to seal the seams of the tarpaper.

My favorite place was the little porch just off the second floor bedroom. This was to become my play area and sleeping porch. It was just wide enough for a canvas cot and long enough for a small desk and an area for my dolls. Dad screened in this porch and added a canvas shade that I could roll down when it was cold or rainy. So many nights I went to sleep listening to the varied noises of the forest. My parents screened in a side porch that became their sleeping place. They so enjoyed being in the fresh air at night. They had a bamboo screen for their privacy.

The cottage was perched at the very edge of the hill. The little kitchen was out over the edge where the path came up. The front porch was entered by the big white birch on one side and a choke cherry on the other. When the Littler family lived there, they must have had a stairway from the center of the porch down to the road. Bette and I had explored down the hill and found remains of the old stairs and the wood wishbone that marked the bottom by the road. Often when we would return from Manistee by the Dunewood Road (*now Lakeshore/Crescent Beach*) we would spot the wishbone and know that straight up from there was the Johnson cottage.

Early during that first summer after the roof was repaired and the house electrified, the next job was to get water up to the cottage. Dad, with the help of some of the staff, laid pipes from the camp well and pumped water to a large water tank placed on the hill in the woods behind the cottage. We used gravity to get water pressure for the shower and toilet installed on the back porch. This was enclosed to make a very suitable bathroom. We also had a sink in the little kitchen. We used the kitchen to fry the fish that we caught. An electric hot plate served as our stove. Popcorn was made in the fireplace. The drywell was down the hill towards the road. We were duly warned to stay away from that area for safety's sake.

I remember one time when a phoebe had built her nest on the back porch. There were young in the nest by the time we came to camp, so, of course, the parents stayed close to the nest. With a nest like that you can expect to find lice and such was the case. Dad forgot about that and leaned against the boarded window. Needless to say he soon had bird lice all over his arm. Fortunately he was on the way to a shower and got rid of the lice.

We used a kerosene water heater that Mother or Dad would light up for the weekly Sunday morning show or other times when they felt showers were needed. It was nice to have hot water for this purpose.

The cottage was known as the "Johnson Cottage" or "General's Cottage" as long as we lived there. It was not until we moved into the Vista, and the cottage was used for the youngest campers, that it became known as the "Crow's Nest." It was this name that stayed with the cottage until the very end.

Mildred "Mickey" Johnson
Daughter of A.E."The General" Johnson
1922-1955

The Chronicle of the Last Days of Camp Tosebo

Chapter One: Camp in its Prime

My eight summers at Tosebo to me from an innocent in Cabin 3 to a young man working in the kitchen under the direction of “Chief Good Cook” and “Squaw Yum-Yum.” I found myself fortunate to have been in on the Roskie years, gotten to sing “No cares have I to grieve me” at the top of my voice from a bench seat on the old Tosebo truck on a Saturday trip to Onekama, to learn horsemanship from Bob Low, sailing from Steve Buck, and to have spent many happy, sun-drenched days with my buddies as we grew up together on Portage Lake.

As a nine-year-old kid who had never left home before, I wasn't as apprehensive as I might have been on the seven-hour bus trip from Chicago to Manistee. Not only was I already friends with some of the other campers on the bus, but there developed a camaraderie from early on as many of the returning kids passed the time by singing camp songs (that, and putting up the seat on the toilet in the rear of the bus so it would come down with a bang every time the bus rounded a corner – Hee! Hee!) By the time we arrived, I knew the words to many of the songs.

The first campfire at the stage was kept lively by the manic Hal Tonkins moving things along. A camper face the rest of us and tried to name all the people assembled there but was interrupted by hilarious laughter when he inadvertently called out “Whitey Woodhead”, causing Woody Whitehead's face to match the redness of his hair. Camper Kim Scherschel volunteered to lead us through the complex versus of “Green Grow the Rushes Oh” and we were introduced to some of the behind-the-scenes staff, including Buster Dregansky and a clean-cut, elfin-looking Wally Gibbins from the kitchen staff. Mr. Wally was to reappear as a counselor years later driving a Datsun B210 and sporting a much less clean-cut appearance.

Buster once took me as a passenger on one of the camps' two Sailfish, a smaller, cockpit-less version of the more popular Sunfish that could be argued to be the granddaddy of the modern sailboard. It had a lateen rig, a fact I mention for all of you readers who earned your Able Seaman bar. You had to hook your legs under the straps that were tied between wooden rails on both starboard and port sides. If you didn't you would slide off while attempting to hike out in a good breeze. I don't think I ever sailed any craft that was quite as exciting or fun

Buster had a younger brother, Spike, who was famous for smacking softball's clear to the Tom Thumb golf course in extreme left field. That is where the fielders would routinely stand whenever he came up to bat. Sometimes a fielder would actually cheat him out of a home run using this strategy. Other hitters concentrated on the trees behind center field. This was a much shorter distance than the mini-golf course, and what really made it interesting was that a fly ball in the trees could occasionally be caught by a fielder who patiently waited for the ball to ricochet through the tree limbs.

The statistics for each softball game were carefully kept by a scorekeeper in books that were saved for years in the Craft Shop. I remember watching Mr. John, the gentle counselor from Freesoil, writing the batting order in the book, but he did not take care to allow enough space in the form to accommodate the entire name of George Despotides. I don't know why I still remember this, but I thought it quite funny how chagrined George was to find himself represented in that book as "Despot."

Coach Roskie was the activities director for the first two or three years of my experience. I remember his "sermons" at our twice-daily assemblies while we sat, Indian style, on the ground with a stalk of grass sticking from my teeth. I remember him taking keen interest in the condition of the toilets in the Dew Drop and suggesting that getting them to flush their contents might occasionally require breaking up solid waste with a stick! We all had great respect for the man. I wanted nothing more than to earn the honor of being called an "old-timer" by the Coach. In later years, those of us who came back year after year would take great pride in telling "Coach stories" to each other and to the envious campers who had never known him.

The WWII-era truck also retired about three years into my tenure and was replaced with a fleet of station wagons and a passenger van. Trips into town and the like were never quite the same. We "old-timers" were shameless in the way we flaunted our years of experience. I proudly wore my old green t-shirts that bore the simple and romantic arched "TOSEBO" legend, while almost everybody else was uniformed with the new design. Not unlike the generic canned goods labels that were beginning to show up on supermarket shelves, these new shirts displayed "CAMP TOSEBO" in two large and graceless sans-serif lines. Underneath this was a glossy white panel stretching the width of the camper's ribcage to be filled in with his name in permanent marker. For once I was grateful to have my brother's hand-me-downs to keep me supplied with my tokens of "old-timerhood" for several seasons.

My buddies and I were conscious of the heritage of the campers that came before us. Benny Taylor, son of previous owners Ross and Doris Taylor, and great-grandson of Tosebo's founder, Noble Hill, grew to be one of my closest companions and provided a rich source of history. I remember a prominent feature amongst the marks on the wooden deck of the swimming raft was the inscription, "Termite." The letters consisted of dots punched into the wood, suggesting the work of real termites. I learned that Termite was actually Jim Bergquist and was so named because his head was large in proportion to the rest of his body. Another relic from the mysterious past was a log structure deep in the woods that everyone knew as "CBS." This was an acronym for the last names of the builders, and the only one I recall was Scherschel for the "S" (*Editor Note: Dave Carlson, Don Bogie and Mark Scherschel*) It lasted until the mid-seventies when a counselor deemed it a safety hazard and pushed it over into the valley that it had overlooked for many years.

Chapter Two; Changing Times

We could sense that the landscape was changing in our teenage years at the camp. It seemed harder to attract campers in a world where other camps started specializing in sports or weight loss or academics. The enrollment dwindled from over 70 campers in the late sixties to 50 campers in the later years. It seemed to me that the fuller the tents and cabins were, the more fun camp was.

One summer we arrived to find ten or so of our fellow campers who had come from rich families in Mexico. Some barely spoke a word of English. The oldest, Danny Hidalgo, was a camper for both years that the Mexicans attended. Danny was 15 years old and grossly overweight. He had a bump on his arm, presumably from a smallpox vaccination, which stuck out as if a fleshy dowel pinning his arm to his shoulder was working itself loose. He often would stand on the dock, clad in his dry swim trunks, with his arms folded, jet black hair in a bowl cut framing his horn-rimmed glasses, all accentuating the essential roundness of his posture. He was the most proficient in English of the bunch, which led him to be the interpreter for many situations. I got to know him pretty well. He would spin the most captivating stories of his life with his hoodlum friends in Mexico – stories so cruel and fantastic and told with such lack of emotion that I decided to believe that he made them all up to impress me. In that context they were richly entertaining.

Chapter Three: My Camp Slips from My Grasp

Summers at Tosebo suited me immensely. The carefree days, the pleasant routines, and a core group of likeminded friends made these 4 week idylls the highlight of each year. As the years rolled by, I schemed how I could prolong my time on Portage Lake well beyond my camper years. At sixteen, I could work in the kitchen and the following year I would move on to junior counselor and so on until adulthood would take my summers from me. My assumptions were tested when I came to camp for my last year as a camper to find, not the familiar competent management of Hal and Jane Tonkins, but a new and untested administration. Among my reunited friends that first day, we shared the uneasiness. Will these new people try to change our camp? There were some familiar counselors, but the whole executive branch was new anda lady was in charge! And she has three kids with her including a nine-year-old daughter. Was she expecting to keep the daughter at Tosebo? Surely after the opening festivities she would pack her off to a more appropriate situation.

We also were missing one of the old timers in our age group with whom we had expected to spend our last summer together. What happened to Jim Allen? At mealtime we had our answer. *He had been hired as a kitchen helper even though he was only fifteen! Now this was too much!* Evidently the new owners, the Allmand's, had erred in believing that old Jim was a year older than he really was. Not one to pass up what seemed like a great opportunity; Jim kept mum about his age and

reported for duty in the kitchen. I don't think he expected his pals to react to his opportunism with feelings of betrayal and disgust. Whatever the reason, poor Jim clearly was miserable with his situation and left for home within a few weeks of opening day.

Jim's circumstance was just a sideshow in the tension that characterized the whole summer. We old-timers had the stubborn notion that the camp was ours, regardless of annoying legalities, investments, or deeds, and we resisted any attempts to change our camp. In keeping with this notion, the reader should interpret any subsequent reference to the "real" owners to mean that coalition of persons between the ages of thirteen and sixteen, who interpreted experience to knowing how things ought to be.

Mrs. Allmand had hired an experienced camp coordinator named Ed Smith. As experienced as he may have been, he had zero Tosebo experience and therefore was under a cloud of suspicion from the real owners of the camp. In the final analysis, he mostly passed inspection. The same could not be said of Mrs. Allmand's brother, a guy in his thirties who was brought on board as an assistant who oversaw such things as laundry runs to town and shuttling canoes to the camping trip destinations. His personality did not equip him well to withstand the real owners' prejudices. To our dismay, the nine year old was never sent anywhere, so we were faced with the contradiction of this girl (as sweet as she was) existing in a realm where she clearly did not belong.

Throughout the conflicts, it became the task of the eldest of the real owners to make diplomatic visits to the Welcome House from time to time to "guide" the new administration in the appropriate way to preserve camp traditions. It fell to me on one such occasion to be the spokesman voicing the objection to the proposition that the nine year old daughter go with us on the traditional between sessions camping trip to Mackinac Island. The girl stayed home, but the wounds suffered by our committee's callous indifference to the young girl's feelings (to say nothing of her mother) were to be blamed on me and not soon forgotten.

To paraphrase T.S. Elliot, the end came not with a bang, but a whimper. Benny, Andy Struebing, and I did return the following summer as sixteen year olds to work in the kitchen. Andy found favor with the new administration and returned the next summer as a junior counselor. Benny and I did not. The two of us drove up for a visit and could not escape the impression that our camp was in its last season, which it was. Not being invited back for that last year was one of the greatest disappointments of my life. It certainly loomed very large to my seventeen-year-old sensibilities. Looking back, I see how silly it was to feel left out when the camp was approaching its death rattle anyway. Sometimes it's hard to let go of a dream when it has become such an integral part of one's identity, even though the rays of disillusion are shining so brightly through the bedroom window.

Ken Lacey
1968-1976

Boys will be Boys

I wish that I could remember more about my time at Tosebo or that I had taken a few pictures to help stir my memories. That was almost 40 years ago (1964-1966), so I guess it is understandable that my memories are lacking in detail. The first two years I attended the second 4-week session. In 1966, I believe that I went the full 8 weeks.

One of my favorite memories from Tosebo was the time that the campers became obsessed with knives and knife throwing. I think that was in 1966. I'm not sure how it started. Everyone at the time had a jackknife. That was standard issue. I suppose a few of us started by playing mumbley-peg. For those unfamiliar with the game, it is knife-throwing contest where participants complete increasingly difficult throws. It starts with a simple throw holding the knife handle, followed by a throw holding the blade, and continues from there with increasingly complex throws involving spins and other affectations. I remember one time playing it with a friend on the way up the hill after a meal. Mumbley-peg is fun game, but, because there is no danger involved, it is difficult to hold a young boy's interest. The most popular games were those in which there is some element of risk. The two that I remember are Stretch and Chicken. These two were by far the most popular at the camp and became our near constant recreation, particularly at times when we were cooling our heels, such as when waiting in lines. The game of stretch is fun and the less dangerous of the two. You start by facing your opponent about two to three feet apart. Taking turns, you throw your knife down some distance to the side of your opponent. If the knife sticks in the ground, he must stretch his foot out to touch the knife and pull it out of the ground. Then it is his turn to throw. The game goes back and forth until one or another of the players cannot stretch far enough to reach the knife. If you fall over while stretching, you have lost. It is a fun game for its part and I recall one or two memorable moments when one player, stretched to his limits, made a desperation throw of 10-15 feet to win the game outright. However, we soon all became so good at knife throwing that games were too short and the first to throw would nearly always win. The second game, Chicken, quickly became the most popular because, at its name implies, it was the most dangerous. Similarly to Stretch, Chicken starts out with two players facing one another. The difference, however, is that they start with their legs spread apart, the farther the better. Each player takes turns throwing the knife between the two outstretched legs and the opponent must pull one of his feet (his choice) in to touch the knife. Then it is his turn to throw. Again, if the knife sticks in the ground, fine; if not, you lose your turn. Leaning over was, if not against the rules, then at least bad form. The loser was the one who either first flinched i.e., withdrew his foot to avoid the knife, or put the knife into his opponent's foot. Most of us became quite proficient with the knife and I think it is fair to say that many of us could pin a leaf to the ground at a distance of five feet or more. I remember one memorable game with a camper whose name unfortunately I cannot recall. We were both good and each placed his knife to

greatest effect: right in the middle of the other's two feet. Quickly our feet came closer and closer together and the tension mounted. Soon they were a foot apart, and then six inches and then three. This was good, but not out of the ordinary. Most games came down to three or four inches before someone's survival instinct kicked in. We kept going, and three inches became one and then a half. Now we were truly at the limit because even if the knife was perfectly placed it had to be at the proper angle or it wouldn't fit between the feet. It was my turn and I didn't have much space to work with. I recall that he had sensible shoes on with a nice thick sole and not sneakers, which offered little protection. I took aim and threw. It was a beautiful throw and stuck straight as an arrow. The only problem was that it wasn't sticking in the ground, but rather had found the little rim of sole that surrounded his foot. We both stood there staring at the knife, as it almost seemed to quiver like in a cartoon. I had made one of my best throws but he had nerves of steel and he had won fair and square. I wish I could remember that camper's name. He certainly had the right stuff. Our obsession with knives left as quickly as it came. I don't think it lasted more than three or four days at the most. I also remember being a bit surprised that Hal Tonkins didn't cut our dangerous passion short. Even then I knew that thirty or so young boys throwing knives did not constitute the safest of environments. However, I don't recall anyone getting hurt. Not even a scratch. Today, while I think that it is a good idea to wear helmets when riding bikes and seatbelts when driving, I still think about those four days of the knives and the fun we had and I can't help but wonder if we haven't lost something by being so careful nowadays.

Neil Suits
1964-66

It wasn't just one thing about Tosebo

- Gold Rush Day: This was one of my fondest camp memories. Gold Rush day, searching the campsite for gold colored rocks; it was just as real as being in California in 1849 for me. The fantasy was tremendous, with Black Bart out trying to steal our gold. I decide to try and steal Black Bart's hat. I was hiding up by the woods behind the cabins. I watched him walk out of the woods, and start heading across the ball field, walking away from me. I broke into a quite run, came up behind him, grabbed his hat and took off. I didn't get far before he caught me, and I was on the ground holding firm to the hat. Mr. Hal came up and yelled, "Give me the hat" holding his hands out. I push the hat quickly to Mr. Hal, but of course, he dropped it!! Off ran Black Bart with his hat back on his head.

- Rodeo: I had spent almost no time on a horse before coming to Tosebo. Putting on the bridle on the horse, getting the bit into its mouth was a just plain shocking experience. I still can't believe we were taught how to stick our fingers in the horses mouth and none of us that I am aware of every really got hurt. Also, putting on the saddle, and waiting for the horse to exhale before synching up the last notch. Then riding the rodeo ring, I loved the barrel racing, pulling hard on the reins going around each turn, and then kicking to drive for the next barrel. Can't believe also that I never fell off, nor the horse never fell down, although it was close for both of us on a "Speed and action" run once.
- Sailing -I had such a great time sailing with and against Ben Taylor. It was exciting to have someone that wanted to compete, play hard, and push the boats to make them go faster, go out in big wind, what ever the challenge. It was grabbing the sails, the tiller and dagger board from the upstairs of the boathouse, and heading out to the boat that was always exciting. I still love to sail small boats, being close to the water, near tipping over and getting wet!
- Singing at the campfires -This was really wonderful. The first year I arrived at Tosebo, I had to learn a bunch of songs that I didn't know. By the end of the fourth year, I had them engrained into my mind, many for the rest of my life. The songs were fun, positive, upbeat, and still bring forward the positive feelings when I sing them in my head. "Cheer Cheer for the Chippewa!"
- Working as a waiter- I had three older brothers growing up, so I didn't have to do much around the house or at dinnertime. However, at Camp I really enjoyed the going to get the food, serving, being back in the kitchen area, helping clear the table, and in general, just being an important part of dinner. Doing well at this job made is pleasant for me and for the others at my table. It also broke up the evening, so that it was an activity, and not just eating.
- Mr. Hal - What a great man he was to all of us kids. He maintained a stern persona and a strong physical presence for the boys turning into men to look up to. He had a tremendous positive attitude, always looking for the good things in life. I will always remember him as the leader of the camp, and the one that we all worked to measure up to.

Kenneth Wood
1968-1973

Chief White Cloud

As legends come, and time acquires,
The legends go, in lore transpire.

And many of these bygone yarns,
Have chapters tattered and dimmed,

But not the tale of Chief White Cloud
And the Night of the Great North Wind

The Elder tribes had gathered,
From as far as the crow can fly,

To light the tribal Council Fire,
And reminisce of years gone by.

T'was not since the wise Chief White
Cloud
Presided the fire lighting,

That former embers were rekindled,
The tribes again uniting.

Dusk of night surrounded us,
The evening air grew still,

As the ceremony had long begun,
On sacred land beyond The Hill.

Within the council circle
The Four Winds were all addressed,

The way tradition had it,
First East, then South, then West.

But as the North Wind ember,
To the unlit fire was cast,

The Great Wind descended upon us,
And held us all quite fast.

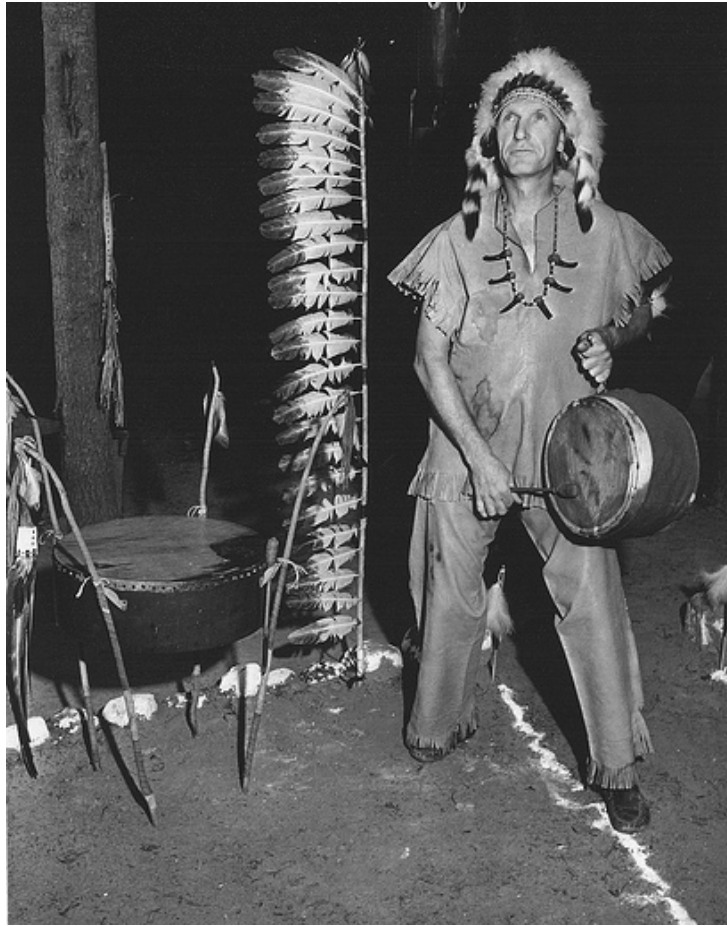
It stirred the trees about us,
Yet no others in plain sight,

Then left as quickly as it came,
Into the stillness of the night.

And those who bore witness of magic,
Know the legend to since transcend,

The night Chief White Cloud came to
visit,
On the wings of the Great North Wind.

James Wilcox
1967-1970



Chief White Cloud, aka A.C. "Coach" Roskie