

## **HYSTERICAL HISTORICAL HERITAGE TOUR OF OLD CAMP READ AND “THE HERMITAGE”**

As part of the 10<sup>th</sup> Camp Read Reunion, I was tasked with running a tour of the original CAMP READ , later called Camp Tomahawk, and still later called the Summit Base. This was originally an Adirondack Great Camp, in the Adirondack style, of the late 1800s, called THE HERMITAGE. It was created and owned by Clarence Collins, a wealthy cotton trader from New York City in the 1890s.

I first had to commandeer transportation for this event, as most of the tour participants were of Senior Age and a walk in the park was not on their, or my, agenda. So, I drafted two more-recent staffers to secure vehicles from the Camp Read transportation pool: Tom Holl kindly requisitioned one yellow bus to accommodate about eight of us and one off-road vehicle was hi jacked to accommodate three passengers.

We proceeded up the camp road towards the base of Stevens Mountain and began the tour at the old Retreat Field, now containing the enormous climbing wall. It is about 50 or so feet high which may have needed a waiver from the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) which limits the height of building in the Adirondack Park. The APA came into being about 1972, well after Camp Read was established here in 1949.

On our tour was one Russ Kinaman, who had been at Camp in 1949 or 1950 , even before my arrival at camp as a 13-year-old first class scout in 1951.

I explained that the Butler Building was on the site of the old Tennis Court for the Collins Great Camp. We then drove up the road and I pointed out the old troop sites of Troop 1 through 6, later converted to Indian names: Wyandotte was old Troop 1, Mohawk for Troop 2, Delaware for Troop 3, Blackfoot for Troop 4 and Pawnee for Troop 6. Could not recall troop 5. Can anyone help here?

Nothing remains from the Collins Great Camp, with Lester Lodge having been dismantled in the mid-1960s and the old horse barn, which had become the camp's Dining Hall having collapsed in 2001 under the weight of a late March, very wet and heavy snow fall.

We continued up the road to the old Race Track and drove around it to the old Rifle Range and Field sports area, later converted into a COPE course. The monument to Lookaway, one of Mr. Collins' favorite trotters, is in the central part of the old race track.

Russ Borner and I then left the tour at the Butler Building to search for the site of the old camp Chapel, with its spectacular views of both Stevens and Third Brother. We were successful and found the old altar and lectern and some of the old concrete blocks that held the benches of two by fours. But, the views are non-existent due to tree growth over the last 70 years. The chapel was dedicated in memory of Joseph De Ganahl who died in World War II.

The ground of the chapel was covered with tailings from the nearby Barton Garnet Mine, at North River, NY. Scouts would surreptitiously scour the ground during services for shards of deep red garnets. I could find no trace of those tailings on the tour today.

On our way back we surveyed the former locations of Lester Lodge and the camp Dining Hall ( the old horse barn), as well as other old barns, the tool shed and a stone root cellar for the Hermitage. We viewed the old rose garden wall, which now surrounds the William Brucker Sr. Building which houses the Summit Office.

A good time was had by all!! And my special thanks to our two drivers.