

Perquimans People

Camping on the shore of Perquimans River

By PAT MANSFIELD

The Perquimans River attracts many types of people, for varied reasons. Not only does it offer fishing, boating, swimming, and other water sports, it also provides solitude for those interested in searching their minds and souls.

One such place on the river is Camp Cale. The camp, owned and operated by the Chowan Baptist Association, is located on the river in Whitehat Community.

Open from March through October, the camp has screened cabins for the warm months and two winterized cabins for the fall and winter. It has a full kitchen — dining hall combination with an adjacent conference room.

The ten county Association is funded by its members, 58 churches and two missions, and in turn, provides for the expenses at Camp Cale.

Land for the camp was donated by the late James Cale, in memory of his father.

But donating the land was only the beginning. Trees had to be removed, underbrush had to be cut down, and some type of shelter had to be built.

Rev. Robert Harrell, of Chowan County, was the associational missionary during this time, and was instrumental in organizing help for clearing the land.

"At first," said Harrell, "there was no money for the development of the camp, so farmers came down and brought their tractors and even one came with a bulldozer. It was like a jungle out there. One Saturday out of each month was set aside as work day and men from the ten county associational area came to help."

The first year, 1964, Harrell became the first summer camp director. The camp consisted of tarp covered hogans and a make shift kitchen, with two huge fallen trees which served as benches for the boys and girls.

Harrell cooked breakfast over a camp stove, but lunch and supper

were catered by a local restaurant and picked up at meal times.

"The facilities were very primitive," said Harrell. The bathroom was an out-door privy and the shower consisted of 55 gallon barrels that they filled each morning with water and the sun shown on them to heat the water during the day.

"The water was so precious," said Harrell, "that you didn't dare get in the shower and just let the water run, you pulled the string and got wet, then you soaped down, then you pulled the string again to rinse off."

"That first year," said Harrell, "it rained so much, we had to meet the parents at the main road and carry the children in on a trailer hooked to the back of a tractor, because of the mud. One night it rained so hard, it actually rained right through those truck tarps we had over the hogans. The next day, the camp was flooded, the children were wet, their clothes were wet, and we just had to call off camp that week and call the parents to come get the children. We made up the week later that summer."

Volunteer pastors from churches in the association helped Harrell the first year. They set up a schedule and took turns spending a week each down at the camp.

Later, the association set aside money in the budget for Camp Cale and some churches began sending offerings.

Today, regular summer camps are offered for girls and boys, and are divided into age groups. The groups are: girls, grades 3 through 6, and grades 6 through 9, and boys, grades 4 through 8 and grades 3 through 7. These week-long camps cost each individual \$45 per week.

There are also day camps during the summer, in which R.A.'s, Ac-teens, Mission Friends, etc. come for the day and enjoy the camp.

Rev. Noah Tolar is the camp director and Rev. Shaw, a retired minister and former pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, is the groundskeeper.

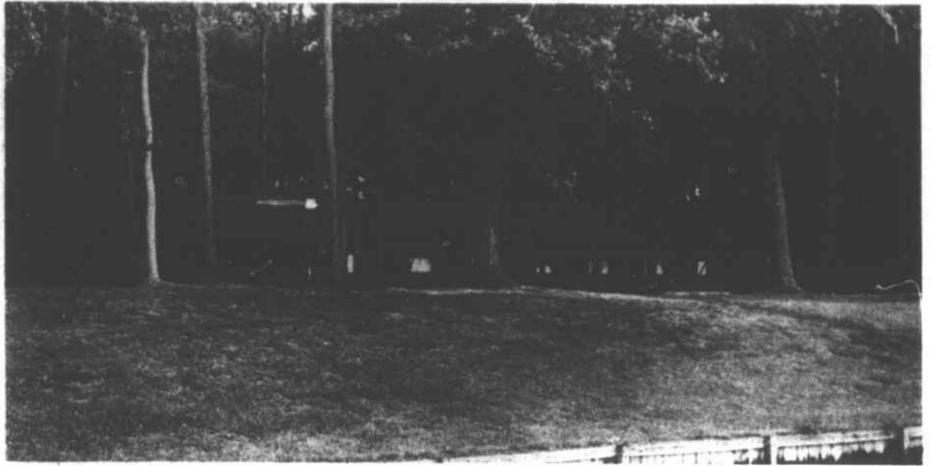
The recently added position of groundskeeper, not only requires Shaw to keep the camp clean of fallen tree limbs, but he also works as a security guard of sorts. Because of its isolated location, the camp could

be a prime target for vandalism.

The camp is open to churches

outside of the Association during March and November, at a cost of \$

per person, per day, strictly on a first come, first served basis.



The kitchen-dining hall is centrally located and overlooks the bulkheaded waterfront. (Photo by Pat Mansfield)



One of two winterized cabins is equipped with 14 beds and two bathrooms. (Photo by Pat Mansfield)



The worship area overlooks the Perquimans River. (Photo by Pat Mansfield)

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