

## **A Brief History of Parker Scout Reservation: 1940-1965 – The Camp Clyde Years**

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By Jack K. Johnson

### **Preface**

I wrote this history four times over a fifty year period and then continued to tinker with it. The first version, circa 1964, was a short, perfunctory chronology. I drafted the second in September 1965, shortly after finishing a two-year stint as Camp Clyde's Program Director. That point in my life marked the end of eleven consecutive summers as a camper, troop leader, or staff member on a piece of land I had grown to love. I had a few empty weeks on my hands before heading off to army basic training later that month and, while my memories were still fairly fresh, I decided to re-write and expand upon the chronology. I drew on facts gleaned from files in the camp office, conversations with camp old timers, documents I had saved over the years (I've always been something of a pack rat), and my own recollections.

I penned my new history in long-hand (this was before the dawn of personal computers!) but never got around to actually typing it up because the army, employment, marriage, kids, and graduate school got strangely in the way.

A chance encounter in 1973 with a former camp staffer prompted me to finally—after serious editing—type up that old hand-written manuscript. I sent a copy of what was now a third version to my friend, mailed one to the Central Minnesota Boy Scout Council office in St. Cloud, and kept one for myself. Then I went on with my life.

Fast forward to spring 2014. Out of the blue, I got a call from someone who told me about an upcoming camp staff reunion. He also mentioned that the Scout office had given him a copy of a camp history I had written long ago (this must have been the 1973 version). As the reunion drew closer, I dug it out and read it again for the first time in all those years. Not bad, I thought, but it could be better. And so I did more editing, added some material, cut some, made a few corrections, and sent it out via email to those attending the reunion. Thus was born the fourth edition.

The version you now read is, largely, as written in 2014, but with still more changes because, like all of us, stuff can always be improved.

Stillwater, Minnesota  
May 2019

## Camp Beginnings

Established institutions seldom spring full-grown from well-laid plans. They take shape over time. Such was the case with Parker Scout Reservation, the official long-term summer camp of the Central Minnesota Council, Boy Scouts of America. The name prior to 1966 was Camp Clyde.

In 1941, a 61-acre tract of land on North Long Lake, about ten miles north of Brainerd, was deeded to the Council for the princely sum of \$1.00. Scouts had actually been camping there since 1923, thanks to the generosity of the land's former owner, Clyde E. Parker, a Brainerd businessman. It was named "Camp Clyde" in honor of its benefactor.

Except for occasional residences and cabins, the lake itself was then largely unsettled. The property crested 20 to 40 feet above 2050 feet of shoreline — forested mainly by pines, oaks, poplars, birch, basswood and maples. The clean, clear water and bright, fine-grained sand made it perfect for swimming.

Troops at first furnished their own food, tents, and equipment. There was no camp staff or special programming. In 1943-44, four local civic organizations donated the money and volunteer manpower needed to construct four small screened buildings. These were initially referred to as "field kitchens" and provided shelter for food prep and storage by camping troops.

Early 1940s

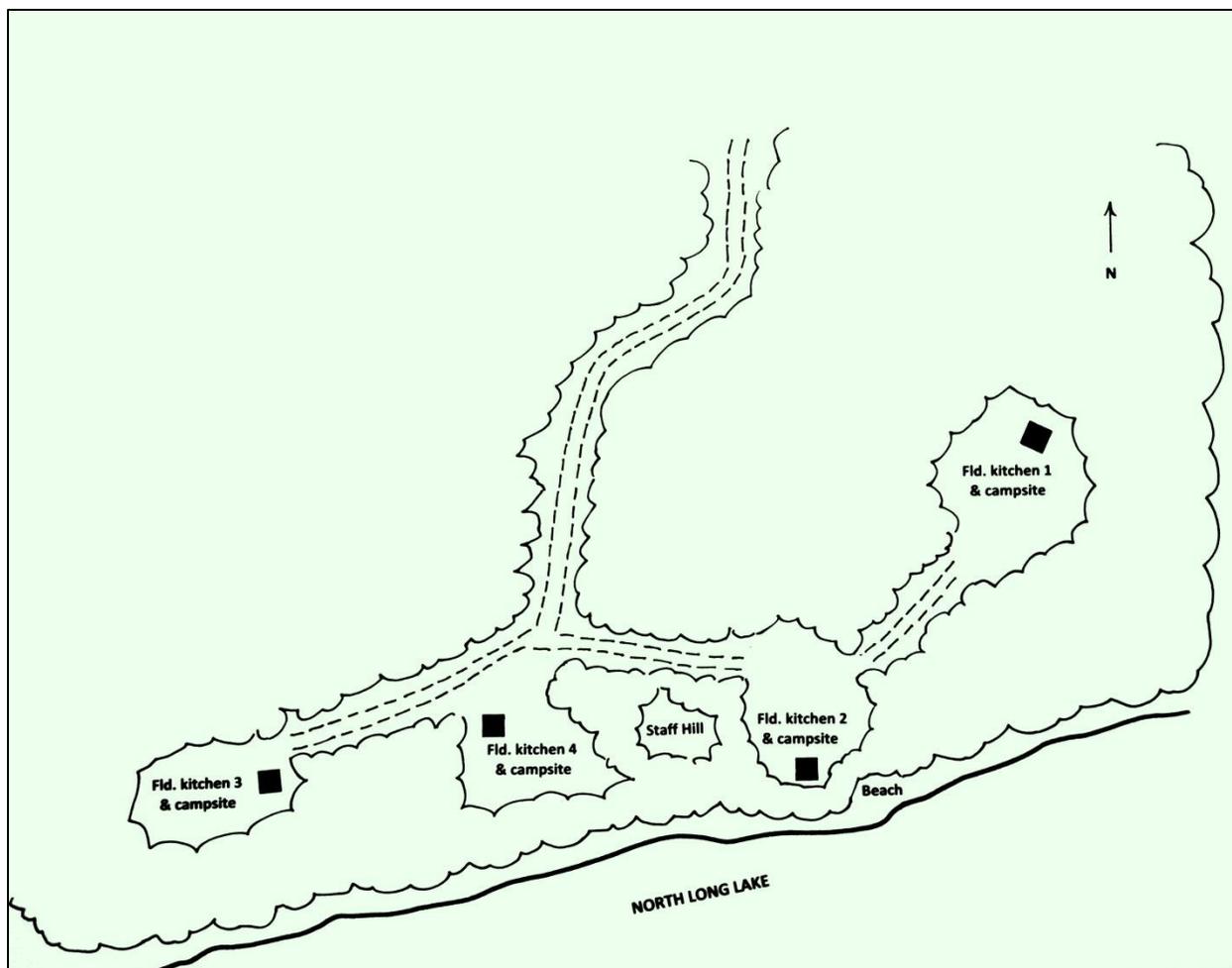


The largest was field kitchen #1, located on a knoll in the eastern part of camp. Kitchen #2 overlooked today's swimming area. Kitchen #3 was built next to what, allegedly, was either an Ojibwe lodge mound or burial mound, and kitchen #4 was constructed near the present dining hall.

## Turning Points

The Council employed its first camp staff in 1944, consisting of ten people, most of them older Scouts. They slept in two large tents on an oak knoll where the camp's main flag pole was later placed. The staff was expected to provide help with Scoutcraft and the waterfront, but as an experiment, a cook was hired to prepare three meals a day for those troops wishing them. Food was prepared in the fourth field kitchen and dished out in a chow line.

Campfire cookery by boys is not always successful, and the camp's new cooking service was an instant hit. It was so popular, in fact, that it soon became necessary for food to be carried



1944: four lakeside campsites—each with a field kitchen.

in large kettles and pans to the other three field kitchens for the ready consumption of active boys.

The food operation became centralized in 1946 when a large army field tent—complete with enough tables and benches to seat 120—was erected next to the kitchen building. This open-air “mess tent” served Scouts until the present dining hall was completed for use during the 1949 camping season. The neighboring fourth field kitchen was no longer useful and torn down.

In many respects, 1946 was a pivotal year for the camp. World War II was over and former servicemen were suddenly free to organize Scout troops and Cub packs. Membership in Scouting mushroomed. The 1946 camping season lasted nine weeks and was attended by a record 920 Scouts who enjoyed a week of boating, swimming, fishing, volleyball, softball, archery, and handicrafts, in addition to Scoutcraft. Attendees paid \$7.00 for their week in camp.

Although available in earlier years, “provisional” camping became *modus operandi* in 1947. Scouts could attend camp for a week under the supervision of camp staff. Staff also took over

the programming. The arrangement made it wholly possible for Scouts to have a camp experience without their Scoutmasters. There were three primary campsites: Snake Hill (the knoll above the swimming beach on which stood the first field kitchen); Little Turtle (immediately west of the third field kitchen); and Wolf Trap (west of Little Turtle). An actual wolf trap hung as a rusty decoration from a gateway to that campsite for quite a few years. Staff took up residence in the Little Turtle and Snake Hill field kitchens.

## **A Main Building and Other Refinements**

It was only natural that with the advent of centralized programming and food service, there should be some kind of main building or lodge that could serve as both dining hall and headquarters. Thus, the dining hall was begun in 1948, with most of the funds for its construction given as a memorial to another man named Clyde: Clyde Kaligher, an old Scouter who had maintained deep interest in the development of a full-fledged Scout camp for central Minnesota. The building was completed during the summer of 1949. Centrally located on the edge of a grassy ridge overlooking the lake, it was spacious and impressive-looking, with varnished pine siding. The screened windows on the main floor had hinged wooden panels that could be lowered and secured against storms or cold. Inside was a kitchen and room enough to feed up to 125 at one time.

Late 1940s



The trading post, which did its biggest trade in candy and pop, moved from its quarters in the old second field kitchen into the basement of the new dining hall. Because it was adjacent to the beach, the now-empty trading post became home to the waterfront staff.

Of course a centralized food service ought to be managed by someone who knows how to cook for large groups. In this spirit, the camp kitchen was turned over to two good-natured, middle-aged ladies who drove daily to camp from Brainerd. This arrangement worked pretty well, but a small, two bedroom cabin was eventually built for the cooks, conveniently located near the dining hall. Completed in 1952, it later became the camp director's cabin.

Scrap lumber from construction of the dining hall was used to build an unusual structure nearby. It was nick-named "the tub," although Hexagonal Lodge was the official moniker. The reason for its six-sided shape—designed and built by Diogenes Comstock—was to make the most efficient use of the short, left-over boards. Diogenes, the camp's director, then lived in it during each camping season through 1955. The building later served a variety of other purposes, including that of Health Lodge, where incoming physical checks were conducted and first aid was administered.

In 1950, an obstacle course and larger archery range was built on the little-used ball field, and a six-mat .22 caliber rifle range was set up after creating a berm for it on the north end of camp.

A refinement of 1953 was an electric water pump that replaced the hand pump in front of the dining hall. Running water (from a faucet, yet!) was thereby made available for the first time to the kitchen. A washing trough for use by all Scouts in camp was also set up next to the dining hall. This was thought a noble improvement by Scouts, many of whom routinely trekked to the

dining hall to wash up rather than use the smelly, canvas Lister bag (it contained chlorinated water) hanging on a tripod near each campsite's latrine. In 1956, running water was extended to each campsite.

### **A Scout is Reverent**

Another important development of 1953 was a chaplain's cabin built near the road leading into camp. Its interior was divided into thirds. The Protestant chaplain (a seminarian) lived in one end of the structure while the Catholic chaplain (a priest) lived in the other end. The middle third sheltered a Catholic altar. Each morning the exterior wall of the center section was raised for morning Mass. Catholic Scouts sat on outdoor log benches, facing the altar. Protestants held their services on a shady hillside overlooking the lake, right next to the swimming beach. It had a rustic altar, cross, and lectern, all made from birch logs. While in camp you were either a Catholic or a Protestant; no other distinctions were acknowledged. Chapel was held daily at 7:30 a.m., prior to breakfast, and the camp's youthful congregations often shivered in the cool, dewy mornings common to northern Minnesota. Services usually ran 15-20 minutes in length.

The Catholic chaplains were always ordained priests who typically served for a week or two before replacement by another priest. The Protestant chaplain was always a seminarian who came for the whole summer. In addition to their spiritual duties, the Camp Clyde chaplains were assigned to a pair of incongruous program areas: for years the Catholic chaplain usually oversaw the archery range while the Protestant chaplain ran the rifle range.

### **The Staff-Centered Mass Camp**



Early 1950s

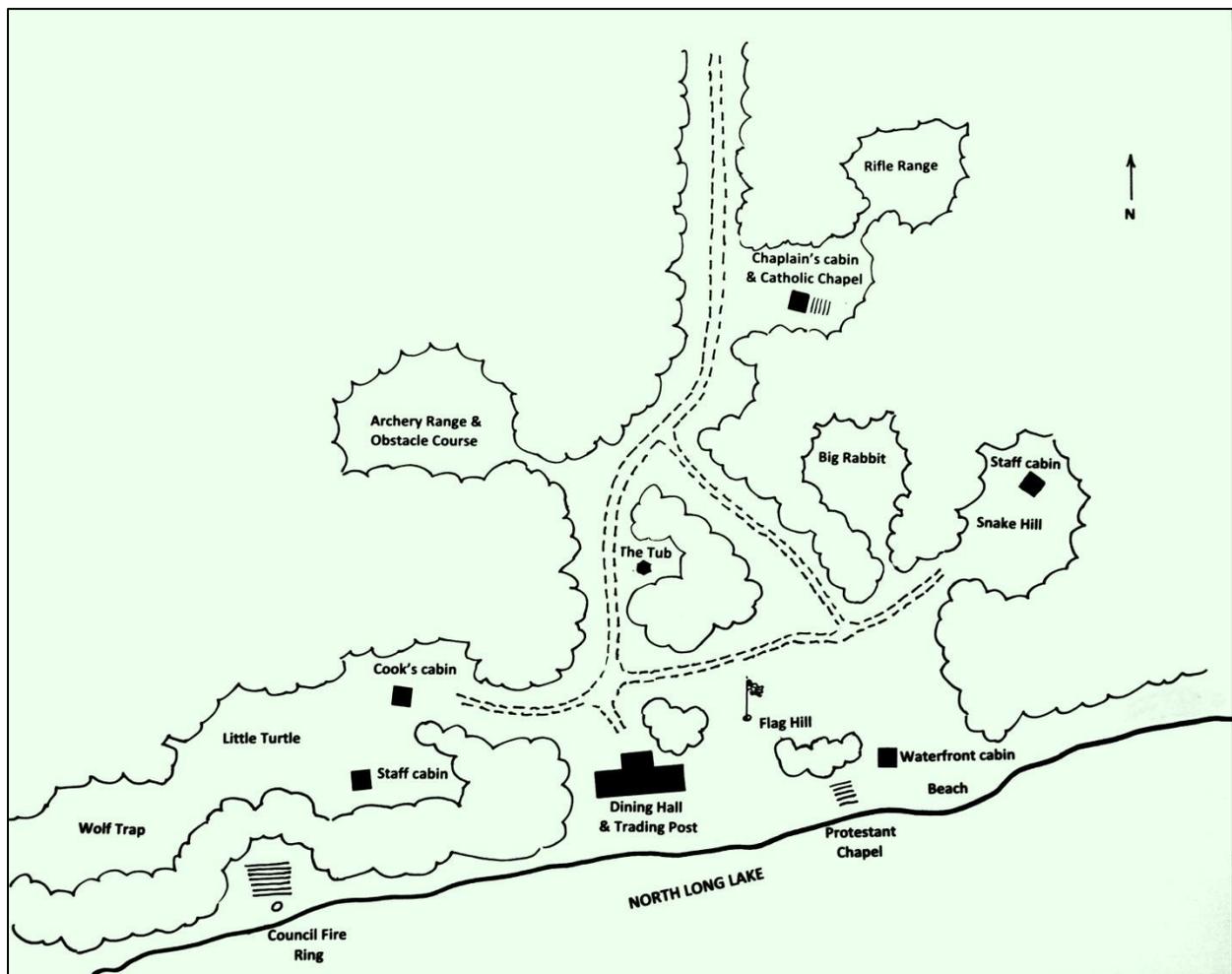
A new campsite, Big Rabbit, was cleared to the northwest of Snake Hill in 1954. By this time, the place was run pretty much entirely by camp staff. Most campers slept in large, six-man canvas tents on a framed platform. Like so much camping gear was in those days, the tents themselves were army surplus—olive-drab, heavy, and hot. Metal army cots with springs and mattresses were part of each tent's permanent equipment. Scouts were processed into camp on Sundays and assigned a campsite that was typically shared with members of more than one troop. All week they played, competed, swam, canoed, learned, and were otherwise led by their camp counselors according to tight, pre-set schedules.

Every morning, right after breakfast, a "good turn" period of 30 to 45 minutes was held. All boys in camp were assigned randomly into patrols that assured adequate camp functioning. The rotational duties included beach-raking, trash-hauling, "policing the area," filling the Lister bags, potato peeling, and of course latrine duty—an unloved chore that quick-thinking Scouts escaped with uncanny regularity. It was harder to avoid KP, however, which became part of most campers' experience for one day during their week in camp. Reveille and Taps were dutifully bugled at relatively dependable times throughout camp each morning and evening. Full-dress inspections were conducted by staff starting around 5:00 p.m. in the campsites, after which Scouts marched to the main flagpole and stood in formation while a bugler played

“Retreat” and “To the Color” as Old Glory was lowered. Then everyone marched in line to the “mess hall” for supper.

Brazen campers who pushed the rules too far (usually for making way too much noise after Taps) might find themselves roused out of the sack and put on impromptu, late-night work details, such as filling pot holes in the camp road. This method of reprimand—carried out under the tyrannical direction of a few older adolescent staffers—worked amazingly well.

It was the mass camp approach: highly centralized with commonly shared activities. On top of that, there were clear parallels to being a camper and a soldier on post. Military-style trappings were everywhere mixed with such distinctive elements of Scout camp life as Indian lore, council-fires, crafts, nature study, etc. The well-organized character of life in a resident camp also meant that it was possible for Scouts to go through the week having set tables and scraped dishes, but without cooking a meal over a fire. If he didn’t mind bedding with five others, he slept in relative comfort in a tent-house already set up for him; it was not necessary to pitch his own tent. As for Scoutmasters, they were noticeably absent—indeed, unneeded because every camp activity was handled by the permanent staff.



1955: a centralized camp where staff ran the show and Scoutmasters were seldom seen.

This approach was unsettling to some Scouters who worried that it undermined troop integrity or Scoutmasters themselves. Some felt that military motifs were too much at play. It could not be denied, though, that nearly all activities traditionally associated with Boy Scout camping were present in some fashion. The camp provided every opportunity needed to advance in rank—from swimming tests, compass courses, and Second Class cookouts, to formal instruction in Tenderfoot knots and First Class Morse-code. Older Scouts vied with one another to complete hard-to-get merit badges during their week in camp. Moreover, there was an atmosphere of cohesion—of widespread camaraderie among peers made possible by an emphasis on common, camp-wide activities that every Scout experienced. There were benefits, in other words, as well as shortcomings, to the mass camp approach . . . but like it or not, change was on the horizon.

## **Diogenes**

August 1955 marked the departure of its long-time camp director, E. H. “Diogenes” Comstock, a retired Dean of Mines at the University of Minnesota. Small, bald (he wore a pith helmet when outside), and bandy-legged, he had a feisty side and a spirit writ large. His influence on the camp was pronounced. To the near-sum of boys who had to date tramped beneath its trees, Diogenes was part of their Camp Clyde experience in some personal way. Few first-year campers would forget his role in an elegantly simple “Indian ceremony” through which each passed as initiates at the camp’s opening council fire. Campers who took his Pioneering Merit Badge class learned about engineering, not just how to lash poles together.

He also had a flair for the dramatic. During Order of the Arrow calling out ceremonies, his was the voice that called forth from the darkness, beyond the firelight. “Only HEEEE is worthy to wear the arroow who will continue faithfully to serve his fellow man,” Diogenes would bellow, sounding like God Almighty on Judgment Day. “Is he willing so to do?”

The candidate, who by this time was often wide-eyed and shaking in his boots after being roughly tapped out and brought forward by two painted Indians, invariably answered yes. To which Diogenes boomed, “It is recOORded!” He then repositioned himself so his voice would come from a different direction for the next candidate. To the staff who worked with him, Diogenes was not only unforgettable; he was Camp Clyde personified.

After Diogenes, what passed for the camp office was moved from a back corner of the dining hall into the front section of the aging third field kitchen, now known as Little Turtle Cabin because of its location next to that campsite. It also housed staff counselors for Little Turtle and Wolf Trap, who shared the space with a large, extended family of mice. Its new status as camp HQ made no difference to the critters already in long-term residence. They continued to live peacefully beneath the sagging floorboards by day and to forage upstairs by night. Squirrels and an occasional wood chuck also inhabited space under the floorboards.

## New Directions

Sweeping change came with the 1956 camping season. Clarence Hammett took the helm as new camp director. A professional Scouter who articulated a camping philosophy decreed by the National Council, Hammett stressed the importance of troop autonomy by enacting a troop-centered approach that reversed the staff-centered “mass camp” approach of previous years. Hammett also downplayed military overtones. Scoutmasters were once again expected to lead their own troops, with staff serving as resource personnel. The intention was to strengthen troop leadership, make camp more responsive to particular troop needs, and to make camp less subject to the undercurrent anarchy of Scouts without Scoutmasters.



Late 1950s

The changes didn't stop there. Due to erosion along the slopes to the lake near each of the three original campsites, all campsites were moved away from the lake. Once cleared, these sites were named after former area Indian chiefs, which translated were: Big Martin, Yellow Hair, Flat Mouth, Broken Tooth, and White Fisher. Elder Brother, North Wind, and Curley Head campsites were added a few years later. Each troop, with the exception of provisional Scouts without their own leaders, was given its own campsite. The large, six-man tents were replaced with smaller two-man wall tents. Snake Hill became Staff Hill—off-limits to campers—and the site's old field kitchen became a staff recreation building. The trading post enlarged its digs in the dining hall basement and offered a wider selection of seductive merchandise.

Joining the trading post in the musty, dimly-lit basement that year was a much touted “Conservation Lodge.” The goal was admirable, but that such a place should be even dreamed up, given the magnificent laboratory of the real world surrounding it, is fascinating if not a bit bizarre. The Lodge consisted largely of some worse-for-wear stuffed animals and birds, jars of pickled snakes and marine life, someone's butterfly collection, assorted pamphlets, and two electrified “Can You Identify It?” boards depicting local flora and fauna.

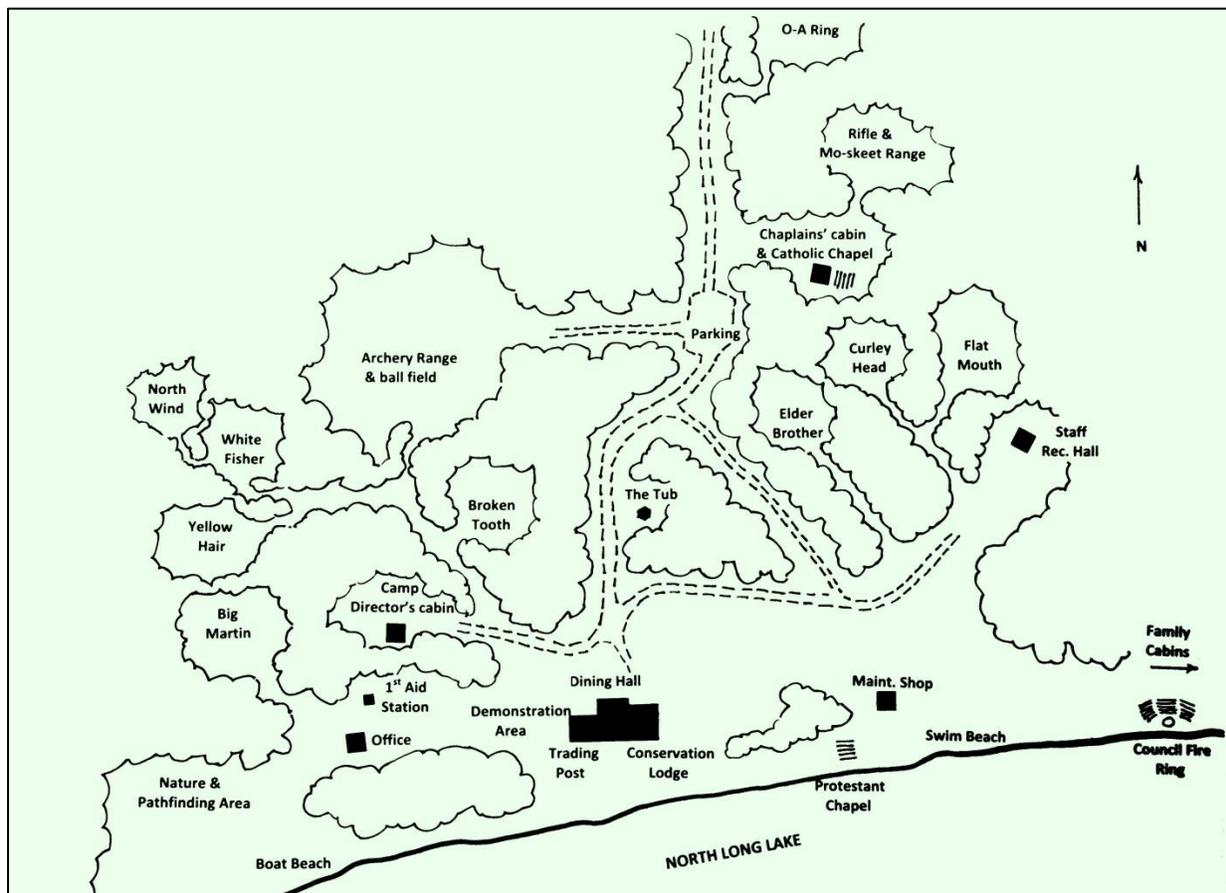
The basement Conservation Lodge never advanced much beyond that makeshift stage of development, in spite of well-intentioned efforts in subsequent seasons to resuscitate it, but it did serve as home base for a staff conservationist who presided over related programs and instruction. One such initiative was the creation of three nature trails of different lengths within the camp's boundaries. Hikers were routed by wooden red, yellow, and blue arrows nailed to trees. An adventurous camper who hiked all three trails could enshrine his name on a large plywood boot sole attached to an interior wall of the dining hall. Unfortunately, the trails were not adequately maintained beyond the first few summers. By 1959 they were overgrown and largely unknown to new campers, but a more manageable outdoor conservation area that demonstrated environmental issues and identified vegetation and evidence of wildlife was created near the present canoe beach.

Also in 1956 the camp director moved into the cook's cabin and the cooks moved into Diogenes's tub.

Boats and canoes were moved off the swimming beach in 1957 and given a waterfront area of their own where a council fire ring had once been. Vintage ring-down telephones were installed, the kitchen was enlarged, and Mo-Skeet and field archery were added to the program. The staff by this time consisted of about 20 people, including a handful of apprentice Counselors-in-Training (CITs).

### Din in the Dining Hall

Life at Camp Clyde was punctuated three times daily by trips to the dining hall. The building was referred to as a mess hall by everyone until 1956 when Hammett decreed in no uncertain terms that it was hereafter to be known as the dining hall. Scouts lined up at the east entrance and were called in by campsite. The honor of using the west entrance was reserved for staff, Scoutmasters, and guests. Each table sat ten people and usually included two staff members who tried to promote some semblance of order. Meals were served family style with platters of food passed around, but in spite of staff and troop leader presence, campers often behaved like budding barbarians at the table. It was not a place for the fastidious. Boys taught manners at home shoveled down their food, exuberantly jostled and argued over extra helpings, and



1960: By this time, Scoutmasters were expected to run their own programs, aided by staff, and all campsites had been moved away from the lake. Scouts in 1960 paid \$16 for a week in camp, which included all meals, a tent and canvas cot.

always shouted their conversations over an ambient din augmented by clatter in the kitchen and the endless scraping of stools across the floor. Two boys at each table boys carried out essential tasks: the “waiter” was responsible for hustling to the food counter for refills (it was considered great fun to keep the poor fellow running) and the “host” had to show up early to set the table and stay late to perform clean-up chores. Duties were, of course, rotated so everyone had their turn.

Each meal began with a blessing from one of the chaplains. Then came the serious business of eating, followed by announcements that Scouts and staff alike generally gave little sign of having heard, and finally a song or two or maybe even three. Group singing traditionally followed most meals. Of particular note is the Camp Clyde Hymn, which was solemnly intoned at least once each day so that all would learn it by the end of the week. Sung to the tune of Cornell University’s [“Far Above Cayuga’s Waters,”](#) it went like this:

Looking far o’er Crow Wing County,  
There among the pines,  
Where the Chippewa before us,  
Camped and built their shrines.  
There above the shores of Long Lake,  
Stands our dear Camp Clyde,  
There the boys and men of Scouting,  
Build horizons wide.

In 1957 and ’58, campers were prodded to also learn a stirring Camp Clyde Rouser. It had good lyrics and a catchy melody, but never caught on. Its fate was sealed when the two staff men who championed it failed to return for the 1959 season, but lest it be completely forgotten, here are the words, sung to the tune [“Don’t Give Up the Ship”](#) from a 1935 Dick Powell/Ruby Keeler movie:

Scouts of Clyde together,  
Taking to the world,  
Scouting ways forever,  
With flags and banners mightily unfurled!  
To our Oath and Scout Law,  
True we’ll always be,  
With every council, every region,  
Bound together in our legion,  
Scouts of Clyde are we!

Every meal ended the same way: tables were dismissed one-by-one with a stampede to the trading post downstairs for massive doses of candy, pop, gum, and ice cream.

## Troubles

In spite of initial disenchantment by some Scoutmasters who preferred letting others take charge of their boys for a week in camp, most Scoutmasters saw, and used, the 1956 decentralized arrangement as a positive opportunity for troop building. There were some problems, however. Most often they arose over the ambiguities presented by staff vs. Scoutmaster roles. Some Scoutmasters grumbled about what they interpreted as staff indifference, wondering about what the staff was supposed to be doing—or seemed not to be doing. Some were disappointed with the de-emphasis on such camp-wide traditions as Reveille, Taps, evening inspections, Retreat, and certain special events. Three traditional camp-wide events were retained: the Thursday night Order of the Arrow calling out ceremony, the Water Carnival competition, and one additional competition such as the inter-patrol Gold Rush. The opening night campfire was initially discontinued, but later revived by popular demand. All other events were dropped or encouraged to be done on a troop level.

The staff, on the other hand, complained about Scoutmasters who didn't structure a program for their troop, content to just let their kids just run free while counting on staff to still take care of things. The acquisition of three small lakeside cabins at the east end of camp for use by Scoutmaster's families exacerbated the issue. The family cabins were well-intended as an inducement for Scoutmaster attendance at camp; however, some spent more time at their cabin than with their Scouts.

The emphasis on troop autonomy was healthy, but the disparate expectations created by such an abrupt turn-around in camp functioning were not quickly resolved. Some troops stopped coming to Camp Clyde. Confidence and harmony between some Scoutmasters and camp staff took years to mend.

The camp went into a holding pattern during the years 1958-1961, void of notable changes. Camp attendance sagged, even though the number of baby-boom Scouts in the Council kept rising. The unavoidable truth was this: the site was under-sized and the grounds over-used. One could shuffle the cards *ad infinitum*, without adding more value. Sixty-one acres, by contemporary Scout camp standards, was too small. Speculation centered on the possibility of a new and larger camp somewhere else and this, coupled with the Council's omnipresent financial straits, discouraged serious new investment in Camp Clyde. Fortunately, prospects soon brightened.

## Space at Last!

Early in 1962, the Northwest Paper Company donated nearly 200 acres of forested land that abutted the northwest end of camp. Apparently there was not enough profit to be made by lumbering there. More would be gained by a tax write-off—and the Scouts could benefit.

The company's gift changed everything. Suddenly there was an incentive for camp growth and renewal. As a bonus, the new

Early 1960s



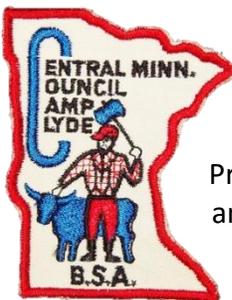
acreage was laced by logging trails that facilitated inland site development. By summer's end, two new campsites, Flat Mouth and North Wind, had already been carved out on the new land.

During the 1963 season, three more campsites were added while three older sites were retired and given a chance to re-vegetate. Following earlier practice, old campsite names were recycled by assigning them to the new campsites. This meant that five of Camp Clyde's seven principal campsites were now located at considerable distance from the original, central part of camp, posing new challenges. It was no longer possible to hear the dining hall's big brass bell at the more distant campsites, a bell that had traditionally announced meals and calls to assemble. Campers immersed in activities often found themselves away from their troop campsite for the entire day.

With respect to facilities, the structure housing the camp office was literally rotting into the ground on which it rested. It smelled moldy. The roof leaked. And the camp seriously needed a better maintenance and storage building—something weather-tight and larger than the old recreation hall on Staff Hill, which had been re-purposed. Now home to the quartermaster, the recreation building was ill-suited for maintenance or storage, but it was the only structure available and at least in better shape than the office.

### The “New Camp Clyde”

These imperatives prompted a council-wide fund drive to build new facilities and to re-center the camp in light of its new boundaries. The outcomes of this drive were realized by the summer of 1964, with Clete Dozark, the council's energetic camping chairman, playing a lead role in the effort. Promoted as a “New Camp Clyde,” the 1964 camping season opened with a new service building to house the trading post, commissary, and maintenance operations; a new office building that was palatial by former standards; a shower house; and a new



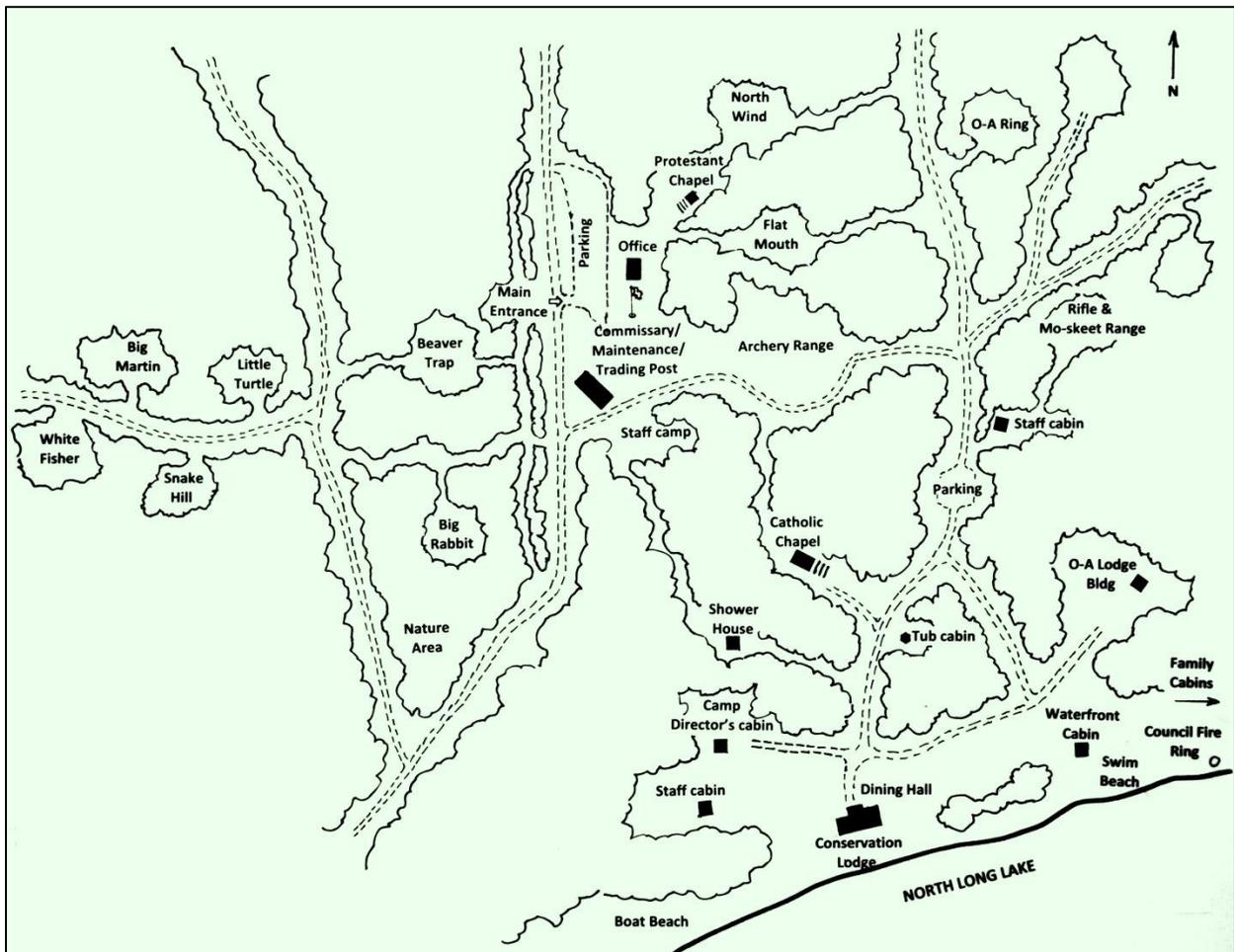
1964-65

Protestant chapel. The service building, office, and chapel were of cedar log construction and more centrally located on the newly-granted land in a field northwest of the archery range. The shower house was built on the most widely-traveled trail leading in from the newer campsites. The new Protestant chapel was of A-frame design with an open-air altar on one side and chaplain's quarters on the other. It was located to the northeast of the administration building and just south of the recently added North Wind campsite.

The new buildings signaled transformation and optimism. Camper attendance increased by 50 percent. There were important program changes, as well. A commissioner system, created the previous year, was beefed up with carefully chosen college men who each worked with two or three troops, helping the troop's leader to identify and achieve unit goals for that week. Programs were flexibly tailored as fully as possible to meet individual troop needs, and the system improved communication between staff and troop leaders.

In order to make their week a more genuine camping experience, troops were required to eat two meals each day in their campsites. Truth be told, it was also because the dining hall was

now quite a distance from most campsites and was now too small to accommodate all campers in one setting. With food and preparation instructions provided by the commissary, every breakfast and alternate lunches and dinners were handled by the Scouts. Lunches usually did not require cooking. Each site was supplied with picnic tables, a storage cabinet, dining fly, and all necessary utensils. Troops sent advance runners to the commissary to pick up what they needed for meals, but that was hard on smaller troops with few Scouts to share the burden and for troops on the outer edges of camp. The eventual solution was to make distributions using the camp's old pickup, which bounced and wheezed its way through the woods with each delivery.<sup>1</sup> The new system clearly had benefits, but it had detractors, too. Some Scoutmasters complained that too much time was taken preparing and cleaning up after meals. More Scouts were coming into contact with the camp's lush Poison Ivy while foraging



**1965: An enlarged camp brought new construction and a shift of gravity to the northwest.**

for firewood. And, of course, the quality of cuisine varied. An aspiring young cook who created an unpalatable mess, was subject to powerful scorn by his peers. The trading post experienced

<sup>1</sup> The ancient truck finally gave up the ghost a few years later. It was buried with full rites at the east end of the archery field.

a conspicuous uptick in candy and ice cream sales. But the system did solve the dining hall distance/space problem, and Scouts gained confidence and skill as outdoor cooks.

Noteworthy but less salient developments of that year included reconstruction of the archery range on the athletic field; enlargement of the rifle range; a welcome batch of new aluminum canoes; a mimeographed weekly camp newspaper called *The Bugle*; the development of a new nature trail and conservation demonstration area within the western part of camp; and movement of most of the staff to the former White Fisher campsite. The old quartermaster building (alias staff recreation center/staff sleeping quarters/field kitchen #1) was turned over for use by Naguonabe Lodge of the Order of the Arrow, which had rendered tremendous service to the camp over the years. Two new campsites were opened on the added acres using the old campsite names of Big Martin and White Fisher.

The biggest physical improvement of 1965 was the addition of an impressive new Catholic chapel on one of the original inland campsites of 1956. It had a small apartment for the priest and provided a roof over the heads of worshipers. A new flag pole was installed next to the office, and troops participated in a flag-lowering ceremony on the nights they ate in the dining hall. The commissioner system, field cooking, and conservation activities got some fine-tuning.

Overall, nearly all troop leaders were pleased with the changes. Staff morale went up, too. Scouts, on the other hand, seemed obtusely unaffected. They simply took the “new” camp for granted, living comfortably in the present. In spite of conjecture that young people were getting more sophisticated, it was not in evidence at Camp Clyde. They beamed with pride and relief upon advancing to the next rank by week’s end. They remained blithely unaware of hygiene in spite of the new shower house. Hikes and camp-outs continued to be treated as major expeditions into unchartered wilderness. Inter-tent raids and reprisals tenaciously persisted. Chaotic competition for mundane camp awards endured. Eating habits were as unrefined as ever. In short, the camp had changed, but not the boys.

## **Final Thoughts**

As stated in the title, this is a *brief* accounting of the Camp Clyde years. One can’t include everything, but I hope I’ve hit the highlights and made the story interesting. In 1966 the camp name was changed from Camp Clyde to Parker Scout Reservation. Many more changes followed. The 1977 camping season was the last one for camp staff. Beset by financial stresses and declining camp attendance, the Council decided to stop using Parker in the usual way. Boy Scouts from the Central Minnesota Council who wanted a traditional week-long summer camp had to go elsewhere (most chose Many Point Scout Camp near Park Rapids). Today, Parker caters primarily to Cub Scouts and to troops camping on their own.

Scouting imparted something in me of enduring value and Camp Clyde played a role in it. Although most of my memories have faded, some carry indelible marks. A few are fixed to a time and place, such as when I proposed to my wife on the waterfront steps. More often than not, however, my recollections are now impressionistic—of being awakened by the warmth of hot morning sun on a steaming tent . . . of faces of fellow Scouts and Scouters who, in my

mind's eye, will remain forever young . . . of wind-blown birches and blue waters riffled with breezes and playful shouts from the waterfront . . . of filing silently with a hundred others down the camp road to a secluded O-A ring, escorted in the darkness by a full moon anchored just above the tree line . . . of campfire horseplay and ghost stories and wood smoke . . . of cool, green mornings and soft carpets of silky red needles and running down seemingly endless dusty paths where thousands of feet had run before. Nearly sixty years later, these things still speak to me.



### A few scenes from 1964



A quiet Dining Hall



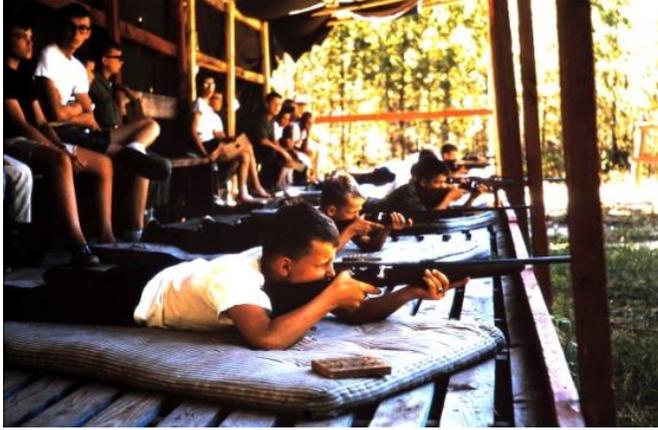
Commissioner John Nelson (L) and CIT Eric Henning



Swim beach



All new aluminum canoes



Rifle Range



The new camp headquarters



New camp service building



Archery Range



Dave Nelson as lead dancer, O-A Calling Out Ceremony



Guides from L: John Aldrich, Tom Richter, Gene Daly