



BLUFF LINES



BLUFF LINES

Eighth Quarterly Edition, Spring 2025

The journal of the Camp Orr Alumni Association and Friends of Camp Orr, remembering and preserving the legacy of scouting summers in the Buffalo River Valley.

**Check in frequently and add informally on our Facebook page,
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CampOrrAlumniAssociation>.**

The membership requirements for the Camp Orr Alumni Association are 1) treasured memories of scouting summers in the Buffalo River Valley and 2) a desire to preserve and share them. Please send in your own memories, even if it's a snippet and/or pictures; we'll contact you and see if we can work it into an article. Forward this to your old Camp Orr buddies, and/or forward us their email address.

Left, Living history Cabin, 2004.



In This Edition:

Alumni Reunion Field Day, May 3, 2025

Skylab Crash at Camp Orr

Oldest Pictures of Camp Orr?

The Living History Program

CAMP ORR ALUMNI REUNION FIELD DAY 2025

Join us at the Camp Orr Alumni Field Day! We will be gathering at the entrance gate for coffee and a continental breakfast at 8:30am. We will be spending the morning working on the Smokehouse foundation for long term preservation, followed by a picnic lunch at the waterfront. There will also be an afternoon field trip to the Living History cabin in Clemmons hollow. There will be a \$20 contribution to attend. To register visit <https://www.naturalstatecouncil.org/orralumnifieldday>

SKYLAB CRASH AT CAMP ORR!

SKYLAB CRASH AT CAMP ORR!

By Karl Van Scyoc, Camp Orr Camper 1971-1974; Staff 1975-1983

In the summer of 1979, NASA's original orbiting laboratory Skylab was expected to fall out of orbit and return to earth. The precise location of its re-entry and impact was not well known or projected. At the time, people weren't used to the idea of space debris, and it was in the news cycle a lot as the day approached. The public was a little apprehensive about the whole deal. Staffers Danny Wilkerson and Tim Osborn cooked up the idea that Skylab debris would land in the parade grounds in front of the new fiberglass flagpole. They found some odds and ends in the quartermaster and various junk piles that were known at the time and made a Skylab debris field right there for campers to experience as they gathered before breakfast. A few left-over smoke bombs from 4th of July added smoky realism of recently fallen space debris. Danny had a very wide band of aluminum foil around his torso to protect against space radiation. Spray-painted

Skylab (??) Creates Excitement At Camp Orr

As almost everyone knew, Skylab, was due to return to earth Wednesday, but what was not known was that Skylab (well, not the NSAS Skylab) was going to show up at Camp Orr, the Boy Scout Camp, along the Buffalo. During Wednesday morning, at a time not exactly recorded a Skylab, of sorts, appeared at Camp Orr, along with miscellaneous other pieces of debris. If you will note carefully in the photo, the object that appears to be an old tire is said to be a wheel off a lunar rover vehicle, by the experts(?) on the Camp Orr Staff. The round object is said to be an afterburner from what was not explained; the barrel like object is clearly marked NSAS and its function was not explained and leaning against the NASA object but barely visible in the photo is what appears to be a gasoline can and the experts at Camp Orr said it was obvious that the container was to carry extra fuel in.

The Camp Orr Skylab was the brainchild of a couple of staff members, Danny Wilkerson and Tim Osborn and their report of the incident was that it made the day worthwhile at Camp Orr and proved to be a lot of fun.



This smoking object was touted as the Camp Orr Skylab, that returned Wednesday. The object, actually an old discarded hot water heater, did return (from the junk pile) to Camp Orr for its debut as Skylab. The event created quite a stir at the camp, Wednesday morning. Shown left to right in the above photo is: Ed Schemel of Ft. Smith, John Taylor of Fayetteville; Karl Van Scyoc of Fayetteville; Tim Osborn of Fayetteville and Danny Wilkerson of Little Rock. Fred Gresham of Siloam Springs is hidden behind the smoke screen.

Vacation Bible School Scheduled

There will be a Vacation Bible School at the Church of Christ in Jasper beginning Monday, July 16 and will last through July 20. It will be from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon each morning. The theme of the Vacation Bible School will be "I Choose Jesus." There will be Bible classes, refreshments and crafts for all ages including adults. There will be a closing program at 7:30 Friday night for the parents.

Mossville Woman In Hospital With

NCWA met in Jasper

The Newton County Wildlife Association (NCWA) has decided to support the efforts of the Dogwood Alliance - this action coming during the groups recent meeting in Jasper. The Dogwood Alliance is an organization working to phase out the Arkansas Nuclear One (ANO) power plant in Russellville and begin implementation of renewable safe energy option. At the meeting, NCWA members expressed feelings that the



This is a side view of the Camp Orr Skylab and there was a sign on the side of the object that read "Return For Deposit." That might be a good idea.

10
Te
Ja
St
The
met Ju
in the
Office
among
taken c
the s
plans r
start A
will be
classes
Thursd
Labor
ed as a
turn of
Novem
giving
will be
January
the sch
for bad
4 are a
vacatio
schedul
Winter
the win
arrange
bad the
The p
will be
USA en
after La
patchel
Also dis
a half d
fair.
There
ion abo
days off
no defin
Fund
To Co
Right
North A



BLUFF LINES



NASA acronyms attributed the detritus to NASA itself. I recall campers looking somewhat puzzled about the whole thing. We found it hilarious. Campers were dismayed. Raising the colors seemed a little less solemn that day as the flag bearers had to negotiate the debris-field on the way to the flagpole. I don't recall who connected with the Newton County Times, but they were on hand to capture the newsworthy event, which was front page news.

OLDEST PICTURES?

These pictures below were shared with me by Council Executive Board member James Hendren, a legacy scouter of many decades from what was Quapaw Council. James obtained them from John Clark, an early District Executive for the district Camp Orr was in, and who went on to be General Manager at Philmont. Pictures 1-3 obviously depict the construction of the Mess Hall, around

1953; it is a best guess from his profile, that the gentleman pointing at the Foundation in the first picture is District Executive, Orr's Camp Director for its first several years, and the originator of the Smokey Joe legend, Pat Bolin.





BLUFF LINES



were served in large Army Mess tents at the bottom of the hill. And obviously the water supply was the perched tank.





BLUFF LINES



These last two are not readily identifiable; perhaps taken elsewhere than Camp Orr? Or some part of the homestead buildings around the original caretaker's house, but they are for sure are not that house....If you have ideas, go to the Orr Alumni Facebook page and tell us what you think!





BLUFF LINES



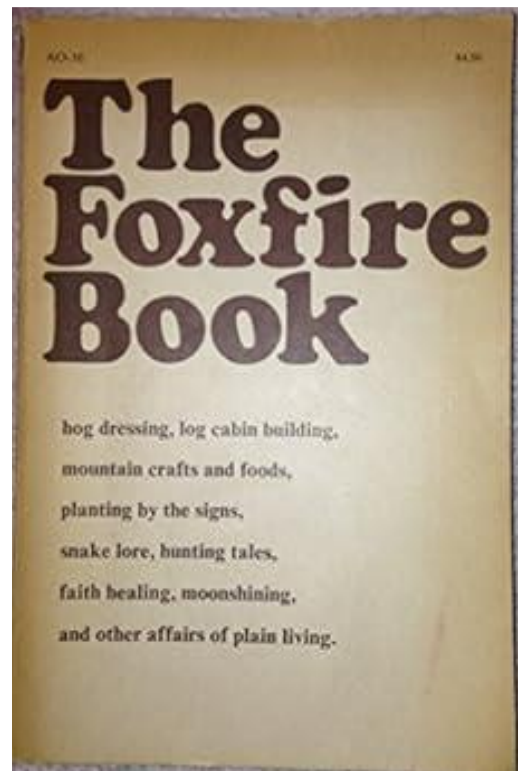
Camp Orr's Living History Program

by Jack Butt, Camp Orr camper 1961-1964, staff 1065-66

Starting in 1974, for 20 years more or less, Camp Orr had a Living History program, centered in a log cabin and its modest yard just across the upriver ford from Camp, on a small bench up in Clemmons Hollow, the hollow that feeds down into the River from river left, or the north, at that ford. Clemmons, sometimes spelled Clements, was a pioneer blacksmith in the earliest days of settlement in the valley, whose shop sat next to the creek that is crossed just as entering Camp Orr, aptly named "Shop Creek" for the blacksmith's shop that sat near there. Shop Creek flows over Twin Falls, just above the Camp Orr entrance. The hollow just up and across the river thus bears his name

My last year of six at Camp Orr was 1966, so the Clemmons Hollow Living History Cabin was not part of my experience. I didn't return with the Scouts until accompanying my son 30 years later in the mid-1990's as a scoutmaster with Troop 102 on their annual "Polar Bear Hike," requiring fording the river at Kyle's landing in December to overnight at the cabin. Informed that it wasn't an original homestead there, but had been constructed by scouts for scouts, I was totally astonished at whoever had conceptualized and accomplished this iconic venue and its programs. I have solicited widely to have someone involved with the Camp's Living History program write this article, since I never learned of the program until years after it had ended. No one has accepted the call, so I have cobbled together this incomplete and probably somewhat inaccurate history from the oral histories I could elicit, with apologies in advance for not reporting accurately. I am hoping that the Camp Orr Alumni Facebook page lights up with input from those who know more and better than I do, to revise and complete this saga.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's there was a "back to the land" movement in the United States, where mostly young people, seeking an escape from the highly urbanized and modernized society, moved from their urban environs to places they perceived as untainted, to live close to nature, again grow and process their own food, create their own shelter and clothing from what nature provided, and live a more natural, less artificial and pre-produced lifestyle. Hippies, teepees, lean-to's and cabins sprang up all over the rural, remote areas of the U.S., peopled by 20-somethings looking for that better life. Part of that movement was recovering and reproducing the way of life and artifacts of pioneers before them. This movement became fueled in significant part, by what started as a public-school project in the mountains of rural North Carolina, to record from those elderly and fast disappearing hill folk still living, and to preserve in writing their rapidly disappearing pioneer way of life. That project ended up as a several-book series, the Foxfire books, first published in 1972, written by high schoolers in North Carolina. Dozens of articles about





BLUFF LINES



how to raise food, butcher hogs, build cabins, make soap, smoke and otherwise preserve food, split rails for fences, make sorghum, use mules, and fashion and use primitive tools, were combined into a series of twelve, full length books, several of which achieved New York Times Best Seller status.

I was then in my early twenties and counting among my dreams that someday I might have a log cabin in a setting such as Camp Orr, I bought, read and dreamed through most of them. I was not alone. Tim Osborn, a 1969 first-year Camp Orr camper from Troop 105 in Fayetteville, by 1973, was on Camp Orr's summer staff, and active in Order of Arrow (ultimately rising to South Central Region Chief). Attending the National Order of the Arrow Conference in the summer of 1973, Tim reconnected with Joe Clay, who as Director of Program at Philmont Scout Ranch had just initiated at Philmont a "back country interpretive program", a living history depiction where staffers took on

the demonstrative roles of the pioneering early trappers in the Rocky Mountains, aka "Mountain Men." It's a small world: Joe, fresh out of the Marines in 1966 had ended up as a student at the University in Fayetteville, where he formed Explorer Post 200 – before moving on to Colorado and New Mexico – the same Post which Tim Osborn joined several years later. Tim's first year as a camper at Orr, was Joe's last as Program Director at Camp Orr, and Tim knew Joe as "Mr. Scouting" in Fayetteville. At the National OA Conference, Joe had two of his "Living History Mountain Men" with him, in full costume, firing their black powder rifles, throwing tomahawks, etc. Joe lit a fire under Tim about the Living History concept. That, combined with Tim's viewing the 1972 blockbuster film Jeremiah Johnson (the definitive and iconic movie recreation of the mountain man as an epic American character), and Tim's reading the Foxfire book on building a log cabin until its covers fell off, was cooking a potent stew in Tim's imagination about what could be at Camp Orr.



Thus, in the fall of 1973, Tim shared his vision with Casey Murphree, who at that time was a Westark District Executive and the Camp Orr Program Director. Casey bought in one hundred percent. Using his scouting contacts, including District Executive Coy Bennett, Casey discovered an original hand hewn log cabin, that had over many years been incorporated into and concealed by a larger, more modern house in the Garfield area of Benton County, which house was going to be demolished. Casey arranged for the donation of the cabin, if scouting volunteers would exhumate it from the condemned structure. Over Thanksgiving and/or Christmas breaks in 1973, Casey, with six other scout volunteers who camped at the site, including Matt Goff and Giff Douglas, spent dusty, dirty, nasty, hard days, tearing down dropped ceilings, breaking out plaster that had been applied over chicken wire nailed to logs, to free, preserve and dismantle the log structure. Tim spent a day helping.

As an aside, while Tim and Casey were pulling down the ceiling of the cabin in Garfield, some heavy objects landed at their feet. They were all the metal parts of a muzzle loading rifle, inscribed with an American eagle and the words "Harpers Ferry". That of course was a major U.S. Army



BLUFF LINES



armory before the Civil War, where John Brown made his infamous and ill-fated raid before the war. The parts were gifted to the owners of the house, who were at the time developing Lost Bridge Village, who had allowed the scouts to salvage the cabin.

Guy Wilkerson, a Bentonville scoutmaster, Silver Beaver, and long time iconic scoutmaster in the Council, was also a National Guardsman, and many times used his connections to assist Scouting. Casey enlisted Guy to provide the deuce and a half Army trucks to deliver the logs to Camp Orr in time for the Spring Order of the Arrow Ordeal, 1974. Greg Martin, anticipating being on the initial staff of the program was there to help, and remembers that, “moving the logs from where Guy's National Guard trucks off-loaded to the top of the Clemmons Hollow bluff was one of the most amazing things I've ever been involved in -- there must have easily been a hundred people involved!”

It became the Ordeal task of the initiates to wade the logs, one by one, across the river, and team-tote them up the rugged Clemmons Hollow to a point they could be hoisted up the bluff to the small bench, itself a magical little mecca which Camp Director Casey had picked out as the perfect home for the Living History Program. While Tim thought the spot was picturesque, he thought it was too inaccessible to get the logs to, and speculates that the ensuing years of toting everything, everything, from water, to a forge, to food and supplies, up the steep slope, may have played a role in the program's ultimate demise. The Ordeal candidates probably agreed with Tim's assessment, but for obvious reasons, could not speak to protest.

The final slope to the cabin site was too steep to carry the logs up, and the logs had to be hoisted/dead-pulled up the bluff by a sling/block and tackle/ come-along arrangement, using for-real Scout pioneering techniques which were designed by Pat Neely, Razorback District scoutmaster and Explorer Post 200 Advisor*. Nevertheless, the Ordeal efforts left the components of the cabin fully delivered to its new site. The logs had all been carefully numbered when the cabin was disassembled in Benton County to facilitate its re-erection at Camp Orr. Unfortunately, the markings were not waterproof, and by the time the logs had been waded across the River and drug upon the hollow, the markings were gone.

Tim was hired as Orr staff in the summer of 1974 to run the new Living History Program, centered at the cabin. Tim, with his Foxfire knowledge and zeal, was joined by fellow scout and Orr staffer Greg Martin, in the week before and week of staff week, re-constructing the cabin on its new site. The unmarked logs left a challenging jigsaw puzzle for Tim and Greg, but they worked through it. Its roof of course was gone, and they had to cut from trees the roof supports, and split the shake shingles from logs. Tim recalls felling a large red oak near the road to the dining hall as the source of the shingles. In hindsight it was dangerously close to the overhead power lines which it brushed in its crashing fall. By huge luck and good grace, Tim remembered that after bouncing up and down for several minutes afterward, the lines remained intact. Karl Van Scyoc (later Orr Program Director) aided by bringing up food, and “splitting shingles with the froe as fast as I could as Tim and Greg nailed them to the roof beams.” By the first week of Camp Orr, 1974, Tim and Greg had created a Living History program! Greg recalls, “In hindsight, it's sort of amazing that the adults in the room let a couple of high school kids loose to create something like that! We only had to go to the emergency room at the hospital in Harrison once!”



BLUFF LINES



An aside here, as the Orr Alumni recently evaluated the renovation of the Smokehouse with its recently collapsed shake roof, I marveled how a shake roof could have lasted for the 70 years or so Orr had been around without its being replaced. In conversations for this story, I learned that Tim Osborn, using his shake roof skills, had re-shingled the Smokehouse in the late 1970's – and given that it lasted until about 2020, did a darn good job!!

Right are Tim and Greg in full regalia; for that first summer, Tim claimed the name of Jedediah Clemmons (for whom the hollow was named), and Greg became Isaac Hawkins, representing intrepid fur trappers in the upper Buffalo River Valley. Their portrait above, was taken by a former Orr staffer, Curt Rom. Tim remembers that while their garb was enviable, in the long, hot summer days, it was also very uncomfortable. However, Tim and Greg became a feature program demonstration at the 1975 National Order of the Arrow Conference, Westark's disply gaining a picture in the feature article on the Conference in Boys' Life magazine.

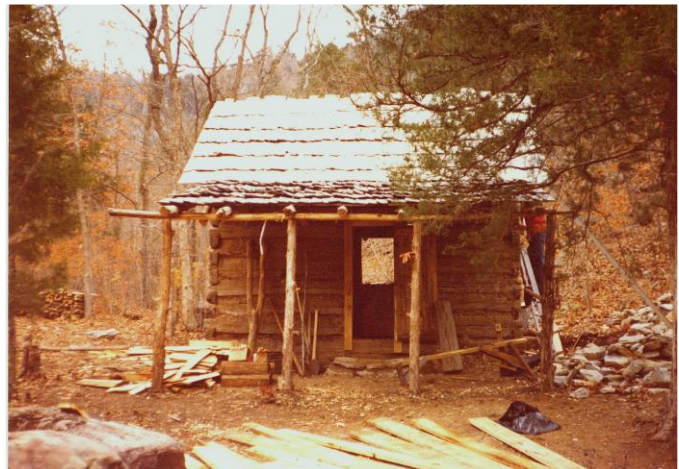
<https://books.google.co.zm/books?id=9Rm9us44aAcC&lpg=PA1&pg=PA34#v=twopa ge&q&f=false>

To the right is the cabin, with stone accumulated to build a chimney, about 1980.

The program was deemed successful enough to continue, being featured in Boys' Life Article on Camp Orr in 1978:

<https://books.google.co.zm/books?id=0r7MHenOJMkC&lpg=PA1&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false>

The quality of its staff continued its justification: Tom Scherry and Andy Lucas staffed the program its second year, a partial list for the following years has been compiled including Jeff Jones and Bryan Huntsman (1982-85, credited with the floor, chinking, split shingles, black smith forge and corral), Cory Willits (recently memorialized in his passing by a tribute and picture on the Orr Alumni Facebook page), Kevin Power and Clay Chaney, credited with the split rail fence and the rock of the porch floor (1986, Clay also being recently memorialized in his passing by a tribute and picture on the Orr Alumni Facebook page), Kevin



Pioneering skills -- a hands-on study.



BLUFF LINES

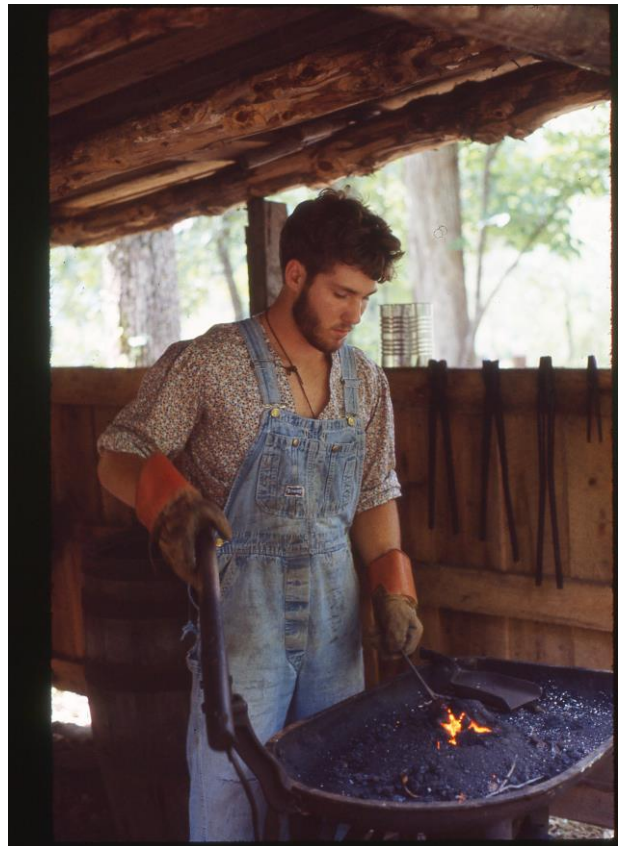


Palmer (credited with adding the mantel to the fireplace, finishing the rock floor of the porch, and constructed the stone wall), Bryan Naylor, Jerry Hapenstall, Paul Schumell, Kevin Alexander, Rice Brewer, Travis Whisenhall, and Jimmie Parker, whose Living History handle was “Potlatch”.

It garnered attention, justifying a picture in the local newspaper, above, showing Kevin Power instructing scouts in using a drawblade.

Karl Van Scyoc, though not staffing the cabin, recovered from his grandfather in Kansas a very high-quality cast-iron forge for the program, disassembled it to the extent possible, and with huge effort heaved it up the hollow to the cabin where it was re-assembled. While the forge was quite popular for making and repairing tools and heating branding irons for branding visiting scout’s hats and leather items, it was allegedly “disappeared” by a later professional scouter who didn’t understand its value and sold it for a pittance. Karl returned a few years later in the early 1980’s with some volunteers to finish the fireplace, which had been finished to only about head height, and with, “zero chimney building experience and limited masonry experience, fashioned something resembling a fireplace, which did not draw at all and fully smoked the cabin when used.” Certainly, there are many more, whose names I haven’t yet recovered. Longtime and popular Camp Ranger Willard Jones (“Jonesy”) is credited with saving the cabin from burning when a forest fire came roaring down the valley, and the Park Service’s response was, “let it burn”.

The program evolved. It initially contemplated that the Living History staffers would actually “pioneer” their living at the site, cooking, eating, sleeping, cleaning, doing everything the pioneer way. That quickly proved practically impossible, and they became sustained by a key to the kitchen and its storerooms, and discrete visits to the showers and toilets of the camp. Nevertheless, they spent their days in bona fide pioneer garb, demonstrating and teaching pioneering techniques and ways of life. Over the years the program included black powder shooting, tomahawk throwing, using a two-person cross cut saw, skinning and processing skins (a nasty smelly program that didn’t last long), a teepee, using the blacksmith forge and related metalwork, froe-splitting shake shingles, and at least for several summers employed a donkey named Elizabeth, gentle to and well-beloved by the scouts, who not only trucked heavy gear up and down the hollow in her pack baskets, but served to carry the staff across the river when crossing it would have soaked their buckskin leggings and moccasins. Whether there is a failure of memory, or actually two donkeys involved, another Living History staffer remembered a donkey named Jack, and during at least one summer while Bryan





BLUFF LINES



Huntsman and Jeff Jones were running the program, horses were involved as representative pioneer passenger and freight vehicles. The forge involved scouts by letting them brand their hats or leather with an “Orr” brand. Trapping was one of the themes and when word got out locally that primitive traps were of interest, the locals seemed to have a vast supply of no-longer-used-leghold traps, which were contributed until the collection had upwards of 25 traps which were demonstrated to the scouts by the staff.

Bryan Huntsman is pictured above, working the forge in the mid-1980's.

By around 1980, some of the more exciting aspects of the program, such as tomahawk throwing and black powder shooting lost favor with the safety conscious Council, and the emphasis moved from showing off deadly skills, to primitive carpentry, cabin building and tool making. Jeff Jones and Bryan Huntsman, who ran the program for four straight years from 1982-1985, were challenged by Camp Director Burl White to either make it more interesting and well attended, or lose it. They did their homework, going to Silver Dollar City, and Philmont’s interpretive history program looking for ideas and inspiration and hunted down oldsters who locally had practiced pioneer crafts decades before, like hewing logs with a broadaxe, and validated the program to continue. In those days, one night of the week was set aside for the camp to attend a Hee-Haw type song and skit night at the upriver Barn, called the Rustic Theatre (featured in an earlier Blufflines). The Living History Program, located just off the way from Camp to the Barn, diverted those heading there from Camp, to do a simple rotation through their program, touring the cabin to explain how it was built, using a froe to make shingles, show and tell with the animal traps, working a drawn knife to smooth logs, and would run 100 scouts through the course in time for them to still attend the Rustic Theatre performance that evening.

According to some accounts, the program didn’t always have the full support of the Council and Camp bosses. It apparently petered out sometime in the 1990’s, and I’ve been unable to determine exactly when, why, or how that happened. Again, I hope this brief (and admittedly incomplete and probably inaccurate) history will light up the pages of the Camp Orr Facebook Page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CampOrrAlumniAssociation/> with many more, and more accurate and complete memories.

Pictured at right is the cabin in 2004, some 10 years or more after the Living History Program ended.





BLUFF LINES



Despite the Living History Program having terminated about 15 years before, former staffers Jeff Jones, Kevin Power and Brian Huntsman reunited in 2019 of their own volition and restored the cabin with a new metal roof, repaired front porch, and rotted logs replaced; below are the before and after pictures of their efforts:



While the shed built over the forge at some point burned down, the cabin still stands on its little terrace up in Clemmons Hollow, and is still used by Fayetteville's Troop 102 as the destination for its annual December Polar Bear hike-in and camp.

The May 3rd, 2025, Alumni Reunion and Field Day at Camp Orr this year intends to pay it a visit, and hopes some of those who worked or attended the Living History Program will be there to share their own memories. Join us! The registration fee has been waived but please register so we can count on you! <https://www.naturalstatecouncil.org/orralumnifieldday>



BLUFF LINES



*While drafting the above article, I learned that Pat Neely died on April 5 at his home in eastern Oklahoma at age 94. Another great one gone. An appropriate memorial will be posted on the Alumni Facebook page. -Ed.

Please remember, the Camp Orr Alumni Association will grow and thrive based solely on your input of stories, pictures, and additional contacts. Please submit ideas, stories, pictures and comments to Maribeth Harris jersey_burn@hotmail.com

Until the next newsletter, yours in Scouting!

Westark Camp Orr Alumni Committee:

Jack Butt, chair jbutt@dbtcfirm.com

Maribeth Harris jersey_burn@hotmail.com

Bryan West dominosnorth@hotmail.com

Billy Williams, *ex officio*, Camp Ranger

Mike Boness *ex officio*, Camp director