



## PECOS RIVER ENCAMPMENT HISTORY



This is a history of the Pecos River Encampment, Sheffield, Texas, from July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1944, through June 2025.

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## **Mankin Family History**

### **By Melinda Baugh**

Ted and Dee Mankin started going to camp in the 1980's. They took us grandkids out to camp as kids. Paige Massingill Lombard was baptized there in 2000 by our grandfather, Ted Mankin. Ted also baptized Cash and Wyatt Mankin there.

Ted was the "trash man" for many years. He would take his helpers to Sheffield swimming pool for an afternoon treat for helping out. The last day of camp the concession stand would throw out the ice cream that didn't sell and the guys would sit at the dumpsters and eat ice cream that had been thrown away, until they were sick.

Paige Massingill Lombard, one of Ted and Dee's granddaughters, has lots of memories of being a dorm counselor. One time the stomach bug came through camp, and she cleaned up vomit all night but managed to not catch the bug herself. Once, a dead snake was placed in the senior girls' shower and when the girls went to take a shower, they found that snake and they ran and screamed so loud it interrupted ladies bible class. She remembers the dust storm that blew through in the night and waking up covered in dirt, leaving a head outline on the pillow.

Keisha Massingill Weaver, another of Ted and Dee's granddaughters, is trying to plead the fifth on all activities. She will admit to filling water balloons with ice water and sneaking out at night.

I, Melinda McRae Baugh, remember sleeping next to Keisha in our cabin one night when a bucket of ice water was thrown through the window drenching her in her bed. She did not move or make a sound, not wanting to give the culprit the satisfaction. I was thrown a perfect baby shower at camp, complete with lots of bugs, when I was six months pregnant with Trine. I have great memories of all the volleyball games we, the "old ladies" played against the senior girls' dorm.

Trine Baugh has been climbing the mountain since I was pregnant with him. The only year he missed was when he was seven months old because I was so exhausted from chasing him all weekend.

Cash says, "I don't know if I have any stories that anyone else wants to hear, but the ones I do remember are very dear to me. It wasn't really the place or what we were doing there, it was the people and the relationships with those people and how they made you feel special, was the best thing about church camp" .

## **Pecos River Encampment History**

### **Carla Jean Scott Berry**

There are a few things in this world that trip my senses instantly and takes me to a most cherished place. (1) the deep ringing of a big, heavy bell and (2) the smell of burnt pancakes and/or toast.

My first year attending camp was in July 1963. I was 5 months old. My grandparents lived in Sheffield. LD and Hazel Bullard. My parents Henry (HC) and Bonnie Scott.

Of course, I remember very little of coming to camp until I was somewhat older. My earliest memory is of Mr. Hub Holmes. A lot of us were at the campground, probably a week or two before camp started. I was tagging along with daddy. The men were talking about repairs on some of the cabins. I told Hub that I needed a cabin too. He looked around and pointed saying "Well darlin', you can have that one right there". Boy, was I excited. That little white, one room, feed shed was my cabin until 2022 when it was pushed down with ease. To this day I remember the cabin Hub gave me.

Our family stayed in Sheffield or in our camper during camp until we got the cabin, overlooking the baseball field, from the Goldsmith Church of Christ. It was in terrible disrepair and the elders signed ownership over to dad. We spent many spring and fall weekends at the campground working on the cabin and dad doing things in the cook shack. Even when camp wasn't in session, we girls NEVER went into the cook shack. You see, back in the day, girls and women didn't ever go past the serving tables. There was no reason for the girls or women to be in or at the cook shack. That was the guy's territory and there were lots of men and boys back then. It was hot and heavy work, and the men took care of it.

The menu was very different too. Breakfast was either eggs and toast or pancakes. Rotated every other morning. Hence one of my favorite smells....burnt pancakes. The best pancakes you'll ever eat by the way!! We ate goat....and we ate A LOT of goat. Not just on the first Sunday. Mr. Hub and Mrs. Johnnie Holmes had a ranch cook by the name of Jorge. Jorge was paid to cook for the week, and he was really good at it. He fed us like he fed the ranch hands. We ate lots of beans, potatoes, corn and green beans. He made an amazing Frito pie that actually had no meat in it. And prunes. Everyone got prunes. I loved the prunes. They were sweet and syrupy and had lemons floating on the top. I imagine a lot of prunes ended up in the slop bucket, but I ate mine. All of our meals were served in metal pie plates, and we had real metal silverware. Just as it is today, our tea was served in tin

cans. I hope that is one tradition that is never changes. I don't believe the tea could ever be so good as in metal cans.

Every morning the smoke from the fire covered the campground and almost everything was cooked in the big concrete pits. Sundays there were more sweets than you could imagine. Some mornings we got cartons of chocolate milk. Some mornings there was no chocolate milk at all. You'd have to ask the boys and men what happened to the chocolate milk in the middle of the night. (Wink, Wink)

Back in the day the icehouse was a popular meeting place for us kids. Come time to eat, the men would drag out big blocks of ice and put them in the ice chipper. Small pieces of ice would slide across the concrete, and we'd race to grab one. Believe it or not it was a real treat. Thanks to Bob Reese who was a master at keeping the icehouse running!

Water had to be heated in big pots for the boys to wash dishes. Dad created a big boiler that ran off of propane. You could hear them light it up. Momma always said she hoped nobody burned their skin off. Apparently, it is very hot water. I don't know but it sure sounds hot.

Speaking of hot water-or the lack thereof-dad had put a propane water heater into our cabin. As far as I know, we were the only one with hot water at the time. David and Judy Brown were staying in the little cabin in front of ours. Dad could hear David Clint and Sam crying about the cold water when Judy would go to bathe them. Daddy couldn't stand it. He ran a hot water line from our cabin to theirs. He threatened every one of us with a whoopin' if he caught us in the cabin showering instead of showering at the dorms. I remember teasing him about not caring if his own kids had to take cold showers but he sure wasn't gonna let those boys suffer! I believe the next year he made sure the preacher's cabin had a water heater and then the song leader's cabin. But not the dorms. Never the dorms. Sorry kiddos. There actually was hot water in the dorms though. Still is. You just gotta know about being the first to the shower in the afternoon and be able to shower in about a minute and a half before the pipes cool off...hey, it's there.

Becoming of age to stay in the dorms was a big deal for those of us who attended every year. Great planning went into bedding, clothes, snacks and what not but most importantly, which bunk you wanted. I had been planning for years which bunk I'd choose. Saturday morning came and I hurried to the elementary girl's dorm carrying my bed roll. No one was supposed to check in until 7:00 am. I just knew I'd be the first there and claim my

carefully planned location. Imagine my surprise when I discover someone had their stuff on my bunk. What? The early bird turned out to be Gayla Bowerman from Iraan. Despite her spoiling my well laid plans, we became best camp friends and bunked together every year thru senior dorm. We made lots of friends in the dorms.

One thing we looked forward to was the tradition of the boys coming by one night and serenading the girls. There were some really talented guys. They played guitars and a fiddle, and the songs were beautiful. They sang a couple of songs at the elementary dorm (just to be nice), a few more at the junior dorm and a lot of songs at the senior dorm. Those were the dating age girls and the dating age boys. It was so innocent and special. Courting was handled with a very watchful eye. Bob Allen gave a speech at least once a day saying we were to “keep it above reproach”. Curfew was strictly enforced. The rules were very strict. It is my understanding that the boys were always testing the rules. I’m sure some of the girls did as well. I was always afraid to break the rules. I didn’t wanna get sent home or face my dad if I was to get into trouble.

One night though, in the senior dorm we decided that we were going to sneak out and paint the bell. We decided we’d cut the screen on the very back. About the time my foot hit the ground I heard Midnight Turk say, “Carla Jean Scott, you better get yourself back in that dorm before I go get your daddy”. I dove back in, scared to death. Then he stuck his head in the hole and said, “And this screen better be fixed in the morning”. Needless to say, the screen was fixed and I never got to paint the bell.

The bell was the target for a lot of mischief. Sometimes the boys would be able to take the clapper out and hide it. One time it was found in the river. The bell would have to be wacked with a big hammer. That morning just after breakfast I saw the bell tipped upside down and daddy’s welding truck backed up to it. Dad tacked the nut so the clapper couldn’t be removed anymore. To this day she still rings true! And nobody gets sent home for painting the bell anymore.

We looked forward to recreation. We climbed the mountain every other day with Jimmy Watts leading the way. We had a sunrise devotional the last day. It seemed so easy when we were young. A few years ago, Dana and I decided we needed to climb for old time’s sake. Good grief...what were we thinking? She’d push me up then I’d pull her up. Then I’d push her, and she’d pull me. We finally made it, completely out of breath just as the devo was over and all those kids were starting back down. There were offers to wait on us, but we assured them that we knew the way down. We savored the view and time together in in

silence. One special memory with my baby sister. I think we made it back just in time for the first service! That is a challenge for the young and fit for sure. A most memorable last climb.

There were activities that are still a matter of pride and tradition. The senior girls vs ladies volleyball game is a very serious matter. The prized trophy – a coffee can with a volleyball glued on top- is a cherished accomplishment! The men vs boys softball game is taken very seriously and is, at times, brutal to watch. The senior boys and senior girls used to have a softball game that was hilarious. The boys had to bat off handed and run the bases going backward. What fun times.

As of late, water sports have been added. Big slip and slides and wading pools. Years ago, we were taken to the Iraan or Sheffield swimming pools. Boys one day, girls one day. One year we were taken to part of the river and one year we were taken to a stock tank. But honestly it was too much trouble. We were on a pretty tight schedule. Every year though, Daddy would take us to Live Oak to the low water crossing. Most years there was some kind of water in it.

Some years there wasn't enough water in the river even for baptisms. But then one year, sometime in the 70's, (I don't remember exactly) just a few months after camp ended, the sky opened up and the bottom dropped out. The river flooded all the way over the highway up to the Holmes house. The entire campground was flooded. Some parts completely under water. If you know where to look you can still see the water line in some places. When the water receded, there was a lot of clean up to do. A lot of repairs and a lot of changes. The container that held the pie plates and cookware was full of silt and rusty pie plates. The decision was made to use disposable plates rather than the expense of buying new ones. Plus, the boys would have less dishes to wash. And so, it was. The end of an era. But let me tell you that the food sure tasted good in those old pie plates, and I miss them. During the clean-up there were pressure washers going everywhere. Keith Harper helped clean our cabin. How do I remember? Because he wrote his name on a high piece of sheetrock that is still visible today. We smile every year when we see it. We love you, Keith!!

Here's one for ya that I probably shouldn't tell but I can't help it! One year, Toni and I decided we would go down to the river and wade around for a while. It was a few days before camp, and everyone was busy. Or so we thought. As we rounded the corner we heard laughing and shouting and splashing! And then bare bottoms. Those boys were

down there skinny dipping. We were traumatized. Tom Scott, Rowdy and Perry Holmsley, Scott Reese and a whole bunch of other guys down there....being boys!! Once again, see what happens when you try and sneak off to do something you ain't supposed to be doing? HaHa!

A gathering place and protection from the sun and occasional rain. We gather there to begin our day and end our day. The tabernacle is another trigger of memories. Many hours spent in the shade listening to amazing preachers and teachers. And singing that God himself must look down on and say, "oh my....but ain't that purty". There used to be wooden pews and as they aged, they cracked. We took to carrying a pillow to set on because if you didn't time the standing just right you get a pretty good pinch.

Many wonderful preachers have attended camp, making their impressions. One in particular gave me a lesson in geography and ethnicity. Ian Fair. I thought, as a child, that he was from England. When momma told me he was from South Africa I remember saying "but he ain't colored". I thought everyone from Africa was black. Hum. We've also had many very talented and beloved song leaders. The one that I first remember was Bob Connel. He taught us the song he wrote, #189, Holy Father Loving Master. 728b is probably everyone's association with camp these days. But to me it's Holy, Holy, Holy. Every morning, we sang it and every time I hear it I am taken back to camp. I always say that we are from the "Holy, Holy, Holy" generation.

The dress code was very different especially for the girls and women. From 4:00 on we were dressed for church. Dresses, with sleeves, and pantyhose. I don't believe we were ever so uncomfortable as at the 4:00 service. It was hot, we were tired and hungry, but I am so honored to have that memory and be of that generation. I must admit that I do enjoy sleeveless dresses and blouses though.

This past year (2024) the little ones got themselves a brand new playground under the trees! I remember when they put in "the cage" beside the eating tables. The little ones still play safely in the gravel

I remember the watermelon feast and ensuing seed spitting contests and watermelon rind fights. Apparently, the guys had a substantial watermelon fight every year down at the dump.

I remember the bonfire when it was up in the parking lot, and everyone was invited.

I remember the talent shows. The Hounshells playing their guitars. Daniel Harrell singing and being amazed at the talent God had bestowed on my friends. I can't help but believe that our maker not only finds joy in our worship, but also in the fun we have together. Recent years have seen the talents of Shelton Boyd and his harmonica, Carla Sandusky and her guitar, Chris Pettijohn and his wit and of course Lance Grigsby. Lance is forever entertaining.

My two daughters, Tamequah and Ambher were baptized in the river as were nieces and nephews. My daddy spent more than 10 years working at camp and cooking and making sure things were done. He made sure his family was at camp, but he was not a Christian. He sat on the bench in front of the cook shack during every service. I remember looking down there from the tabernacle and seeing him there alone while all the other men were participating in the services. It made me sad, and I prayed for him constantly. One afternoon I was babysitting for someone (I don't remember who) watching a sleeping baby in a camper. I heard the bell ringing and knew someone was being baptized because there was no other reason for the bell to be ringing. A little while later there was a knock at the door of the camper. I opened it and they said, "your daddy just got baptized". I remember running to the cabin. He was setting on the edge of the bed and sure enough, he was soggy! That could have been the best day of camp as a family!! To this day I catch myself looking for my daddy down there in front of the cook shack. I am so grateful for the men who were so patient with him and never gave up on him. In 2014, my husband Buddy Berry was also baptized. Jimmy, Dana and I were the only ones present, but Shelton Boyd saw us going into the cabin and celebrated with Buddy. They have been friends ever since.

Camp is not for everyone. In my opinion, you either love it or you wish you'd never come. Over the 60-some-odd years I have met many people who have influenced my life and set an example of what it is to be a Christian. These people have loved me, corrected me and forgiven my mistakes. I learned from the women what is expected of a Christian wife and mother. I have never seen a group of men more eager to work and dedicated to providing a wholesome environment and a tradition that will never die. I don't believe there is a better-meaning group of people. I hope that I can be counted among them.

I pray that the Lord will continue to bless our efforts. That the traditions we have established will be passed down to many generations to come and that God will be edified in all we do.

## **Camp History** **Sue Dahlen**

My first encounter with the Pecos River Encampment was about 1953 or 1954. Our preacher and his wife, George True and Ruth Baker, from Kermit brought a group of us down for a few days. I don't remember much except the cold showers, goat meat for dinner, and that we dressed up for evening services. By dressed up, I mean, we wore dresses with hose and can-can petticoats. It was July and very hot. Who knew that this humble start would lead to a long-term love affair with the camp.

The next time I attended was around 1959. I came down for evening services with Frankie (my mother) and Cecil Faulkner (my stepdad) from Rankin. I was pregnant and it was still hot, but I loved it. A few years, and another child later, my husband, Roy, rented a camper so we could spend the whole week at camp. It was not to be. Keith woke up Sunday morning with the mumps and that was the end of that. After moving to Utah, we continued to make the trip every year and Roy would work in the cook shack preparing our meals. Back then, it wasn't unusual to have 500 in attendance. That was a lot of mouths for feed.

After Roy's death, we moved back to Odessa from Utah, and we continued to come to camp yearly. I remember that in the 60's there was a communal water can and dipper that everyone drank out of, and somehow, we all survived. I also remember that Ike Williams ran the candy store during this time and that he was a wonderful man. Also, we ate off of tin plates as well as the beloved tin cans for drinking. I remember that Cecil Faulkner was in charge making the tea, and you could count on it being wonderfully sweet.

I married Charles Dahlen in 1977 and moved to Montana. He had been going to a camp in Wyoming, but after we married, he made the trip further south to the Pecos River and got right to work. It was fitting that Charlie picked up both the tea and chocolate milk duty. Just like it is today, the men worked themselves to death to make sure everything was done and done well.

During the 70's, W.C. Wilson ran the candy store for several years until we took it over in the mid 80's. We absolutely loved running the store and seeing everyone pass through. After 13 years, it became too much for us, and we passed it on to Gina Holifield. It was also about this time, 1981, that we bought the cabin from Bob Allen. This cabin was one of the original structures from camp. It came complete with a 1940-50 era refrigerator that still works to this day. The ceiling was comprised of cardboard boxes laid in the rafters, along with snake skins. The cabin, however, did require a tune-up due to time and termites. Charlie, with a lot of help from others, spent a great deal of time reinforcing and rebuilding it to last another 60 years.

There were so many great preachers that we encountered over the years at camp, and I am sure many have been listed. One that comes to mind, was Joe Malone. He was also an artist and would draw on the chalkboard as he preached. That sure kept my

attention. The ladies' class an important part of camp for me, especially as a young woman. Sister Hance had so many practical lessons.

One thing you could count on during camp was a storm rolling through. Pack for 104 degrees with a chance of torrential rain. I'll never forget the Sunday morning that it was storming so badly that we couldn't hear a word of the sermon, so we took communion and were dismissed. There was also the year that the flooding was ankle deep everywhere and ran in one door of the cabin and out the other. We weren't worried though, because a deputy was parked at the top of the hill to alert us of tornadoes. When the storm was over, you could count on seeing all the little fuzzy red bugs that are only found at camp.

Camp memories are woven into my family's history. Keith learned to lead singing at camp when he was still little enough to wear Buster Brown. Over the years we have had kids, grandkids, great grandkids, and great-great grandkids attend camp and many were baptized in the Pecos River. We served and were served. We have made friendships that have carried us through the years. The life lessons that came from camp were so important, it formed a sense of family and community. It's a little like Heaven, and that is why it will forever hold a special place in my heart.



(L-R) Amy Holifield, Cassie Harper, Gina Holifield, Alyssa Harper, Amy Sawyer, Sue Dahlin, Dee Harper, Caroline Killion, Amber Parker, Barbara Harper, Neva Grigsby, Lexi Sawyer, Amy Grigsby, Katy Wilkerson

## **Church Camp Memories** **By Cyan Duckett (Scott)**

I am Cyan Duckett, and my maiden name is Scott. I am HC and Bonnie Scott's Granddaughter. I wanted to share a few of my memories for the camp history.

Scott Cabin- I remember that Grandma and Grandpa's (HC and Bonnie Scott) Cabin was one of the very few if not the only one that had hot water. When I was in the dorms, I would sometimes sneak over to the cabin and take a warm shower. If Grandpa was there, he would say go back to the dorms and shower in the cold like everyone else. That's part of the church camp experience!

728b- This was always the favorite song at camp. It was sung at every song service sometimes more than once. I have fond memories of all the music at camp. I love that every part of the song from Soprano to Bass was included. We always sang loud and proud. Now when I was older, Uncle Jimmy started leading singing. I remember him trying to teach us how to sing quieter in some parts and louder in others. I don't remember that going very well.

I remember my grandpa. HC was one of "the men". There was a group of men that everyone looked up to and respected. They were the role models for the younger men. Mr. Black, Mr. Holmsley, Mr. Owens and several others were a part of that group. If it needed doing, "the men" probably did it.

Recreation- We played kickball, had shaving cream and water balloon fights, volleyball tournaments against "the adults" and had a giant slip and slide . I have never seen a superior slip and slide that the ones we made at camp.

Dorms- I remember my councilors, Katie, Jade, and Stacey. Katie had a chant we had to do EVERY morning before we were allowed to leave the dorms. If it wasn't loud enough, we started over. These three ladies listened to our laughter, our tears, our songs and everything in between. I remember our devotionals with them and singing in our bunks. I looked up to those ladies and still do.

Baptism- I was baptized at the camp, and although I do not remember the exact date, I think it might have been June 27, 2004. I know I was staying in the dorms, and I know it was on the last Sunday of camp. I wanted to wait for my parents to get there. So, Sunday after the final church service, we headed down to the river. My dad and I waded in the water and went through the words. When I came up, I heard my grandma's voice starting the singing for "I have decided to follow Jesus". To this day, the song brings me to tears and I'm brought back to the Pecos River.

## Pecos River Memories Nolan Earle

My parents, Alvin and Luray Earle, attended Pecos River Encampment before I was old enough to remember starting to attend. My grandparents, the Bullards, lived nearby, in Sheffield, so we would combine visiting the grandparents with attending camp.

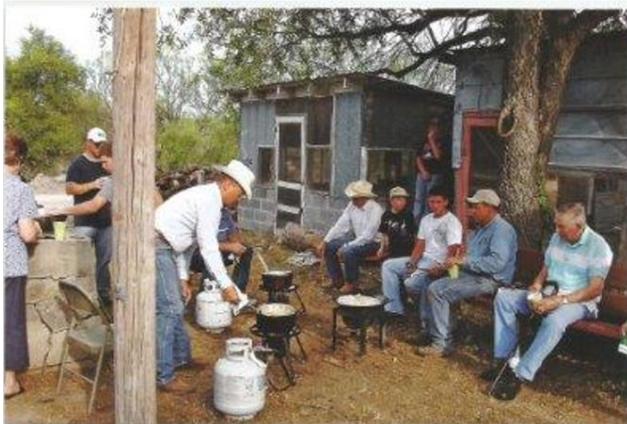
Since my dad helped with the cooking each year, one of my most vivid memories was him taking me to help butcher goats one year. I was probably nine or ten years old. Initially, it got to me, and I almost got sick. By the end of the day, I was running around collecting the heads and stacking them somewhere. I'm not exactly sure why I was doing that, but I was.

I don't remember my age, but I recall being very excited to be old enough to climb the hill for the first time.

I was baptized at camp, but don't have many memories around that event. I believe I was 11 at the time but don't remember who baptized me or much of anything else.

I believe I was 14 the last year I attended, which would have been 1975. I attended with my aunt, Bonnie Scott, and her family. That may have been my first year staying in the senior dorm. That was when I learned how to scheme getting back to the dorm early enough to get a few minutes of warm water in the showers due to the sun warming the pipes.

My one regret is never learning how to season and smoke goat meat. I always enjoyed the days that they served goat at camp and wish I could recreate it now.



Ridgely Holifield, Mac Deaver, Seth Sawyer, Mr. Schultz  
Frying fish at the cook shack



Randy Grigsby

## **Camp Memories** **By Neva Harper Grigsby**

### **Beginning**

My cousin, Roy Harper, was an electrician for the Pecos River Encampment. He was Sue Dahlen's first husband who died at a young age and was Keith Harper and Kathy McGlothlin's dad. Roy told my mother, Valerie Harper, and my aunt, Dean Harper, who were sisters, about camp and how wonderful it was.

My sister Barbara Harper, at the age of nine, went to camp with our cousins, Linda Harper Harris and Carolyn Harper Killion. (You could go to camp at age 9 in those days.) Camp was also two weeks long and they served goat meat every meal. Barbara loved camp from the very beginning and so did Linda, Carolyn said she was not that impressed. She hated the food and never liked recreation. Barbara said she remembers getting to go into the senior girl's dorm and as far as you could see were these beautiful slips of every color of the rainbow hanging from the ceiling. They were called can cans. She said how those girls managed to walk around with them hanging like that had to be something. The girls wore what were called poodle skirts and the more colorful your slip was the better. They dressed to the nines for the 8:00 church service and you wore tight skirts, hose and garter belts- no panty hose back then. The only time pants were allowed was for recreation.

Barbara was not a big fan of recreation, especially when she got older. There was an older woman who had a cabin somewhere in the back and she would get kids who didn't want to go to recreation and hid them in her cabin. Her name was Opal Hale. She worshiped in Iraan. She loved kids and was always doing things with them and for them. She gathered up kids and treated them so special. She loved them and they loved her. She and her husband could never have children, so she just loved other people's children. She was a very sweet woman and had a great influence on all children. Where was Opal when I was there!

I was in the sixth grade and came to camp for the first time to stay. I must admit I was not that impressed overall. I stayed for only one weekend with a friend who invited me. Jeanie Foster was her name and she and her family worshiped in McCamey. I remember dorm life was so much fun. Jeanie and I laughed a lot, especially at lights out. Yes, we were told many times to get quiet! Why is it when you know you should be quiet, it just makes you laugh harder? Dorm life was the best!

Recreation wasn't too bad at that age. The cold showers were tolerable because it was so hot! But the food, oh my, I hated it! Goat meat I've never liked, especially with hair on it! Beans and potato salad were no better. Not for ME!

I lost touch with Jeanie, her family moved away. She was a dear friend that had a great influence on me. One evening, years later, I stopped and talked with David Easton after services. Somehow, we figured out that my old friend, Jeanie, was his aunt. He told me

that he had just done Jeanie's funeral. I told him how she had been such a good friend. It amazes me that so many of us at camp are connected by people we have known in the past whether by being kin or just friends to those of us who now go to camp. The brotherhood really is small.

My next stay was no better. I was now an active member in the church in McCamey but was not a Christian.

I was a few years older; it was the summer of my 8<sup>th</sup> grade year going into high school. I decided to go to church camp. In McCamey at that time we didn't have a big youth group, but I decided to go anyway.

I can tell you I was still not too impressed, though I did stick it out for the whole week. I will say my Dorm Mother was very good to me, her name was Allene Allen. And yes, we called them Dorm Mother's back in the day not counselors. It was in the day of ratted hair, lots of hair spray, panty hose, and no jeans except for recreation. I can tell you ratted hair tons of hair spray and over 100-degree temperature was terrible. There was no time to wash your hair and get it dry before 4:00 service. There were no blow dryers, no curling irons, you washed your hair at night and slept on rollers. We were tough in those days. I'm not talking about those cute little pink sponge rollers; I'm talking about the ones that had bristles sticking out of them that stabbed you all night long. I was not one of those girls that could put her hair up in a ponytail and look good. I hated girls that could do that and look so cute! No, not me, I looked like a nut in a ponytail! The food had not changed much to my disappointment since the last time I was there. Hairy goat meat and beans, just terrible! The dress code was still the same, no pants except for recreation. We still wore slips but not the huge ones. But we dressed up every time we stepped out of the dorm door. Until you have worn a nylon slip that sticks to you in the heat and panty hose in miserable 100-degree weather you have not suffered- at least not enough! It was awful! I was a cowgirl who wore jeans and short sleeve shirts. I was miserable! Also, I would like to add that recreation was baseball every time and sometimes climbing a mountain, not for me! There were no water days, and I can also tell you there was no free time. You were either at church, at bible class, or at recreation. Maybe a few minutes to go to the cantina! And you had some time after the 8:00 service. That was it!

One afternoon I had just had enough. I can't believe I got up the nerve to do this, during recreation, I just walked right down to the trees where the travel trailers were. So

cool under those trees! And an angel opened her camper door and asked if I would like to come in. She gave me cold lemonade and cookies. I thought I had died and gone to heaven. Her name was Mrs. Sonny Rowe. She was Vircille Owens' sister-in-law.

I have expressed multiple times I was not impressed with everything at camp. But the classes and preaching must have taught me something. I think the preacher that year was Johnny Ramsey. Whoever it was, changed my life. Saved my soul. I decided to get baptized one evening in that dirty old Pecos River. I went down into that dirty salty old water; when I came up out of that dirty old water I have never felt as clean as I did that night.

That was an amazing year. Camp had really changed my life. Though I never went back as a teenager, I did have a good memory of camp. And you know looking back; the goat meat, the weather, and the recreation wasn't a bad memory. It was kind of a very neat memory that made you appreciate all the good things, to look back and laugh at yourself and remember how you handled everything. I wouldn't change those memories for anything.

It was in the 80's that Barbara was asked to teach, and I was her helper. That experience left a huge impression on me and the love of camp grew.

In later years Barbara and I taught classes, were dorm councilors and also helped to get camp ready.

This first year of teaching got us ready for future years, years that were going to change all our lives and we had no idea.

Several years later Randy and I put our membership in at the Sheffield church of Christ as well as Ridgely and Barbara Holifield.

Each summer we helped to get camp ready. It was so much fun! Not only were we working with our brothers and sisters in Christ for a common goal to bring God's word (the truth) to all who came to camp. It was also a family affair.

Working to get camp ready for me was more fun than going to camp, except we did hear wonderful preaching and great teachers and got to see old friends. I honestly think the workdays getting camp ready made us all stronger Christians especially my kids. My kids learned early how important it was to work along in unity with fellow Christians and hard work for God was fun!

I can still hear Kevin, Amy, Jason, and Cameron and of course Sandra June laughing as they were sweeping and spraying out the dorms. Not to mention all the other dozens of kids.

I can still see Dustin following behind Ellis spraying trees and Vircille telling him not to soak Dustin.

I still hear all of us laughing because someone had put the curtains up and the prints were turned upside down. I remember being told that if Aunt Teenie were here, she would let you know that you had better get them down and put them up right and done neatly. Her rules stuck and were carried on for generations. I did not get to worship with Aunt Tennie at Sheffield. By the time we got to Sheffield she had passed away. I heard a story Ellis told about her. Some of you won't remember but there was a time women and girls could not go pass a certain point; they called it an imaginary line. No women at the cook shack or down around the boy's dorms. No woman of course except Aunt Teenie. Anyway, Ellis said she came one afternoon and pecked on the cook shack window where they turned in the dirty dishes and called Ellis over and told him the dishes weren't clean enough. (We ate on tin pie plates. No paper goods at all). It didn't matter how far along they

were in washing dishes, Ellis would say “Run ‘em back through boys. So, they had to start over with the washing. They knew they had better do as she said. She ruled with an iron fist, but everyone respected her so much! Aunt Teenie was also the one who took care of watering the trees for years. She dug ditches to every tree, so they all got watered. I do remember seeing her and she was a little woman and wore a long skirt and she had a bonnet on like they wore in the old days. Like you see in westerns.

Our families each had campers, it was much easier for us to be on the grounds instead of driving back and forth and much more fun. Randy and Ridgely were in the cook shack much of the day as well as all the men. We always put our campers in the back under the trees near the benches because Carolyn had this huge camper (motor home). It was easier for her to put it in the back next to the road. It made it nice for us all to be in the same area and the benches and big trees were great for all of us to sit under. We parked there every year. Each night after the last service we would gather under the trees on the benches. In the evenings we had many that would stop to visit some even brought their guitars and sang. Daddy loved this. I want to mention by this time my mother had already passed away. Dad would come out in the evenings and go to worship then go to the benches to talk and visit. During those evenings young dorm kids would come by and visit us. Also, during this time there was a song that became popular called Harper Valley P.T.A. Now Roger Smetak was one of the kids that stopped by (he and friends). Because of that song Roger called where our family parked our campers and where we sat on the benches at night Harper Valley. I think Rowdy had a hand in calling it that too and so the name stuck.

Randy became head counselor in the late 80’s to mid-90’s. Bob Allen had been head counselor for many years and decided it was time to step down. The men of Sheffield church of Christ appointed Randy as head counselor.

The years Randy was head counselor were the years camp had so many campers. There were as many as over 500 one year if I am not mistaken. That was a lot of food to buy and to prepare. It was over capacity for dorm kids but somehow, we found room.

It really was an amazing time to be at camp. At the time most of the men were ranchers, so they donated lots of goats and also several steers were donated. Not to mention how generous everyone was to donate money to help put camp on and also to help in the cook shack. Yes, the days of only goat meat were over.

I can’t talk about camp unless I mention Lance. He was very hard the first few years of camp, and it took my family and the whole camp to keep up with him. But he eventually grew up and became the cook shack boss or at least he thought he was. What is funny is Lance can’t tell time so he might just get up at 3:00 in the morning thinking it was time to cook breakfast only to wait until someone showed up at 6:00. By the time breakfast was over he was exhausted so he would go back to bed and sleep until lunch, missing bible class and church. But, no one cared, everyone just let him do his own thing. Also, we can’t forget him leading the first song at every 8:00 service for years. And also, he and

ChrisPettijohn and the talent show. They were a hoot! Such great memories, it makes me kind of sad to think back and think how wonderful that time was for me.

Our family was growing, and we wanted to all stay in one place, also we had two aunts that could not bring campers, so we decided to try and buy a cabin. We found one called the Boar's Nest. The cabin was originally owned by Alicia's Aunt Aline Hale. Years later the college boys stayed in it because they were too old to stay in the dorms. Neal named the cabin the Boar's Nest because it was just a bunch of boys he called Boar Hogs.

Barbara and I asked Neal if we could buy it and he and Alicia agreed we could. I am pretty sure it's one of the oldest cabins in camp. It was leaning a little when we bought it. It had holes all around and the screens in the windows were a little worn out. So, we just put up black plastic and filled the holes with foam. It was perfect! People said the only thing holding it up was the black plastic. My cousin spread some tin around in the rafters and that cooled it down immensely. In fact, it was the coolest cabin in camp or, so we were told when people would come by to visit. It certainly wasn't the prettiest cabin in camp, but we loved it! Ridgely did finally brace it. He said one puff of wind and it would be on top of us. For many years we used black plastic but, we finally did get a makeover and put new siding (at least new to us) and we even put up new white plastic sheets on the inside walls. Boar's Nest has been home during the week of camp for many of my family for many years. We first started out with our older Aunt Dortha Donowho and Carolyn and Linda's mother Dean Harper. I can tell you when the aunts were in the Boars Nest it was hopping with action, never a dull moment when they were there. We laughed so much with their antics. They were either laughing about something one said or arguing over politics. After they passed the old Boar's Nest was never the same. But then came the best part of our lives. The grandkids! We just thought the Boar's Nest was hopping! It would rattle your brains with all those guys! To get them to settle each evening after bath time we would have story time. On occasion we would have little visitors that our grandkids had invited to hear my stories. That was the best time of my life at camp. Couldn't get better, all likeminded learning about God, family and friends. It was wonderful!

I have saved this for last although it was my very first impression of camp. Several years before I became a camper and after my cousin Roy had told my mother about camp, I came to camp with my parents, Floyd and Valerie Harper, my uncle and aunt Lloyd and Dean Harper, my younger cousins Dan and Dennis Harper. We would drive out in the evenings to listen to the 8:00 service. We did this for several years; we might only come out for one or two services each year. When we came it never failed that Ellis Owens and Neal Sconiers would get my daddy and uncle to go play dominoes at the cook shack after service. They would play forever it seemed. It was too hot for us to sit in the car to wait on them, so we waited under the trees on the benches that is now called Harper Valley! We waited there until way after lights out! We had to sit there in the dark very quietly because there were people in campers trying to sleep. There was a night watchman that would

come by and shine his flashlight on us. It made me feel so uncomfortable like I was somewhere I wasn't supposed to be. And yes, there was a night watchman in those days. (Don't you know he wondered what in the world we were doing?) He would walk around the grounds making sure everyone was in their dorms. Which we were not! Finally, Daddy and Lloyd would walk up, and we could go home.

My daddy and Lloyd were not Christians, I know that had it not been for Ellis Owens and Neal Sconiers and making them feel welcome they would have never become Christians, I know asking them to come play just a game of dominos meant so much to them. I will forever be grateful to those wonderful men.

It was late one night after the 8:00 service that my Daddy, my uncle Lloyd and a cousin, Ray Harper were baptized in the Pecos River.

### **Final Thought on Camp**

Keith and Kathy should be so proud of their daddy, Roy Harper. They came to the Pecos River Encampment, a small family of four that grew to over 50 members of the Harper family that have become a part of the Pecos River Encampment. Sue Harper Dahlen also had a great influence in all of this. She is also one of my favorite cousins.

I would like to express my gratitude for Hub and Johnnye Holmes for having the foresight of giving their land and starting the Pecos River Encampment all those many years ago. It has blessed so many lives and saved many souls.

I also would like to mention a few that helped me along the way, many have gone on to be with our Lord. Aline Hale, Ella Maie Welch, Annie Morris, Morine Carson, Ellis and Vircille Owens, Neal Sconiers and Alicia Sconiers who will be 90 this year.

My prayer for camp is that it will be a place that stays true to God's word and will hold to the values of years gone by.



## **Camp History-The Early Years**

### **Keith Harper**

I have been attending camp since 1962 and was told by my mother, pregnant the year before, that I was actually there in 1961 also. I attended every year until our family moved to Louisiana in 1996 and since then have missed maybe 4 other years.

My history writing is only my childhood memories at camp, it would take a book for me to tell all about my adult history at this place.

My first memories of church camp were when I was probably 5 (1966) and I played tetherball in the dirt parking lot. It seems like my bible class that year was in one of the old cabins closest to the road. I know that I had a new pair of baseball cleats and didn't want to dull up the cleats on the caliche parking lot, so my dad carried me back and forth to the baseball field. The next couple of years, the memories I had were staying in our tent camper and getting ice cream from Ike's Candy Shop.

When I was 8 (1969) I went with Rowdy to skin goats the Saturday before camp. Rowdy had some responsibilities but I just kind- of hung around watching the goats get bled, gutted and skinned. While inspecting the organs of the goats I reach up and squeezed the bladder of the goat hanging next to me and the bladder squirted a stream right into the face of Reed. I don't remember to much after that, but I still remember Reid's face and I seriously thought my young life might have come to an end. I was always a little scared of Reed after that, and of course he was a very big guy and pretty intimidating to a 8 year old.

When I was around 8 or 9 years old, all the camp baseball players would return home during camp to play ballgames, then would proudly return wearing their uniforms to show off. I remember playing catch with Zane Turk and Daniel Harrell in our uniforms before a game. Doc Turk was a little older and I remember him wearing steal cleats and thinking that was so cool.

I was 10 when I first went into the dorm (1971). I begged David Love, the junior counselor, to let me stay in the dorm and I think my mom probably talked to him as well. He agreed to allow Dean Norris, Daniel Harrell, and me, which were all 10, to stay in the junior boy's dorm that year. The dorm was a new way of life that I had never experienced, mostly because the boys were older, and I was intimidated and scared mostly at night because of the scorpions and spiders crawling around.

I vividly remember the belt line (where the men of the cook shack lined up in 2 lines with belts in hand) and the punished kids ran through as quickly as possible. I only witnessed that twice because it was reserved for the kids who really did something bad like fighting with a knife. A good deterrent from poor choices.

The next 3 years in the junior boy's dorm all seem similar. We played pranks on the counselors and on each other like throwing water on our favorite counselor and squirting shaving cream on each other (no wonder they could never find a junior boys' counselor. It seems like I continually got my share of pranks played on me.

During those years Dean, Daniel and I always worked on the trash detail, which was cool because we never had to observe the required rest period after lunch. On Thursday nights the camp had a watermelon feed (absolutely no throwing rinds), and the trash guys got to clean up the watermelon and haul them to the dump. Once we got to the dump we were allowed to have a huge watermelon fight, throwing the watermelon rinds at each other. The dangers were, it was night (pitch black) at the dump yard with broken glass and all kinds of dangerous trash, along with rattlesnakes, and 17-year-old kids that had great arms and no mercy towards 11-year-olds. One year I can remember Dean and myself running all the way back from the dump to the camp because we were too scared to face the older kids. This might have been the reason this was the last year for the rind fight.

I remember the junior high Bible classes took place in Harper Valley or the Breezeway. Every year most of us guys would pick out our favorite sweetheart to hang around at camp. Mine every year was Candy Hon, but she always liked the older guys, mainly Doc Turk. So, I spent my time chasing her and mostly facing rejection year after year. Daniel and Dean seemed like they were always a bit more successful in their quest. Bob Allen always helped us understand how to properly hold hands and exactly what was permitted according to camp rules.

Bob always directed the recreation and was so good at dealing with the kids. Recreation was my favorite time of camp. I always wanted to play softball against the men and couldn't wait until we were old enough to face Ted Kell or Johnny Ramsey pitching. They both could hum a softball, way different from a baseball pitcher which I was way more familiar with.

Speaking of Johnny and Ted, they were preachers throughout my junior high and high school years at camp and both would quote literally hundreds of scriptures in their lessons. Others I remember were Jim Hance, Jimmy Jividen, and Abe Lincoln. The only song leaders I remember were Edwin Myers and James Crowder. Edwin Myers was also one of my favorite Bible class teachers at camp and really had a strong influence on my relationship with Christ as a teenager. Singing at camp was the best, we had singing groups, quartets every year and were always singing and learning new songs. I always think that this must be how it is in Heaven. The talent show was always fun and back then, only real talent was allowed. Daniel played guitar and we always accompanied him while he always had a new song he had written for one of his girlfriends.

I was 14 was when I played the men in softball. I think we won every year I played with the boys and secured bragging rights year after year. I finally got to face Johnny Ramsey in fast-pitch, we played fastpitch until I was about 16 and then none of the men ever had a fast-pitch pitcher so we switched to slow-pitch. Most of the time the boys didn't have a fastpitch pitcher either so we would just throw underhanded tosses (as hard as we could) but we still beat the old men. David Brown would come up to bat with his cowboy boots on and hit the ball in the river, literally we chased a ball he hit to the edge of the river. The boys' team was always good, but then, we had some really good baseball players - the Sconiers brothers, Zach Hon, Daniel Harrell, Chris Pettijohn, Mark Harrell, Danny Dixon, and Billy

Erwin. Rowdy was a little younger but was a beast at third. There were others that came in and played through the years that I have forgotten about. When I was 20 the men tried to recruit the boys and finally said if you're out of high school or married you should play on the men's team (I was both). Our boys soon played on the men's team and continued the dominance as men.

In the senior dorm we had some great extracurricular activities most of which involve swimming, or bell ringing/painting, mostly at night escaping the wrath of "Midnight Turk". Mike Turk was an incredibly sneaky guy, that took his midnight watch seriously. Through multiple incidents I really got to know Mike and will always consider him a friend I love and respect. One morning, in my first year in the senior dorm, the dinger (before it was welded) was discovered missing for the 6:30 AM wake up ring, (which I may or may not have been involved) Mr. Reid Holmsley came into the senior boys dorm beating-on and throwing an empty 55 gallon drum, accompanied by some of the other cook shack men, hollering, shaking the bunk beds, and waking up the dorm looking for the dinger. That morning made quite an impression on me and helped deter future endeavors.

Through these years I made some fantastic friends, some of which I keep in touch with today. Danny Dixon was always a friend, and we stayed in touch most of my high school year, but I haven't talked to him in years. He was such a great athlete and so humble about his talents. Daniel was such a talented songwriter, and I always envied him and his abilities while Zach and Doc had all the good looks. Billy Dale Hon (BD) was the senior dorm counselor for my high school years from 1977-1980 and was the absolute funniest adult (in his own unique way) I was ever around. He had such an even-keeled attitude and hardly ever let his anger show. I always thought he was probably a great dad, and I wanted to be a fun parent like him one day. However, I was always a bit uneasy around him because of my years of Candy crush and I knew he knew.



Seth Sawyer, Keith Harper, Lane Boyd



Dustin Grigsby, Keith Harper, Allen Weakland

## Holmes and Sconiers Family

Herbert (Hub) Holmes and his wife, Johnnye Holmes graciously donated the land where the Pecos River Encampment is located. The Pecos River was convenient for baptisms and the land centrally located for those original pioneers coming from the neighboring communities around Sheffield. The original group hailed from Sanderson, Ozona, Sheffield, Iraan, Ft. Stockton, and McCamey, to name a few. The first encampment at this location would be held on Hub and Johnnye's daughter's, Alica Holmes', birthday on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1944, which is a delight to her now in her older age. Hub and Johnnye would be involved in every aspect of the camp, as were so many during the early years. This community of believers would come together to build an encampment with immeasurable spiritual implications. Hub did everything down there. I say down there as theirs is the house that sits up on the hill just above camp. Especially after Hub died in 1974, Johnnye would talk about the pride he took in making camp look its very best. She would tell how he would pick up every piece of trash he could find no matter how small it was. There was no job too small or big for him to take care of in order to get camp ready for June. He wanted everything to be just right for the Lord and for all who would attend. He loved that place. He went after food and ice each year. He was the treasurer and documented the history of the expenses of what it took each year to pay for camp. He documented the number of goats donated and by whom. He would document the cost of bread and tea and how much the preachers and teachers would be paid. He kept these records in an old ledger book that is a treasure to us as we turn through the pages and remember the rich history of God's people who have walked through the gates of camp. It is heartwarming to see the generosity of so many. The first camp in 1944 cost a total \$432 for the week. The contribution that year was \$643.

But before I go too far, it must be noted that there would be no camp at all if it weren't for the vision of Brother Frank Black and his wife, Nellie. He is the one who really had the idea to start it all. What a profound endeavor it was from those back then and down through the years to those of us still are attending now in 2025. Alicia reminisces so fondly about Brother Black and his wife, Sister Nellie Black and the salt of the earth people they were. Brother Black, of course, would work tirelessly to establish the camp both physically and spiritually. Brother Black was a World War I veteran who preached for the Sheffield congregation in the 1940s. Brother Black suffered with what we now call PTSD, but back then they called it "shell-shocked". This did not stop him from serving the LORD. Imagine this-he did not have car and on Sundays he would preach in Sheffield in the morning, and then would hitch hike to Iraan, to preach there in the afternoons or evenings. It was a different time back then, but even now, you can see the fortitude and dedication with which he served the LORD. His faith seems unformidable as I hear the stories about him. And it was his vision that began the small camp that would do so very much for the Kingdom of God. Everyone was so poor, but they found a way to make every penny count to pull camp together. The pioneers of the camp were strong in spirit and moved forward with the will of the LORD, who would use the camp for generations to come. The good that has been accomplished through Pecos River Encampment can never be measured. The number of souls where the Seed has been planted, the number of restorations, baptisms, and marriages is only known by God Himself. I have heard some comment that they would not be Christians if it weren't for camp, and that is priceless.

During the early days, and even now, there was a lot of chopping and clearing of brush from the raw ranch land that had to be done. It is hot, hard labor, that is willingly done, by a few each year.

Aunt Teenie Campbell, as she was lovingly called by all who knew her, was my grandmother, Johnnye's, aunt by marriage. Interestingly, Aunt Teenie was married to Uncle Bynum, who was the last man killed in a dual in the streets of Sheffield, according to Reid Holmsley, and I am pretty he knows correctly. As a widow, she sold milk in a wagon in Sheffield to make ends meet. Part of those earnings would pay for planting trees at camp for much needed shade in the hot Texas sun. She could be seen wearing her signature bonnet lovingly tending the trees that are so important in providing shade from the summer sun of June.

Alicia recounts how the Sanderson congregation, comprised of the Allen and Hardgrave families, and others, were heavily involved in the beginning of the camp. She remembers how people would come from far and wide with pickups loaded in the back with kids and their belongings coming to camp. She smiles as she remembers these great memories of a time when people looked forward to spending a week at camp learning about Jesus, seeing old friends and making new acquaintances.

Alicia also remembers the time that an orphanage from South Texas sent a bus load of children to camp. She doesn't know the exact year, but she was about 18 years old, so sometime around 1953. She tells this story with tears in her eyes thinking of the love that was shown to the kids and of their heartbreaking situation. No one at camp had heard this group of children were coming, but it didn't matter. Everyone was so glad that they had arrived. Everyone at camp came together to provide bedding and places to stay for all of these children making sure they were comfortable and had everything they needed to make the week. The children were welcomed by all and taken in with loving arms. The bond of church camp that draws us all so close together during this week was no different for these young people. The kids formed lasting friendships throughout that week. I can only imagine the sad anticipation of the week drawing to an end knowing that they would have to load the bus and once again return to the orphanage. Mom remembers seeing some of the younger boys who had grown close to some of the older high school boys, having to say good bye at the end of a glorious week of fun and friendships. One little boy clung so tightly to a young Christian teenager from McCamey. They didn't want to let go of each other to return to their homes. As she tells this story, I can see the throng of campers gathering around the bus as the kids would reluctantly board the bus to go back to South Texas. I can see the hugs and tears and hear the "goodbyes" and "I love yous" as they departed. Mom says there was not a dry eye in camp that day. This story is a great illustration of what happens at camp each year. And it is a great illustration of the heart of the people who come here. They are Christ like, and pure hearted.

Another memory that Alicia has tearfully recounted through the years, is of Keith and Kathy Harper's father, Roy, saying the final prayer of camp, the year of his death. This somber moment reminds us that life is so precious and everything we do matters in the eternal scheme. While tragic and heartbreaking for the Harpers, whom we love so very much, the silver lining is Roy's prayer to God that is a lasting memory all these years later. Through life's most devastating trials, camp has

been a constant rock in the lives of so many. The Harper family is still a solid and integral part of camp history and there are at least 5 generations of people who have attended camp.

In 1957, Alicia would marry Neal Sconiers, but Neal was not a Christian when they married. As they were dating Alicia would make clear the importance of Pecos River Encampment to her. He made some sort of disparaging remarks about camp that offended her pretty good, even though she laughs when she remembers it now. Neal could not fathom why anyone would hold so dear a camp in the middle of nowhere, with rustic accommodations at best. How in the world could that place be so important? But he would soon learn and understand the why and would become a staple himself in the workings of the camp. Neal could build and repair anything and so his skills were always needed. Of course, camp can make carpenter or plumber out of nearly anyone. Neal would attend every camp between 1958 and 2011 and he would spend his dying days in 2011 getting ready for camp. He would work tirelessly his last year on this earth preparing the grounds and buildings for PRE 2011. His funeral in August of that same year was fittingly held in the tabernacle.

Our first cabin at camp was, Hub's mother's, Mamie Holmes. She was not a Christian but wanted a cabin at camp and knew the value of being in attendance with the good folks there. Hub would build the original cabin early on and it stood until it couldn't in 1996 when a windstorm blew the ceiling in during camp. Neal and Alicia would rebuild it when they retired in 1996. It's the cabin with the green tin roof next to the preacher's cabin. Most people take a vacation after retirement, but mom and dad worked through the Spring to have a new cabin for camp in 1997.

I guess you could say that camp is right at the center of our lives, never far from our mind and always in our heart. Through the years, Neal and Alicia would work hard to get camp ready. During camp, Neal would always be in the cook shack getting meals ready for the campers; early, early mornings flipping pancakes and hot days over campfires cooking the goat. And Alicia doing whatever needed to be done around camp-washing cup towels daily, planning the meals, going after the food, etc. Alicia always prepared communion for both Sundays. The only women to do that through years are Nellie Black and Alicia. Now Alicia has passed that honor on to Jade Turk Barkheimer.

The Pecos River that runs through camp, is just as dear to the those who have had their sins washed away there as is the Jordan River. Its waters are muddy and brown and most years it runs shallow, but the feeling of walking that dusty road to its banks will leave you with butterflies in your stomach and joy in your heart. How many times through years has the family of God walked that road to welcome a new creature into the kingdom. The songs that have been sung, the prayers that have been prayed, the sins that have been washed away in the Pecos cannot be numbered. Yes, the Pecos is precious to those of us who entered into Christ in those waters. In our family Alicia, Necia (1973), John, Joe (1974), Sandra June (1987) Mike Miranda (2017) Jacob Graham (2003).

Through the years, I guess we have all been involved in one way or another each year. Alicia, Neal, Necia and Ridgy, Joe and Kathy, John, and Sandra June. There are not many jobs we haven't done at one point or another--creating the menus, going after food, keeping the books, cleaning, repairs, hanging curtains, mowing, hoeing, sweeping, cleaning the cook shack, cooking meals in the cookshack, dorm counselors, Joe gave a lesson not too long ago, John lead the singing one year, and everything in between.

There are so many good times that there isn't any way to put them down. Most of you who are reading this understand what I am saying. The preaching and teaching is the best you can find. Personally, I think we have had some of the best preachers there are between Texas and Tennessee. Men that know The Book backwards and forwards and stand for truth and express it in a way that is easily understood and inspirational. Camp elevates you to a spiritual mountain and renews your determination to be more Christ-like.

Singing under the tin roof of the tabernacle or beside the banks of the Pecos will raise goosebumps on your arms. Looking out at the mountains and the mesquites and seeing the birds or the goats on the side of the mountain during a worship service really helps you to understand why heaven and nature sings of His glory. It's the prettiest singing ever! Watching young boys lead their first songs and men sing the old standards will never get old. Nothing beats the singing in the early morning tabernacle devotionals or the late night dorm devotionals.

The laughter and fun of being with friends, remembering when and catching up, the talent show and Lance, watermelon, goat meat, chocolate milk, sneaking out, painting the bell, climbing the mountain, volleyball, boys serenading the girls on Saturday night, hot dresses and panting hose in June, cold showers, Christian fellowship, working hard, tin cans, tin plates, a 50 gallon barrel of tea, dominos, the bell, and "above reproach". All of these things remind me of the heaven on earth that we call the Pecos River Encampment.



Johnnye Holmes & Randy Gray



Hub Holmes & Betty Annette holding David Clint Brown

## **Camp Memories**

### **By Laci Langford**

Jogging back down memory lane...I am amazed by how much I can remember from at least 25 years ago. All wonderful memories. It was an honor to be able to attend camp that my family had so many ties to.

My mom, Toni Jezisek (Scott) always sewed me new “camp clothes” before the trip. Nothing more than three inches above the knee of course, and clothes to keep as cool as possible because it was hot. Speaking of attire, I will never forget the constant reminders to shake your shoes and check your bed for scorpions.

My grandparent’s cabin (HC and Bonnie Scott) had a full bathroom, fridge, and bunk beds. My grandma always had those cans of grapefruit juice that you peel off a sticker to open it. My cousin Ambher and I stayed in the dorm one year together and got to experience painting the bell. I always thought it would be fun to camp in a tent, so you would be really close to the concession stand.

My fondest memory was the day I was baptized in the river by my dad, Eddy Jezisek. I wanted to be baptized there like so many of my family members had before and after me and it was so very special.

The singing at the tabernacle rings in my ears just like it was yesterday. Looking back, that was such a great opportunity for young men to come out of their comfort zones and begin leading songs and prayer. My favorite song, “A Beautiful Prayer” was always a hit, and sounded better at camp than any other time I have ever heard it.

The sunrise services on the “mountain” were memorable as a kid, and hopefully someday I can experience that as an adult.

Meals- Tea from tin cans was absolutely amazing and for some reason I remember some of the absolute best mashed potatoes ever! They were marbled with cheddar cheese. The goat meat was really something, and I can honestly say I have never eaten goat meat any place other than camp. I will just let that be a camp tradition.

The talent shows were always entertaining. Lance Grigsby was always the star of the show. He was there every year I attended around 25 years ago.

I remember some weird red velvety bugs after a rain shower. Rain, I feel like, was just as rare as those red velvet bugs at camp.

Recreation was always a blast. Playing tetherball was so much fun, and for some reason was always way more fun at camp than anywhere else.

## **Leatherwood History**

**By Debbi Leatherwood Meador**

Our journey to camp came through our grandparents, Rufus and Marie Andrews. They lived in Goldsmith. They were friends with H. C. and Bonnie Scott and the Hounshells. My granddaddy, whom we called Daddy Rufus, helped build the Goldsmith cabin and his signature is carved in the concrete foundation. We have taken our kids and grandkids to see it on several occasions. He was an electrician so when the Holmes donated the land, he did a lot of the electrical work for camp. He and my grandmother, Mommy Rhea, started a legacy at camp that our family is carrying on.

In 1971, my parents, Denzy and Darla Leatherwood, my three sisters; Diann Leatherwood Schooley, Deana Leatherwood Hodges Shockley, and Danet Leatherwood Davis, moved to Ozona. We went to church with Jeff and Laura Owens, and they had a cabin they offered to let us stay in at camp. My mother remembered her family going to church camp. We eventually bought that cabin along with two more.

I remember our senior dorm counselors, Mrs. Procise, Mrs. Vercille Owens, and Judy Brown! They were the best! The boys serenaded the girls, cold showers, goat meat, and great singing and preaching! Oh, the memories!!

The first baptism was my mother's brother Rufus (Sonny) Andrews in 1962. He was killed in an oilfield accident the next year. I was baptized at camp on June 22, 1971, by Jerry Love. I continued my journey by bringing my children Aime and Jason. They were both baptized at camp. I continue to bring my grandchildren: Braeden, Blake, Bret, Mayce, Raylee, and Ellye. Blake, Bret, and Raylee were all baptized at camp. I have been teaching at camp with my cousin Darcy Blocker for several years. So many of my family members come to camp and were baptized there.

Camp is like a family reunion! At times, we had five generations come to camp! So thankful for my grandparents for starting a legacy at camp that I hope will continue for years to come! I have wonderful memories and have made lifelong friends!!



## **Camp Memories** **By Ambher Longwell**

I am blessed to have been able to attend Pecos River Encampment with my family a few years of my childhood.

My absolute favorite part was singing under the tabernacle. I will be the first to admit that I have never been a talented singer, but I loved hearing all the voices rise up together. I remember having to convince my brother to go request my favorite hymn, A Beautiful Prayer, and I was so happy when he finally gave in.

Speaking of the tabernacle, the talent show was always so much fun! It is amazing how gifted folks are from singing to acting to comedy. Lance was always the one to get the biggest applause.

My family, The Scott's, own the cabin that at one point had the only hot water on campgrounds! I remember hoping to beat my cousins to the shower first, so I did not have to use cold water! Also, there were often little lizards in the shower stall, and they always made me happy. Now, I will also admit that a freezing shower felt wonderful on the notoriously sweltering summer days, especially after recreation. Which was a blessing because the dorms had only freezing cold showers! Also, hard to forget the volleyball games during recreation where the women's team always seemed to whoop our girls' team.

My favorite year was the year I spent in the dorms with my cousin Laci. The windows had no glass, just screens, and at night the bugs sang us to sleep. We made sure to get bunk beds in the center of the room, just in case the boys decided to hit us with a late-night water balloon attack.

That was the same year we snuck out to paint the bell. I am still amazed by the sheer amount of paint that was layered on that bell! It was incredibly beautiful, and a testament to the amount of people and the number of years folks have been coming. Hearing that bell ringing each morning was lovely.

Mornings at camp were great! A wonderful breakfast and the chance to catch up with each other before the day got busy. My favorite morning was the sunrise hike. As soon as we started up the "mountain" I began to regret my choice to join. But seeing the sunrise after making it to the top was always worth it.

The food at camp was always top tier. Who knew drinking tea from tin cans would be the most refreshing thing I think I have ever experienced. I did once walk in on the goat being processed, and it was a bit hard eating goat that year. My momma, Carla Berry (Scott), was always the most excited about getting goat. And, if there happened to be a few goat hairs on your plate, she would say "That's just for flossing your teeth afterwards!" Oh, and I remember buying candy and cokes at the store. We especially loved Warheads, and tried to see who could handle the sourest flavor.

Being in the middle of nowhere, we did have to share campgrounds with some creepy crawlies. My aunt, Toni Jezisek (Scott), was the official bug wrangler and I loved

helping her remove all sorts of spiders and insects from people's cabins. One year it rained, and these red velvet beetles came out from the damp ground. They were beautiful! It was also particularly important to shake out your shoes and keep your bedding from touching the ground because scorpions were ever present.

The most important part of camp for me was the year I was baptized. I asked my uncle, Eddie Jezisek, to baptize me and I remember taking the dirt path down to the river. That walk was serene, and I still think about it to this day. The water was murky and cool, and the sun was starting to set. I remember feeling so much peace as I was dipped backwards into the river. It was a wonderful day.

I am extremely grateful for the time I spent at Pecos River Encampment. I have such wonderful memories with my family and will never forget that place.



Ted Kell-Song Leader 1972, 1973, Preacher-1977



Johnny Ramsey-Preacher 1966, 1968, 1972, 1974, 1979,



Ryan Harper, Clint Owens, Keisha Massingill, Payden Ward, Stacy Turk, Paige Massingill, Micah Turk



Lance Grigsby, Larry Roberts-Preacher 1993, and his wife

## **That Pettijohn Kid**

**By Chris Pettijohn**

I was a baby the first time I visited the camp, a day trip with my mother in, I think, 1963. We visited again in 1970 and 1971, and I actually vaguely remember those two visits, which were also day trips. At the first one I remember (1970), we were at the back rows of the tabernacle in between classes or services or singings, and there was a small boy chasing and stumbling after his flaming red-haired toddler sister he was taking care of, calling “Cacky! Cacky!”. These kids were young Michael Cole and little sister Cathy (Cathy Cole Irby).

In 1971, my mother and I rode down from Odessa early one Wednesday morning with Zillah Herrington in her new little Toyota Corona, and I had the back seat to myself. However, for the return trip, one of the famous Herrington boys, Kim, a high schooler then, wanted or needed to go home instead of staying at camp, so he rode with us, along with tall Donald Vaughan (same age as Kim), and you never saw such long legs in a little car... I rode in the middle of the back seat, cramped as all get-out in between those knees.

As soon as I was old enough to stay in the Junior Boys’ Dorm (1974), I became a yearly camper and continue to attend every year I’m able. Unfortunately, I can’t say I’ve made every camp meeting since then, because there have been a few years I wasn’t able to attend, due to a new job, new baby, selling a house, etc. At this time, I’m only able to visit for a day or two each year, unfortunately.

Different things have motivated me to keep coming over the years... at first it was the amazing Christian fellowship, and it was softball sometimes, and at times I admit it was getting to know better the many wonderful Christian girls who left me star-struck and ready to be in love, and also at times it was being around the many wonderful Christian guy friends who left me feeling lucky indeed to have deep bonds of friendship with them. Many times, it was to hear the speaker/preacher/bible class teachers, to experience the angels sweetly singing in the tabernacle, and to share the blessings of the Pecos River Encampment with my wife and children. Several times the camp needed a Talent Show M.C., and they let me know they were counting on me! But one thing that keeps me coming has always been to give my soul a chance to grow spiritually, and it was never disappointed in that effort.

Ruthie Crowder revived the Talent Show in 1979 or 1980, and I enjoyed doing goofy stuff for cheap entertainment beginning then in skits, often impersonating Johnny Carson or the camp preacher. Daniel Harrell emerged as the usual M.C., and what an entertainer he is, until 1997 when he was not present. Someone asked me if I would like to serve as Master of Ceremonies in his absence that year, and that was that—I became a fixture there. Saul Blair and I traded off the duties for a few years before he was unable to come for a good while, so I became entrenched in that role for many years. I very much enjoyed

sharing the hosting with Carla Sandusky, Sandra Sconiers, Katy Holmsley, and Holly Pettijohn at times (there may have been others).

Particular events I will never forget, besides “Cacky”:

--Getting knocked unconscious for a long time when playing the Junior Boys in softball while diving for a line drive fly in left field and colliding with the Rover Daniel Harrell, who had the same idea. I was loaded up in Mike Turk’s car so he and Camp Nurse Maddie Wilson could take me to the clinic in Iraan. This scared a lot of people, including me after I was able to think about it.

--I have always felt I owed my spiritual life to that event, and to one person who influenced me tremendously over a couple of years and caused me to seek the Lord’s way without ever looking back, and that is Angie Taylor, a relative of the Holmsleys and my girlfriend in the late 1970’s.

--When my son Reese, age 2, pulled a heavy tetherball pole down onto himself on a Monday back in 2003, and having his own concussion as a result. We took him to the clinic in Iraan, and after an evaluation, that visit was followed by an ambulance ride to Odessa, where he stayed in the hospital for a couple days—so the family’s visit to camp was cut short. This was particularly distressing to little Holly, age 5, who was having such fun in Carla Sandusky’s bible class with the theme Fruit of the Spirit, that she wouldn’t hear of not returning. So, after dropping off the boy with the head wound, along with his twin sister and mother in Abilene, father and one daughter returned to Camp by Thursday night so class could be attended, Dad could go back to teaching his 7<sup>th</sup> Grade class, and he could emcee the Talent Show.

--Me getting drilled in the collarbone by a SCREAMING grounder which took a bad hop, while playing 2<sup>nd</sup> base and facing the very talented batter Hannah Andrews, and then having Ryder Sawyer drive me (here we go again) to the clinic in Iraan, me thinking she had broken my collarbone.

--Everybody always wants to sneak out of the dorm at night... but man, I always just wanted to sleep! I had my fun during the busy and tiring days.

--Jogging on the highway as an adult trying to stay fit many times at 5 AM, or 5 PM, with Frank Harrell, Shelton Boyd, and David Day.

--Impersonating and roasting the visiting preachers during the Talent Show and discovering their good sportsmanship and good humor whenever they commented on it during the next day’s sermons.

--Baptizing each of my three children as teenagers in the Pecos River and forcing everyone to endure the delays in beginning the Talent Show—because each of the kids wanted to be

baptized on Friday night after the evening service in different years! Ol' Dad the M.C. simply had to change outta those wet clothes...

--Mac Deaver and his expansive wit, as he made camp fun in so many ways while trying to seriously help organize the worship and study activities, and while taking a plethora of barbs and jests hurled at him in good humor.

--The time a skit was cut, and it seemed to need cutting, performed by some young boys at the Talent Show tryouts, including my son and Orrin Sawyer. Orin's miffed mother Amy, who had devised the skit, sought out the judges responsible for the cutting, so as to have his or their head(s), and each judge blamed another judge who wasn't present for this outrageous slight (David James, Rowdy Holmsley, and Lane Boyd). When no one would stand firm on his conviction against this indignant mother and the poor, innocent, beleaguered little boys, and take responsibility for axing them, the skit and its actors were restored to the Talent Show lineup. And finally, after all was said and done and sung and performed, this was the best skit in the Show, as it brought down the house—Mrs. Sawyer had the final say and was absolutely right!

--Serving as Senior Dorm counselor with Seth Sawyer in 1998. Man did we get initiated by the high school boys. Also, that year, when we had barely gotten there on the first Saturday, somehow the toddler Ryder Sawyer got away from everyone and was missing for, what seemed to me, a long time for a little bitty kid, as dozens of us searched the bushes, trails, and river for him but to no avail. Of course he was eventually found, but before that Mom Sawyer was plenty worried; this was no skit!

--Carrying a kid down the mountain who had fallen right at the top and busted up her shin... and this was no small kid.

--Carrying a kid down the mountain after persuading her mom (Candy Hon) that if she let her go up the mountain, she would be safe and would not be left behind.

--Carrying each of my kids down the mountain after telling them I was too old to be carrying kids down the mountain anymore.

--Getting attacked on the way down the mountain by the male llama who was trying to protect a herd of goats, while myself trying to protect Darcy and several children including my son, Reese. I was pretty sure he would kill me.

--EVERY year having a ball and a lot of laughs getting to be around my very dear and longtime friend, Keith Harper, whom I've known since we were babies.

--EVERY year having a ball and a lot of laughs getting to be around my very dear and longtime friend, Sandra Sconiers Miranda, who as a little kid used to follow me, a teenager, around and try to get me to do something zany; over the years she made me think I must be the funniest man alive.

--Impersonating preachers Jim Hance and Ian Fair at the same time, while pretending to broadcast a live telephone call between the two during a Talent Show when Daniel was the M.C. This "phone call" fooled a lot of people.

--When we kind of had all our babies at once in 1998-2000, I announced to Lori Turk that I wouldn't be able to be counted on to teach class at the next camp, and probably for a few years, because we really had no place to stay where little babies/toddlers could be taken care of. She and Zane wouldn't hear of it and loaned us their house in town to stay in for several years during camp meetings. This act of kindness kept me in the loop and able to continue affiliation with the camp.

Long live my association with the Pecos River Encampment! Because of what it does for me.



Bob Allen & John Hardgrave



Ellis Owen & Zane Turk-1993

## **Reese Pecos River Encampment History**

### **From Karen (Mollie's notes in parentheses):**

In 1961, the last 10-day camp, three of the Mason girls—Karen, Connie and Billie—attended camp for the first time. We learned about camp from and came with “Mama Nellie” Black. She was the wife of Frank Black, long time Sheffield church of Christ preacher, but had moved to San Angelo, where the Masons lived. (Karen would have been 14 years old that summer.) Our little brother, Freddy Mason, would also come when he was older. (I don't think Mom's older sister, Cindy, came. I think Uncle Freddy made lots of good memories—and a lot of mischief—at camp!)

In 1961, I enjoyed Bible classes, singing class, and sermons. I also enjoyed the mountain-climbing, volleyball and keeping the little kids while their moms went to Ladies' Class. Those, along with the Talent Show, would continue to be some of our favorite parts of camp. In 1961, Ruel Lemmons preached. He preached at my grandparents' congregation and married my mom and dad (note—that would be Bill and Mildred Mason). He had known me since I was born.

Bob Reese (Robert) first attended in 1962, when he was 15 years old. His brother, George, took him to camp on Thursday, not knowing that the schedule had changed since the previous year and camp was not to start until Saturday. George was on his way from their hometown of Odessa to El Paso to see his girl, so this threw a wrench in his plans. Jeff and Laura Owens to the rescue! They were the only ones at the camp ground that day, no doubt getting some work done. A quick discussion, and they took Bob to their ranch for a few days to “feed and bed down.” He helped Jeff around the ranch until the correct day to start camp. (I always heard this is when my dad, Bob, first had a pineapple pie, made by Laura Owens. She eventually taught my mom to make it, and it was always Dad's favorite.)

My family met Bob in 1962—camp was a good place to meet a future husband! Bob was also baptized that year at camp. All five of our children and quite a few of our grandchildren were, as well.

I believe in 1962 Allene Allen and Carol Horton were counselors in the Senior Girls' Dorm. Camp became so special to the Mason girls. My best friend when I got to camp was Melissa Black, Nellie Black's granddaughter. I met Judy Owens, another great friend, as well as many others. Judy later married David Brown—another successful marriage that was a result of meeting at camp.

As we grew up, we would go to work days with Mama Nellie or the Watts family. Kids washed dishes & cleaned the kitchen to get ready for camp. (Mom notes cleaning the cook shack with supervision—I think I recall her telling me about Jim Watts cracking the whip on the dishwashers!)

I helped in the Senior Girls' Dorm in 1966 and 1967, and Bob and I married in July of 1967. We attended camp as much as jobs allowed. In 1968, Bob had to work and only got to come on the weekends, Friday to Sunday. In 1969, I started teaching childrens' classes.

We spent some of our first married years in tents, before staying in Odessa cabin #2 for several years when I taught 2- and 3-year-olds. One tent was air-conditioned, and we called it "the bubble."

Bob mowed baseball fields, cleaned cabins, helped in the kitchen, made tea and hauled trash as a young man. In later years, we helped in classes, and Bob helped with electrical wiring for the camp trailer park. Our older son, Scott, learned a lot working alongside his dad helping with that project. Scott loved going to the camp ground to help "Aunt Teanie" (Tina Campbell, of Sheffield) water the trees in the trailer park.

As the years went by, Bob helped with breakfast and served coffee. One year he woke me up about 5:00 a.m., telling me to go to Sheffield and get from our house or borrow enough supplies to make the pancakes. The pancake mix did not come on the grocery delivery, but we got the job done, and everyone had from-scratch pancakes that morning.

One year Judy Brown and I talked to Ellis Owens about making the enclosed Rock House for kids out of a meal shed that was no longer being used. It is still a great feature (though rebuilt).

In 1969, Bob began servicing the Ice House. Later he regularly fixed all of the refrigeration equipment. He got some used drink machines donated from a friend at Johnson Street church of Christ, who owned the RC Bottling Company. The first ice machines were given to camp by Bob's Air Conditioning boss. When we lived in Iraan and Sheffield, Bob would start in March each year to check and repair all of the refrigeration equipment (ice machines, ice house, walk-in coolers, drink and ice cream coolers in the snack bar...even a retired Borden Milk truck dubbed "Elsie"). It was quite a hodge-podge of donated and second-hand machinery, but he (mostly) kept it running.

In 1973, we moved from Odessa to Mount Pleasant, in East Texas. The drive became much longer, but by the grace of God, we got to come to camp each year.

(I'll insert here the story of us moving to Iraan. Reportedly, Neal Sconiers, met my dad at the gates of camp in 1976 and said "Reese, there's a job you should apply for..." Dad applied for the shop teacher position at Iraan High School, and we moved to the place Mom and Dad loved so much and had so many friends. Dad eventually transitioned from teaching at IHS to owning his full-time Heating and A/C business in Sheffield.)

When we moved to Iraan in 1976 and Sheffield in 1979, it was much easier for us to help get ready for camp—fixing things, cleaning, stripping paint from the bell and painting it silver before camp would start.

I handled registration from 1984 to 1996. We had a few years when we were not coming to camp, but we returned in 2010, joined by our adult kids, their spouses and many grandkids through the years. This camp means a lot to our family!

–Karen (Mason) Reese 2025

### **Mollie’s Pecos River Camp memories**

“How long until Christmas?” is a common question children ask, but right after Christmas at our house, it was “How long until camp?” Those were definitely the two highlights of my year as I was growing up in Sheffield.

As you saw in my mom’s account, our family story really did start at camp. Mom and Daddy met there, and some of their best lifelong friends were made there. We always heard stories growing up about things that happened at camp and with those friends. Everyone in the family has stories.

Laura remembered Daddy taking her and Scott up the mountain as preschoolers. He was carrying Laura on his back and Scott on his shoulders. When he came to a rimrock, he would put them both down, carefully watch Laura climb it, then help Scott up. Then he loaded them both back up to continue the “climb.” Laura also made some wonderful lifelong friends at camp, keeping up with them as she and they moved all over the country and the world.

I know Scott had a thousand stories about whatever he got into with the Holmsley and Smetak brothers, but my favorite story about him involves our Uncle Freddy and a mountain climb. Apparently the teenage uncle didn’t heed my Mom’s advice about how often to stop for a potty break. That, along with carrying his nephew on his shoulders, made for a wet mountain climb. :)

Martha and I were close in age, but camp allowed us just enough independence to each make our own friends. Camp was a chance for kids from small-town congregations to see that there were a lot of other Christian young people around. It was an opportunity to make some great friends. Martha went on VBS mission trips with some of her friends from camp. I remember writing letters to camp friends for months, eagerly anticipating the next year’s Camp Meeting.

Ben was a bit behind us, so I wasn't always around during his camp years, but I do remember how much fun he had as a little kid, and how much fun his own kids have had there when they were able to go.

More than anything, what I remember about camp is the friendships, the deep spiritual discussions, the time away to reflect, regroup and recharge spiritually for the coming year. When we began coming as a family, it was the same. My husband, Mark, and our kids—Macy, Mattie and Malachi—first attended in 2010. All three of our kids were baptized at camp—not because they were waiting to be baptized there, but because at camp, we had extra time to slow down, sit down with them and study. They got away from all of the busy things of life and their thoughts turned to spiritual things...and they asked questions.

I will say that from the time I was a little girl, I saw folks working at camp workdays and all week at camp. I now know that working together toward a shared goal is one of the best ways to build relationships. Whether it is leading singing, teaching classes, having personal Bible studies, digging a baptism hole, spraying cabins, making meals, cleaning tabernacle seats or scrubbing toilets, all the work matters, and everyone feels like they are part of a big family. The hours preparing for Bible classes are all worth it when a little girl or boy is excited to see you at a meal or worship service. The afternoons sweating over a barbecue pit make the cup of coffee with a friend in the early morning or the domino game that much more enjoyable. I smile to myself when they see heads bowed together in study or prayer and shed a tear when someone gives their life to Christ. That kid may not know me, but, yeah, I know who he is. His grandma or aunt was the one babysitting me so my mom could go to class.

My siblings and I have all enjoyed coming as adults. I love seeing how hard Martha works at preparing for her class, and I love seeing my husband, who did not grow up coming, do the same. I love that Scott drives all the way from Tennessee, even if for a few days, to study with his best friend and help out at the cook shack. I love to sit beside my sisters and mom while we pray and praise God, and I love to hear my dad's voice when my brothers sing. I love seeing my kids and niece and nephew serving as counselors, leading singing, serving meals, pouring tea and lending a hand wherever needed. And I know we are not the only family like this! Whether you are the first generation to come or the sixth, you know how special this place is, and you are part of a legacy of service and renewal.

As we go forward and more generations come to camp, I know the spirit of love and camaraderie will continue—especially among those who use it as a working retreat. We will always end the week of camp physically exhausted and spiritually recharged. We will be thanking everyone else for all the work they did, while seeing our own work as a very small part. And we will be ready for camp to start again...well, maybe right after Christmas.

—Mollie (Reese) Drew 2025

## **Pecos River Encampment**

**Submitted by:  
Terri Earle Salisbury**

Our family, Alvin, Luray, Donna, Rhonda, Terri and Nolan Earle, attended the encampment from approximately 1964 to 1969. HC and Bonnie Scott were my aunt and uncle. During this time, we were living in Hatch, NM. My grandparents, Dow and Hazel Bullard, were very involved in the encampment. They encouraged us to attend one year, and it became one week of our annual vacation.

The week started with move in day at the dorms. The girls' dorms were across camp from the boys. It was always fun to reunite with past friends and meet new ones. As soon as you arrived, you picked out a bunk bed, made it up and organized your belongings. One end of the girls' dorms were the bathrooms and showers. There was no hot water. My first experience at cold showers! I didn't take near as long in the shower as I did at home.

My grandmother would make large bags of caramel popcorn for each of us to take to our dorms. It was a nice treat to have to share with other campers when visiting before lights out at night.

The big silver bell was our clock at camp. It woke us up, called us to Bible class, devotionals, meals, and physical activity. It also dismissed us from our activities. It could be heard all over the campground. I understand it is still in use although it's been modified with attendee's artwork.

Physical activities were twice a day, morning and afternoon. My favorites were mountain climbing, baseball and swimming. We climbed the mountain twice a week in the mornings. Over the years, I found quite a few shell fossils when climbing. We were bused to Iraan for swimming. Girls went two afternoons that week and boys went two separate afternoons.

I also remember the Talent Show we had on Thursday night of camp. This was so much fun, and we saw some really good talent. Mine wasn't one of them! I recited the Old Woman Who Swallowed a Fly! I was 9 or 10 and learned it at school.

We had Bible class according to age/grade each morning. The Bible class teachers were provided cabins for the week. The class teachers, spouses and young children would stay in the cabins for the week. The cabins were also where the classes were held for most age groups. My Mother taught the young children for several years. We would help Mom prepare her class materials for several weeks before camp started.

The men did all the cooking for the week. Breakfast entrees were pancakes or scrambled eggs. Several lunches and suppers were pit barbecued goat meat. The entrees and side dishes were placed in large metal dish pans. Campers and visitors lined up and

we picked up silverware and tin plates. The older teenage girl campers served us as we progressed through the line. After we were served, we proceeded to the drink table and got our metal can of water or tea. I suppose the local congregations saved tin cans all year for camp.

My Dad really enjoyed attending camp and assisting with the cooking. The barbecue pit was a large concrete bin with a heavy metal top. It took several men to hoist the top and turn the meat. I think the fellowship with the other men was one of his biggest enjoyments.

Last, but by no means least, was the powerful spiritual lessons brought during the week. Besides Bible classes, there were two church services in the evenings. I was privileged to hear such moving, God inspired lessons from some great men of God. I accepted the Lord as my Savior at the encampment and was baptized in the Pecos River. The Lord is good.



## **Camp Memories**

### **Bonnie Scott**

Never underestimate the long-lasting effects of seemingly insignificant actions. In 1961, my parents, LD (Gabby) and Hazel Bullard, moved from Pyote to Sheffield. This move introduced them to the Pecos River Encampment. This camp is one of a kind. There is no tuition charge. Everything is run from free will donations. Someone once said, "There is no camp like this. There is not one person in charge, and you don't charge for attendance. You can't run a camp like this and make it work, but it does." I'm not sure, but it sounds like something Bob Allen would have said. For nine years before their deaths in 1970, Gabby and Hazel did what they could to get the campgrounds ready for the campers who would arrive from all parts of the state. Mother helped clean cabins, hang curtains and do whatever she could to help make the camp facilities comfortable for the campers.

At Hazel's invitation, for several years my sister and brother-in-law, Alvin and Luray Earle drove from Hatch, New Mexico, with their four children to teach Bible classes and work in the cook shack feeding the campers.

Mother was available to help the young mothers with their little ones when needed. She worked quietly behind the scenes to try to make everyone comfortable in the summer heat.

In 1963, HC Scott and I moved to Sheffield to work for LD in the oil/gas field. That summer was the beginning of my family's 60 plus years of camp experiences. Daddy gathered up surplus oil field supplies; pipe, paint, plumbing and electrical fittings, etc., to be used to maintain and upgrade the dorms, cabins and cook shack. H.C. would use his free time and weekends to attend workdays.

At the time, HC had not been baptized and did not attend worship with me. However, he eventually began working in the cook shack to prepare meals. He also assumed the responsibility to wash down the eating tables after every meal. He put some kind of disinfectant in the water that deterred flies, so we didn't have to fight the flies when we ate.

So many people had a positive influence on our lives at camp. There was George; (I never knew his full name). He was a chuck wagon cook who oversaw the meal preparation. HC said that George would stand outside the cook shack and scan the crowd to get an estimate of how much food to prepare. I was told that he didn't miss the estimate by much. There was always enough but not a lot of surplus to be wasted. There were Hub and Johnnye Holmes, Jeff and Laura Owens, Ellis and Virville Owens, Clint and Stella Owens, Jim and Wanda Watts, Bob and Alene Allen, Billie George and Anita Love, Charles and Betty Annett among others. Their positive examples were such an encouragement to a young wife and mother.

How can one condense sixty plus years of memories into a document that isn't a novel comparable to War and Peace? I'll try.

Journey to Camp: Our family has special landmarks that trigger special memories. The hill coming to Iraan from the east. When we top that hill, it seems that we can see forever. The view is like coming home because we know we're not far from camp.

Years ago, there were some brine tanks on the north side of the entry to camp. The way the road was laid out there was a point where the tanks looked as if they were on the right side of the road. The closer you got they changed to the left side of the road. HC always told the kids to watch those tanks walk to the other side. They could not figure out how those tanks could walk. When viewed from a child's eye, the tops of the mountains just west of the camp looked like a lady reclining. They could see the profile of her face with her hair flowing behind her head. Our girls called her the lady in the mountain. It takes a great imagination to see it, but after a few times, I finally did.

First Saturday evening: Hot dogs for supper. HC didn't prefer hot dogs, so we would go to the low water crossing on Live Oak Creek, east of Sheffield for our own picnic. The kids would wade in the creek and try to catch minnows. We timed our outing to assure we made it back to camp in time for the evening devotional and Bob Allen's reading of the camp rules. Bob always ended with an admonition to the young people to "keep your dating above reproach".

Camping area: I don't remember the year, but Aunt Teanie, from Sheffield, planted the trees that now shade the camping area. She "babied" those trees and shooed off the children who thought to climb them before they got big enough to hold the weight without breaking. We treasure the shade these days and those of us who are old enough to remember, thank her for her foresight.

The Bell: Everyone who has attended camp has memories of the bell. It is the common denominator that brings everyone together. It is the alarm that wakes the population from the dorms to the private cabins. It calls people together for every assembly from devotional to recreation. I venture to say that more pictures have been taken of the bell than any other location on campus after its redecoration by the different dorms or with families gathered around to commemorate family reunions. It peals loudly and clearly and is heard in the farthest reaches of the campground.

Cook Shack: The women were not needed at the cook shack because the men had everything under control. Only Aunt Teanie Campbell went down there. She collected the used linens and took them to her house to wash them and prepare them for the next day. We women laughed and said that there was an invisible line that we could not/would not cross. It's still hard for me to go there.

HC told me that once when Lance Grigsby was small, he wanted someone to make him some lemonade because he was hot. HC told him that no one had time to make it for him, but he would teach him how to make his own. He carefully watched as Lance cut his lemons and squeezed them into the container. I think Neva might have been a little nervous about seeing Lance using a knife at such a young age. HC just felt that was something that boy could do and wanted to help him.

Morning devotional: Singing Holy, Holy, Holy. The smell of the fire making coals to cook the meat, the cool and quiet of the morning. The sound of the men talking and laughing at the cook shack.

First Sunday desserts: Once my mother made a cobbler before she came out to the campgrounds. She put it on the deck above the back seat of her car. When she went to add it to the other

desserts, it was as hot as if she had just removed it from the oven. The inside of her car was that hot.

Meals: On alternate mornings, the breakfast menu consisted of pancakes with syrup or scrambled eggs with toast and gravy and pancakes. My favorite was the eggs. HC always made gravy because he knew I loved it with my eggs and toast.

There was goat meat and beans for most of the other meals with a meatless Frito pie on a couple of days during the week. In order to keep everyone systems moving smoothly, George threw in specially made prunes for something sweet. Of course, the kids (and some adults) disliked the prunes. HC admired George and tried to learn his closely guarded secret recipes. He mastered the prunes, but the meatless Frito pie was never quite the same at home as it was at camp.

Food was served on metal pie plates with tea from tin cans. There has never been tea as good as the tea at camp. After we ate, we put the plates in a #3 wash tub, forks and spoons went in another and the tea cans in another tub. The boys in the dorms were tasked with washing dishes after meals. I'm told that the water was heated in pans on the cook stove in the cook shack. A splash of bleach was added to ensure sanitization. I can still hear in my mind the sound of those plates and cans being knocked together as they were washed and dried and the sound of the boys laughing and cutting up.

Women and senior girls served the meals from enamel dish pans. There was no cover over the serving tables and even when it did rain, we served food with someone holding an umbrella over the food and our heads. There was no room for "wimps" at camp! The meals had to be served on time. The sound of the pressure washer that was used to clean the eating tables after the meal signaled the end of fellowship around the tables. Everyone knew that sound and vacated the tables post haste. Those men had work to do. They either had to prepare for the next meal or grab a few minutes rest before time to go back to work cooking or getting ready for the next worship service. After a few years of heating water on the stove, HC decided that there had to be an easier way to get hot water for the kitchen. He used his "creative skills" to pipe hot water to the sinks inside from a propane heated tank that was installed outside the cook shack. I don't know what caused the noise, but when he fired the boiler up to heat the water, it sounded like an airplane engine. He was always looking for a way to make the work easier for the men in the kitchen.

Bible Classes/Worship: Camp is a VBS, Singing and Gospel Meeting rolled into one. For many years there were combined adult classes, separate men's and women's classes, classes for all ages of children, two singings a day, and three gospel sermons a day. The three o'clock singing and four o'clock sermon were hard because everyone was tired from recreation and hot because of the time of day. If you went to camp for a vacation, you would be greatly disappointed because it is so rustic. However, if you need your spiritual bucket filled, this is the place to be. Recently the schedule has been changed to keep people out of the heat of the day as much as possible. This is a good change for the sake of people's health.

Singing: The praise and harmony that comes from the campers gathered under the tabernacle is unsurpassed. There I learned "The New Song" and I can still hear what it sounds like when sung under the tabernacle. When I hear "As the Mountains Surround Jerusalem" I think of camp. I see the mountains that are visible from all sides of the campground and remember that the Lord surrounds His people.

Dress Code: For years everyone was expected to dress appropriately for the afternoon and evening singings and worship services. Even though it was HOT, the women wore hose and dresses. The men weren't expected to wear ties, but they were expected to wear their best jeans and shirts. That was the custom of the times. For the last several years, the dress code has been more relaxed. We are still expected to be respectful and reverent, but we are more aware that it's the condition of the heart rather than the clothing that matters.

Talent Show: The Hounshell family playing Bluegrass music; Jim Watts and sons singing "White Lightning" among other talented adults and young people.

Cabin: After we moved to Goldsmith in 1969, we sought permission from the elders of the Goldsmith church to use the cabin that they had built in the 1950's but no longer used. After a couple of years, HC asked the elders if we could buy the cabin. They ended up giving it to us with the stipulation that it would revert to the campground if we discontinued use. We are working on our third generation of use, and it is now known as the Scott cabin.

We have many family memories made in that cabin. Once, while I and the children were out and HC was there resting, he caught sight of movement out of the corner of his eye. It was "Big Red" the camp red racer snake! He had come through a crack in the wall and was making his way across the floor to the opposite wall. This was his home territory, and we encroached for a week out of every year. Big Red wasn't to be ousted, and he let his presence be known. There were several sightings during the week.

Several times, after lights out we would hear mice scampering about in the cabin. HC decided that he would put out some mouse bait in pellet form. Once we heard them rustling about with the bait. We smugly thought that we had won that battle. The next morning, when I was about to put on one of my pairs of shoes, I found it filled with mouse bait. Those varmints had transferred the pellets from the container to my shoe. I don't know if the bait worked, but I know that I was uneasy about putting my foot into that shoe.

There were always "critters" to deal with. We cautioned the children to always shake out their shoes before putting their feet in them. There could be scorpions inside. We would see them on the walls of the cabin. Also, the children had to be educated that Katydid's and dirt daubers would not hurt them. When cleaning the cabin, we had to remove and destroy the dirt dauber nests. They were built onto anything they could find that had a crevice or hole to hold the foundation of their nest.

The fun "bug" was the red mite that came out after the rains. We called them red velvet rain bugs because we didn't know their "official" name. It was after Toni studied entomology at A&M that we learned that they were mites. Our children loved collecting them on the rare occasions that they appeared.

HC was always looking for ways to make camp life more comfortable. One year, when David Clint and Sam Brown were little, HC heard them tell their mother at bath time, "Oh Mommy. That water's so cold". HC had had enough, and he said then that there would be no more cold showers for the Scott or Brown cabins. By the next year, we had a hot water heater in our cabin and hot water was piped to the Brown cabin next door.

The Flood: I don't remember the exact year, but in the mid 1970's the Pecos River flooded the campgrounds. Our cabin is on the highest point of the camp and water got about two and one-half feet deep in the cabin. We could see the high-water line on our refrigerator. We were blessed in that the refrigerator had the motor and condenser at the top of the back panel, so we didn't lose the use of the fridge for camp. There was much work to be done to ready the camp for the next summer, but people rallied, and camp happened right on schedule.

Baptisms: As I mentioned before, when we first began attending camp, HC did not attend services and had not been baptized. He would sit on a bench outside the cook shack and listen to services but would not come to the assembly. In 1974, Johnny Ramsey was the preacher and Bob Connel was the song leader. On Thursday morning during breakfast, Charles Annett approached HC and asked him to meet with him after breakfast. I went about my business and after chores in the cabin, I went to the volleyball court to play the senior girls in volleyball. Edie Connel came running to the court yelling, "Bonnie, you had better get to the river. HC is going to be baptized!" Needless to say, the volleyball game fell apart. After that, he faithfully attended services with the family until his death in 2016. Several members of my family were baptized in that river: children, Tom and Dana, grandchildren, Tamequah, Ambher, Laci, Cyan, Kyler and grandson-in-law, Justis Kosmoski. My son-in-law, Buddy Berry was also baptized there as was my niece, Terri Earle Salisbury and her brother Nolan Earle. We are now working on our fifth generation to attend the Pecos River Encampment; all because my parents moved to Sheffield and were introduced to camp. What a blessing that the founders of camp have given to following generations. Never underestimate the influence one's actions have for future generations.



HC and Bonnie Scott



Four Scott men: Tom, HC, Sawyer, Kyler.





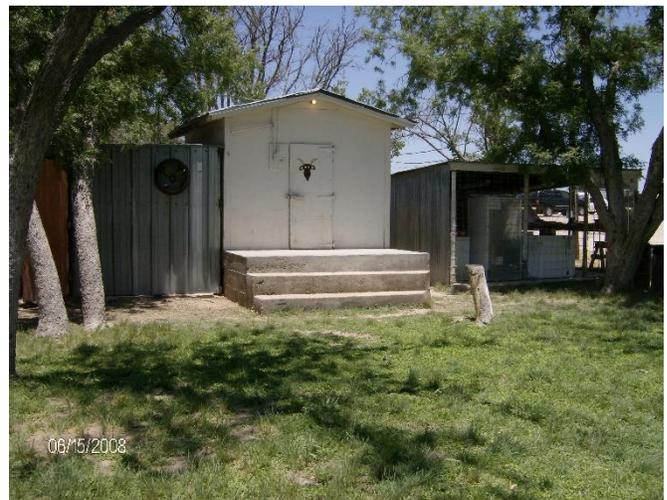
Eating Tables in 2008



Tabernacle in 2008



Camping 2008



Icehouse before Ice Machines

**Memories from Tom Scott  
Son of HC and Bonnie Scott**

I remember the year that I had the chicken pox. I got to sit in the breezeway and listen to the amazing singing coming from the tabernacle.

I remember George's Frito pie and having to eat two prunes. That kinda ruined Frito pie supper.

"Holy, Holy, Holy" every morning was a good thing.

I remember Daddy being baptized.

I remember having the honor of baptizing my baby girl.

When Daddy and I built the water heater for the cook shack and how appreciated it was.



Necia Graham & Lance Grigsby



Dean Harper and Dorothy Donawho



Ryder & Lexie Sawyer



Sarah Sandusky, Summer Vardeman, Callie Sandusky

## Zane and Lori Turk Memories

GOD has blessed Zane and I and our children to be able to work to get ready for camp and to attend. Our son once said he loved camp because it was easy to be a Christian at camp. I remember as a little kid riding on Bob Owens shoulders coming back from a baptism singing Isn't Grand to be a Christian. It is, indeed! We have wonderful memories from spiritual moments to mischievous ones. There is absolutely no greater earthly blessing than to sit with a grandkid in your lap surrounded by your whole family and sing 728b along with other members of GOD's family. From memories of those long wooden benches, the ones where when it was time to stand and sing, you didn't want to be the one that got their hinny pinched when everyone stood to picking the few remaining hairs off your goat meat, to playing tricks on the domino shack, to listening to the kids bang their cans on the table singing Ricky Ticky Bear, to seeing the sunrise from the Turkey roost, to singing on the mountain top, and now watching others climb it, we have been so blessed. How can you possibly write down each one?



Zane Turk & Rowdy Holmsley

## **Camp History**

### **Dana Scott Willeford**

My memories of camp always start way before the third week in June. Daddy (HC Scott) prepared all year long—collecting plumbing and electrical supplies, scavenging parts and paint for our cabin, for the dorms, for the cook shack, for anyone who might need something. He built gadgets and tanks and trailers with specific camp purposes that only he knew. Mom (Bonnie Scott) made sure each of us had day clothes and church clothes for at least eight days. That means each year she made 24 dresses—one for each day of the week for Carla, Toni, and for me. Funny, but I don't remember her ever having a new camp dress. . . New jeans for Tom and sometimes Daddy. Some people get new clothes for school or for Christmas. We got ours for camp.

In my earliest memories I am no more than two or three years old and I already feel the importance of this place. I feel joyful anticipation as we pile into our 1968 suburban, heaped with bedding, towels, food, day clothes and dress clothes for six, sometimes a sewing machine, and whatever tools daddy needed to fix all the things he knew would need fixing. Sometimes all six of us were in the suburban. Sometimes he and Tom rode in the welding truck. There's a predictable rhythm to the trip. Before we leave Goldsmith for the 100-mile trip to the campground we always stop to get road food—powdered sugar donuts for me. Then I promptly fall asleep. The next notable part of the trip is entering Iraan, passing the Alley Oop Park, and FINALLY turning onto the road that leads to the campground. This is when I perk up. I'm on the lookout for the lady in the mountain. There she is! Now to look for the tanks on the right side of the road. Daddy never fails to point them out and start fussing at them to hurry up as they "cross the road" and settle on the left side. Without fail they make it across right when we make the curve, just in the nick of time. And there it is. The cattle guard. We have arrived.

I remember seeing an old woman (Aunt Teeny) out watering trees as my parents set up our pop-up camper, and getting my Prince Albert can of crayons out only to find they had all melted in our hot car. Carla, Toni, and Tom have disappeared. I am free to roam as long as I heed the warnings not to step on the cesspools, and one of my first stops is to the breezeway to check out the mulberry trees that are in front of the old nurse's cabin. I still wonder what happened to them. . .

Even though we have arrived a week or so before first Sunday, the campground is alive with activity. Men are gassing snake holes, patching water leaks, setting up air conditioners, and cleaning out the cook shack. Women are hanging curtains in the dorms and cleaning all the things—the dorms, the cabins the camper restrooms, and sweeping the tabernacle. Everyone is industrious and the joy and anticipation is palpable. Our family always takes an evening to go picnic and swim at the low water crossing and a morning to

lay flowers at my grandparents' graves in Sheffield, maybe making a quick drive past their house.

It's magical to have the campground almost to myself before all the campers arrive. This place represents freedom, joy, peace, and belonging. But it's even better when everyone starts showing up.

Here are a few of my most cherished memories.

Waking on Father's Day to find Daddy had already gone to the cookshack, probably hours earlier. Then looking for him as I go through the breakfast line. I don't dare go to the bench where he sits. The cookshack is for men only. But he'll come to us in a bit. I love the look of relaxed joy that he always has here. Later, in the cabin, we'll give him the vice grips, welding cap, or Brute aftershave we've brought as his gift. Now that he's gone, I find it difficult to look at the cookshack without tearing up.

When my sisters became dorm age, they used to let me hang out with them. Sometimes they would shower me in the dorm with panties on my head to keep my long hair dry, let me sit with them during worship, or take me up the mountain. At mealtime when the "kids' line" stretched all the way up to the tabernacle, sometimes they would let me stand in line with them, too. I felt so cool hanging out with my big sisters. I couldn't wait until I was old enough to serve the meals and babysit during ladies' class like the dorm girls.

Chief and Nita Roy had a camper that I thought was the most luxurious thing I had ever seen except for their home on the ranch in Notrees. They invited me to spend one night with them each year. Chief would dote on me, sometimes buying me ice cream after the evening service.

One of my (now) favorite memories of life in our cabin is the time Sam and David Brown locked me in by latching the door from the outside. I was terrified I'd get in trouble for being in there in the first place. We were expected to be at every service and event on time and dressed appropriately—not hanging out eating popsicles in the cabin.

Before I was dorm age I was often on my own during ladies' class. I loved watching as my mom and ladies who had known and loved *her* mom fellowshipped under the tabernacle. Ladies like Nita Roy, Anita Love, Judy Driggers, Sue Harper (now Dahlin), Sandy Cole, Karen Reese, Tot Holmsley, and a host of familiar faces that I couldn't ever put a name to were all part of her inner circle, if only for one week a year.

Daddy had his inner circle, too. Those men changed his life and the course of our family. I'll forever be thankful that these hard men understood him, loved him, and helped him find Christ. He and so many of our family were baptized in the Pecos River during camp. My turn came on the last Saturday of camp 1981.

I don't remember a time I didn't have a friend in Laura Reese. She was my playmate before we were dorm age and my bunk mate once we turned 11. She is still my closest and dearest friend. We share too many camp memories to list here.

At camp meeting 1985 the course for the rest of my life was set. Saturday before camp started Laura and I were walking past the tabernacle when I spied the most handsome guy putting away songbooks with Sam Brown. Laura knew him, of course, and promptly introduced me to Jimmy Willeford. It was out of character for me, but I maneuvered my way into any crowd where he was. Somehow, I "just happened" to sit next to him during many services and we held hands during prayers (because that's what teenagers do when they pray). Harold John and Bobby Fair's family had attended with our family that year and I have lots of photos where their kids are barely in the frame and Jimmy is on the other edge of the frame, clearly the one I wanted to capture. When he was leaving at the end of the week, I mustered the nerve to ask if I could get his address. Thus began our years of dating via correspondence which led to happily ever after. Camp is where he sang to me at the talent show, painted a "reserved for Jimmy and Dana" sign on a bench, and where he proposed and I said yes (even though his proposal was interrupted by the night hawk, wondering what those boys were doing out after curfew.)

Jim and I have missed many years due to his Marine Corps career and now our work on Okinawa. My heart aches every third week in June that we are not there. Still, time marches on and there are few left who might have any inkling of how intertwined the Scotts are with Pecos River Encampment. But it will forever be the most important and influential place in my life. I'm thankful for those who keep it alive.



Buddy Berry & Jimmy Willeford



Dustin Grigsby



Front Row L-R: Unknown, Unknown, Mrs. Hardgrave, Teenie Campbell, Unknown, Cuvie Williams, Unknown, Unknown, Johnnye Holmes, Hub Holmes, Second Row L-R: Mr. Ike Williams and his wife, Wanda Watts, Vircille Owens, Noreen Owens, Alicia Sconiers, Unknown, Aline Allen, Billie Hardgrave, Honey Anderson, Morine Carson, Aline Hale, Stella Owens, Back Row L-R: Reid Holmsley, Mr. Woodward, Ellis Owens, Harry Holmes, Bob Allen, John Hardgrave, Ella Welch, Clint Owens



Brother Frank Black



1948 Amos & Wanda Owens



1948 Bobby Black



Deborah, John, Billie Hardgrave



June O'Bannon, Mona, Alicia Holmes, Janice



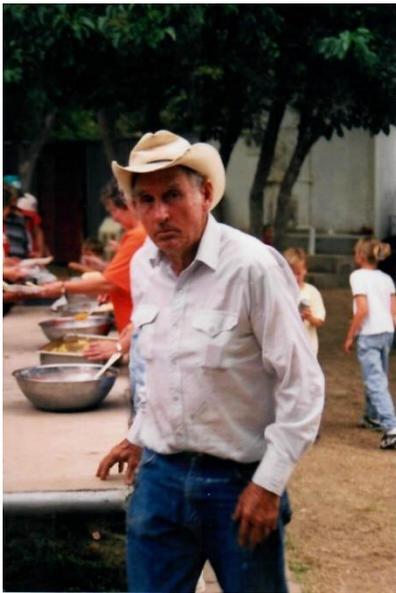
John, Sconiers, Necia Sconiers, Cindy Holmes, Joe Sconiers, unknown



Johnnye Holmes, Morine Carson, Aline Hale, Billie Hardgrave, Bob Allen



June Deaver, Kevin Grigsby, Payden Ward, unknown



Ellis Owens



Alica Sconiers & Amy Sawyer



Jason Holifield, Neva Grigsby, Gina Holifield



Drake Holifield, Orin Sawyer, Ridgely Holifield



Gannon Morado, Seth Sawyer, Lloyd Ward, Lance Grigsby



Chris Pettijohn, Sandra Sconiers, Lydia Harrell, John Moon



Sarah Owens, Page Boyd, Stephanie James, Marty James, Amy Grigsby, Crystal Amthor



Front Row: Jennifer & Connor Holmsley, Maddie Boyd, Second Row: Trine Baugh, Avery James, D'Laney & Brynna Holifield, Landon & Eli Grigsby, Zoe Boyd, Third Row: Melinda Baugh, Stephanie James, Amy Holifield, Jade Barkheimer, Harper & Amy Grigsby, Page & Emma Boyd, Hunter, Heath, and Crystal Amthor, Top Row: Josie, Jaden, Sawyer Boyd



Brant Baugh, Sandra Sconiers, Melinda Baugh, Gina Holifield, Keisha & Paige Massingill



Gina Holifield, Andrea Blair, Melinda Baugh, Stephanie James, Page Boyd



Ashley James & Jenny Gonzalez



Ted Mankin, Cash, and Wyatt



Ted and Dee Mankin Family



Lexie Sawyer, Orin Sawyer, Drake Holifield, Ryder Sawyer



Sawyer Boyd, Trine Baugh, D'Laney Holifield, Maddie Boyd, Jetty McIntyre, Emma Boyd, Avery James, Cayla James, ?, Kailynn & Kerra Gonzalez, ?, Harper Grigsby, Hunter Killion, ?, Brynna Holifield, Standing: Landon Grigsby, Jake Barkheimer, Zoe Boyd, Eli Grigsby



Paige Massingill, Melinda Baugh, Jenny Gonzalez, Lori Turk, Marty James, Carla Sandusky, Stephanie James, Ashley James, Keisha, Katie Boyd, Tressie Boyd, Stacy Turk, Cathy Irby, Gina Holifield



Landon & Eli Grigsby, Emma Boyd, Brynna Holifield, Shelton Boyd



Melinda, Trine, Stephanie, Avery, Amy, Landon, Eli, Jade, Jake, Jaden, Josie, Crystal, Heath, Hunter, Page, Maddie, Amy, D'Laney



Gina Sawyer, Caroline Killion, Gunner Killion, Neva Grigsby, Landon & Eli & Harper Grigsby, Barbara Holifield



Frankie Faulkner, Vircille Owens, Dean Harper, Dortha Donawho, Evelyn Boyd



Lance Grigsby



## ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

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December 28, 1996

Melissa Verett  
15 Comanche  
Ransom Canyon, Tx. 79366

Dear Mrs. Verett,

Please accept holiday's greetings, coupled with thanksgiving, for the preservation of and access to various materials associated with the Pecos River Family Encampment which you have provided. We were delighted to receive copies of many materials first gathered by your grandfather, James Frank Black, I think, as well as a paper, in this connection, produced by Glenn Willeford.

We at the Center for Restoration Studies at Abilene Christian University share your interest in preserving and providing access to materials such as these which have great historical value. We are always interesting in collecting papers such as these-- whether copies or originals--and hope that you will consider us as a future repository for any papers you might have connected with the encampment. We would, of course, take great care in insuring that these are cared for so that they are accessible to future generations.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions concerning the Center, or its activities, and thanks again for your interest in these matters.

Sincerely,

*Craig Churchill*

Craig Churchill  
Archivist, Center for Restoration Studies  
Abilene Christian University Library  
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A HISTORY OF THE PECOS RIVER FAMILY ENCAMPMENT, 1940-1996

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A Paper  
Presented to the  
Archives of the Big Bend  
Sul Ross State University  
and  
Brown Library (Archives)  
Abilene Christian University

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by  
Glenn P. Willeford  
September 1996

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#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Melissa Verett for lending the Frank Black diary and Bob and Karen Reese for transporting and making it available to me. I also wish to thank Melleta R. Bell, Archivist at the Archives of the Big Bend, and Erma Jean Loveland, Special Services Librarian at Brown Library, for encouraging this work and accepting it for inclusion in the archival record.

I know that whatever God does endures for ever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has made it so, in order that men should fear before him.

*Ecclesiastes 3.14*

## INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century has been a period of major transition and cultural dislocation. Those of us living in the United States have come from a predominately rural background into an urban society where technology often seems to reign supreme. As we approach the new millennium, most of our people dwell in cities and have forgotten the rural roots from which they came.

This is not necessarily a bad thing. We realize that the modern age has brought many benefits to our swelling population, including mega-advances in communication, education, employment, medicine, transportation, etc. Few of us would want to go back to a time when we could not pick up a telephone and gain immediate access to our loved ones anywhere in the world. Still fewer would willingly revert to hitching a team of mules to a wagon and traversing a dusty, rock-strewn, trail one hundred and more miles for supplies. So, let us not delude ourselves by falling into the "Good Old Days" school of thought. In the future, *today* will be remembered as the good old days.

Even so, there is a sense of having been cheated among so-called "baby-boomers" or, post-war Americans. A mysterious *something* seems to be missing, and few people seem able to identify what that is. It seems as if, while we were growing up, we went into a coma somewhere along the way, and upon waking realized that something significant had been missed along the way.

And something has gone awry, for early in this century

Americans lost something fundamental to their character: the frontier. It was the frontier, with its vast expanses and natural resources, that allowed unrestrained progress across the continent. It was the frontier that engendered independence and democratic principles in the hearts of men and women. But when it was gone, America began to suffer: the freest of people had lost their birthright, i. e., space and land.<sup>1</sup>

Two world wars temporarily alleviated some of the anxiety associated with the loss. But the Second World War, in actuality, exacerbated the problem for with it came great cultural changes. Two of those changes were most important. First, during the war, women left the hearth and began to work for wages (and did not quit after the men came home). Secondly, technology that had been developed to defeat the Axis powers was turned to commercial purposes. As a result life progressively became more convenient and cosmopolitan.

So, since December 7, 1941, the United States of America has been on the "fast-track." On that day Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and ignited the industrial/technological might of the American nation. We have moved along so fast that we have outrun ourselves. And that is the missing link in our national psyche. We have not had time to adjust to the fastest changes the world has ever seen. The nation is, metaphorically, like an adult who had no childhood or roots. And we suffer for that. This fact is evidenced in many ways: the crime rate, unwanted pregnancies, alcoholism, drug addiction, suicide, divorce, and a multitude of perverse

entertainments.

Naturally, we long to recoup what we have missed: that something that we believe was *good* but have trouble identifying. Most of us, I think, maintain a latent sense of rural heritage. We believe that there was a simpler time when people could leave their homes unlocked and walk down a street without fear of being robbed, raped, or murdered. There was such a time in most of America, and there is nothing wrong with seeking it. But we live in a complex society: opportunities for a simpler existence are, realistically speaking, few and far between.

Summer camps, both the secular type and those of a religious nature, are one escape valve from the pressures of modern life. They permit both the young (and the not-so-young) an opportunity to peer backward and experience how it may have been once upon a time. And that can be beneficial so long as people remember the old adage: *You can never go back*. This paper concerns one such place, a church related camp where, for eight days each summer, people can leave the cares and concern of modern life behind to experience some aspects of the American past. It is a past from which none of us are yet far removed.

## A History of the Pecos River Family Encampment, 1940-1996

The summers of 1943-44 were times of great contrast. American industry and American fighting men, with the Allies, were turning ruthless aggression around in the Pacific and European theaters of war. On 19 June 1943 German Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler, whose forces had been turned back on the Russian Front, secretly enacted a "Final Solution" to the "Jewish poison" in Europe by ordering massive deportations of European Jews, and millions of other unfortunates, to Eastern Europe where death camps awaited.<sup>2</sup> While the greatest crime in history continued to unfold at places with names like Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Chelmno, American fears about the eventual outcome of the war began to ease. It was all right to feel good again and appropriate to thank God for granting the nation prosperity and success at arms. Our world was largely unaware of the genocide being committed by the Nazi war machine.

It was in that context that Christian people in West Texas began planning to re-institute a camp meeting they had started just before the war. In the summers of 1940-41, religious oriented family camp meetings had been held in the Pecos River area of West Texas south of Sheffield on Independence Creek. Those first gatherings were largely instituted through the interest of a Church of Christ minister, Dave Black, as well as Sheffield area Christians John Trotter, R. N. Allen, Charlie Chandler, Charles Hale, E. W. Hardgrave and H. M. Holmes. Communities represented included: Iraan, Sheffield, Ozona, Sanderson, Rankin, McCamey and

Fort Stockton.<sup>3</sup> With the onset of the war, however, the meetings were postponed for two consecutive years.<sup>4</sup>

Mrs. John J. Carson (Morraine) attended the 1940-41 meetings. From one of those events she recalls:

Laura and Jeff Owens were there. A bunch of us went down there in a old school bus that Charles Hale owned. He took us down there and all of our equipment, and I had the little three burner oil stove, you know, to cook on, with a little-bitty oven. Well we took that down there and we cooked on it and we made pies and bacon in that little oven. And Laura and Jeff came and they parked on a hillside down there--not high but just sloping, and our camping thing was right here, our little stove and I think a little tent we slept in or something, and something happened to her brakes or she didn't put them on (laughs) and uh, let's see, anyway, it rolled down that slope and that tent, it ran into that tent, and that tent, pole, you know, in the center, come right through her windshield. And it's a wonder it hadn't of hit her, but it didn't. And now that's the thing I remember; see something like that really sticks to you.<sup>5</sup>

By mid-1944 the fortunes of war had turned against the Axis powers; the encampment convened on July 2 at a more central location than before: six miles north of Sheffield along the Iraan road (now State Highway 349). The site, composed of about ten acres on the west bank of the Pecos River, was provided by rancher H. M. Holmes and his wife, Johnnie. Since that session the Pecos River Family Encampment has met annually at the same location. It is noteworthy that the re-institution of the meeting occurred less than a month after the successful Normandy landings on 06 June 1944 (D-Day). No doubt, many sincere prayers of thanksgiving were offered to the Lord for His oversight of the war effort and for the

protection of the soldiers and sailors, some of whom were area men of the Church.

The new camp site, on the high bank about three hundred yards from the river, was covered with brush that had to be cleared. Alicia (Holmes) Sconiers, who was only about eight years old at the time, says the men, women, and children all pitched in to help. A brush arbor was erected on the highest ground to serve as a meeting place. The campers brought tents for sleeping and weekday preaching services were conducted by Sheffield minister James F. (Frank) Black at four o'clock in the afternoon and again at nine.<sup>6</sup> The meeting ran eight days and public meals were limited to dinner-on-the-grounds each evening.<sup>7</sup>

The first sermon was preached by Frank Black at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, 02 July 1944. It was entitled, "Ask, Seek, Knock." 292 individuals attended the first (eight day) camp meeting; there were nine baptisms.<sup>8</sup> Brother Black was paid \$100 for his week of work.

In his diary for 02 July Frank Black said:

Good weather. Moon light for the camp meeting. 11:30 "Ask, Seek, Knock." 9 "No Room." More than 100 people present from many towns. Good start. I'm tired.

Those early meetings, being ranch country affairs, took on a decidedly Southwestern flavor. Camp veteran Bob Allen says mesquite roasted *cabrito* (kid goat) became the mainstay of the menu early on because it is "the ranchman's favorite in West Texas."<sup>9</sup> Generous tureens full of steaming pinto beans, tubs of potato salad, and iced tea served in tin cans have also been favorite menu items

through the years.

Though the early camp meetings were a cumulative effort by many folk who loved the Lord, Alicia Sconiers says she believes the preacher, Frank Black, was the driving force behind it all. The type of man we now sometimes refer to as an *old-time* gospel preacher, Brother Black, along with his wife Nellie, was a real worker. He built at least two cabins, including the song-leaders cabin, and was always active in camp ground preparation and activities.<sup>10</sup>

Other names that were prominent in early camp ground lore include: George and Ruth Baker; Jeff and Laura Owens; Claude and Noreen Owens; Wilse and Tiny Owens; Clint and Stella Owens, and Teanie B. Campbell.

The move from the well-shaded Independence Creek location, on the Chandler Ranch, had its drawbacks. There was neither shade, electricity, nor a readily available water supply at the new site. Bob Allen says: "They built a brush arbor [tabernacle]<sup>11</sup> and everybody began to build cabins and set up tents to stay in. And the *accessibility made it so much more realistic.*" (italics added).<sup>12</sup> Outdoor toilets were also erected and served the campground for several years before septic tanks were installed.<sup>13</sup>

Mulberry and pecan trees were planted on the west side of the ten acres to accompany the native wild chinaberry. And even though the trees were irrigated, it would still be some years before they could provide a meaningful amount of shade to sun weary campers. So the brush arbor tabernacle, situated on the highest ground to

catch the breezes, may have been the most comfortable spot on the grounds.

After 1944, "camp meeting"<sup>14</sup> apparently began on Thursday or Friday after the Fourth of July and ran for ten consecutive days (two Sundays). By 1947 preaching and Bible classes were being conducted during the day in the new concrete floored, metal-roofed tabernacle that had been built under the direction of Charles Hale of Sheffield.<sup>15</sup>

There were few activities for the youth at that time. Bob Allen, who had been in the armed forces during the war, came back to camp in 1950. He says:

It was small at that time; there was no recreation or organized activity for the youth and that was one of the problems, and that's the thing I got involved in. They were complaining about the children misbehaving and I said, "Well, what kind of programs do you have for the kids?" and they said, "Nothing, they get out and play ball" and so forth. They were just running around up and down in the cars without any organized athletics or programs specifically for them, why, that's where I volunteered to get started. . . . We began to set up playing the games and facility for games. They had, I think a ball field and a volleyball court when I came here at that time, but it was just kind of up to the kids to do it if they wanted to, when they wanted to. But we went to building it and gradually, it just grew and grew.<sup>16</sup>

In those years gospel meetings generally lasted two weeks, so the men had reservations about the camp lasting only through two Sundays. Most other meetings, however, were held in buildings and did not require the facilities or work necessary to hold a camp style event. Then as more young people who were unaccompanied by

parents began attending, the camp was divided into two sessions. One youth group came to camp for five days then left and was replaced by a new group. Bob Allen says: "It got to be pretty hard on the counselors because we were running two groups of kids, and that got exhausting for the counselors."<sup>17</sup> Additionally, July was too hot a month so, by the mid-1950s, camp meeting dates were changed back to June, always beginning on the third Sunday (Father's Day). The starting date has remained the same since then even though at some point the ten day schedule was changed back to the original eight days.<sup>18</sup>

Once a routine was established the camp generally operated in much the same way on a day in, day out basis. The first bell, from an old hotel in Ozona,<sup>19</sup> was presented to the camp by H. W. Baker. It was later replaced by a larger bell that had been donated by the Sterling City Church of Christ.<sup>20</sup> The bell became a symbol of the camp, for it has, and does, play an integral part in the everyday operations. From the 6:30 a.m. wake up to 11 p.m., when the lights go off, the clear bong-bong-bong of that old bell signals every event:

7 a.m. devotional  
7:15 breakfast  
8:00-9:30 recreation period  
9:00-9:50 adult Bible classes  
10:00-10:45 Bible classes  
11:00 worship assembly (preaching)  
12:00 dinner  
1:00 p.m. rest period (Be in your cabin)  
2:00-3:30 recreation period and mail call  
4:00 singing  
5:00 free time  
6:00 supper  
7:15-7:45 singing  
8:00 worship assembly

10:30 everyone in quarters

Until recent years the 4:00 o'clock singing was a preaching service. It is a full and demanding schedule for everyone, including the preacher, who must also teach a Bible class.

No one at the camp works any harder than a core group of men who rise between four to five o'clock each morning to begin the cooking chores. The camp has always employed a professional cook to put together the menu and supervise the preparation of vegetable and salad foods in the cook shack. Regardless, routine kitchen chores are left to these patient men who quietly perform their jobs so well.

One denizen of the cook shack is H. C. Scott of Abilene. Camp went by for many years with the men heating up dishwashing water on a butane stove before camp ground ingenuity finally prevailed: Scott invented a hot water system that still scalds the hands of many a male camper. (Female campers are told not to cross the *line*, an imaginary boundary that keeps lady campers away from all cooking and clean up chores.)<sup>21</sup>

Main course meat selections have always been cooked outside in large concrete barbecue pits over mesquite wood coals. Even today, the manly art of camp ground butchering and barbecuing remains jealously guarded by *los leches chocolates*, a secretive order of knights errant reportedly headed by Ellis Owens. On a certain Saturday each winter these men hew and collect many cords of mesquite wood on area ranches. The wood is then hauled in on stock trailers and piled near the barbecue pits.

In recent years there has been less *cabrito* on the menu as donations and purchases of beef, chicken, pork, and hamburger have increased. Even so, kid goat, often contributed by area ranchers, remains the staple meat for about fifty per cent of camp meals.

Donations are a key to camp operations. The camp has always operated solely on free will offerings--primarily of money. No one is charged anything to attend, to camp, or to partake of the meals although campers are asked to register and furnish a small fee for insurance coverage.<sup>22</sup>

In a way, camp expenditures can be seen as a microcosm of our national monetary inflation. The 1944 camp meeting cost \$431.96. Ten years later saw an increased cost of \$1789.99. By 1964 the bills amounted to \$2660.56. In 1974 it cost \$4939.12. 1984 saw a large advance in costs to \$16,761.64. From there the costs levelled out somewhat to \$16,618.10 in 1994, although the 1996 costs, largely due to water well and pump problems, are reportedly going to reach \$20,000.<sup>23</sup>

Typical costs for a modern camp session (1995) follow:

preacher	\$1000.00	
song leader	800.00	
local preacher	1200.00	
cook	1000.00	
cook's helper	500.00	
telephone	107.71	
book store	224.36	
insurance	2329.16	
Iraan News	127.16	
postage	96.00	
electricity	1950.26	
contract labor	875.00	(Sheffield preacher)
groceries	4741.66	
milk	949.20	
bread	284.90	
meat processing	176.00	

freezer parts	160.00
fly spray	139.50
mower parts	27.97
battery	55.95
mowing	57.00
PA system	107.19
trees	824.20
hdw. supplies	<u>339.20</u>
Total	18072.42

(The above does not include the girls dorm building project that cost \$8706.50.)

As time marches on costs will continue to increase. To assure the future of the camp meeting some brethren may wish to remember it in their wills, as did Teanie B. Campbell, who left one half of her estate to the camp.

The Sheffield area is blessed with talented Christian men and women who work toward maintaining the camp infrastructure on a continual basis. Some of those are: Ellis and Vircille Owens; Bob and Karen Reese; Jack and Annie Morris; Ridgely and Barbara Holifield; Randy and Neva Grigsby; Reid and Tot Holmsley; Rowdy Holmsley; Peery Holmsley; Dennis Bowerman; Lloyd and Suzy Ward; David and Judy Brown; Butch and Sharon James; Zane and Lori Turk; Kerry Carson; Charlie and Jo Elwood; Neal and Alicia Sconiers; and the Tommy Hayre family. Without their help and the assistance of others, the camp meeting would be an impossibility.

The infrastructure, or physical plant, at the camp ground is aging. Several new concrete block dormitories have been erected in recent years, but, in general, the wooden structures date back to the early gatherings. This, however, does not seem to be a drawback. In fact, the rusticity appeals to many of the campers. Jimmy Watts, the "unofficial" camp director, recalls some of the

youth, who have the means to attend any camp, saying: "We have all the fancy things at home; this is rustic. We love it!"<sup>24</sup>

Even so, safety has to be considered. Watts says that he cannot remember an ambulance ever being called to the camp in his years of attendance.<sup>25</sup> That may be the case, but Neal Sconiers believes that every precaution should be taken to prevent accidents: some cabins should be removed, old electric wiring checked or replaced, and air conditioners grounded.<sup>26</sup>

Another safety consideration has always involved the normally placid Pecos River. Morine Carson, who was born in 1910 and reared along the river, remembers the Pecos as it deserves to be remembered: before it was dammed far upriver. She says:

It [the river] used to be up all the time. Every time it rained up in New Mexico or somewhere, that river was muddy. And I mean it, we called it whirlpools [eddies], the water would go like this [circular hand motions]. It was awful. But when it was down and clear it was as nice [as could be], we just swam and fished. . . . It was a beautiful river, no brush, no salt cedar [tamarisk]. We could go down there and play on the sand bars and cover ourselves up with the sand and just run and get in the water. [It was] just as clear as crystal. . . . It's nothing now. It's just brush and mesquite and salt cedar.

Mrs. Carson also remembers when the Pecos flooded in 1974:

That flood they said was a mile wide, that water right out from my house yonder, it come up to the foot of this hill. . . . You could see it way over yonder; way over there. There was a car down at my mother's house, renters or something and they weren't there, and you could just barely see about that much of the top of that car outside her old house. A red car."<sup>27</sup>

That flood, in September, occurred only about three months

after the camp session ended. Floodwater poured over the camp ground and high up into the tabernacle. Bob Allen recalls:

After the flood we could see the water line on the chalk board, which was about sixteen inches from the bottom of that chalk board, on the tabernacle itself. . . . We stood in there and looked at that line and thought, *Praise the Lord that He didn't send that flood while we had encampment going.* Because it would've been a tragedy."<sup>2</sup>

Though the 1974 flood may have been the most dramatic, it has not been the only flood that put water in the camp ground. Perhaps Jimmy Watts puts it best when he says: "I've got to believe that God watches over this camp very closely."<sup>23</sup>

The church men whom direct the Pecos River Family Encampment have always insisted on sound Bible doctrine being taught; they have spared no effort or expense to bring the best available preachers and song leaders to camp. The following list comprises each years' leadership:

1944	J. Frank Black (preacher)	John Hufstedler (song leader)
1945	Dave Black	" "
1946	Dillard Thurman	" "
1947	Wesley Mickey	Ross Hufstedler
1948	" "	W. A. Turner
1949	Dillard Thurman	Holland Boring, Sr.
1950	Clifton Rogers	H. Boring, Sr. & Jr.
1951	" "	" "
1952	Reuben Stanley	Holland Boring, Jr.
1953	" "	" "
1954	L. N. Moody	B. Connell & Don Boring
1955	W. A. Brown	Holland Boring, Sr.
1956	Clifton Rogers	Harold Lipford
1957	Joe Malone	" "
1958	Wesley Mickey	" "
1959	James D. Bales	Holland Boring, Jr.
1960	Joe Malone	" "
1961	Dillard Thurman	" "
1962	Ruel Lemmons	Ted Ware
1963	Sammy Swain	" "
1964	Ruel Lemmons	Herman Knox

1965	Jimmy Jividen	Joe Lee
1966	Johnny Ramsey	Joe Lee
1967	Jimmy Jividen	Pat Stephenson
1968	Johnny Ramsey	John Hardgrave
1969	Abe Lincoln	Edwin Myers
1970	Ruel Lemmons	" "
1971	Roy Deaver	Foy Forehand
1972	Johnny Ramsey	Ted Kell
1973	Abe Lincoln	" "
1974	Johnny Ramsey	Bobby Connell
1975	Jim Hance	" "
1976	Jimmy Jividen	Edwin Myers
1977	Ted Kell	" "
1978	Ian Fair	" "
1979	Johnny Ramsey	Randy Gray
1980	Jim Hance	Chris Frizzell
1981	Jack Evans	Danny Dixon
1982	Jimmy Jividen	James Crowder
1983	Leonard Gray	Randy Gray
1984	Nat Cooper	B.B. Stevens
1985	Ian Fair	Bill Blackstone
1986	Jimmy Jividen	John Sconiers
1987	Randy Gray	Bill Blackstone
1988	Jim Hance	C. Sweeton
1989	Jimmy Jividen	James Crowder
1990	Randy Daugherty	Gary Hounshell
1991	Ian Fair	Tom Slagle
1992	Tex Williams	Bill Black
1993	Larry Roberts	Daniel Harrell
1994	Jimmy Jividen	Colquitt Nash
1995	Paul Shero	Lyn Money
1996	Randy Daugherty	James D. Willeford

In order to *inherit* Salvation the New Testament teaches that people must first hear the Gospel,<sup>30</sup> and after hearing, must believe.<sup>31</sup> True repentance of past sinful living is then required<sup>32</sup> before making a public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.<sup>33</sup> The Word then requires the confessed believer to submit to the physical act of water (immersion) baptism for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>34</sup> Obedience to His commands adds a person to Christ's Church, but a continual striving toward Heaven is required to assure one's place in the Eternal Kingdom.<sup>35</sup>

The above illustrated Plan of Salvation is the crux of Church

of Christ doctrine. Preaching and teaching at the camp has always been based on these Truths and deviation from the path has never been permitted.

Central to the doctrine is water baptism for the remission of sin. It is a demonstration of faith in which one person places his/her complete trust in the Lord, and less significantly, in another living person--that Christian man who will go down into the water and perform the baptismal ritual (in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost). The initiate experiences a symbolic death, burial, and resurrection, as did Jesus Christ in actuality. It is a washing away of sin; the convert comes up from the water (the grave) a resurrected, sinless soul. Once baptism is completed, the re-born individual is added to<sup>36</sup> the Church. He or she then has the right to wear the name, Christian.

The Christian ritual is considered ultra-conservative by many modern theologians. Be that as it may, you will not hear anyone apologizing for it at the camp ground, nor among any group of New Testament Christians seeking to follow His Word to the letter.

Oddly enough, the encampment is not equipped with a formal baptistry. Each year, in the first weeks of June, men and boys of the Sheffield and Iraan Churches of Christ clean out and deepen a baptismal spot in the Pecos River. Camp records do not reflect all responses over the years, so no one knows how many people have obeyed the gospel at the site. It is safe to say that the numbers run, at least, into the several hundreds. The "Baptizin' hole," as it is often referred to in camp vernacular, is reached by following

a dusty, two-rut trail from the back of the tabernacle down through a mesquite thicket to the river: an easy four or five minute walk.

There have been drought 'y years when the Pecos was too low for baptisms. On those occasions the baptistry at the Sheffield church building served the purpose."

Superior preaching and song leading have not been the only spiritual highlights at the annual gathering. Bible study classes are also a major part of the daily program. Adults have two sessions each day; the youth currently have one. Daily Bible class attendance in 1993 averaged 335 persons and is reasonably indicative of class attendance in recent years." On average daily, 96 of those were adults (college age or above). Therefore, 239 (71%) of the individuals attending classes that year were of high school age or below.

A list for the 1992 meeting shows a total of seventeen different classes with no duplication of teachers. The roster includes:"

1. adult class
2. men's class
3. ladies class
4. high school (11-12)
5. high school (9-10)
6. 8th grade
7. 7th grade
8. 6th grade
9. 5th grade
10. 4th grade
11. 3rd grade
12. 2nd grade
13. 1st grade
14. kindergarten
15. 4-5 year old
16. 2-3 year old
17. nursery

Bible study was performed at many locations across the campground that year. The noted document, under *Teaching Area* names seventeen spots, such as: Breezeway; Blue eating tables; Big Tree; Baseball Stands, and Odessa # 3, etc. The author, observing the 1996 camp session, observed that during the 10 a.m. class period most shaded spots on the grounds were taken up by classes. The older boys, being taught by Doc Turk, were the least protected; they were at the softball diamond. Conversely, the most comfortable class space seemed to be "the Breezeway," located between two cabins on the north side of the quadrangle. It was occupied by the men.

Back in 1993 the recorded camp attendance numbered 463. No doubt, more people than that attended at least some of the services but were never registered. The average age of all campers in 1993 was 17 years.<sup>40</sup> That year may not hold the record for attendance, but it was probably one of the more heavily attended sessions.<sup>41</sup> Since then attendance at the Pecos River Family Encampment has been decreasing: 407 in 1994, 455 in 1995 and 383 in 1996.<sup>42</sup> In part this decrease is due to competition from other more recently established encampments that are usually located in more temperate climatic zones.

That does not ring a death knell for the encampment. In fact, the camp may have become too crowded for a period of several years. Discipline, learning, and fellowship probably suffered as a result. Perhaps the future emphasis will be towards a smaller but more family-oriented camp. That was the original idea, and it was not

such a bad one.

The encampment is a cultural blessing to the Trans-Pecos area. A review of the rosters demonstrate that people from all across Texas (including Hispanics and Blacks), as well as people from several other states attend annually. In a part of the world where people live more or less in a cultural vacuum, it is important to interact with others when the opportunity presents itself. The camp serves as a leveling factor in that regard: wage earners rub elbows equally with prosperous others whom are often the elite in their home communities. Young people of different races dwell and worship together; therefore, the concept that we are all God's children, that He is no respecter of persons, is visibly reinforced.

Who can measure the soulful benefits received from a week at camp? To hear the Spirit poured out from the Bible by Godly teachers, to hear voices raised in spiritual song floating across the grounds, and to have continual fellowship with like-minded brethren serves to strengthen the faith of even the most discouraged God-fearing individual. A week at camp can be precious, like a water well to a Bedouin tribesman.

Some brethren have expressed fears that with the passing of time and key individuals, the Pecos River Family Encampment will fade into oblivion. Those fears are well founded. The Sheffield Church of Christ, which takes primary responsibility for camp operations, has lost much of it's membership since the 1980s oil "bust"; therefore, much more work and expense has fallen on the

shoulders of the remaining membership. It is a heavy load, but one that is still being born by those families.

Traditions, while sometimes counter-productive, are usually good. The encampment has become a good tradition for the Trans-Pecos area of West Texas. It is an asset.

Presently there is no talk of closing the camp, or of alternating the years of operation. Hopefully there will not be. The Churches of Christ need this *Voice in the Wilderness*. Jimmy Watts said: "I've got to believe that God watches over this camp very closely." But God expects His people to do their part. In the spirit of the men and women who founded the encampment, all Christians in West Texas should lend their support for a solid, and continuing, Pecos River Family Encampment.

## NOTES

1. Walter Prescott Webb, *The Great Frontier* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1952, second paperback printing, 1979), 413.
2. John Toland, *Adolf Hitler: Volume II* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1976), 861-863.
3. Bob Allen, interview by author, Tape Recording, Pecos River Family Encampment, 18 June 1996. Also see the diary of James Frank Black: 04 July 1944.
4. Ruel Lemmons, "Preaching All Day and Dinner on the Ground," *Firm Foundation* (30 June 1964).
5. Morine Carson, interview by author, Tape recording, Sheffield, TX, 27 June 1996.
6. James Frank Black, personal diary: 02 July 1944 and following. Original in possession of Melissa Verett. Used by permission.
7. Neal and Alicia Sconiers, interview by author, Tape recording, Iraan, TX, 08 July 1996. Mrs. Sconiers is a daughter of H. M. and Johnnie Holmes. J.F. Black diary indicates that "dinner" was served.
8. Black diary: 09 July 1944.
9. Allen, interview.
10. James Frank Black died in Del Rio, TX, in the early 1950s while conducting a gospel meeting.
11. Eddie Mae Woodward, "Pecos River Encampment, Still Yearly Tradition," *Western Chronicles* Vol. 4, (December 1982): 2. This article says that the first tabernacle measured 25 X 40 feet and that a Delco power plant furnished electric lights the first year.
12. Allen, interview.
13. Sconiers, interview.
14. *Camp meeting* is the most commonly used referent for the Pecos River Family Encampment. In this paper I may use any one of several additional referents including: camp, encampment, or camp meeting. James Frank Black's diary indicates that the first camp lasted eight days.

15. Sconiers, interview. Also: Woodward, *Western Chronicle*. The Woodward article says the 1947 tabernacle measured 40 X 64 feet and was constructed of steel and concrete.

16. Allen, interview.

17. Ibid.

18. The author has seen no evidence of there ever having been a fourteen day encampment as reported by some individuals.

19. Other reports say the bell came from Mertzon, Irion County, TX. The present bell is a # 34 YOKE.

20. Woodward, *Western Chronicles*.

21. The 1996 camp, for the first time, hired a lady cook when the regular one failed to appear for duty. However, as she is an employee--not a camper--the tradition still holds!

22. James Watts, interview by author, Tape recording, Pecos River Family Encampment, 18 June 1996.

23. Sconiers, interview. The books are kept by Neal Sconiers who has been camp treasurer since the death of H.M. Holmes in 1974.

24. Watts, interview. James (Jimmy) Watts, whose parents, Jim and Wanda Watts have been active in camp almost since its inception, has attended at least 45 meetings in his 46 years.

25. Ibid.

26. Sconiers, interview.

27. Carson, interview.

28. Allen, interview.

29. Watts, interview.

30. Jno. 20.31-31, Rom. 10.17

31. Heb. 11.6, Rom. 1.16

32. Luke 13.3, Acts 17.30-31

33. Matt.10.32, Rom. 10.10

34. Rom. 6.1-6, Col. 2.12, Acts 2.38, Acts 16.33, Acts 8.38

35. 2 Pet. 1.1-11

36. Acts 2.41
37. Sconiers, interview.
38. [Class] Attendance Chart for 1993, Pecos River Encampment 1993 record book, Sheffield Church of Christ.
39. Typed roster titled "1992 Pecos River Encampment," in 1993 camp record book, Sheffield Church of Christ.
40. Registration rolls and related papers for 1993, Pecos River Encampment record book, Sheffield Church of Christ.
41. Karen Reese, telephone conversation, Sheffield, TX, 19 September 1996. Reese, who is camp registrar, says that the attendance has gone over 500 at several past encampments and was once at or near 600. She also added that 450 is a "big crowd."
42. Ibid.

# A week without cell service, immersed in God's word

*A Texas Christian camp resumes, allowing Christian families to disconnect and focus on God and each other.*

THE CHRISTIAN  
**Chronicle** An international newspaper  
for Churches of Christ

August 1, 2022



J. Holmsley

**S**HEFFIELD, Texas — “Why would anyone want to come here?”

It’s a question organizers of the Pecos River Encampment have heard more than once.

Since 1944, Christian families — physical and spiritual — have gathered along a paltry stretch of the Pecos River in the West Texas desert. They play softball in 103-degree heat, take cold showers and eat mesquite-grilled cabrito (roasted goat).

They also spend a week immersed in Scripture, united in their desire to uphold biblical truth.

“Rustic” may be the best word to describe the camp — a hodgepodge of ramshackle shacks on property just north of Interstate 10. There’s no charge to attend — just a small insurance fee. Last year the Church of Christ in nearby Iraan, Texas, took oversight of the camp, which operates on donations and the sweat of members who install plumbing, repair broken benches and maintain the facility.

After a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19, the encampment resumed this summer. About 200 people spent a week rekindling old friendships, making new friends, discussing Scripture, basking in the blessing of no cell phone service and feasting on barbecue and God’s word.



PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

Kids at the encampment learn about sheep and goats from the Good Shepherd, portrayed by James Willeford, director of church relations for Herald of Truth.

Kids squared off against adults in volleyball and softball, played in the West Texas heat. All ages made use of the camp's giant slip-n-slide during "Water Day." And the campers made their traditional trek up a nearby mountain for a devotional.

Speakers from across Texas discussed the "I am" statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John.

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As meal time approaches, campers prepare metal cans of ice, which serve as cups during the annual Pecos River Encampment.



Groups of campers take turns decorating the campsite's bell during the annual encampment. Here, it bears the Texas flag.



Campers of all ages take in the view from atop a mountain near the camp that overlooks Pecos County and the Permian Basin in West Texas.

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Garrett Morado grew up in Iraan and has fond memories of attending the camp. Now a student at Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, he returned to preach and to serve as a counselor.

“I think the best part of it all was just being able to get away from a chaotic world and just focus on who Jesus is and what he has done for us,” Morado said. “There’s no cell service out there, and it is pretty nice to be able to step away from everything.”

It is a huge blessing to be able to be surrounded by so many like-minded Christians.

“I know there was a lot of work that went into making it all possible, and it definitely paid off. I am definitely looking forward to next year.”



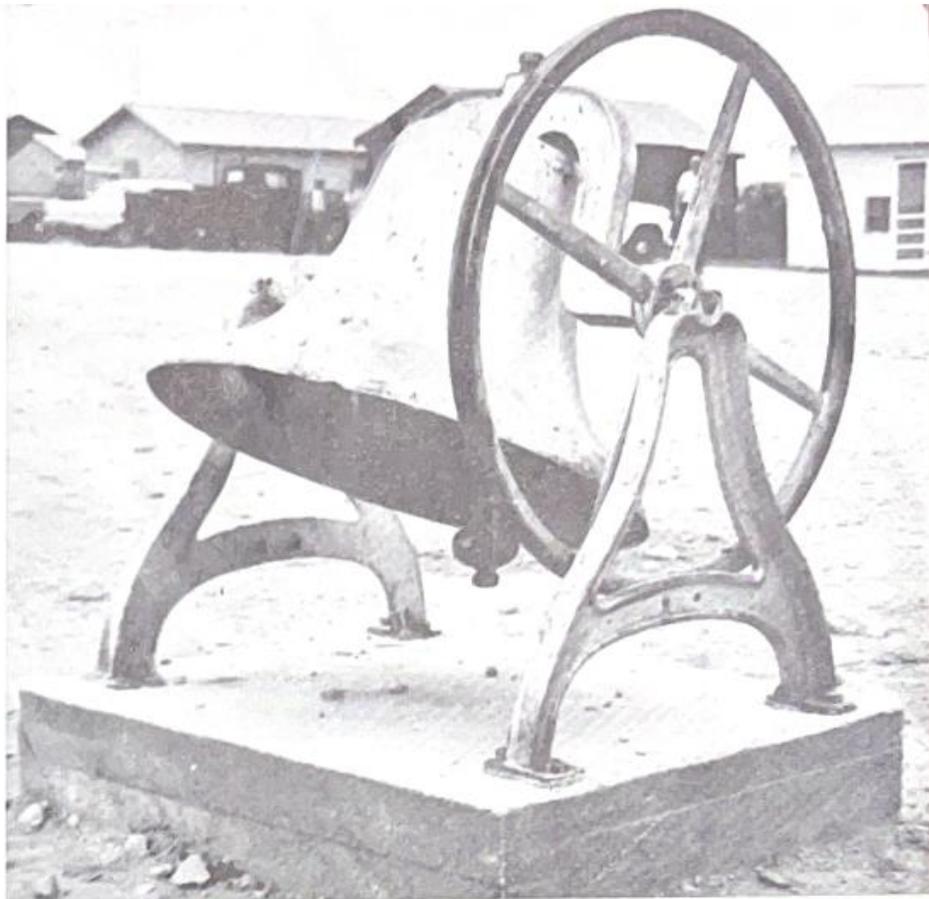
Sign over the gateway marks the Pecos River Camp Meeting grounds on the highway between Sheffield and Iraan in Southwest Texas.



In the clear cool waters of the Pecos River, which flows through the Camp ground, scores have been baptized into Christ. Daily baptismal services marked the week just passed in which more than 100 responded to the invitations.



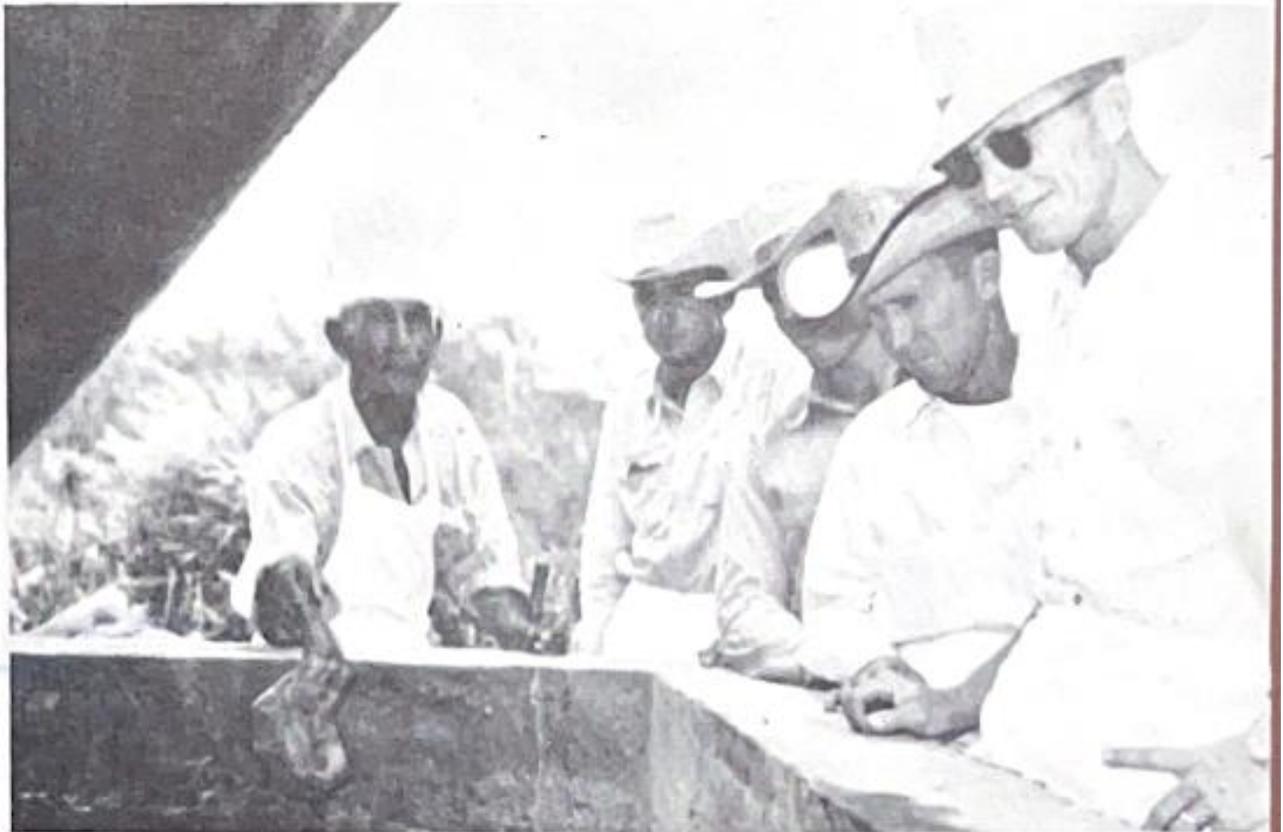
Under the friendly trees on the Camp grounds, hundreds ate their fill of camp-cooked foods, three times each day.



A huge iron bell, which in the early days hung in a hotel in Ozona, wakes campers each brisk morning and entones the scheduled activities of the camp throughout the day.



The huge tabernacle built on a prominent hill in the midst of the Camp ground is the scene of Bible classes during the day and evangelistic meetings each evening.



Local ranchers did the cooking and the chores about the camp during the week long Camp Meeting. Pictured above are, Left to Right: George "Zuniga," Ellis "Hambone" Owens, Harry "Mushy" Holmes, Sonny "Ringy" Rowe, and Jim "Wishbone" Watts.

# PREACHING ALL DAY AND DINNER ON THE GROUND

Old fashioned Camp Meetings, in the thinking of most folks, have just about passed into history along with other frontier customs. But these people have not been to Sheffield recently. If they had been there the past few days they would have known better. The Pecos River Encampment folded its tents—or, rather, entered its air conditioned automobiles, and went home Monday, June 15th.

On Sunday night the largest camp meeting of the long series was concluded. Camp trailers, pick-ups and buses had converged on the ten acre site on the Pecos River half way between Sheffield and Iraan a week earlier for the 21st consecutive gathering of the Pecos River Camp Meeting. Families came from a wide area of West Texas and New Mexico to camp under the trees or to stay in one of the twenty-eight buildings now covering a part of the camp ground. Young people were housed in especially designated dormitories supervised by adult counselors.

A full daily program, beginning with the ringing of the huge iron bell in the midst of the camp each morning at 6:30 and ending with the curfew sounded by the same bell at 11:00 each night, kept the several hundred campers busy for the entire week. Bible classes, singing and recreation filled the day, and each evening at four and again each night at eight o'clock there was a gospel sermon. The preaching was done this year by Reuel Lemmons, evangelist of Austin, Texas, and by the end of the week one hundred persons had responded to the gospel invitation.

It all began back in 1940. Charlie Chandler, rancher, whose country lay south and west of Sheffield, had been conducting rodeos on his ranch at a location on Independence creek, thirty miles south of Sheffield. Dave Black was a gospel preacher who had conducted meetings throughout southwest Texas for many years. In conversation one day at the rodeo grounds, about the large spring of cold water that burst from the earth there, preacher Black suggested to rancher Chandler that this would be a good place to hold a camp meeting. Chandler agreed.

John Trotter was a merchant at Sheffield who had recently become a Christian. He took a great interest in promoting the camp meeting, and R. N. Allen and E. W. Hardgrave, ranchers from southwest of Sheffield, and who had been leading religious influences in Southwest Texas for half a century, joined in promoting the first Pecos River Camp Meeting in 1940.

The Camp Meeting was held on Independence Creek in 1940 and in 1941. Then it was suspended for two years.

It became necessary to find a more accessible location, and H. M. Holmes and his wife, Johnnie, donated a ten acre campsite on their Pecos River ranch, six miles north of Sheffield for the purpose. A brush arbor first served the assembly, but later a large all-metal tabernacle was erected, complete with concrete floor instead of the traditional sawdust. Complete facilities were installed for feeding several hundred people at each meal, and an area was set aside for the building of camp cabins. Many of the ranch families of Southwest Texas have permanent camp cabins on the site and have come to the camp meeting every year since its beginning. Ranch family names familiar to Southwesterners are well represented at the Pecos River Encampment. E. W. Hardgrave, R. N. Allen, Jeff Owens, Clint Owens, H. M. Holmes, Clarence Chandler, and others

have been the strong forces that have built the Camp Meeting on the Pecos.

The Pecos River Camp Meeting is not conducted on the order of a youth camp, though about 250 young people attend, and live in dormitories built by the free will offerings and donated labor of individuals. The meeting is, rather, considered as a free family camp meeting. It, too, is supported by free will offerings—even to the meals served three times daily out of a central kitchen.

While individuals provide the campsite and facilities, the church of Christ in Sheffield has the oversight of the Camp Meeting itself, choosing the preacher and song director each year, as well as the teachers for the classes of children of all ages and counselors for the various groups.

Like all things else, the Camp Meeting has undergone great change since its early days when each family came to camp with its own coop and camp or chuck wagon. Lanterns were hung in strategic places at first, then were replaced by Delco system, and later by electricity. Oil burners provided energy for cooking. Today a paved highway goes by the front gate, and electricity and "running water and plumbing" in abundant supply. A young grove of trees fed with fertilizer and watered from a well adorns the oasis on the Pecos. Air conditioners are in the cabins, and a growing problem is parking space for cars and house trailers.

But the spirit hasn't changed. Cattle men and sheep men and goat men squat in high-heeled boots in a close circle under the shade of a tree or in the blazing sun, eating out of tin plates and drinking tea from a tin can, as they catch up on the happenings round about, or discuss some Bible theme. Broad brimmed straw hats turned up on the sides and slid slightly to the back of the head dip in agreement or shake in disagreement with a speaker's efforts. Busy ranch hands do the camp duties with the same bowed head and bent shoulders and shuffling fast walk so peculiar to their profession. A spirit of friendliness so typical of the better element of the old west, is in evidence everywhere. Friends and brethren separated as these are by miles and miles, and for long periods of time, find in the occasion an opportunity for fellowship that is rich and rewarding.

Meal time on the camp meetings grounds is a real treat. Shirt sleeved ranchers, aided by Mexican cooks, prepare three meals a day and serve between three and four hundred at each meal. Ranch style cooking is the menu and barbecued goat the main dish. Over one hundred Spanish goats are barbecued in the course of an average week. This year the menu also featured barbecued chicken, charbroiled steak, ham and fried chicken. All the trimmings made those meals objects of fond remembrance. A pick-up load of ice cold watermelons were consumed one evening.

A well chosen faculty of counselors and teachers direct the program of each day, beginning with an early devotional program at 7:00 a.m., and continuing without a dull moment through a day of Bible classes and supervised recreation, to close with preaching each night. Many who are not able to stay through the entire day come for the afternoon and evening preaching services.

The Pecos River Camp Meeting conducted by the churches of Christ is becoming a part of the great and colorful history of West Texas.

# OZONA HISTORY

## 90 YEARS AGO...

June 21, 1934

Early hard-surfacing of the 45-mile stretch of Highway 27 from Ozona west to the Pecos County line is seen as a possibility with the designation of Crockett County in the drought relief area of Texas by the federal department of agriculture this week and the allotment of more than \$12,000,000 by the federal government for highway construction work in Texas.

## 80 YEARS AGO...

June 22, 1944

Churches of Christ at Ozona, Sheffield, Iraan, Sanderson and Fort Stockton, have combined to create a new permanent camp meeting site on the Pecos River about halfway between Sheffield and Iraan on Highway 51 according to an announcement this week by James F. Black, minister of the Church of Christ at Sheffield. The encampment site has plenty of shade trees, good water and is available for fishing and bathing in the Pecos River. Rev. Black wrote Grounds for camp houses and a new tabernacle are available this year, the announcement said.

## 70 YEARS AGO...

June 17, 1954

A petition asking that an election be called for the purpose of deciding whether or not sale of beer shall be legalized in Crockett County was presented to the Commissioners Court at its June meeting Monday but the court returned the petition when it found that the legal requirements to the number of qualified voter signers had not been met.

# Business &

## CHURCH



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
OZONA

Sunday School - 9:45 a.m.  
Sunday Morning Worship - 10:55 a.m.  
Sunday Evening Worship - 6:00 p.m.  
K.I.D.S. - Wednesday - 5:30 p.m.  
Youth - Wednesday - 6:00 p.m.

### Ozona Church of Christ

1002 11th St  
P.O. Box 1227  
Ozona, Tx 76943

Sunday Morning Bible Class @ 9:30 A.M.  
Sunday Morning Assembly @ 10:15 A.M.  
Sunday Evening Assembly @ 6:00 P.M.  
Wednesday Night Meal @ 6:00 P.M.  
Wednesday Night Bible Class @ 7:00 P.M.  
Garrett Morado - Preacher  
432-302-1792

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

### AL-ANON AND ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETINGS

will now be held on Tuesdays at  
917 Sheffield Road  
(old radio station building)

**Pecos River Encampment  
Preachers and Song Leaders**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Preacher</b>	<b>Song Leader</b>
1944	Frank Black	John Hufstedler
1945	Dave Black	John Hufstedler
1946	Dillard Thurman	John Hufstedler
1947	Wesley Mickey	Ross Hufstedler
1948	Wesley Mickey	W.A. Turner
1949	Dillard Thurman	Holland Boring, Sr.
1950	Clifton Rogers	Holland Boring, Sr. & Jr.
1951	Clifton Rogers	Holland Boring, Sr. & Jr.
1952	Reuben Stanley	Holland Boring, Jr.
1953	Reuben Stanley	Holland Boring, Jr.
1954	L.N. Moody	Bobby Connell & Don Boring
1955	W.A. Brown	Holland Boring, Sr.
1956	Clifton Rogers	Harold Lipford
1957	Joe Malone	Harold Lipford
1958	Wesley Mickey	Harold Lipford
1959	James D. Bales	Holland Boring, Jr.
1960	Joe Malone	Holland Boring, Jr.
1961	Dillard Thurman	Holland Boring, Jr.
1962	Ruel Lemmons	Ted Ware
1963	Sammy Swain	Ted Ware
1964	Ruel Lemmons	Herman Knox
1965	Jimmy Jividen	Joe Lee
1966	Johnny Ramsey	Joe Lee
1967	Jimmy Jividen	Pat Stephenson
1968	Johnny Ramsey	John Hardgrave
1969	Abe Lincoln	Edwin Myers
1970	Ruel Lemmons	Edwin Myers
1971	Roy Deaver	Foy Forehand
1972	Johnny Ramsey	Ted Kell
1973	Abe Lincoln	Ted Kell
1974	Johnny Ramsey	Bobby Connell
1975	Jim Hance	Bobby Connell
1976	Jimmy Jividen	Edwin Myers
1977	Ted Kell	Edwin Myers
1978	Ian Fair	Edwin Myers
1979	Johnny Ramsey	Randy Gray
1980	Jim Hance	Chris Frizzell
1981	Jack Evans	Danny Dixon
1982	Jimmy Jividen	James Crowder
1983	Leonard Gray	Randy Gray
1984	Nat Cooper	B. B. Stevens
1985	Ian Fair	Bill Blackstone
1986	Jimmy Jividen	John Sconiers
1987	Randy Gray	Bill Blackstone
1988	Jim Hance	C. Sweeton
1989	Jimmy Jividen	James Crowder

**Pecos River Encampment  
Preachers and Song Leaders**

1990	Randy Daugherty	Gary Hounshell
1991	Ian Fair	Tom Slagle
1992	Tex Williams	Bill Black
1993	Larry Roberts	Daniel Harrell
1994	Jimmy Jividen	Red Nash
1995	Paul Shero	Lynn Money
1996	Randy Daugherty	Jimmy Willeford
1997	Paul Shero	Larry Tolivar
1998	Jimmy Jividen & Dale Huff	Larry Tolivar
1999	Macie Boren	Tom Slagle
2000	Jim Laws	Saul Blair
2001	Mike Vestel & Paul Shero	Saul Blair
2002	Johnny Ramsey & David Boren	Jimmy Willeford
2003	Malcolm Hill & Robert Berard	David Longley
2004	Glenn Ramsey & Robert Dodson	Saul Blair
2005	Gary Montgomery & Mike Vestel	David Longley
2006	Paul Shero	David Longley
2007	Michael Light	Halbert Griffin
2008	Paul Wilmoth	Halbert Griffin
2009	Michael Light	Keith Harper
2010	Joe Wells	Halbert Griffin
2011	Dan Winkler	Keith Harper
2012	Willie Franklin	Glenn Jobe
2013	Willie Franklin	Allen Weakland
2014	Allen Weakland & Paul Shero	Joel Rodgers
2015	Paul Shero	Keith Harper
2016	Jody Apple	Dustin Grigsby
2017	Mike Shero	Dustin Grigsby
2018	Jim Laws	Jimmy Willeford
2019	Paul Shero	Jimmy Willeford
2020	Camp Cancelled Due to Covid	
2021	Camp Cancelled Due to Covid	
2022	Bo Shero	Shelton Boyd
11 AM Speakers	Johnny Golden	
	Jimmy Willeford	
	Garr ett Morado	
	Owen Davis	
	Lane Boyd	
2023	Paul Shero	Keith Harper and Saul Blair
11 AM Speakers	Jacob Carson	
	Saul Blair	
	David Easlon	
	Josh Weakland	
	Caleb Turk	
2024	Bo Shero	Joel Rodgers
2025	Phil Sanders & Paul Shero	Steven Easlon
2026		

