Camps In Waterton - History Project 2015 -

Canyon Camp, Camp Columbus, Camp Inuspi, Fathers Sons Camp, Kainai Kamp and Mothers Camp

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credit Parks Canada



Canyon Church Camp

Canyon Church Camp, formally established in 1944 in the Blakiston Valley, is today the oldest surviving youth camp in Waterton. A predecessor canvas camp for boys was located at the same place in 1940 by two United Church Ministers from New Dayton, Alberta.



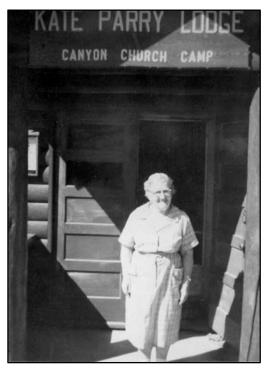
The quintessential group photo was a necessity for each camping session and served as a lasting memory maker. (Photo: Galt Museum and Archives)

The two camp requirements—water and wood—were adequate at

this location and in the summer of 1940, about 35 boys from three southern Alberta towns, members of a local group called the Trail Blazers, spent 10 memorable days in the wilds. They returned each summer.¹

Despite the Second World War and its associated rationings, the camp organizers thought it appropriate to make an application for a permanent facility at this site under the auspices Lethbridge Presbytery of the United Church of Canada which had far greater influence than the Trail Blazers. Two acres of land were assigned to the church for camp purposes based on Superintendent H. A. DeVeber's recommendation. In the summer of 1944, using mostly volunteer labor, a dining hall-kitchen building, one sleeping cabin and an outhouse were built.² The camp sessions, held separately for both boys and girls, began July 17, the first of three 10-day sessions utilizing borrowed tents and other equipment. Fees were \$1 a day plus \$3 for transportation to and from the park.

An editorial in the 1945 *Lethbridge Herald* drew attention to the benefits of youth camps by noting that those facilities in Waterton provided recreation "that cannot be overrated in its value to boys and girls. The more facilities of this nature for present day youth, the better the citizenship of the future.... Park authorities in setting aside sites for these camps are carrying out what is really intended of our parks—a playground for the people. In these camps the playgrounds are supervised and parents know that their children are being well looked after and that their summer outing is being helpfully directed. Few better investments can be made for youth than to provide them with camps of this nature."³



Kate Perry was the much loved, hard working head cook who served the camp for decades and fed hundreds of children. (Photo: Galt Museum and Archives)

After the first season, a building fund campaign for the camp was launched and raised \$3,200. The facilities grew gradually as money and access to materials in wartime permitted. After the war, the camp boasted nine sleeping cabins, a modern shower-toilet house, ablution shelter and insulated house for food storage.⁴

Religious services were always a part of the camp activities and were offered in a primitive outdoor chapel with hand hewn benches. In recent years this outdoor altar has been booked for both weddings and baptisms.

The camp activities were many: swimming in Crandell Lake, 1.6 kilometres away by trail, sports, day hikes, camp crafts, evening campfires, singing as well as participating in kitchen and dining room duties which included assistance in meal preparation, table setting and clearing as well as kitchen clean up.

If an army runs on its stomach, so too does a

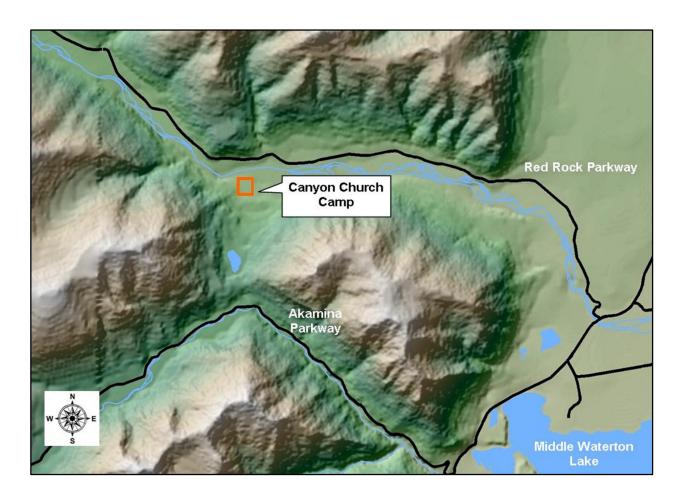
youth camp. The camp cook was a cherished regular among the camp counsellors. Kate Parry of Taber, the mother of five who was widowed in 1940, spent 20 summers cooking for the campers, watching those who returned each year grow up.⁵ In honor of her long service, the main lodge was named for Parry in 1963.⁶

The longevity of Canyon Church camp may well have been founded in the operators' willingness to try new formats: In 1951 a family camp was scheduled in late August to give children too young to enroll alone an opportunity to experience camp life. This session was repeated for several summers. During the 1970s two other kinds of varied and successful sessions were held: a week-long camp for senior citizens and then a camp for the mentally ill patients from Claresholm and Raymond. This latter group participated in a carnival, painting, games, dancing, song writing and hikes.⁷



Preparing for a day hike was always looked upon with much anticipation. (Photo: Galt Museum and Archives)

The church's original lease did not expire until March, 1975 by which time the government's policy toward existing camps had been amended and Canyon Church Camp avoided the fate of other camps. In 1983 management of the camp was offered to the Lethbridge YMCA for a five year term when the United Church found the administration of the camp too onerous. Under this arrangement both the church and the YMCA had their own camping sessions. Management of the camp returned⁸ to United Church organizers who nurtured "Christian faith through fun and fellowship in God's outdoors." Family camps and a woman's retreat continue to be offered at this 96-person camp which is accredited by the United Church Camping Association. Rental of the facilities is available in the shoulder seasons.



¹ Chris Morrison, *Waterton Chronicles: People and Their National Park*, (Lethbridge: Goathaunt Publishing, 2008), 126.

² Chris Morrison, Waterton Chronicles, 126.

³ Editorial, Lethbridge Herald, July 24, 1945, 4. WLNP Archives, Box 252, Item 20.

⁴ Chris Morrison, Waterton Chronicles, 126-127.

⁵ Obituary for Kate Parry, *Lethbridge Herald*, December 28, 1985.

⁶ "Four Park Youth Camps End Successful Year," *Lethbridge Herald*, Sept. 10, 1963, 5. WLNP Archives, Box 252, Item 20.

⁷ Chris Morrison, *Waterton Chronicles*, 128.

⁸ The date this occurred is not known by present day camp administration.

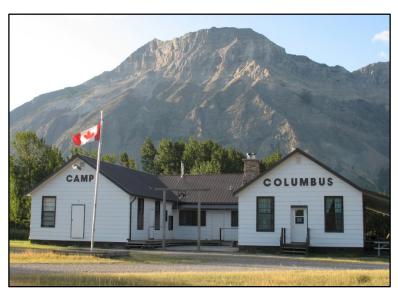
⁹ Chris Morrison, Waterton Chronicles, 129.

¹⁰ Canyon Church Camp website: http://www.canyonchurchcamp.com/rentals.html



Camp Columbus

Camp Columbus, under the sponsorship the Knights of Columbus, has been serving the camping desires of boys and girls since 1956. It was the fourth and final youth camp at Waterton. Camp Columbus was built just after Camp Tee-La-Daw for girls on Lower Waterton Lake. It was built at a Canada time when struggling to building schools youth-oriented and other facilities for the large numbers of children that formed what



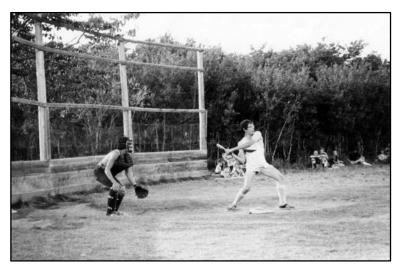
Camp Columbus has a utilitarian layout which includes a dining and activity area on the west side and a sleeping area on the east side. (Photo: Chris Morrison)

came to be known as the baby boomer generation.2

The original request for a camp location was made in 1954 when three Milk River, Alberta members of the Knights of Columbus approached Waterton managers. The men suggested four potential locations: two were on Pass Creek in the Blakiston Valley, one was along Upper Waterton Lake and one was along Middle Waterton Lake opposite Vimy Peak. At first, park officials were hesitant to allow construction of another camp in the park³ but relented having no good reason to object.⁴ The Upper Waterton Lake location was rejected out of hand, leaving three other potential sites to be examined.⁵ The Middle Waterton Lake site was approved and became home to the final fixed roof permanent youth camp in the park.⁶

Quickly on the heels of the approval, the Knights of Columbus began raising money for the camp. All the Knights in the area got behind the project in a big way beginning with a door to door canvas of Catholic residents in Lethbridge, Pincher Creek and Milk River and selling tickets for a draw with the proceeds going toward camp construction.⁷ Fundraising was also done from time to time in years to follow to finance camp improvements.⁸

Plans for the camp were drawn up by May, 1956 and by July construction of a single squared off U-shaped building began. Estimated to cost \$25,000, the camp was built by Sieben and Schamber, general contractors of Milk River. Hopes for a 1956 completion were optimistic but on July 1, 1957, the facility was finished and an open house was held incorporating Dominion Day activities.



With a ball field of their own for games and access to Middle Waterton Lake for canoeing, campers could stay close to home base as the schedule allowed. (Photo: WLNP Archives)

The ceremonies began with a flag raising while a band from Milk River played *O Canada*. Throughout the afternoon, the public was invited to participate in bingo and outdoor games. Topping off the attraction was a barbecue for some 1,200 people.⁹

One week later, the first 10-day camp session for children ages 10-14 opened under the supervision of Bruce Field,

camp manager. In later years, the age limit was lowered to 8 years and the time at camp reduced to five days per session

for 50 participants each. Open to all children regardless of religious affiliation, the camping activities included water safety, canoeing, team sports, lake swimming, horseback riding starting at the nearby stable, boat rides on commercial vessels and the ever-popular hiking and evening campfires. When the new town swimming pool opened in 1960, the Camp Columbus kids became regulars at the facility. 10

Over time, hijinks became a normal part of camp much to the delight of the seasoned campers and the embarrassment of the newcomers. But, in the long run, it was all about youthful character building. The last night of camp for many years, a kind of kangaroo court was held to admonish those who were supposedly guilty of imagined misdemeanors. Punishments were silly and kept spirits high.¹¹

The activities at the summer camp were seldom reported in the newspaper with one notable exception: the death of a camper on July 25, 1973. Twelve-year-old Arthur Joseph Cordiero of Lethridge was among a group of five boys who became separated from a group of 23 during a two-night outing in the Mount Lineham area. Cordiero's body was found at the base of an 800 foot cliff .¹²

In a follow-up report later that year, it was noted that park wardens had responded to five accidents occurring during large organized hikes that summer and blamed inadequate supervision by group leaders and selection of trips that were too difficult for the hikers' ability. This was the only group hike which resulted in a death and it cast a pall over activities for the balance of the summer.

Camp sessions resumed the following year with greater caution and have been held every year since for boys and girls emphasizing Christian Spirit, concern for a fragile environment, cooperation with others and maintenance of individuality.¹⁴



¹ Knights of Columbus is a Catholic men's fraternal service organization.

- ⁴ Library and Archives Canada, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2171, file W 16-30, pt. l. Letter to C. W. Jackson, Deputy Minister, Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, Ottawa, from J. R. B. Coleman, Chief of National Parks Service, Ottawa, Sept. 2, 1954.
- ⁵Library and Archives Canada, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2171, file W 16-30, pt. l. Memo to Waterton Lakes National Park Superintendent from J. R. B. Coleman, Chief of National Parks Service, Sept. 14, 1954.
- ⁶ As of today, only Canyon Church Camp and Camp Columbus still exist.
- ⁷ Chris Morrison, *Waterton Chronicles: People and Their National Park*, (Lethbridge: Goathaunt Publishing, 2008), 130-131.
- ⁸ "Knights Set Talent Show," *Lethbridge Herald*, Sept. 29, 1916, 5. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 19.
- ⁹ "Catholic Youth Camp Officially Opens at Waterton Park—Greetings From Bishop Are Read," *Lethbridge Herald*, July 4, 1954, 16. WLNP Archives Box 130, Item 19.
- ¹⁰ "Youngsters Cast Eager Eyes Toward Summer Camps," *Lethbridge Herald*, June 27, 1960, 17. WLNP Archives Box 130, Item 19.
- ¹¹ Chris Morrison, Waterton Chronicles, 130-131.
- ¹² "Local Boy Dies in Fall," *Lethbridge Herald*, July 26, 1973, 14. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 19.
- ¹³ Resource Conservation Report, 1973, 23-24; WLNP Archives, Box 114, Item 4.
- ¹⁴ Camp Columbus website: http://www.campcolumbus.com/

² Baby Boomers were those children born from approximately in 1946, after the end of the Second World War, through 1964.

³ The first youth camp was the YMCA Camp Inuspi on Lower Waterton Lake, the second was Canyon Church Camp in the Blakiston Valley, the third was Camp Tee-La-Daw across Lower Waterton Lake from Inuspi.



Camp Inuspi

When representatives of the long-established Lethbridge Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) sought permission from Waterton park managers to operate a camp in 1934,¹ they were being optimistic at a very pessimistic economic time—The Great Depression. Little did they know that their modest camp would become the largest in the park and one that, generations later, campers and counsellors alike would remember fondly.

Superintendent Herbert Knight and a committee of five YMCA supporters met in the park in April, 1934 to look for a potential location for a youth camp.² Following the visit, Knight wrote to his Ottawa boss advising, "It is the intention of the YMCA to erect a permanent camp on the site, if this meets with your approval."³

A month before, the committee had done its homework by contacting Senator William A. Buchanan asking him to test the waters with J. B. Harkin, Commissioner of National



Camp Inuspi's first lodge was a gathering place and dining hall for all campers and their counsellors. (Photo: Galt Museum and Archives)

Parks. Harkin was most encouraging: "I am pleased to advise you that the policy of the department is to encourage YMCA and other such camps in national parks. The experiences with such camps in other parks have clearly demonstrated that these camps provide a means for a holiday in the parks for many boys and young men who would otherwise be unable to enjoy the benefits of such an outing."4

Just 10 weeks after the committee's visit, a canvas

camp was set up on the east side of Lower Waterton Lake where the YMCA was given a license of occupation for 18 acres of land. ⁵ That summer 26 older boys spent three weeks at the camp and 36 younger campers arrived for a 10 day stay. ⁶

The first group was able to participate in formal dedication of the camp on July 1, 1934, which included the announcement that thenceforth the camp would be called Camp Inuspi,⁷ from the name used by the Blackfoot Indians for the late John George "Kootenai" Brown, first forest ranger in charge of the park, which translated to "Long Hair" for Brown's hairstyle.⁸ Fittingly, the camp was located across the Lower Lake from Brown's gravesite where he was buried in 1916.

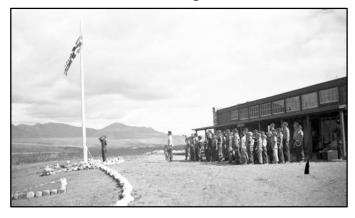
Each summer through 1968, campers were busy from morning to night with activities under the supervision of camp leaders and leaders-in-training. One of the first such leaders was 23-year-old George Swedish⁹ who helped clear brush at the camp site and set up the tents before taking charge of one group of boys during the initial camping session. Swedish recalled years later that "....our first camp was in tents and it rained and rained and it rained," noting that the camp was very primitive with bedding set out on pallets inside the tents. "The cooking was done in a tent, the eating was done in a tent,"

he said.

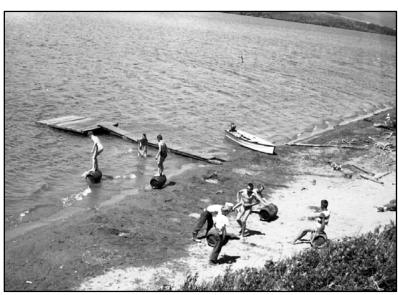
The year 1935 marked the start of several changes and improvements that would continue over the life of the camp. Girls were invited to attend in separate camp sessions that summer.¹⁰ As luck would have it, the camp closed for the season just one day before the start of the Boundary Creek fire which filled the Waterton Valley with black smoke and created much local concern.11 And that year, the first building—a log structure to house the kitchen, was erected. It was just the first step that would see years of camp improvements thanks in large measure to the generous contributions

of the Kinsmen Club, the Kiwanis Club, the Rotary Club, Gyro Club, *Lethbridge Herald* and others. By 1936 all campers were housed in nine person cabins, eight of whom were youths and one counsellor.

Not even the advent of the Second World War slowed down camp attendance thanks to the financial support of both groups and individuals.¹² In developing the camp from absolutely nothing to a well equipped state, the financial problems had been many and varied. Among the many staunch, generous and loyal backers of



A second, larger camp lodge was built after a fire destroyed the original building. It was situated above and to the east of the first lodge and offered a spectacular view. (Photo: Chris Morrison)

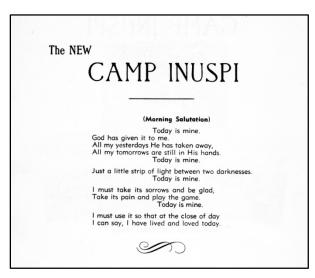


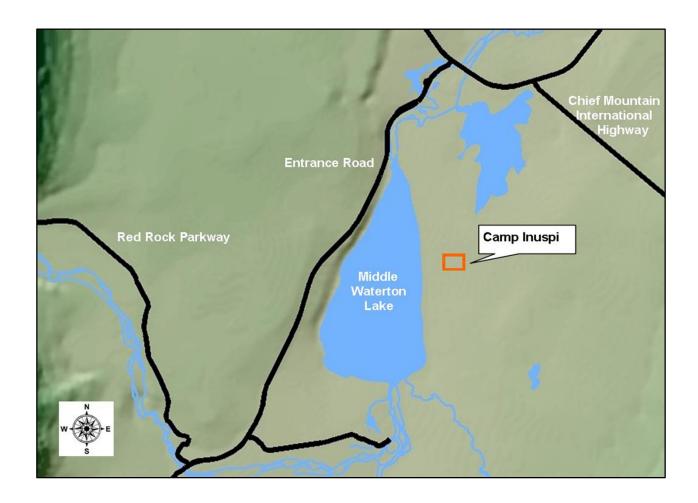
Just below the camp was Lower Waterton Lake where the participants went swimming, a refreshing activity after a long day of hiking on a hot day. (Photo: Chris Morrison)

the local Y camp, the name Russell H. Bennett of Minneapolis and Twin Butte headed the list.¹³ Learning that the camp would find it difficult to operate under wartime conditions, Bennett donated \$450 which provided an outing for many needy girls and boys as well as clearing up an accumulated building deficit.¹⁴

In July, 1949 disaster struck the camp when an early morning fire, fanned by strong winds, destroyed the dining lodge, kitchen and ice house. The loss was only partially covered by insurance.¹⁵ Citizens of Lethbridge rallied to remedy the disaster with donations and labor in kind to rebuild.¹⁶

Camp Inuspi met its eventual end after the 1968 season as its license of occupation was about to expire. It had grown substantially since the tent days. Besides the replacement main dining lodge, the camp consisted of 11 cabins for children, a small lodge for arts and crafts, three cabins for the staff and hospital hut plus a facility for indoor toilets and a bathing house. These improvements were sold to the government in 1971 for \$18,000 in light of a new park master plan which called for the cessation of privately-owned camps. On the camps of the camps of





¹ The Lethbridge YMCA was established in 1910 and operated from an impressive three story building located in the city's downtown at 4th Avenue and 10 Street South.

² Chris Morrison, *Waterton Chronicles: People and Their National Park*, (Lethbridge: Goathaunt Publishing, 2008), 118.

³ Library and Archives Canada, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2171, file W16-22, pt. 1. Letter to J. B. Harkin, Commissioner of National Parks, Ottawa, from Herbert Knight, superintendent, Waterton Lakes National Park, April 20, 1934.

⁴ Library and Archives Canada, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2171, file W16-22, pt. 1. Letter to Senator William A. Buchanan, Ottawa, from J. B. Harkin, Commissioner of National Parks, Ottawa, March 5, 1934.

⁵ The size of the camp's land was reduced in 1951 to 10.38 acres when a resurvey was done to site a new dining lodge.

⁶ "Days All Too Short for Happy City Boys at 'Y' Camp," *Lethbridge Herald*, July 9, 1934, 3. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 17.

⁷ Inuspi is pronounced "InÓspi".

⁸ "Dedicate Y.M.C.A. Camp," *Lethbridge Herald*, July 3, 1934, 7. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 17.

⁹ George Swedish later went to work for the park as an accountant for four years ending in 1940. Interview of George Swedish, no date, WLNP Archives, Box 117, no item number.

¹⁰"Girls Y Camp at Waterton Opens Season," *Lethbridge Herald*, July 30, 1935, 9. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 17.

¹¹ "Wonderful Waterton," *Lethbridge Herald*, Aug. 12, 1935, 12. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 17.

¹² It is not clear how the camp was able to get around rationing during the war which included food, tires and gasoline.

¹³ Russell Bennett was owner of the Shoderee Ranch, north of the park.

¹⁴ "Generous Gift to Y Camp at Waterton," *Lethbridge Herald*, Jan. 8, 1942, 7. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 17.

¹⁵ "Fire Hits Camp Inuspi," *Lethbridge Herald*, July 16, 1949, front page. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 17.

¹⁶ Chris Morrison, *Waterton Chronicles: People and Their National Park,* (Lethbridge: Goathaunt Publishing, 2008), 121-123.

¹⁷ "Brass Bell is Camp Clock," *Lethbridge Herald*, July 29, 1968, 9. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 17.

¹⁸ The buildings were used for several years after the government buy out as accommodation for the participants in the Youth Conservation Corps Program.

¹⁹ "Camp Inuspi Sold, *Lethbridge Herald*, April 20, 1971, front page. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 17.

²⁰ "Federal Parks Policy to Ban Private Leasing," *Lethbridge Herald*, April 27, 1971, 12. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 17.



Camp Tee-La-Daw

Years of discussion and negotiation, which started in 1950,¹ came to fruition in the early summer of 1954 when a license of occupation was signed for a girls' camp at Waterton that would become known as Camp Tee-La-Daw.² It was the only all-girls camp built in the park.

Owned and operated, under the auspices of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Taylor Stake of Raymond,³ the camp was located on the south shore of Lower Waterton Lake previously occupied by the Cedar Cabin.⁴



The sod turning for the camp drew a group of enthusiastic supporters eager to see their dream come true for a girls' camp in the park. (Photo: Raymond Historical Society)

The \$13,000 facility was enough large accommodate 50 girls who slept in beds that folded up SO dormitory could double as a daytime recreation area. Connected to the dormitory by breezeway were a dining room and kitchen. A special feature of the building was a double fireplace which had both an indoor and outdoor hearth for versatility in all weather.⁵ Funds to build the camp were raised by donations and

events such as pantry sales, bazaars, catering and peanut sales which raised a total of \$7,500. Adult work parties were formed to save on construction costs and the potential young campers pitched in to paint and make simple improvements.⁶

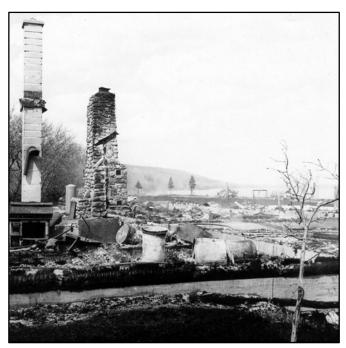
Two months and two days after the sod was turned, the camp opened and was toured by 400 visitors who were shown around and entertained. Some 64 young campers were enrolled for the first camp session. By summer's end six groups of 44 girls each spent three days at Tee-La-Daw.

One anonymous camper who, years later, recalled her annual Waterton adventures noted the emphasis was on fun and ensuring fellow campers had fun as well. "The big thing was to make sure that we had enough shaving cream. toothpaste and cellophane and things to play tricks on people and see who could plan the best tricks." she wrote. The indoor/outdoor fireplace allowed the girls to stay close to the camp for evening events and mornings always started with a flag raising ceremony.⁸



Work on the new camp went quickly with volunteers and professional contractors working side by side. (Photo: Raymond Historical Society)

During the day the girls went swimming, hiked, and did handicrafts.⁹ The camp was equipped with a donated piano



The double fireplace, second from left, stands among the rubble following the fire that destroyed the camp. (Photo: WLNP Archives)

and furniture, and a locker room as well as an outdoor amphitheatre with a stage and floodlights for evening activities. In subsequent years the camp operated for two full months for girls 12 years of age and over.

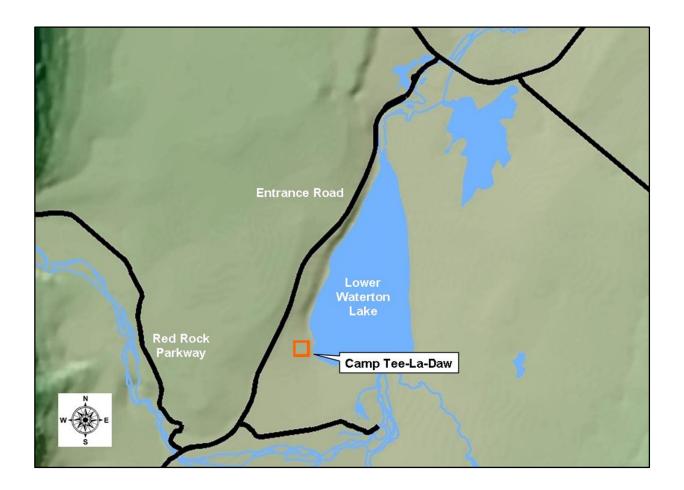
Girls of all denominations were welcome. By 1960, two sessions were added for married women. ¹⁰ The camp was so well situated below Knight's Hill that it was virtually hidden from the view of motorists travelling on the entrance road. Many visitors were unaware of the camp's presence. ¹¹

The end of the camp came unexpectedly on May 19, 1970. After checking on the camp May 18 and moving in replacement furniture, the six-member board of directors locked up, confident the camp had wintered well. Unfortunately, after they left a fire broke out at the site. Townsite

volunteer fire fighters, park wardens and park maintenance staff responded. It took two hours to extinguish the fire which burned the camp to the ground. Mop up activities

carried on through early evening. About two acres of nearby mixed forest were consumed as well.¹² The cause of the fire was not disclosed and the building was only partially insured. The fire's devastation ended plans for that summer's camp.

The Taylor Stake decided not to rebuild the camp given the federal government's plans to disallow private camp ownership as announced in its new master plan a year later. ¹³ The site was later restored to a natural state.



¹ Chris Morrison, *Waterton Chronicles: People and Their National Park*, (Lethbridge, Goathaunt Publishing, 2008), 129.

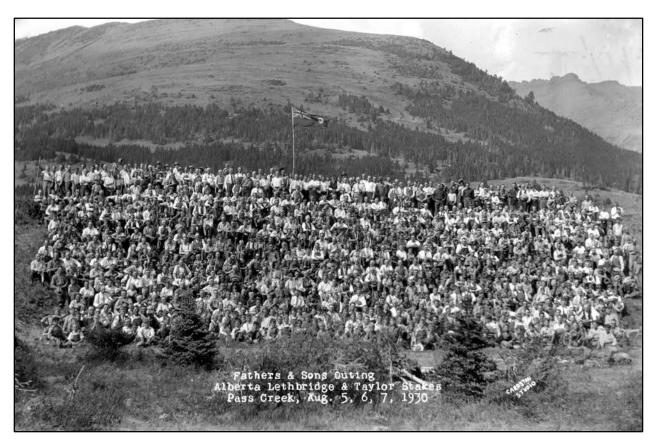
- ⁴ The Cedar Cabin was home of the Chief Park Warden until 1951 at which time the CPW moved into a new residence in the townsite at 206 Cameron Falls Drive.
- ⁵ It is believed this fireplace was built by local stone mason Walter Foster, a long time park resident.
- ⁶ "MIA Girls Home In Waterton Started," *Raymond Recorder*, June 25, 1954, 1. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 18
- ⁷ This was 14 girls more than allowed. "Stake Girls Home in Waterton Officially Opened," *Raymond Recorder*, Aug. 13, 1954, front page. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 18.
- ⁸ A Planting of the Lord: A Century of the Latter-day Saint in Raymond: 1901-2001 (Salt Lake City: Bryan Crockett and Carrie Long of Publishers Press 2001), 482.
- ⁹ "Wonderful Waterton," *Lethbridge Herald*, Aug. 12, 1955, 12. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 18.
- ¹⁰ Chris Morrison, *Waterton Chronicles*, 130.
- ¹¹ Chris Morrison, Waterton Chronicles, 129.
- ¹² Resource Conservation Report for 1970, 14. WLNP Archives, Box 114, Item 1.
- ¹³ "Federal parks policy to ban private leasing," *Lethbridge Herald*, April 27, 1971, 12. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 17.

² The name Tee-La-Daw was said to be Swedish for "sweet little lady. "Tee-La-Daw Camp Burns," *Lethbridge Herald* May 20, 1970, 2. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 18.

³ A stake is an administrative unit composed of multiple congregations in the LDS movement.



Fathers-Sons Camp



The Father-Son Camp began in 1929 and by the following year the event drew an outstanding number of participants to a location in the Blakiston Valley. (Photo: Raymond Historical Society)

An annual Fathers-Sons camp for Boy Scouts associated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proved to be one of the most popular camping events in Waterton. In one year attendance grew 15 fold from its first event in 1929 to its second the following year. Lasting just three days once a summer, but never held on a Sunday, the outings provided an opportunity for fathers and sons to get away from their regular surroundings. They camped in tents in the Blakiston Valley where nature and its wonders provided a perfect place to develop a bond of fellowship and comradeship during the all-male event. The camp was located on the south bank of Blakiston Creek, between Coppermine and Lost Horse creeks.

The Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association (YMMIA) of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints organized the Mutual Improvement Association Scouts in late 1911 to provide church-appropriate leisure and sports activities for its young men. When this separate group became a recognized part of the Boy Scouts organization a few years





later, it gave LDS boys the opportunity to participate in church sanctioned Boy Scout troops of their own.³

The first of these faith-based events drew 114 fathers and sons from three stakes⁴ of The Church of Christ of Latter-day Saints: Lethbridge, Taylor (Raymond) and Alberta (Cardston). The following year, as word spread, more than 1,500 fathers and sons from the same stakes gathered at a site about 16 kilometres up the Blakiston Valley, along



The camp was run with the precision of a military organization with rules and regulations for nearly everything. (Photo: Woslyng Collection, WLNP Archives)

Pass Creek.⁵ This was an astonishing number to camp at one location.

The 1930 outing was described as being "the greatest gathering of its kind in the history of the world."6 Some 300 cars arrived at the camp site carrying the fathers, sons and necessary gear, food and equipment. The camp was highly organized. Nothing was left to chance, from the sun up to sun down. Everything, from who should go and when to go, to how deep the latrines and garbage pits should be, to what to do and the schedule for doing it, was laid out in writing in a church

document issued in 1926.⁷ The planning and organization had been done for the campers right down to which songs should be sung around the campfires.

Selection of the camp's location, which became known as Camp Kootenai,⁸ was credited to Gerald Brown of the Alberta Stake, C. R. Wing of the Taylor Stake and C. F. Steele of the Lethbridge Stake. Just as had been "suggested" in the camp instructions, a rustic entrance was erected over which the camp name was spelled out in tree branches. Substantial preparations were assigned to eight separate committees which handled everything from camp layouts and assignments to first aid and sanitary facilities.⁹

The encampment was made up of smaller camps each of which was provided with a garbage and grease pit for three days' use and then was filled in at the end of the event leaving only trampled grass to indicate the area's use. Every attendee, novice or adult, learned how to care for a campfire, the proper way to pitch a tent and the need for orderly camp conduct. Camp life was a combination of the best of Scouting and the best of adherence to church organization. Sons and fathers participated in hiking, cooking, sports, singing and other activities.

Ceremony was observed from the sound of the reveille bugle and the flag raising in the morning to the lowering of the flag at dusk. Boys were "shown the way by men themselves who do the right thing in the right way," the *Raymond Recorder* told its readers. ¹⁰

The following year, 1931, the Fathers-Sons participation was reduced to 170 campers, but by then the outing had been labeled by the newspaper as "a tradition". That year the campers hiked, and learned about geology and flora. Sports including baseball, horse shoe pitching and swimming were pastimes. Dinner was to be ready at each campsite by 6 p.m. followed by campfire



The flag raising ceremony was the official beginning of each day and attended by all. (Photo: Woslyng Collection, WLNP Archives)

entertainment. The 1931 outing proved to be sadly memorable: Three uninvited visitors, a Black Bear sow and her two cubs, entered the camp attracted by the food odors. When she returned the next evening, "for her lack of camp ethics, she was shot by the warden...much to the regret of the camp. For one of the things for which the fathers and sons stand is the preservation of wild life in its natural beauty." Warden Bo Holroyd, of the Pass Creek warden station killed the animal.¹²

In outings to come, the programs were similar with talks given by special guests which included Herbert Knight, the park superintendent, who spoke on what the park means to the people and why it should be carefully preserved. ¹³ The final night of the outings, prizes were presented to campers for various distinctions: ¹⁴ the oldest, the youngest, the father with the most sons present, the camper from farthest away, the church ward with the greatest number attending ¹⁵ and the best kept camp.

Camp Kootenai was where memories were made. But some of those memories were not good ones. At the 1939 camp, George Shinbashi, the 11-year-old son of a Welling, Alberta farmer suffered fatal injuries while climbing Mount Blakiston with a party of other campers. A rock dislodged above the lad and struck his head. He died in hospital later that same day. ¹⁶

Despite the regular practice of camping in the park by the Fathers-Sons and other Boy Scouts groups, they held no right to any individual site and had no fixed location. ¹⁷ The LDS campouts continued after the Second World War and into the 1950s¹⁸ but it is not known when they stopped camping as a group in the park.



¹ "Fathers and Sons Have Wonderful Outing," *Raymond Recorder*, Aug. 15, 1930, front page.

² "Fathers and Sons Have Wonderful Outing," *Raymond Recorder*, Aug. 15, 1930, front

oage.

Encyclopedia of Mormonism, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 1275-1277.

 $^{\rm 4}$ A stake is an administrative unit compose of multiple congregations in the LDS movement.

⁵ "Fathers and Sons Have Wonderful Outing," *Raymond Recorder*, Aug. 15, 1930, front page. It is not clear where in the Blakiston Valley the camp was set up.

⁶ "Fathers and Sons Have Wonderful Outing," *Raymond Recorder*, Aug. 15, 1930, front

page.

⁷ "Fathers and Sons Outings, 1926", issued by the General Board of YMMIA, Salt Lake City. Available at: http://www.keepapitchinin.org/2011/06/22/fathers-and-sons-outings-1926/

⁸ The name Camp Kootenai was later applied to the event rather than the location of the event since the Boy Scouts had no official claim to any site in Waterton according to Herbert Knight, park superintendent. (see footnote 17)

⁹ "Fathers and Sons Outings, 1926", issued by the General Board of YMMIA, Salt Lake City.

¹⁰ Fathers and Sons Have Wonderful Outing," *Raymond Recorder*, Aug. 15, 1930, front page.

¹¹ "Fathers and Sons Have Wonderful Outing," *Raymond Recorder*, Aug. 15, 1930, front page.

¹² "Fathers and Sons Outing Great Success," *Raymond Recorder* Aug. 14, 1931, front page.

Bo Holroyd Fonds, Whyte Museum, Banff, M495, File 11.

¹³ "800 Fathers and Sons have Wonderful Outing," *Cardston News*, July 21, 1936, front page.

¹⁴ "800 Fathers and Sons have Wonderful Outing," *Cardston News*, July 21, 1936, front page.

15 In the LDS movement a ward is the equivalent of a large congregation.

¹⁶ "Welling Lad Fatally Hurt in Rock Fall at Waterton Lakes Park," *Lethbridge Herald*, July 28, 1939, front page.

¹⁷ Library and Archives, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2202, file W36, pt. 2. Letter to C. W. Fletcher, District Commissioner, Boy Scouts Association, Lethbridge, from Herbert Knight, Waterton Superintendent, June 11, 1937.

¹⁸ "Father-Son Waterton Camp Attracts 200 from LDS Stakes," *Lethbridge Herald*, Aug. 4, 1953, 10.



Kainai Kottage

Organized youth camping in North America dates back to the 1860s when a private school headmaster took his young charges on a two week canoe trip. From that a whole movement of youth camping emerged that by the 1890s included private, agency, and fresh-air camps with fixed facilities. In Canada, youth camping blossomed in the 1920s and 1930s and then expanded considerably after 1945 as the number of school age children rose rapidly with the 'baby-boom.' 2

Youth camping gained popularity at a time when North America was rapidly urbanizing and industrializing; it was seen as a way for youth to escape from troubled and dirty urban environments to clean country or wild places where they could learn skills and build up good character in a controlled environment.³ The exact meaning of 'good character' and important skills has changed over time and varied with the organization running camps (religious, service, and other types of organizations have dominated the camping movement); however, the basic idea that camp is 'good' for children and could prepare them to live better modern lives remains a commonly held belief.⁴

Waterton's camps provide a good example of the kinds of organizations that established camps in western Canada. In the late 1960s and early 1970s Parks Canada began to limit developments in national parks to specific areas. In some instances this meant that the

St. Paul's Residential Indian School hosted Blackfeet children at a purpose-built Waterton cabin.

(Photo: Glenbow Archives NA-3910-103)

licenses of occupation granted to camps were not renewed.⁵

The first youth established in the Waterton townsite was also the first in the park established under the auspices of a church.⁶ Kainai Camp was the brainchild of Rev. Samuel H. Middleton. Anglican minister on the Blood Reserve and principal of St. Paul's Residential School near Cardston.⁷ Middleton, in letter written in 1946. recalled he first brought his students to Waterton about 1910-1912 and held the camp annually for at least the next 34 to 36 years.⁸ Among the first 30 individuals were 12

First Nations children from St. Paul's, two clergymen, two newspapermen, one judge, three teachers, two farmers and their spouses.⁹

When Middleton and his school staff began bringing First Nations children to Waterton, ¹⁰ they camped in tents for two to three weeks at a time near the lakeshore at the eastern end of what is now a Cameron Falls Drive. ¹¹ It was at a time when only a few buildings had been erected in the townsite.

An active outdoorsman, Middleton saw spiritual and educational value in exposing the children to the natural wonders of Waterton. Together with the First Nations traditional respect for the mountains, it seemed to be an excellent location. Waterton had long held a special attraction for Middleton. He had set out years before to introduce himself to as many people as he could, including John George "Kootenai" Brown, first forest ranger in charge of Waterton. He conducted open air church services in the park whenever possible. And he spent time learning about the park's natural features and wrote copiously about the park over the course of his life. 13

As an educator ever observant of this pupils' behavior, Middleton had noticed that during the school year, when the students were in residence, they lived one kind of life but during the two summer months when they returned to their parents' care, they reverted to native ways.

Middleton applied for leases of three townsite lots in early 1917, under the auspices of the Missionary Society of the Church of England,¹⁴ which were to be used solely for supervised summer holiday purposes by First Nations children from St. Paul's Residential School.¹⁵ He explained his motivation in a letter to Parks Commissioner J.B. Harkin in Ottawa: "To Indian children such an excursion proves of inestimable benefit



The girls wore middies and bloomers, versatile outfits for most outdoor activities.

(Photo: Glenbow Archives NA-3910-60)

as the main point of our Indian education is to bring the Indian mind in contact with edifying and wholesome environments. No better place can be found than Waterton Lakes." ¹⁶

At first Parks Commissioner, J.B. Harkin resisted the idea of leasing lots in the Waterton townsite for a youth camp based on experiences in Banff which showed popular resentment towards First Nations people.¹⁷ He later reconsidered and



Canon Samuel Middleton, school principal and Anglican minister, as well as some of the school's teachers provided suitable supervision during the annual Waterton outing. (Photo: Glenbow Archives NA-3910-57)

Middleton was allowed to apply for the lots¹⁸ which were somewhat off the beaten path at the time, being about two blocks south of the business area on what is now Waterton Avenue.

The First World War delayed Middleton's ability to have the required buildings erected on the lots, but by August, 1919 he advised park officials he had met this requirement.¹⁹ But when the cabins were completed and in Middleton learned of a major proposal for construction of an irrigation dam at the Narrows on Upper Waterton Lake which would flooded most of the Waterton

Valley and put his lakeshore cabins underwater.²⁰ It was not until 1923 that the proposal was withdrawn and lessees such as Middleton could breathe easy again.²¹

The first building, named Kainai Kottage, ²² was said to be large enough to accommodate 40 girls and their supervisors and was next door to the cabin occupied by Rev. Middleton and his family. ²³ The older girls at St. Paul, those between the ages of 10 and 18, were brought to Waterton on the assumption they might remain under the influence of the school atmosphere and "not be retarded by contact with tepee life during their vacation." ²⁴ The students' activities in the park included hiking, climbing, fishing, bathing at Linnet Lake, backcountry campouts, games, singing by campfire and occasionally a boat trip to the head of Upper Waterton Lake. Sometimes the girls were escorted to a small dance pavilion to the north of their lodgings which gave them an opportunity to observe other park visitors dancing. ²⁵

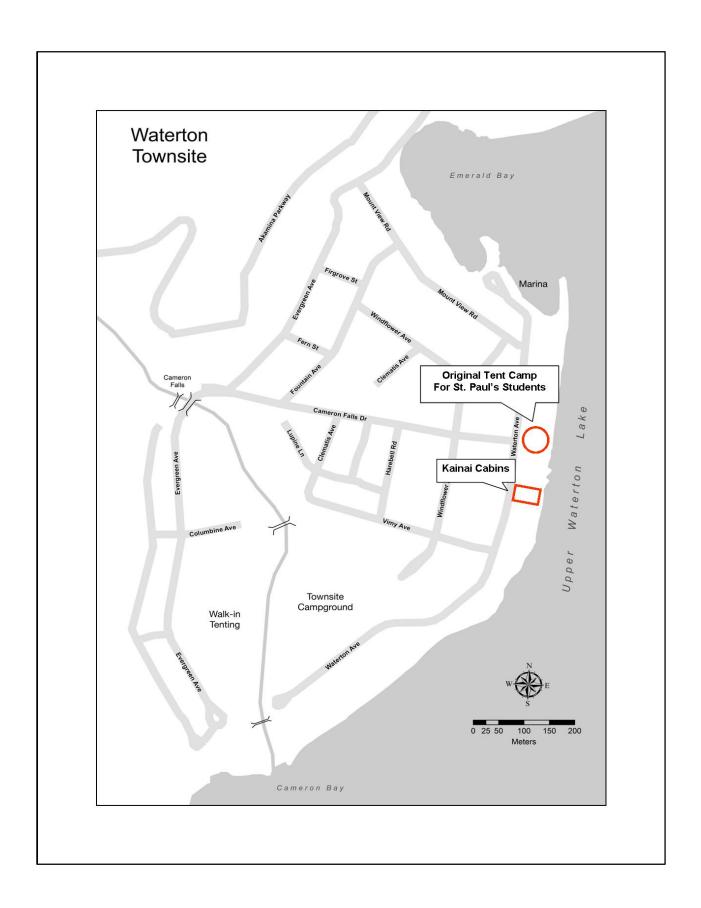
First Nation activities at the cabins were not reported in the ensuing years so it is not clear how often they were used or by whom or how many. Middleton continued to be involved even while he became a key player in the Cardston Rotary Club goal to get Waterton Lakes National Park and Glacier National Park (Montana) designated as the world's first international peace park.

When Middleton retired as principal of St. Paul residential School in 1949, the summer camps were discontinued.²⁶ The leases were transferred from the Missionary Society to the **Anglican** Diocese Calgary²⁷ which became responsible for the one remaining original residential lease and volunteers of the local All Saints Anglican Church in Waterton replaced the original cabins with a single three bedroom Pan-Adobe cabin. It served for



The children and adults arrived in the park by truck over dirt roads. The rough journey was all but forgotten once the campers reached their destination. (Photo: Glenbow Archives NA-3910-58)

many years as summer accommodation for visiting ministers who conducted services at the church.²⁸ The replacement Pan-Adobe cabin was demolished in the fall of 2015.



¹ Sharon Wall, *The Nurture of Nature: Childhood, Antimodernism, and Ontario Summer Camps, 1920-55* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 9.

- ⁵ C.J. Taylor, "National Parks," Gerald Hollowell, ed., The Oxford Companion to Canadian History (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2004), pages 431-432. See also: Canada, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Natural and Historic Resources Branch, *National Parks Policy*. ([Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1964]), p. 3, 21, 18; Paul Kopas, *Taking the Air: Ideas and Change in Canada's National Parks* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 61-62; C. J. Taylor, "Banff in the 1960s: Divergent Views of the National Park Ideal," 133-152 in Campbell, ed., *A Century of Parks Canada*.
- ⁶ The others elsewhere in the park were Canyon Church Camp, Camp Tee-La-Daw and Camp Columbus. Camp Inuspi was affiliated the Young Men's Christian Association.
- ⁷Chris Morrison, *Waterton Chronicles: People and Their National Park*, (Lethbridge: Goathaunt Publishing, 2008) 125-126. Middleton, nearly always referred to as Canon Middleton, would rise to the position of Anglican Archdeacon before he retired.
- ⁸ Library and Archives Canada, RG 84, A-2-a, Vol. 2188, file W2105-6/7.
- Letter to J. Smart, Controller of National Parks, Ottawa, from S.H. Middleton, principal, St. Paul's School, Blood Indian Reserve, Oct. 5, 1946.
- ⁹Wonderful Waterton, *Lethbridge Herald*, July 24, 1923, 5. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 16.
- ¹⁰Library and Archives Canada, RG 84, A-2-a, Vol. 2187, file W21-4-9. Letter to J.B. Harkin, Commissioner of National Parks, Ottawa, from Rev. Canon Middleton, Principal of St. Paul's Residential School, Cardston, Sept. 7, 1926 Copy in WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 16.
- ¹¹Bessie M. Annand, "Historic 'Little Brown Church' is Being Renovated at Waterton," *The Sower* [sic], Dec. 15, 1962. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 16. The site of the first camp is today a parking lot on the east side of Waterton Avenue at the eastern end of Cameron Falls Drive. The article was written at a time when the Kootenai Brown cairn, since relocated, was situated there.
- ¹² Roberta J. Forsberg, *Chief Mountain*: *The Story of Canon Middleton*, (Whittier: Whittier College, 1964), 48-49.
- ¹³ Chris Morrison, *Waterton Chronicles: People and Their National Park*, (Lethbridge: Goathaunt Publishing, 2008) 125-126.
- ¹⁴ Library and Archives Canada, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2188, file W2105-6/7. Letter to Messrs. Farthing and Tavander, Barristers and Solicitors, Calgary, from J. Smart, Controller, Ottawa, Oct. 1, 1947.
- ¹⁵ Library and Archives Canada, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2188, file W2105-6/7. Memorandum to W. F. Lothian, National Parks Branch, Ottawa, from H. A. DeVeber, National Parks Branch, Ottawa, Feb. 6, 1952.
- ¹⁶Library and Archives Canada, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2188, file W2105-6/7. Letter to J. B. Harkin, Commissioner of National Parks, Ottawa, from S. H. Middleton, St. Paul's

² Wall, 11-12.

³ Wall, 5-7.

⁴ Wall, 15.

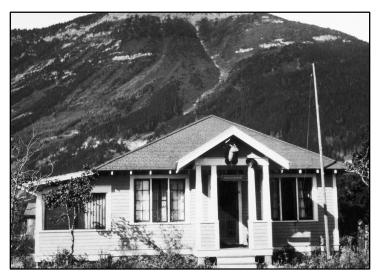
Residential School, Blood Reserve, Aug. 28, 1912. Copy in WLNP Archives Box 130, Item 16.

- ¹⁷ Library and Archives Canada, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2173, file W-2, pt. l. Memorandum to W. W. Cory, Deputy Minister, Department of the Interior, from J. B. Harkin, Commissioner, National Parks, Ottawa. Nov. 8, 1912.
- ¹⁸ The three lots are now identified as 209, 211 and 213 on Waterton Avenue. Because of his status with the church, it is supposed Middleton was given unusual leeway and was allowed to apply for more than one lot at a time, a privilege not allow to others wishing to build a cabin.
- ¹⁹ Library and Archives Canada, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2188, file W2105-6/7. Letter to Messrs. Farthing and Tavander, Barristers and Solicitors, Calgary, from J. Smart, Controller, Ottawa, Oct. 1, 1947.
- ²⁰ W. F. Lothian, *History of Canada's National Parks, Vol. III*, (Ottawa: Minster of Supply and Services Canada, 1979), 47.
- ²¹ Ian A. L. Getty, The *History of Waterton Lakes*, 114-124.
- ²² Kainai was the Blackfoot name for the Blood Indian tribe.
- ²³ The number of students who attended each summer was not noted .
- ²⁴ S. C. Long Lance, "Alberta's Most Progressive Indian Tribe," *Calgary Herald*, Aug. 27, 1921, 20-21. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 16.
- ²⁵ S. C. Long Lance, "Alberta's Most Progressive Indian Tribe."
- ²⁶ Middleton, who died in 1964, is buried in the Waterton cemetery. St. Paul's Residential School was closed in 1975.
- ²⁷Library and Archives Canada, Waterton Lakes National Park Administration of Townsite Lots Lease of Villa Lot #6, 7 Block #5, RG 84, A-2-a, Vol. 2188, file W2105-6/7.
- ²⁸ All Saints Anglican Church, built in 1928 and demolished in 2014, was Waterton's first church. It was located at 103 Windflower Avenue.



Mothers' Camp

The Kiwanis Club of Lethbridge, a service club formed in 1929 by prominent businessmen wanting to do good works, i jumped in to help at a propitious time at the beginning of the Great Depression (1929-1939) when help for the less fortunate was desperately needed.



"Inglenook", owned by Mary Agnes and John Mason, was located on Mount View Road. In the 1950s it was one of the cabins demolished to make way for today's Bear Mountain Motel. (Photo: WLNA Archives)

At the club's first anniversary, it was announced its first objective would be establishment a summer camp at Waterton for deserving mothers where they could have an outing in the mountains with their children.² The idea was favorably received by the club because among the members were a number of men who were or would become involved in Waterton through cabin ownership or frequent summer visits.3 Member Dr. Les Allen4 scouted the Waterton townsite for a cabin to hold the camp until such time as they could build their own⁵ and advised the membership that a two-year-old cabin named Inglenook,⁶ owned by Mary Agnes

Mason, could be rented for one month for \$150.7 The members approved the deal and Mrs. Mason was hired as Camp Matron as well.8

Each week the camp accommodated 10 deserving mothers, who could bring one preschool child. All expenses were paid by the Kiwanis Club which raised money in the city to support this venture. A popular method of the day was the "tag sale" in which contributions to a charity were solicited in the street with donors being given a small identifying tag.⁹

The camp attendees were selected by a committee of Lady Kiwanians at first who were later augmented by members of the Lethbridge Nursing Mission who were made aware of needy or convalescing women through the health services the mission provided. From the very first season, the camp was a success and the second year it operated for six weeks. ¹⁰ The weekly cost was \$8.70 per person. ¹¹ Dr. Allen, now committee chair, told his fellow Kiwanians he "considered the Camp was our excuse for existence as a Club

and we should go wholeheartedly into the matter of the successful conducting of the activity."¹² And wholehearted they became, with the annual operation of this rest camp in the park.

The location of the camp was ideal for its purpose "with plenty indoor of and open-air accommodation on the shores of beautiful Waterton Lake surrounded with towering mountains," the club's directors were told.¹³ Its purpose mirrored the Department of Interior's observations which were published in a 1914 booklet touting the benefits Dominion



The children who attended the Mothers' Camp were able to take advantage of the playground located in the same area as today's playground. (Photo: WLNA Archives)

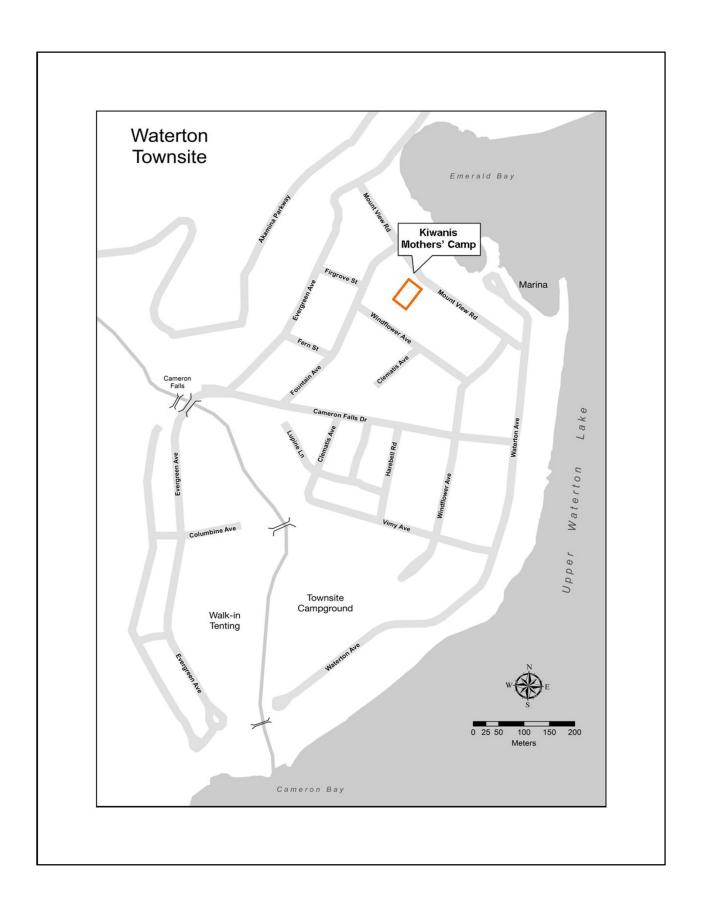
Parks. Pointing out the "rightful heritage" of nature, the booklet called attention to the "guarantee to Canadians of recreation which serve best to make better men and women, physically, morally and mentally."¹⁴

At the camp, the mothers had no work to do. They "just rest—probably for the first time in their lives—[having] a wonderful holiday in one of the most beautiful locations on the continent. Each guest is taken for a…boat trip to the head of the lake over the International border. The camp is equipped with gramophone and also a library and everything is done to make their stay a beneficial and enjoyable one. This year a total of 36 mothers and 35 children were accommodated." ¹⁵

Over the course of successive summers as the Great Depression deepened, changes were made to the operation: the number of weeks the camp was held was reduced, and the focus turned to accommodating convalescing women recovering from illness. In addition club members who drove the women and children to Waterton were partially reimbursed for their oil and gas. ¹⁶ After four years of operation, the Kiwanis members were still unanimously in favor of continuing the camp. ¹⁷

Finally in the spring of 1939, the question of camp operation was discussed by the Board of Directors who determined it was advisable to discontinue the camp "on account of the difficulty of securing deserving cases and that the same women were looking with expectations of turning this into an annual holiday." ¹⁸

Having done yeoman service for needy mothers, the Kiwanis Club did not abandon their interest in good works in Waterton. They turned their attention to providing financial and material assistance to the YMCA Camp Inuspi on Lower Waterton Lake and sponsored attendance for deserving boys. 19



¹ "Kiwanians Celebrate at Charter Night Banquet; Club Formally Launched," *Lethbridge Herald*, Sept. 6, 1929, 9. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 15.

- ³ Included in the membership were Bob Lynn, Dr. Les Allen, Dr. Jesse Bigelow, Dave Elton, and Claude Boulton, all of whom were regulars in Waterton. Chris Morrison, *Waterton Chronicles: People and Their National Park*, (Lethbridge: Goathaunt Publishing, 2008), 135-216.
- ⁴ Galt Museum and Archives, Lethbridge, Alberta, file P19981012028, Minutes of the Lethbridge Kiwanis Club luncheon discussion, June 10, 1930. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 15.
- ⁵ The club never did build a cabin in Waterton and continued to rent Inglenook for the life of the camp.
- ⁶ Inglenook was demolished in 1958 to make way for an addition to the west end of the El Cortez Motel (now Bear Mountain Motel). Chris Morrison, *Waterton* Chronicles, 232.
- ⁷ Galt Museum and Archives, file P19981012028, Minutes of the Lethbridge Kiwanis Club luncheon discussion, June 17, 1930. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 15.
- ⁸ Galt Museum and Archives, file P19981012028, Minutes of the Lethbridge Kiwanis Club luncheon discussion, June 24, 1930. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 15.
- ⁹ City of Lethbridge Bylaw No. 638, 1936.
- ¹⁰ Minutes of Board of Directors meeting, Feb. 10, 1931, Galt Museum and Archives, File P19981012029; WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 15.
- 11 Galt Museum and Archives, file P19981012029, Kiwanis Club Minutes, Nov. 10, 1931. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 15.
- ¹² Galt Museum and Archives, file P19981012029, Kiwanis Club Minutes, Nov. 10, 1931. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 15.
- ¹³ Galt Museum and Archives, file P19981012030, Minutes of Board of Directors meeting, March 3, 1932; WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 15. (The camp was one block away from the lakeshore, not "on the shores of Waterton Lake.")
- ¹⁴ A Sprig of Mountain Heather Being a Story of the Heather and Some Facts About the Mountain Playgrounds of the Dominion, (Ottawa: Department of the Interior, 1914) no page numbers. Available online at:

https://archive.org/search.php?query=%22A%20Sprig%20of%20Mountain%20Heather%22.

- ¹⁵ Galt Museum and Archives, file P19981012030, Minutes of Board of Directors meeting, March 3, 1932.
- ¹⁶Galt Museum and Archives, file P19981012030, Minutes of Board of Directors meeting, March 3, 1932.
- $^{\rm 17}$ Galt Museum and Archives, file P19981012031, Lethbridge Kiwanis Club Annual Report, 1933. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 15.
- ¹⁸ Ĝalt Museum and Archives, file P19981012037, Minutes of the Board of Directors, May 29, 1939. WLNP Archives, Box 130, Item 15.
- ¹⁹ Chris Morrison, *Waterton Chronicles: People and Their National Park*, (Lethbridge: Goathaunt Publishing, 2008), 117-123.

² "Kiwanis Summer Camp," *Lethbridge Herald*, May 8, 1930, 5. WLNP Archives Box 130. Item 15.