

Camp Olave - A Brief History

Camp Olave, formerly the assembly camp of the Rat Portage Lumber Company, was a wilderness area with 2 cottages (Rose and Brock), stables built of huge logs, one or two shacks, and a half-wrecked wharf. In February 1930, after an assured water supply was confirmed, an agreement of sale was drawn up for \$10,000 with a down payment of \$2,000, an amazing act of courage and vision by those involved. Despite donations and numerous fundraising efforts, it was often difficult to meet the annual payments for the property, but eventually, by October 1935, the final payments *were* made and the property was owned free and clear (the price having been reduced to \$7,500).

The summer of 1930 saw the first full camping season enjoyed on this property. The camp was initially referred to as Camp Brock, then the Wilson Creek Camp, until it was renamed in 1961, to honour and with the permission of Lady Olave Baden-Powell.

By 1946 the guiding area of Greater Vancouver consisted of four Divisions. In late 1956, the different Divisions began to take responsibility for specific sites within the camp. By 1957, when the new agreement was entered into, the name of the camp committee became the Vancouver Girl Guide Council. Representatives from all Divisions sat on this Council and the Chairmen rotated from Division to Division.

Area boundaries were redrawn by the Provincial Council in 1971, so the North Shore Division became Lions Area, the Burnaby Division became Burnaby Royal Area, and the Richmond Divisions (Centennial, Heritage and Massey) became part of Fraser Delta Area and maintained their connection with Vancouver Area for camping activities.

By May 1978, following National's suggestion, the Greater Vancouver Camp Committee was disbanded and the Camp Olave Management Committee, chaired by Georgia Runcie, was formed and took over the management of the common areas. A minimum of two representatives from each of the four areas were to attend the meetings and the Areas retained responsibility for their own portions, continuing to administer them with their own Area Camp Committees.

As described in the 1985 (current) agreement, the Common Interest of Camp Olave is administered by the Camp Olave Management Committee, composed of at least two representatives each from Burnaby Royal, Fraser Delta (Richmond Divisions), Lions and Vancouver Areas. The Common Interest includes:-

- I.O.D.E. Hut (also known as the Recreation Hall)
- Chapel
- Hospital (now Tipi Wakin)
- Caretaker's Cottage and Garage

Flagpole area
Boat Shelter and Related Equipment
Main Roads
Water Line
Trails and Orienteering Course
Basic Insurance on all the above buildings

Each Area also has its own land on which the rest of the sites sit: Burnaby Royal has 18.96 acres, Lions has 22.55 acres, Fraser Delta (Richmond) has 15.50 acres and Vancouver has 46.30 acres. The parcel of land north of the Highway held by the Camp Management Committee as Common Interest consists of 28.83 acres (the other common area sites listed above are included in the Areas' land allotment). The total is 132.14 acres.

FUNDRAISING

Establishment of the site at Wilson Creek required considerable effort by the early camp committee members. Work to purchase the land and subsequently develop and maintain the site has required that fund raising be an ongoing aspect of Camp Olave.

Early financial support for camp endeavours was provided by the Executive Council members themselves. Many came from socially prominent and wealthy families that were concerned with promoting Guiding activities, and they were able to contribute as was needed. Initially, funds from the sale of property at Eagle Harbour were donated by the Brock family in 1927 to purchase the land at Wilson Creek.

Fund raising efforts prior to World War II were of a genteel nature and included the types of activities that would appeal to influential Vancouverites. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Miss Pumphrey's dance and concert displays, held in the Orpheum Theatre, brought in up to \$1000.00 at one time, a tremendous amount of money in those pre-Depression days. At about the same time, an annual series of "Garden Fetes" or "Gardens Beautiful" tours was established. Patrons would be picked up at the nearest interurban streetcar stop and driven to the gracious homes of the Guiders in affluent neighbourhoods of Vancouver and West Vancouver where a wide variety of stalls and entertainment awaited them. These were discontinued during World War II due to gas rationing and were not resumed afterwards. A Girl Guide Cook Book was published in 1932 for sale at 50 cents, "proceeds to be used for camp purposes." As a money-raising venture the cookbooks were unsuccessful, selling only enough to cover costs, but they remain as a testimony to the hard work of the Guiders.

During 1942/43 two major changes influenced the fund raising efforts related to the camp. Firstly, the Greater Vancouver Guide Council became a member of the Welfare Federation (later known as the Community Chest) and began to

receive an annual sum of \$250.00 for the maintenance of the campsite. Because ongoing funding was provided in this manner, raising funds was no longer the main obligation of the Executive Council. Divisions started to pay a share of the profits from the annual sale of Girl Guide cookies to a camp maintenance fund.

Notwithstanding the provision of ongoing maintenance funding, over the ensuing years, as each new project was started, a separate account was opened to cover the expenses (e.g., Brock Fund, Ranger Fund, and Hospital Fund). Different groups supported the individual projects and were challenged to find ways to raise the money required.

As early as 1935, the Imperial Order, Daughters of the Empire (I.O.D.E.) contributed generously towards the erection of a recreation hut. Mr. Don Carpenter, architect, donated his services to make a plan for the hut, which was initially built as a nucleus that could be (and was) enlarged from time to time as finances permitted. When it was built, the I.O.D.E. hut was the only building available to accommodate girls in wet weather. The Rotary Club donated funds in 1940 to double the size of the I.O.D.E. hut and make the outside appearance both more attractive and more useful, since the wide veranda and steps could now be used when overhead protection from the weather was required. At the same time, the I.O.D.E. supplied funds for a fireplace to be built. In 1941 The Rotary Club donated \$500.00, on the condition that 21 sleeping huts (with three sets of two-tier bunks in each) be built at once on campsites. So generous were the lumber merchants in the size of their donations that there was almost enough material remaining after the huts were built to construct a three-room cottage for the caretaker.

Funds to assist underprivileged girls to attend camp have been provided by a variety of charitable organizations. The Lions Club provided funds in 1939; National Trust donated \$50.00 in 1961 for needy Brownies; and the Vancouver Foundation granted \$1,000.00 in 1972 and further funds in 1976.

Waterfront staffing has been supported by various organizations. In 1964 funds were made available through the National Fitness Council to employ a Red Cross instructor to improve the waterfront program. This proved to be very successful. In 1971 and 1973 the Royal Bank promoted a Youth Work scheme and paid the salary of a university student employed as a lifeguard. Beginning in 1977 and continuing to the present, funds from the provincial government's Youth Employment Program have been used to help pay for waterfront staff.

It is impossible to give suitable credit to the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people who have made contributions of money, talent, time and hard labour to the development and maintenance of Camp Olave throughout the years. Families, groups and individuals regularly donate their time and labour to the seasonal work weekends and have contributed to such projects as roofing, painting, gardening, cutting fire wood, organizing equipment, cleaning sites, moving rocks, burning refuse, insulating cabins, undertaking repairs, building

new structures, and many other tasks. Considerable time is also donated to serving on camp administrative committees.

THE SITES

Lions Area Sites

Nawilak (Mischievous Spirit) - first used in the summer of 1958, indoor plumbing was added in 1967/8. Several major renovations have been done over the years, the latest being completed in 1997. Note the beautiful carved benches made by a local craftsman.

Si Yay Lum (Blue Skies and Fair Weather) - Thanks are due to the Canadian Order of Foresters whose members volunteered many hours to clear this site and erect a small shelter (1958). "Operation Upgrade" made it possible to build and equip the shelter we now have - re-opened in 1979.

Tee Cseh (Tall Trees) - a great site for pioneer camping, other than the proximity to the re-routed highway. In the early nineties many trees came down, but the replacement seedlings are doing wonders - check out the young cedars.

Burnaby Royal Sites

Galilana (Water's Edge) - this site was set aside for pioneer camping in 1957 and bi-weekly work parties ensured that the construction work was done

(local contractors and many volunteer hours) so that it could be officially opened in June, 1958.

Kwi Kwa (Seagull) - opened in October 1990, this building accommodates 32 campers in 2,400 square feet. The lumber used in the construction was milled from trees taken down to clear the site. As with so many sites, a lot of volunteer labour was used.

Vancouver/Richmond Sites

Ah Ah Wah Kie (By the Sea) 1941 Huts with bunk beds were built, replaced with new in 1988/89. Wall tents added in 1999

Brock - originally just one large room with a lean-to kitchen and verandas on two sides. Major renovations (including winterizing) to the tune of over \$20,000 were completed in 1969

Gingerbread House - built in 1966, originally intended for Ranger and adult use, it has also served as home to the Summer Staff.

Field - cleared in 1939

Brownie Hideaway - officially opened in 1955, it cost under \$6000.

Hi Yu Win (Place of High Winds) 1941 huts with bunk beds were built, replaced in 1988/89 and again in 2000.

Kutawa (Clearing in the forest) 1941 huts with bunk beds were built, replaced with new in 1988/89. The tipis currently on site were erected in 1998. They keep ?? campers warm and dry.

Pioneer - By 1955 this site was cleared, water piped in and a narrow access road cut. In 1994 the gravel pads were built.

Ranger - funds were raised by Rangers to build this cabin. A road was cut to the site in 1946, but it was 1950 before the cabin was opened. Several pieces of furniture were made by the girls. Major renovations in 1995.

Dude's Palace - A Provincial Ranger camp in the 1950's with a western theme, entitled "Westward Ho", gave these lats their current name

Rose Cottage - one of two original buildings when site was bought (the other was Brock). Renovated in 1940 and a new floor installed, Rose was used for group instruction in wet weather. Later just used for storage.

Panabode - constructed in 1964 this is used for overnight stays by Camp Advisers when evaluating Guiders for their camp licences.

Nature House - originally in a school portable (1973), the current building was not built until 1987.

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Caretaker's Cottage - the original cottage was only three rooms with no indoor water, plumbing or electricity. It was added to and remodeled twice before the current building was erected in 1973.

Chapel - Dedicated in 1949.

IODE - started in 1936, designed to be enlarged as funds permitted. 1940 saw a doubling in size and a fireplace and wide veranda added. Extensive renovations were completed in 1964.

Tipi Wakin (Medicine Hut) - built in 1951 as a hospital hut, by 1988 it began its new life as home to the Summer Staff.

Flagpoles - erected to the memory of a wonderful friend, Mr. George Walker in 1948. He had played a very active role in the early days of the camp, building shelters and huts and was always available to help with the last-minute rush of breaking camp. The 40-foot pole was hewn from one of our own cedar trees.