

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CASCADE MEADOWS

(Written by Allan Anderson, Minister of Christian Education and Camping When Cascade Meadows was purchased.)

WHY THE PURCHASE OF CASCADE MEADOWS

It is important in understanding the history of Cascade Meadows that we look at the total American Baptist camping in Washington at the time CM was purchased.

The year was 1961. Camping was a vital part of most Baptist Youth Fellowships. This was true across the country. Rodney Britten was the National Director of camping. He spent his time working with states in the development of camp sites. Across the country youth poured into camps each summer. Also family camps were popular. Men and Women groups held large Retreats. Any empty week there were rental groups. And in most cases, across the country the campsites were old and not adequate.

In Washington State we owned Burton and Ross Point. We had just purchased Camp Bethel. The purchase of Camp Bethel was made because it was felt if the state Baptist did not purchase Camp Bethel the few churches in the area would go ahead and purchase it and it could have caused a major break in the state camping program. We also rented a campsite on Orcas Island for Junior Camping each year and joined with the Disciples of Christ for a Young Adult Camp on White Pass each Labor Day.

By the end of 1963 the Washington Baptist Convention had voted to have a major capital funds effort to upgrade our campsites. This followed a survey by an outside group and "hearings" around the state to find out what was wanted. What they found out was a intense loyalty to the camp "their church and their families had attended through the years". The word intense is not strong enough! An example, at one of the meetings we were trying to list all the options open to us. When I stood to make a case for selling all the sites and building one central in the state a man from Burton came down the isle and I was convinced he was going to try and lay me out!

Cascade Meadows was "born" with the vast number of persons committed to "their site". This included all three sites, Burton, Ross Point and Bethel.

WHY CASCADE MEADOWS WAS EVER "BORN"

There were two reasons Cascade Meadows was purchased:

1. There was a need for a site where backcountry camping could use as a base. Many also saw the value of a smaller campsite for year around local church retreats as well as ski camping in the winter.

2. When we spoke with capital fund experts about what we had planned for our Capital Funds effort they suggested we needed something new to talk about. Cascade Meadows became that something new we hoped all who loved camping could support.

FINDING THE PROPER SITE

Time was really pushing us. We had just over a year and we were ready to move on the financial effort. The State Camping Committee and the Board of Trustees asked if I would take the time to try and find such a site. I worked with a small committee. Most trips around the state looking at sites were made by two or three of us. I recall going to a beautiful piece of property near Cle Elum and going back to the motel and spending several hours picking the ticks out of my clothes. We looked on White Pass, near Snoqualmine Summit, around Ellensburg and a couple of spots on Stevens Pass. Nothing was just right, or even near what we were after. There was a site on Blewit Pass but the price was more than we could handle.

Finally, in December, 1962 I made a trip to one of my favorite places in the world, Leavenworth, with no leads, but I decided on the way over the pass to make contact with the county assessor. My theory was he would know the property in the area. I remember he was an elder man, who wore black pull over sleeves to protect his shirt.

After I told him what I was looking for it took him just a minute to remember that, "Dr. Hopkins had died, and he had heard Mrs Hopkins might be selling their get-away property." He told me the story of Dr. Hopkins being the doctor for many years for the whole valley. He had burned himself with x-ray and for a number of years suffered extreme pain prior to his death. There was no question, Dr. Hopkins and his wife were loved in Leavenworth.

I went out to lunch and then made my way over to the Hopkins residence across the street from the hospital. (I think that the assessor must have called for I was greeted warmly by Mrs Hopkins and invited in.) She took me downstairs where she had a projector set up and for an hour I looked at pictures of their get-away on Nason Creek. All four seasons were represented. I was so excited but tried to contain my excitement. She knew that The Doctor would like his get-away used by boys. I corrected her, saying it would be used by girls also but she did not want to hear this so I stopped saying it.

I think I went into Cashmere and stayed overnight with the Bill Coxes, or I visited with them and stayed at the Cashmere Motel. In the morning I headed across the Pass with the key and directions up Nason Creek to the Hopkins get-away. Mrs Hopkins also loaned me a pair of snowshoes.

What a hike in. I was so excited and the scenery was breathtaking with close to 6 feet of snow on the ground. When I came to the opening and could see the chimney of the lodge off to the right I felt very strongly, this is it!

I found the lodge just like they had walked out planning to return in a couple of days. At the Doctors death Mrs Hopkins wanted nothing more to do with their get-away. The large garage on the west end of the house was full of wood, enough for several winters. The generator ran well but it was the first time I had worked with direct current. I came out must faster than I hiked in.

Returning to Seattle I called Mrs Hopkins and told her it was just what we were looking for but that the wheels of Washington Baptist Convention moved slowly and it could be several months before she got her money. She said no trouble take all the time you want.

In our original visit she said she wanted \$30,000. At the time it was about 1/3 the market value. The price made the purchase possible. I remember at the time there were two families represented on the site committee ready to purchase the property if the Convention turned it down.

During the next several months, even prior to purchase, I spent time at the Hopkins get-away. I took down a load of personal items in the back seat of my car to Mrs Hopkins. She said she did not want anything else. It left us with some beautiful bedding and furniture, some of which is still used in 1992. Mrs Hopkins came up to the site only once and then did not get out of the car.

As money came in from the Camp Financial effort it became clear very soon than the only money that was going to be available for the new site was the purchase price. Much of the money came in designated to a given site and left little for the new site.

The name CASCADE MEADOWS came out of a contest we held to name the camp. There were many suggestions. One I remember was ROCK OF AGES CAMP after the huge rock in the upper field. The name Cascade Meadows came from a women out of a church in the central part of the state. The final selection was made by the state Board of Trustees.

Those first years were primitive. We built four of five privies and put up several large tepees. Each had a fire pit and we had many kids go home with burned and dried out boots from trying to dry the too quickly next to the fire. Also many sleeping bags had holes burned in them from the sparks. However, camps filled up.

The second year we began to purchase burros. We got a jack and tried to time the birth of colts during the camping season. Stories of campers staying up all night to witness a birth spread across the state.

I remember our son, David, coming to me and telling me of the women who drove into camp, saw the burros, and said to David, "Is that another of your fathers, crack-pot ideas?" I'm afraid it was. The burros became a symbol of the camp and youth returned each year to see their burro. We had pack saddles made and used them to carry gear into the back country with the youth.

I'm sure we never would have been able to have them at camp for all these years if it had not been for Dave Trogler, Ellensburg, that took care of them all winter. He also had many stories to tell of chasing them all over the Ellensburg valley.

"Clarence" was my favorite burro. He had character. It moved more like a horse, if he wanted to. When we held rodeos he normal one. "Old Blue" was wonderful with little children. He could haul six or eight kids at a time with little fear of falling. We guessed he was close to 30 years of age in 1963.

Junior Citizens Camps were held at Cascade Meadows. The isolation was ideal. I always have felt this was one of the finest ministries ever offered in our camping efforts.

I know it is dangerous to begin to name names of persons who were apart of the early days at Cascade Meadows. I'll take the chance:

Bill and Daisy Cox. Bill help often in construction and Daisy did much of cooking for several years.

Mrs Cannon cooked for several years at almost no cost to the camp.

Russell Orr was executive for the state and kept money available when it was needed.

Harriett and Al Harrington were main stays in the back country camping.

Harold Smith worked at the camp and also wrote part of the program material used at camp.

Well, the stories keep coming and maybe someday I'll write them down. I know that in my 40 years in ministry my years at Cascade Meadows were some of the happiest.