

WABASH VALLEY CHRISTIAN YOUTH CAMP

A BRIEF CAMP HISTORY

Someone has said, "An opportunity is an idea or dream whose time has come." The Wabash Valley Christian Youth Camp, Inc. came about and exists today because of the men who dreamed and worked for the youth of the Wabash Valley Area of Eastern Illinois and Western and Central Indiana. These dreamers and workers were the founders of the Wabash Valley Christian Youth Camp in the year 1956.

Brother Fred Walker was conducting a Gospel Meeting at the Northside Congregation in Terre Haute in that year. He spoke of the youth camps being operated by members of the Church in the South, and the success they were having. Those present were impressed with the idea of such a camp and believed the time was right for such a work in our area. Within a year the efforts of many were rewarded as the Wabash Valley Christian Youth Camp became a reality. Bro. Roy Van Tassel was selected as the first Youth Camp Director sponsored by members of the Church of Christ in the state of Indiana.

In those early years camp facilities were leased from the Boy Scouts at Camp Krietenstein located in Clay County. That first year at Camp "K" saw a total of 100 campers in attendance. The following year attendance increased to 155. For the next two years the attendance remained about the same even though a new camp was established north of our area, pulling some of the staff members and campers who formerly attended camp with us to that area with it. As attendance climbed we were forced to go to two weeks of camp each summer. Until the past two years attendance has averaged well over one hundred each week plus the necessary staff.

For the past seven or eight years we have planned and hoped for the day when we could leave our own camp facilities and a greater use of the possibilities of such a camp. Several sites were looked at and discussed at various Board of Directors Meetings. It was in 1967 that our dreams began to come true. Peabody Coal Company donated a tract of land to the Southside Church of Christ in Terre Haute for use as a camp. It was then that a new corporation was formed and the land leased on an indefinite basis from Southside so as to better utilize this gift for the betterment of our camp.

Actual construction began on the new facility in a big way in 1968. With construction came needs for funds to buy materials. Several blessings have come our way to enable us to keep on making progress. We were able to buy surplus and scrap (reject) materials that were actually first class materials by building the cabins out of Stran Steel. Since this would be practically maintenance free we made this the type building we would erect as the cost would be low and we had no timber on the premises large enough for sawing lumber. We are now beginning to show quite a complex of beautiful Stran Steel Buildings at camp. We have also had several thousand dollars worth of plastic water and sewer pipe donated to us by Ethyl Visqueen Corp. There have been some disappointments such as getting no water from our 400 feet deep well but all in all everything looks great at present.

In 1969 we found ourselves out of a place to conduct summer camp as the scouts had grown and needed all of Camp "K". We were fortunate in being able to lease the facilities of Woodland Bible Camp near Linton for both 1969 and 1970 summer camp. We are working hard to have 1971 camp at our own camp site.

Those who have served the camp as President-director since its beginning have been Roy Van Tassel, Gene Carrell, Billy Ringold, and Frank Binford. In 1969 a new system was enacted and J. Douglas Jones served as President for 1969 and 1970. Camp Directors for 1969 were Odell Kirby, J. Douglas Jones, and Larry Vandeventer. In 1970 C. Edwin Smith and Larry Vandeventer served as Camp Directors. Beginning October 1, 1970 Larry Vandeventer was elected to serve as President for the year 1970-71 as J. Douglas Jones asked to not be re-elected. It was this summer that the name for our new camp was chosen. Other than for business matters the camp will be known in the future as Camp Wabashi [pronounced wah-bah-shee].

Just this year, Peabody Coal Company has given us another tract of land to be added to our present camp for the construction of our sanitation lagoon. Now we will have approximately 80 acres of land in our camp proper.

WHERE WE NOW STAND

- The access road has been built into camp but lacks a finish coat of gravel.
- A survey was made by the Soil Conservation Service and as a result a drainage diversion ditch constructed to protect our athletic field.
- The athletic field has been leveled and seeded for future use.
- Three cabins have been constructed. One is being used as a tool shed, the other two are cabins for girls and have all toilet and shower facilities built into each cabin. One girls' cabin remains to be erected although we have materials.
- All of the boys' cabins are yet to be built. Materials for two of them are on the grounds. Also a boys' shower house is yet to be constructed.
- The road has been built to both the girls' area and part way to the boys' area. This remains to be completed and surfaced.
- A temporary water system has been installed and lines run to the caretaker's house site. A temporary shower has also been in use all summer. Water is being used from our lake since the failure of our well to give us water. This lake is a fine source of water as it is 30 feet deep and practically no surface water runs into it.
- The Chapel area is practically complete and has been used for various functions both in 1969 and 1970.
- The combination Lodge-Cafeteria Building [100' by 50'] is now complete for the most part on the outside. Rough-in plumbing and heating is in and the floor has all been poured and chimney and fireplace constructed. We lack the interior walls, porches, plus kitchen equipment, plumbing and heating. A second floor is yet to be built above the kitchen area.
- A sanitation lagoon is to be constructed and with it the installation of all the sewer lines.
- Excavation is almost complete for our concrete water storage reservoir high on the hill above the cafeteria building. This must be poured in the next few weeks. Water lines will then have to be installed to and from it to the various areas where water will be needed.

- The site has been prepared and almost complete for the caretaker's home. This should be completed within the next week.
- We have pledges of about \$200 per month for the next year or so to cover some of the costs of getting into camp but we lack a lot more. We have paid for everything as we bought it so we do not owe anything but current bills. As of September 30 we had \$3930.38 in the bank. This will not go very far toward completing the camp.
- It will take from \$40,000 to \$50,000 to complete the camp to the degree planned. We can get into camp next year with perhaps an outlay of a little over half this figure but we still will have to complete it all eventually.
- Everything has been planned to be as free of annual maintenance as possible with an expected useful life of many years. Also with the stiffer health laws today, everything is being installed and constructed to meet or exceed the requirements of the State Board of Health. This will give us one of the most modern and finest camps anywhere when it is completed.

HOW THE CAMP WILL BENEFIT YOU

Camp Wabashi [Wah-bah-shee] has been planned as a year round camp for the use of Christians from this whole area. It has been planned with the following goals in mind:

1. To provide us our own camp grounds for this part of Indiana and Western Illinois for year round use.
2. To provide a place for weekend outings and retreats for Christians.
3. To give us a place to conduct workshops, youth forums and similar programs.
4. To make available area wide training for service sessions, etc.
5. To provide facilities for day camps for underprivileged children and the like.
6. To be available for congregational use by various churches of Christ wishing to use it in accordance to camp regulations.
7. To make a place where Christian families may vacation together in a Christian atmosphere untainted by the stench of sin in the world about us.
8. To have a place easily accessible to all of us. A place easily reached from Evansville and the south via US 41; from the East and Indianapolis via Hwy 46 and I-70; from the North, Lafayette, Danville, Urbana-Champaign, etc. via Hwy 63 and US 41; and from the west via I-70 towards Effingham and St. Louis. Within the next two years most of these main roads will be fast non-stop routes with the exception of the north routes.

HOW THE CAMP IS FINANCED

Our whole program is financed in the following ways:

1. Some income is derived from operation of the Summer Camp and fees collected from campers but this is not nearly enough to pay for upkeep, etc.
2. Additional expenses are met by Annual Membership and Life Membership of \$5 and \$100 respectively.

3. Construction expenses for new installations must be met by pledges from individuals, gifts and donations from them, etc. We do not solicit churches for funds.
4. Some additional income is received in the way of Memorials set up by different individuals honoring some Loved One.

HOW THE CAMP IS OPERATED

The Wabash Valley Christian Youth Camp is governed by a Board of Directors, all of whom are members of the church of Christ and who are in good standing in their community and congregation. At present there are 18 Directors. Our charter and Bylaws provide for as many as 21 Directors and these 3 additional will no doubt be added at a later time as needs arise. Each Director is elected for a term of three years and no more than two Directors can be from the same congregation.

The Officers of the Corporation are elected for a term of one year and consist of a President, Vice-President, Summer Camp Coordinator, Secretary and Treasurer. These plus the Chairman of the following committees meet as the Executive Committee at least once each month: Fund Raising Committee, Public Relations Committee, and Building and Grounds Committee. They answer to the entire Board in conducting needed business and meet with the Board in its regular Quarter Meetings.

OUR HOPES

We are hoping that you will catch a glimpse of the Vision we have and want to be a part of the great team working to develop greater Christian Character in our boys and girls. It is not our intention to be in competition with any other camp and this can be shown since really we are the oldest camp in the state among churches of Christ. We just want to promote Christ and Him crucified for a lost and dying world in such a way that generations yet to be born will know the truth and be made free. We want our children and our grandchildren to be rooted and grounded more firmly in the truth as they face an atheistic age. Christian camping can help do this by teaching from God's Book of Nature as well as the Bible and by Christian association and friendships that may be lifelong.