

Camp Orr

50th

June 19, 2003

Anniversary



Boy Scouts of America
Westark Area Council



As we embark on the 50th Anniversary of the purchase of the Camp Orr Property, we are pleased to be able to provide a brief of history of the Camp for you. Many have provided, money, labor and love for Camp Orr during the past 50 years and for this we simply say "Thank You."

The information in this book has been a collective effort. Thanks to Tim Osborn of Fayetteville, a former Staff Member for the camp, for his research and compiling the history. Tim has spent many hours in his quest.

I would also like to Thank the entire Camp Orr 50th Anniversary Committee for their time and effort to make this celebration a success: Jamie Bowerman, David Fisher, Ken Pevehouse, Ed Dillon, Butch Moore, John Levy, Boyd Darling, Lance McReynolds, Tim Osborn, Toney Antrim, Lanette Williams, Bill Spilman, Donnie Green, Council President, Loren Kitterlin, Council Commissioner and John Morton, Scout Executive-for all you have done to help plan this celebration for the Scouts and Scouters of Westark Area Council, We salute you.

This project would not have been completed without the help of Camp Ranger Bob Smith, Camp Director Brian Adams and the entire summer camp staff and the entire staff of Westark Area Council. A special thanks to all.

Also, a Thanks to those who have "**volunteered**" to help: Duane Klink, Joe Davis, Kathy Ware, Joe Ware, Bob Stevenson, Jeff Atkinson, John Gray, Marie Earls, Carl Russell, Mike Benefield, Jeff Desort, Tom Berryville, Susan Kramer, Ron Mabry, G.I. Ochs, Chuck Bushong and the Order of the Arrow members. I am sure there are others that I have forgotten to mention. To each -"Thank You."

We will strive to continue to improve Camp Orr with the help of our many Scouts and Scouter Friends. At present nearly 2,000 Scouts attend Summer Camp each year.

This is a special milestone for Boy Scouts in Westark Area Council. At Camp Orr we not only offer high adventure camping to our Boy Scouts, but to boys from many other areas as well. The unique experience of Camp Orr starts when you leave Jasper. It is truly an adventure that some will experience many times; however, those who only come to camp one time will remember it forever.

Yours In Scouting,

Mary Fisher

Mary Fisher

Camp Orr

50th Anniversary Committee Chairman

Camp Orr 50th Anniversary Committee



***Mary Fisher, Chairman
Ken Pevehouse
Jamie Bowerman
David Fisher
Ed Dillon
Donnie Green
Loren Kitterlin
John Morton
Tim Osborn
Lanette Williams
Toney Antrim
John Levy
Butch Moore
Boyd Darling
Lance McReynolds
Bill Spilman***

Camp Orr Rangers

Jeff Ramey 1953-56
Roosevelt Self 1957-59
Ray Self 1960-62
James Gardener 1963-69
Willard "Jonesy" Jones 1970-79
Earl Braswell 1980-2000
Bob Smith 2000-present

Camp Orr Directors

Pat Bolin
Burl White
Ivan Hunter
Bill Riley
Bill Wilson
John Easterly
Bob Trail
Brett Matherly
Brian Adams

WESTARK AREA COUNCIL
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
2003 OFFICERS, BOARD
AND COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Council Officers

President- Donnie Green
Council Commissioner-Loren Kitterlin
Vice President-Administration-Jim Spears
Vice President-Boy Scout-Mike Benefield
Vice President-Cub Scout-Jamie Bowerman
Vice President-Finance-Ken Pevehouse
Vice President-Marketing-Mary Fisher
Treasurer-Frank Shipley
Assistant Treasurer-Dave Galloway
Legal-David Vandergriff

Past President-Dr. Dick Cameron

Council Chairmen-

Wood Badge Coordinator-Joe Davis
Council Camping Committee-Danny King
Camp Orr 50th Anniversary-Mary Fisher
Endowment-Pettus Kincannon
OA Advisor-Bill Spilman

District Chairman-

Butterfield Trail-Ben Shipley
Magazine Mountain-Tom Berryhill
Ozark-Larry Phillips
Razorback-Matt Lawrence

District Commissioners

Butterfield Trail-Lance McReynolds
Magazine Mountain-Butch Moore
Ozark-John Levy
Razorback-Boyd Darling

2003 Executive Board

**Mike Benefield
Tom Berryhill
Jamie Bowerman
Chuck Bushong
Dr. Richard Cameron
Gary Campbell
Joe Davis
Ed Dillon
David Fisher
Mary Fisher
Don Flanders
Dave Galloway
Bob Gillson
Donnie Green
Johnny Haney
Barbara Hathcock
H.L. Hembree
Danny King
Matt Lawrence
John Levy
Charles Logan
Ron Mabry
Ken Pevehouse
Larry Phillips
G.I. Ochs
Richard Ruble
Ben Shipley
Frank Shipley
Robert Skinner
Judge Jim Spears
Sandy Stroope
David Thrasher
David Vandergriff**

Westark Area Council Presidents

<i>C. H. Baltzell</i>	<i>1920-1921</i>	<i>William M. Eds Jr.</i>	<i>1959</i>
<i>W. J. Johnson</i>	<i>1922-1925</i>	<i>Claude H. Turney</i>	<i>1960</i>
<i>Robert C. Coffey</i>	<i>1926</i>	<i>R. W. Bitter</i>	<i>1961-1962</i>
<i>J. W. Ramsey</i>	<i>1927</i>	<i>Donald H. Flanders</i>	<i>1963-1965</i>
<i>Harry Robinson Sr.</i>	<i>1928-1929</i>	<i>H.L. Hembree III</i>	<i>1966-1967</i>
<i>A.G. Williams Jr.</i>	<i>1930</i>	<i>William Morton Jr.</i>	<i>1968-1969</i>
<i>A.Y. Berry</i>	<i>1931</i>	<i>Richard J. Udoj</i>	<i>1970-1972</i>
<i>S. Bernie Harper</i>	<i>1932-1933</i>	<i>Robert S. Young III</i>	<i>1973-1974</i>
<i>Dr. W. R. Brooksher</i>	<i>1934-1935</i>	<i>Hal Wardell</i>	<i>1975-1976</i>
<i>Sam Galloway</i>	<i>1935-1936</i>	<i>Travis A. Miles</i>	<i>1977-1978</i>
<i>L. N. McAfee</i>	<i>1936-1937</i>	<i>Stewart Condren</i>	<i>1979-1980</i>
<i>J.P. Woods</i>	<i>1938-1939</i>	<i>Danny J. Butler</i>	<i>1981-1982</i>
<i>Ed Wright</i>	<i>1940-1941</i>	<i>Terry J. Benson</i>	<i>1983-1984</i>
<i>Sam D. Tressler</i>	<i>1942-1943</i>	<i>W.K. "Mac" McGehee</i>	<i>1985-1986</i>
<i>Stanley Smithson</i>	<i>1944-1945</i>	<i>Barton Hudspeth</i>	<i>1987-1988</i>
<i>R. K. Rodgers</i>	<i>1946-1947</i>	<i>Robert Burr</i>	<i>1989-1990</i>
<i>Raymond F. Orr</i>	<i>1948</i>	<i>Ben Shipley</i>	<i>1991-1992</i>
<i>Harry G. Barr</i>	<i>1949</i>	<i>Gary W. Campbell</i>	<i>1993-1995</i>
<i>Frank W. Youmans</i>	<i>1950</i>	<i>David W. Fisher</i>	<i>1996-1998</i>
<i>J. Clib Barton</i>	<i>1951-1953</i>	<i>Joe Davis</i>	<i>1999-2000</i>
<i>James S. Beckman</i>	<i>1953-1957</i>	<i>Dr. Richard Cameron</i>	<i>2001-2002</i>
<i>Jim D. Meek Sr.</i>	<i>1958</i>	<i>Donnie R. Green</i>	<i>2003-Present</i>

Scout Executives

<i>William J. Carter</i>	<i>Aug. 1920- Nov. 1920</i>
<i>W.I. Mayfield</i>	<i>Dec. 1920 – Dec. 1923</i>
<i>Nelson F. Dickey</i>	<i>Dec. 1923 – Dec. 1925</i>
<i>J. Fred Vantrease</i>	<i>Dec. 1925 – Feb. 1936</i>
<i>I. W. Wall</i>	<i>Feb. 1936 – Dec. 1940</i>
<i>L. Malcom R. Rogers</i>	<i>Mar. 1941 – Dec. 1961</i>
<i>Hoyt Hunt</i>	<i>Jan. 1962 – Nov. 1964</i>
<i>John E. Stouffer</i>	<i>Dec. 1965 – Jan. 1969</i>
<i>Cecil Weller</i>	<i>Feb. 1969 –Aug. 1981</i>
<i>Clarence Baker</i>	<i>Sept. 1981 – Mar. 1987</i>
<i>Cliff Takawana</i>	<i>Apr. 1987 – Nov. 1992</i>
<i>Ronnie D. Turpin</i>	<i>Feb. 1993-Mar. 1996</i>
<i>John Shannon Morton</i>	<i>Apr. 1996-Present</i>

A Brief History of Camp Orr

On the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary, June 2003

Camp Orr is situated on a bend of the Buffalo River approximately 40 miles downstream from its source. Scouts and Scouters began attending Camp Orr in the mid 1950's. By an Act of Congress, in 1972 the area surrounding Camp Orr became the Buffalo National River, a unit of the National Park System. However, long before the establishment of Camp Orr and the creation of the National River, this land was home to ancient peoples, Native Americans, early settlers, and 20th Century farming families. The following is a brief history of the area in and around Camp Orr.

Natural History

Geology: Camp Orr is located at the northern edge of the Boston Mountain range – the highest part of the Ozark Plateau. The Ozark Plateau forms a dome in the midst of the U.S. Midwest, and as part of Interior Highlands, represents the only extensive mountainous topography between the Appalachian and Rocky Mountains.



Aerial view of Camp Orr looking west

The Ozarks were created by numerous cycles of geologic uplift, erosion, and submersion under shallow seas that occurred over millions of years. During periods of submersion, sediments were deposited creating limestones, dolomites, sandstones, and shales. During periods of uplift, streams and rivers cut through these deposits leaving flat-topped summits and steep valleys. This resulted in a karst landscape characterized by horizontal bedrock, towering bluffs, numerous caves, sinkhole, springs, waterfalls, underground rivers, and clear and cool streams and rivers flowing out in all directions.

The rocks and bluffs that are found along the Buffalo River around Camp Orr are sedimentary rocks that were deposited in shallow marine environments during the Ordovician Period (505 to 438 million years ago) and the Mississippian Period (360 to 320 million years ago). Younger rocks from the upper Mississippian and Pennsylvanian Periods (320 to 286 million years ago) are found higher up the mountains, but are normally not seen from the river. The bluffs between Ponca and Camp Orr are among the highest in the Interior Highlands of the United States.

Close examination of the base of the upper end of Gar Hole Bluff, across from the present Camp Orr canoeing area, shows a special geologic feature "frozen" in the rock.



Paleo-sinkhole in base of Gar Hole Bluff

According to John McFarland of the Arkansas Geological Commission, two different things cause this feature. First, the dipping of the rock layers on both sides appears to be a paleokarst dissolutional sag structure (in other words, an ancient sinkhole or vertical cave). This is the same as a modern sinkhole except it developed during Ordovician time (over 443 million years ago), or at least before Mississippian time (360 million years ago). Just as modern caves are being dissolved out of the rocks, the same process was at work in Ordovician time. Several of these paleokarst features are exposed along the Buffalo River in the Ponca region. The rock bedding sags due to the weight of overlying rock when material is slowly dissolved away in a focused place over a long period of time. The rocks, and the minerals that make them up, are weak enough to bend without breaking under these conditions. The top of the sag is the base of Mississippian age rocks and there is an ancient erosional surface at that boundary representing 10's of millions of years.

The second factor seems to be a thin, slightly recessed shale layer, occurring just above the dark stained vertical stripe. Shale acts as a "dam" to the migration of water through rock. Groundwater percolating through the fairly porous rock reaches the shale layer and is blocked or somewhat retarded. This causes the water to move laterally until it reaches the bluff face, where it then dribbles down the side depositing dissolved minerals.

Animal Life: Many mammal extinctions have occurred in the Ozarks during the last 200 years. Eastern Bison, cougar, red wolf, and gray wolf are only a few of the extinct species once found within the Buffalo National River. Eastern Elk is another mammal that no longer occurs along the River.

The Eastern Elk ranged from the northern boreal forest to the southern hardwood forests of Arkansas, and went extinct around 1840 due to over-hunting and habitat loss. In 1981, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission began a successful Rocky Mountain Elk Restoration Project along the Buffalo River. The elk are often seen in the late winter and early spring in the meadows of Boxley Valley along the upper part of the River.

Black bear populations along the Buffalo River have also increased significantly over the past several decades. Other animals seen in and around Camp Orr include deer, turkey, armadillos, bobcats, numerous species of non-poisonous snakes, and an occasional water moccasin, copperhead or timber rattlesnake. (Portions excerpted from the National Park Service website <http://www.nps.gov/buff>.)

Paleo-Indian/Native American History

Archeologists tell us that human occupation in the Buffalo River Valley began over 10,000 years ago. The oldest inhabitants are called Paleo-Indians, which literally means "old Indians." The Paleo-Indians used bone, antler, stone and leather for their tools. Their subsistence was dependent upon hunting and scavenging animals. To date, no sites from this period have been located within the Buffalo National River.

Habitation during the Dalton Period, around 10,000-9,000 years ago is well documented in the Ozarks through "biface" stone tools where both sides of projectile points and cutting tools were chipped or worked by humans. Other stone implements from this period have also been found including sandstone mortars, grinding stones and pestles. Favored habitation sites included bluff shelters especially in connection with south-facing bluffs.

The Early to Middle Archaic Periods occurred approximately 9,500-5,000 years ago. The stone tools from this period demonstrate major technological changes. The projectile points were no longer a uniform shape but became more stylized into corner-notched, side-notched, and stemmed varieties. Over the years, many "arrowheads" of this type have been found at the edge of the field near the present-day Camp Orr swimming area. However, very little is known about the Early/Middle Archaic settlement patterns, site types, and subsistence.

The Late Archaic and Early Woodland Periods occurred 5,000-1,800 years ago. During this period the climate became moister, which led to the pronounced oak-hickory forest we see today along the Buffalo River, as well as enlarged habitats for deer and other animals. Native Americans continued to forage for wild plants and began squash and gourd gardening. Camps were more frequently located in the river valley and were occupied year round. Toward the end of the Early Woodland period bluff shelters became less used for habitation, and became hunting/butchering stations or special use sites.

The Middle and Late Woodland Periods existed from 1,800-1,100 year ago. This period witnessed expanding Native American trade networks across the mid-south. A new technological addition at the end of this period was the bow and arrow. Native plant foods continued to be a major source of subsistence, along with the establishment of maize as a food source.

The Mississippian Period was 1,100 years ago until the first contact of native peoples with French and Spanish explorers around 300 years ago. During this period native American inhabitants increased in population and lived in small groups scattered along major waterways. They continued to use rock shelters for specialized purposes, and established permanent sites on river terraces overlooking the fertile bottomlands where maize was grown.

The Historic Period after European contact was a time of turbulence for Native Americans in the Ozarks. When the French and Spanish explorers arrived, they encountered the Osage Indians. Between 1763 and 1804 the semi-nomadic Osage had a number of seasonal hunting settlements between the White and Buffalo Rivers. Osage lands in Arkansas and Missouri were taken by the U.S. government in 1808 and 1818, and in 1825 an Osage reservation was established in southeastern Kansas. In 1872 the Osage sold their land in Kansas and purchased land in Oklahoma from the Cherokee Nation. This Oklahoma land later proved to be rich in oil, making the Osage one of the wealthiest Native American tribes. Today there are about 18,000 Osage listed on the tribal roll, many of whom live in and around Pawhuska, Oklahoma.



Osage portrait by Saint-Memin, 1807

In 1817, the Cherokee of the southeastern U.S. signed a treaty with the U.S. obtaining land in Arkansas between the White and Arkansas Rivers, including the Buffalo River area. In 1828, the Western Cherokee signed a new treaty opening up Arkansas to white settlers. The Cherokee were later forced to relocate to the new Indian Territory in Oklahoma. Today the Cherokee Nation is the second largest Native American tribe in the United States with more than 200,000 tribal members. Nearly half live in the 7,000 square mile area of the Cherokee Nation, which is not a reservation, but a jurisdictional service area that includes all of eight counties and portions of another six counties in northeastern Oklahoma. (Portions excerpted from the National Park Service website <http://www.nps.gov/buff>.)

History of European Settlement

The first written mention of the Buffalo River is in a Spanish land grant document dating from 1793. It identified the River as "Rio Cibolos." In Spanish, cibolo is the name for American bison or buffalo. It seems likely that early European explorer-hunters, ascending the White River, observed bison herds near the mouth of the Buffalo River near present-day Buffalo City. After the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, an American mapmaker changed the name to "Buffalo River." Ironically, by that time, American hunters were busy exterminating the Ozarks' last bison, often ambushing them at natural salt licks where the animals naturally congregated.

The first settlers in the Buffalo River country were of Scot-Irish and French Huguenot (French protestants of the 16th and 17th centuries) ancestry and came primarily from the southern Appalachians. Early records show they were establishing homes here as early as 1825. Abraham Villines, the patriarch of the many Villines families that live in the area today, brought his family from Tennessee to live under Big Bluff (6 miles upriver from Camp Orr) in 1837, just one year after Arkansas Statehood.

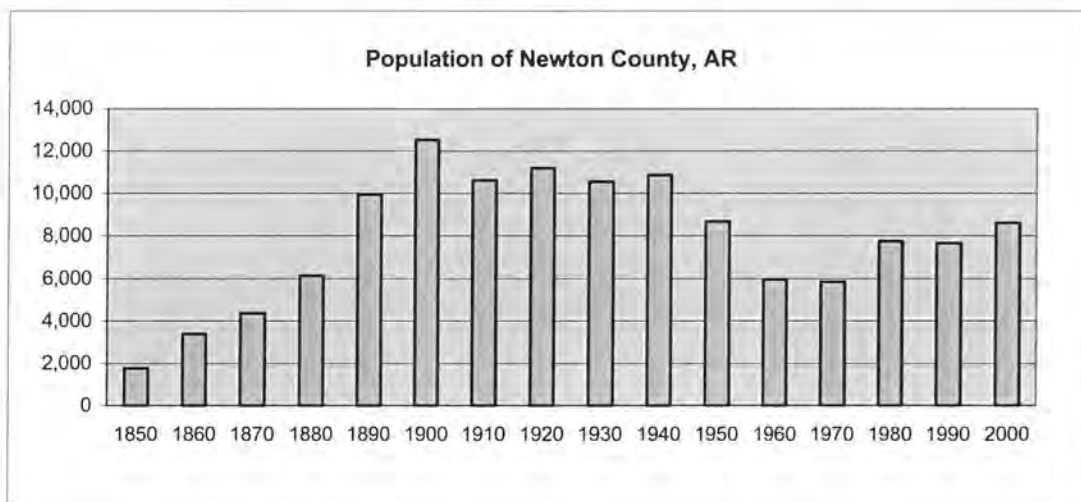
These settlers were a rugged, self-sufficient people, crossing the mountains and ascending the Buffalo River on wagons pulled by teams of oxen with only vague trails to follow. For some, the river was their highway. It was the best route into the backwoods of Newton and Searcy Counties

and they poled rafts up the White River, then up the Buffalo, searching for river bottoms that could be laboriously hand cleared with axe and cross-cut saw to establish farms and communities.

The earliest known existing cabin (circa 1840) on the Buffalo is the Parker-Hickman Farmstead located in the historic farming community of Erbie. Erbie is also the location of other early farmsteads that are being preserved by the National Park Service, and is the location of the Cherry Grove Cemetery where many early settlers are buried. This area is only a 3.5 mile hike downriver from Camp Orr.

Towns sprang up early. Records show that Jasper was an established town by 1840. One of the first residents was John M. Ross, a Choctaw Indian, who became the first postmaster and was also the first county clerk, serving from 1842-1846. Ross became postmaster in 1843, when Jasper was made the first post office in Newton County.

By 1850, the population of Newton County had grown to 1,758, and the average price of an acre of land was \$1.25. Towns began to spring up all over the Buffalo River area. The rugged terrain kept Ozark settlers isolated up to the beginning of World War I. Most learned to make what they needed. Oak furniture, handcrafted baskets, and pieced quilts were some of the homemade things every cabin needed.



Sometime between 1850 and 1860 a Mr. Andrew J. Clemmons, a young blacksmith born in Missouri, set up a blacksmith shop at the mouth the creek near the present-day Camp Orr Ranger's house. Ever since, this creek (the one that forms Twin Falls) has been called "Shop Creek." Along with his wife Licenda and their three sons, Andrew farmed the area that is now Camp Orr and was the blacksmith for nearby farmsteads. Clemmons Hollow northwest of Camp Orr is named for him.

Despite their isolation, the early settlers were affected by the coming of the Civil War in 1861. Several skirmishes occurred in the area and many families have handed down stories of problems caused by "bushwhackers" (partisan outlaw gangs). It was a lawless and dangerous time to be living along the Buffalo. The land was so rough and mountainous that neither the Union nor the Confederacy could control the area, which gave bushwhackers a free hand.

The Confederacy had a saltpeter works for making gunpowder upriver at Boxley, and one of the best-known local battles occurred when a detachment of the First Iowa Cavalry captured and destroyed it on January 12, 1863. Seventeen prisoners were taken, and two steam engines, three boilers and seven cast iron kettles were seized or destroyed. During fighting at Jasper, Union soldiers hunting for the famous Confederate guerrilla leader John Cecil, burned the town to the ground.

In the post-Civil War years, communities grew and schools and churches were built. In Newton County, where now there are four schools, there once were more than 100 one-room schoolhouses. Teachers walked from wherever they lived to teach and, if it was any distance, boarded during the week with one of the local families. A site of one such school, the Center Point School, is located approximately 3 miles upriver from Camp Orr just beyond the entrance to Hemmed-In Hollow.

The first "landowner of record" for some of the land that would become Camp Orr was a man named Samuel Cecil. In 1875, under the provisions of the Homestead Act, the United States General Land Office granted Samuel ownership of 160 acres including most of the fields of Camp Orr. Samuel was the son of Joseph Cecil who lived with his family in what is today known as Cecil Cove north of the Erbie Community. Samuel was a Union soldier during the Civil War. His brother was the famous Confederate guerilla leader John Cecil mentioned above.

Around 1890, a mining boom provided employment for hundreds as lead and zinc were taken from the hills. The town of Ponca was named for the Ponca City Mining Company out of Ponca City, Oklahoma when it came to the area and opened mines.

Around 1903, cedar timber harvesting began along the Buffalo River. The Eagle Pencil Company used the cedar to make penny cedar pencils. Cedar logs were cut and pulled to the River by mules, or the logs were simply rolled over the edge of the bluffs to the River below. During periods of high water, mainly in the spring, the logs were floated down to the town of Gilbert. The float often took 2-3 weeks.

Around the same time, other kinds of timber were also being harvested. Walnut for gunstocks and furniture was cut and transported by wagon to the newly established railhead at the town of Pettigrew. White Oak was harvested and cut into barrel staves at numerous small stave mills scattered throughout the valley.

After the mining boom, the timber harvests, and the fertility of the soil all played-out, the Buffalo River Valley began a period of economic decline causing many families to move away. After World War II the pace of outmigration quickened and by 1960, the population of Newton County was less than half of what it had been at its peak in 1900. The cabins of those who left, some well preserved and others rotting, dot the hillsides around Camp Orr. (Portions excerpted or adapted from National Geographic Trails Illustrated Map of the Buffalo National River - West, "These Hills, My Home: A Buffalo River Story" by B. Touchstone Hardaway, and the website <http://www.theozarkmountains.com/heritage>.)

Wilderness Library: On the West side of the Camp Orr road, located at about 1,400 feet elevation, are the remains of a cabin know as the Wilderness Library. Sometime around World War II, a man named Ted Richmond started the Wilderness Library in the small cabin that he called the "Wild Cat Cabin" on Twilight Trail. Ted would haul books in gunnysacks, slung over an old mule, around the hills of Newton County loaning them out to the local people.

After a few years, and with the assistance of area residents Jeff and Charles Raney, another Wilderness Library cabin was built up on Mt. Sherman not far from the top of the Camp Orr road. Many of the books in Ted's collection were donated and



reportedly autographed by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt or Bess Truman. One day Ted mysteriously disappeared and was never heard from again and the Wild Cat Cabin, with all of its books, was abandoned. In the early 1970's, books and papers could still be found in the rotting cabin, but today little is left. (Information and drawing provided by Ms. Denise Raney.)

The Establishment of Camp Orr

For years, the story of the establishment of Camp Orr has been told at the opening campfire each Sunday evening during summer camp. It goes something like this:

The first summer camp of the Westark Area Council was Camp Rudy, located near the town of Rudy on Old 81 Loop, bordered by Frog Bayou. This camp was later renamed Camp Tom Futral.

In the early 1950's Camp Rudy was becoming a bit small (17 acres) relative to the number of Scouts and Scouters attending each summer. The Council needed a larger Summer Camp. Several Scouters were charged with the task of finding a suitable location. Among these were Raymond F. Orr, Pat Bolin, and Uncle - Frank Lewis. Legend holds that these men boarded canoes and floated down the Buffalo River, scouting locations for a new camp. At the end of the day's paddling, they camped near the River across from the base of Gar Hole Bluff (today's Camp Orr waterfront). When they awoke the next morning, they looked the



Raymond F. Orr



Pat Bolin

area over and were so impressed with its beauty and qualities for a summer camp that they decided this would be the perfect location.

Whether the canoe trip discovery of Camp Orr actually happened this way is unclear. But it is clear that in months that followed, Raymond Orr, acting through the Residue Company of Sebastian County, purchased land from several owners including a Mr. V.E. Stoper, a Mr. W.J. Hawkins, and a Mr. A.B. Arbaugh. Finally, in early 1953 Raymond Orr was able to sell approximately 846 acres to the Westark Area Council for \$15,000.

Camp Orr's first year of actual operation was 1955, following completion of the road in to Camp and the construction power lines for refrigeration. Meals were served in a large Army tent. Eventually, a native stone dining hall (now known as the Uncle Frank Lewis Lodge) was constructed. Kenneth Fizzell, a Professor of Architecture at the University of Arkansas, developed the blue prints. The distinctive wagon wheel

lighting fixtures in the original part of the Dining Hall were among the last wooden wagon wheels made by Fulbright Wagon Products Company in Fayetteville, Arkansas. In his book "Building with Stone" (1980), Charles McRaven recounts his work installing the stone veneer on the Camp Orr Dining Hall and the trials and tribulations of collecting stone and hauling it back down the steep Camp Orr road.

Raymond F. Orr was also instrumental in the acquisition of \$150,000 for the development of the Camp that ultimately would bear his name. Pat Bolin was the first Camp Director, serving in that position for 8 years, and was the originator of the Smokey Joe Legend.

Uncle Frank Lewis served on the Camp Orr staff from the beginning through 1974. Earlier in his life Uncle Frank had been a parcel post carrier in Fayetteville, and was registered as Scoutmaster of Fayetteville Troop 102 in 1918, just two years after Scouting was chartered by Congress in the United States. At Camp Orr, Uncle Frank taught archery and presided over the archery range. When not at the archery range, Uncle Frank manned the Health Lodge. Uncle Frank's favorite Scout song was "The Happy Wanderer," and it always brought a tear to his eye when sung by campers at Sunday night dinner.

In addition to Raymond Orr, Pat Bolin, and Uncle Frank, other men including R. K. Rodgers, Gene



Uncle Frank Lewis

Rush, Jim Beckman, Herb Meeks, Claude Turney, Tom Bill Rogers, and Herbert A. Lewis played important roles in the acquisition and development of Camp Orr in the early years.



R.K. Rodgers

In the following decades continuing progress was made to Camp Orr including the rebuilding of the Quartermaster building after it burned in the Spring of 1968, construction of the Order of the Arrow Hogan (early 1970's) and the Living History cabin in Clemmon's Hollow (1974), improvements to the Health Lodge (1983), construction of the climbing/rappelling tower (1989), addition of new campsites, and the additions to the Dining Hall and Kitchen (1999). As in earlier years, other Scouters left their mark on Camp Orr including Burl White who served as Camp Director for 19 years from 1966 to 1984, Melvin Binam who was a Professional Scouter in Harrison during the 1970's-80's and was responsible for Camp upkeep and development, Willard Jones (Jonesy) who was Camp Ranger from 1970 to 1979, and Earl Braswell who was Camp Ranger from 1980 to 2000. Before coming to Camp Orr, Jonesy had been a professional artist. Among his many works is the Buffalo River "Smokey Joe" painted mural covering the north wall of the Health Lodge.

On March 1st, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed into law an Act making the Buffalo River the Nation's first National River. Under the supervision of the National Park Service, the Buffalo National River was created for "for the purposes of conserving and interpreting an area containing unique scenic and scientific features, and preserving as a free-flowing stream an important segment of the Buffalo River in Arkansas for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations (PL92-237)." The establishment of the National River finally put to rest the plans of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to construct one or more dams on the Buffalo River, and gave Scouts attending Camp Orr unique access to the 95,730 acres contained in the Park.

While most landowners along the Buffalo River were required to sell their land to the Park Service under the doctrine of eminent domain, Camp Orr remains under the sole ownership and operation of the Westark Area Council, making it the only Scout camp in the Nation to be located within a National Park. After a period of negotiation between the Council and the Park Service, in October 1984



Camp Orr waterfront

nearly 376 seldom-used acres belonging to Camp Orr were sold to the Park Service for \$211,075. This included land located upstream near Kyle's Landing, land located north of the River, the riverbed itself, and land located downstream toward Erbie.

The Council also granted the Park Service a Scenic Easement on the 470 remaining Camp Orr acres. For this the Park Service paid the Council \$311,100. The overall intent of the Easement is to maintain the pastoral character of the land that existed when the National River was established. It allows continued use of Camp Orr for normal Scouting and related activities, as well as farming, grazing, and haying. It also allows construction of new buildings and additions to existing buildings for Scouting purposes, selective harvesting of timber away from the River, removal of hazardous dead or diseased trees, and timber removal to permit camp development.

The Easement prohibits use of the land for industrial or commercial activities, confined livestock operations, converting woodlands to other uses or stripping tree cover from existing woodlands. Also prohibited are the construction of additional year-round dwellings and the dumping of trash on the land. The land may not be subdivided into smaller parcels, and if the Council ever decides to sell or dispose of the land, it must offer the National Park Service first refusal.

The Council placed the payments it received for the acres sold and the Scenic Easement into a Council Trust Fund. This Fund continues to grow to this day, benefiting Camp Orr, other camps owned by the Council, and Scouting in general in the Westark Area Council. (Portions excerpted from "75 Years of the Westark Area Council, Diamond Anniversary Souvenir Booklet", 1995.)

Additions/corrections to this history should be directed to
Tim Osborn, tosborn@sbcglobal.net, (479) 587-8712 or
Mary Fisher, mfisher@arkwest.com (479) 495-2273.

