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THE PRESERVATION OF AMERICAN YOUTH SUMMER CAMPS:
THE CHANGING CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF GIRL SCOUT AND BOY SCOUT
SUMMER CAMPS

By

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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American youth summer camps, first established in the late 1800's, have flourished throughout the 20th century to the present day. Only since the late 1990's, though, have they begun to be addressed by the academic community. The recognition of camps' historic, social, cultural, and architectural significance has coincided with a major change in the landscape of certain camps, specifically Girl Scout and Boy Scout camps. Scout camps have traditionally offered a more rustic camp style and the option for campers to explore a variety of traditional camp activities such as hiking, canoeing, and crafts. However, both the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts today face significant organizational changes, namely the consolidation of local councils, as well as numerous external business pressures such as high operating costs and competition from other camps. In the face of these pressures, Scout camps are vulnerable to being shut down, sold, or modernized. This has caused controversy among Scouting members, resulting in protests, lawsuits, and even boycotts. More than just a disagreement over whether or not to keep camps open, these disputes include the loss of memories and histories associated with camp sites.

This thesis discusses the challenges faced in preserving both physical and intangible aspects of Scout camps, and offers suggestions on how to manage the impending sale of Scout camps while still respecting the strong ties people have to their camps. This is accomplished through an examination of three Northeastern summer camps: Glen Gray in Mahwah, New Jersey, Eagle Island, on Upper Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks, and Mogisca, in Glen Spey, New York. Summer camps, like all cultural landscapes, change over time; however, current changes have been imposed in a manner that has caused concern for those familiar with these sites. This thesis shows that local councils, national Scout organizations, current and former camp attendees, and preservation professionals have many options available to more effectively manage this transition.

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Introduction

For seventy years, from 1938 through 2008, Camp Eagle Island, on Upper Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks of New York, served as a Girl Scout camp for countless girls from the New Jersey area. Prior to this, it was a summer home, first for Levi P. Morton, a U.S. Vice President (1889-1893) and Governor of New York (1895-1896), and afterward for the Graves family of Orange, New Jersey. Designed by William Coulter in 1899 as an Adirondack Great Camp, “Eagle Island Camp may well represent the finest extant rustic camp conceived by one of the preeminent architects working in this idiom and in this region during the late nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth century,”¹ and for this reason was made a National Historic Landmark in 2005 (Fig. 1 and 2).



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

In the late 1930's, upon hearing that the owner, Henry Graves, might be selling the island, the leaders of the Girl Scout Council of Maplewood and the Oranges, which had outgrown its current camp, approached Graves with what they knew was a low offer, hoping he might be generous to the non-profit group. In fact, he was more generous than

¹ National Register, Eagle Island Camp. p. 21

they ever expected; Graves decided to donate the camp to the Girl Scouts in memory of two of his sons, both of whom had died in tragic accidents. The gift of the camp was significant news, with local and national papers, including the *New York Times*, covering the story.²

Throughout the seventy years of the site's operation as a camp, the Girl Scouts were excellent stewards of the gift they were given. The fact that the property was well taken care of, and that new construction was carefully considered so that it would not clash with Coulter's design, was dually noted in the camp's nomination form for Historic Landmark designation: "the complex survives with a considerable level of integrity considering its continued use as summer camp during the past six decades...adaptive reuse of the camp has failed to significantly diminish the cohesiveness of the architectural program."³ Not only was the property well-maintained, but the history of the site lived on through the camp. Campers and staff were educated about the unique history of the island and its context in the larger story of the Adirondacks through oral histories, the annual camp play which portrayed the story of the camp from the pre-historic era to modern times, and evening boat tours which took campers around the lake to both see and hear about the region's history. Sadly, in 2008, as a result of the merging of numerous area Girl Scout Councils (part of a nation-wide strategic plan of the National Girl Scout organization), less than a month before the start of camp it was announced that Eagle Island would be closed until further notice. Many hoped it would re-open, but in 2010 it was put up for sale.

While the camp was in operation, Girl Scout Council leaders touted Eagle Island's

² "Big Estate is Given to the Girl Scouts." *New York Times*, August 30, 1937.

³ National Register, Eagle Island Camp. p. 21

rich history, helping the camp site become a National Historic Landmark and encouraging campers to learn about and appreciate the camp's unique background. Today, unfortunately, the circumstances have changed and the current owner, Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey Council, is simply trying to sell the camp to the highest bidder.⁴ In taking this step, the Council is failing to recognize its own summer camp as a significant part of the site's history. The reality is that Girl Scouts operated Eagle Island as a youth summer camp for seventy years - almost double the amount of time it was in use by the Morton and Graves families. In this time, Eagle Island campers established their own traditions, ceremonies, songs, and camp stories to be told around a crackling fire. Camp customs and traditions contribute to the cherished summer memories of generations of campers at this site.

Traditional, 'rustic' summer camps such as Eagle Island are important not only because of the meaning they hold for individuals, but also because they are part of the larger history of organized youth summer camps, a treasured American tradition dating from the late 19th century to the present time. Unfortunately, many camps of this type, especially Girl Scout and Boy Scout camps, are being sold off⁵ or, as documented by camp historian Courtney Fint in her thesis paper on Jackson's Mill 4-H camp, being 'modernized' and altered beyond recognition so as to lose much of their historical character and cultural meaning.⁶

This thesis will address youth summer camps, specifically Boy Scout and Girl Scout camps that have faced, or are facing, the prospect of permanent closure and sale.

⁴ "Eagle Island, Santa Clara NY 12980," Weichert Realtors, accessed April 1, 2013, <http://www.weichert.com/35931802/>.

⁵ The website www.savecamps.org has been documenting camp sales nation-wide; the Girl Scout and Boy Scout national organizations also openly acknowledge that they are selling off many properties.

⁶ Fint, Courtney P., "Jackson's Mill 4-H Camp: The Summer Camp as Cultural Heritage Site" (M.S. Thesis, Columbia University, 2003).

This is a critical issue facing camps right now, as the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, which have traditionally been a more affordable outdoor camp option geared towards a broad section of middle and working class Americans,⁷ face significant organizational changes as well as numerous external business pressures such as high operating costs and competition from other camps. The selling-off of so many camps would be a major loss of cultural and historic resources, not to mention the covetable acres of open space and forest land many camps own, both to the Scouts and to the nation as a whole.

Inevitably, all camps will face changes, whether it be closing, upgrading facilities, changing owners, or being sold. The question presented is, how can change be managed in a way that recognizes and protects the cultural significance and multiple layers of history present in summer camps? The importance of camps in American history and their meaning on a personal level to those who attended them warrants careful consideration of the preservation of the landscape, physical structures, material culture, and intangible heritage present at camp sites. One of the main challenges in managing change at summer camps while still preserving their history is that, until recently, organized youth summer camps have been widely overlooked by the academic community in terms of historic preservation and cultural landscape preservation. As Fint notes, “working against...all summer camps is a lack of study and analysis of the architectural and cultural meanings of summer camp and a corresponding poor awareness of applicable preservation tools.”⁸ By comparing and analyzing the situations and outcomes of three camps that are facing or have faced closure, Camp Eagle Island of Saranac Lake, Camp Glen Gray, a former Boy Scout camp in Bergen County, New

⁷ Van Slyck, Abigail, *A Manufactured Wilderness*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xxviii.

⁸ Longstreth, *Cultural Landscapes*, 89.

Jersey, and Camp Mogisca, a former Girl Scout camp in Glen Spey, New York, a more complete understanding of summer camps, specifically Boy Scout and Girl Scout camps, can be gained, and recommendations and best practices for their preservation can be identified.

History of the Youth Summer Camp Movement

Knowledge of the history and cultural context from which both summer camps and youth organizations (such as the Scouts) emerged is critical to understanding the current dilemma of Girl Scout and Boy Scout summer camps today. The first camps, such as Chocorua, Asquam, and Pasquaney, were started by private individuals in the late 1880's as a remedy to what was seen as the “softening” of young boys by the modern world and urbanization.⁹ Initially viewed and treated as experiments in education, early camps met with some level of success, began to gain traction, and were embraced by progressive educators and organizations such as the YMCA, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Girl Scouts, religious groups, 4-H, other non-profits, as well as many private, usually wealthy, individuals and families. All of these different groups saw and used camps as a way to instill certain values upon the children who attended. Camps began to flourish and, by the early 1920's, their success as a social, cultural, and educational institution led to the often-quoted remark by Charles Elliot, then president of Harvard University, that “the organized summer camp is the most important step in education that America has given the world.”¹⁰

Like the rest of the country, throughout the 1930's and 40's, camps were affected by negative economic and political events such as World War I, the Depression, and

⁹ Van Slyck, *Manufactured Wilderness*, 8-10.

¹⁰ Paris, Leslie, *Children's Nature: The Rise of American Summer Camps* (New York: New York University Press, 2008) 238 and 337.

World War II, and with each major event camp leaders learned how to be flexible and change to reflect the changing times. In many cases, especially with the advent of national camping organizations (which eventually would form into one – the American Camp Association or ACA) camp leaders were able to share ideas and offer advice for challenging situations. The fact that camp leaders were attuned to the necessity of adapting to external factors is a major reason for camps' endurance and continued popularity through the present day. Today, the ACA continues to guide camp leaders through changing times and challenges, and has the potential to be a key part of the solution to the increasing number of camp sales.

By the 1950's, the idea of 'the summer camp' had entered the national consciousness as an iconic American youth experience; magazines such as LIFE and McClure's had written numerous profiles of summer camps, camps had cameos in books, movies, and television shows, and the song "Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah," by Allen Sherman became a popular hit.¹¹ Starting in the 1960's, specialized camps became increasingly popular, such as basketball or horseback riding camp.¹² Since then, camps have changed very little, with perhaps the most significant changes being in the realm of camper safety and camp liability issues. Recently, there has been a push by some in the camp world for a return to more 'traditional' and 'generalized' and camps, as well as for camps with less highly-structured programs. This is in part due journalist Richard Louv's book *Last Child in the Woods*, first published in 2005, and his entreaty to allow children more informal interaction with the natural environment.¹³ Overall, camps still operate

¹¹ Malinowski, Jon, "Summer Camps in Popular Culture," *Camping Magazine*, May/June 2011, accessed January 10, 2013, <http://www.acacamps.org/campmag/1105/summer-camps-popular-culture>.

¹² Many of these specialty camps are run on prep school or college campuses, as opposed to the more wilderness-like settings of traditional-style summer camps.

¹³ Louv, Richard, *Last Child in the Woods* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin, 2006).

today as a means of instilling in children values that adults, parents, educators, and leaders of the given institution deem important, be they social, cultural, environmental, or otherwise. Camps have never been static – new camps open, old camps close, camp sites are modified – but mass closings and sales of Scout camps is a recent trend in camping and has yet to be adequately addressed on a national scale.

Despite the modern trappings that were, and are, present in camps and the organizations that run them, the summer camp experience is no doubt an authentic one for the individual camper. Attending summer camp invariably leaves a lasting impression of “vivid (if not exclusively pleasant) memories.”¹⁴ To date, the number of children camps have impacted in this way is second only to the U.S. public school system, with ACA estimates of current camp attendance at around 11 million people per year, including both campers and staff.¹⁵ The large number of current and former campers, and their strong emotional ties to these sites is clearly one of the reasons the Scout organizations have faced constituencies angry over the selling of camps.

The nearly concurrent development of both summer camps and youth organizations in the early 1900's reflects the increasing attention being paid by adults to the realm of children and adolescents and their social upbringing at the dawn of the 20th century. Indeed, youth summer camps are prime examples of what Abigail Van Slyck describes as “the modern tendency to create a wide range of spaces devoted exclusively to the use of children.”¹⁶ It is not surprising then, that youth organizations and summer camps were quite interconnected in their early years. Camps were one of the main draws,

¹⁴ Van Slyck, *Manufactured Wilderness*, 37.

¹⁵ "Camp Trends Fact Sheet," American Camp Association, accessed December 5, 2012, <http://www.acacamps.org/media-center/camp-trends/fact>.

¹⁶ Gutman, Marta and Ning De Connick-Smith, eds., *Designing Modern Childhoods: History, Space, and the Material Culture of Children* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 23.

and in some cases, the only type of programming, offered by groups such as the Woodcraft Indians, Camp Fire Girls, the YMCA, YWCA, JCC's, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, and groups less well known today such as the Sons of Daniel Boone, Knights of King Arthur, Girl Pioneers of America, and the Beehive Girls.¹⁷ Especially in the case of girls, “organizations paralleled the growth of camping...in fact the first successful girls' organization started at a camp.”¹⁸ The organization referred to is the Camp Fire Girls, which was established in 1910 out of the girl's camp Wo-He-Lo, started by Luther and Charlotte Gulick in 1888. Just two years later in 1912, the Girl Scouts were founded by Juliette Gordon Low in Savannah, Georgia and one of their first major activities was a camping trip in which they “stripped down to long bloomers, swam, cooked for themselves along the Savannah River, and slept on the sand.”¹⁹

The Boy Scouts, too, have strong and early roots in camping, dating even prior to their official incorporation in 1910 as the Boy Scouts of America. Camp Glen Gray is an excellent example of how early camps and the success of local Boy Scout troops were closely intertwined. Frank Gray, after whom the camp is named, first began a Boy Scout Troop in Montclair in 1909, modeled after Lord Baden-Powell's scouting program, which stressed camping “as a tool in the development of boys to men.”²⁰ In 1911, Gray conducted the troop's first summer camp. The relationship between the camp and the local troops was symbiotic. The troop begat the camp, but the camp is what attracted more boys to join the troop, and the fundraising effort to purchase a permanent camp site was greatly aided by the formal structure of the troop. Camp was a highlight of the Boy

¹⁷ Van Slyck, *Manufactured Wilderness*, 258.

¹⁸ Bond, Hallie E., Joan Jacobs Brumberg, and Leslie Paris, *Adirondack Camps: A Paradise for Boys and Girls* (Blue Mountain Lake: The Adirondack Museum, 2006), 33.

¹⁹ Paris, *Children's Nature*, 52.

²⁰ Dean, Jack, "A Brief History of Camp Glen Gray, Mahwah, New Jersey" Last modified December 7, 2010, <http://www.glengray.org/75.html>.

Scout experience; an account of the early years of the Boy Scouts in Essex County written in 1936 by Luther Edmunds Price, one of the troop leaders, focuses almost solely on the efforts surrounding the founding of the camp, its subsequent success, and the praising of Frank Gray for his leadership.²¹

Summer camps are one of the main ways that the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts built their organizations, yet in the current era they are intent on selling them, and many times this is done without regard to the historical and emotional significance the site holds. This situation parallels a controversial topic in the art world: museums that decide to sell parts of their collection in order to raise capital. Like museums that sell their priceless art, the economics of the situation dictate that once camp properties are sold, it is unlikely that the Scouts would ever be able to afford to buy them back in the future. Scout camps, like museums, are non-profits and pay no taxes, and are therefore partially subsidized by the rest of the tax-paying public. Generally, as non-profits, these institutions also have some type of educational or social mission. This is problematic when it comes to selling both camp lands and museum collections; both will most likely go to the highest bidder if put up for sale on the open market, and the odds are also good that the new owner will be a private citizen (such as a land developer in the case of camps), and these resources will no longer be available to the citizens who subsidized them in the first place. What has caused such a drastic change in the attitude of the leadership of the Boy and Girl Scout organizations over the years, and what can be done to protect summer camps, and all the history that is a part of them, are the questions this paper aims to answer.

²¹ Price, Luther Edmunds. *Twenty-five Years of Scouting* (Bloomfield: The Independent Press, 1936).

Review of Literature

Primary sources provide much information on the early development of the organized youth camping movement in the United States. Camps were influenced heavily by naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton, who established the Woodcraft Indians, in 1902, spoke frequently on the topic of camps, visited and consulted with other camps, and also authored a number of books including *The Birch-bark Roll of the Woodcraft Indian, Containing Their Constitution, Laws, Games, and Deeds* (1906), and *The Book of Woodcraft and Indian Lore* (1920), both of which were commonly used throughout early American youth camps, and upon which many common camp traditions are based.²² As the camping movement grew and became more organized, handbooks and manuals began to appear. Porter Sargent's popular *Handbook of Summer Camps*, first published in 1924, a similar version of which is still produced today, was a useful reference for parents in deciding on a camp for their child. *The Girls' Camp: Program-making for Summer Leisure*, written by Abbie Graham in 1933, and *Campward Ho! - a Manual for Girl Scout Camps* offered guidance to camp directors on topics from camp leadership to programming to meals.

Early writing on camps centered on the value, impact, and effectiveness of organized youth camps in terms of both traditional and progressive forms of education. A prime example of this is Joshua Lieberman's *Creative Camping: A Coeducational Experiment in Personality Development* of 1931, which details his efforts in running a Pioneer Youth of America camp and the impacts of its non-traditional style on the attitudes, manners, and values of the campers who attended it. Still today, camps continue to be discussed in the context of education and child-rearing. Richard Louv has

²² Fint, Courtney, "Jackson's Mill"

been one of the most influential writers on the topic in recent years. In his books, *Last Child in the Woods* (2005) and *The Nature Principle* (2011), he outlines what he describes as “nature deficit-disorder” in children and stresses that “the direct experience in nature is the most important aspect of the camp experience.”²³

The rise of youth-based organizations such as the Girl and Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, YMCA/YWCA's, 4-H, and religious youth groups was closely intertwined with the increasing popularity of youth summer camps in the first two decades of the 20th century; the histories of these groups are therefore important for understanding the growth of the camp movement. Susan Miller's *Growing Girls: The Natural Origins of Girls' Organizations in America* (2007), David Macleod's *Building Character in the American Boy* (1983), as well as *Wo-He-Lo: The Story of the Camp Fire Girls* (1961), and local histories such as those written by Luther Edmunds Price about the early years of the Boy Scouts in Essex County, New Jersey make clear the importance camps held for youth organizations in early 20th century America in terms of building their organizations and communicating ideals and values to their young members.

Primary source material can clarify the role of the national Scout groups in local council efforts to establish and run successful summer camps. The Girl Scouts USA archives in New York City have numerous documents promoting specific types of tents, building design, and camp furniture, which were distributed widely throughout the local councils from the 1930's onward.²⁴ These documents include architectural plans and guides for almost any type of buildings or structure a camp might need, including dining halls, offices, cabins, tents, lodges, outdoor stoves, wash shelters, waterfront storage

²³ Louv, *Last Child in the Woods*, 224.

²⁴ Van Slyck, *Manufactured Wilderness*, xxix.

facilities, even down to details such as dining tables and garbage pits. Many of these plans were developed by architect and planner Julian Harris Salomon at the request of the Girl Scouts, and were first published in the book *Camp Site Development*, in 1948, and then again in an expanded version in 1959.²⁵ The influence of these documents is clearly seen in the layout, architecture, and structures of Girl Scout camps today. Also available in the Girl Scout archives were architectural plans for Boy Scout camp buildings and for structures within the National Parks system. This was both convenient and informative in that I was able to see these documents without visiting additional archives and also in that it is evidence that youth organizations such as the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts were clearly looking to each other and to other entities such as the National Park Service for inspiration and guidance when constructing their camp sites.

Information on the history of specific camps is likely to be found at the camp site itself or with the organization or individual who owns the camp. Due to the structure of Boy and Girl Scout organizations, camp documents, photographs, and other historical information is usually held by the council that owns the camp. Therefore, researching camps is both geographically challenging - one must usually go to the camp itself or to the local organization that runs it to research the site – and inconsistent, depending on how meticulous and knowledgeable the camp leader or local council may be. When a camp closes, this situation becomes still more tenuous, with documents and camp-related items sometimes being divvied up among former campers and/or lost track of. The camps addressed in this thesis were partly chosen based on these research restraints. Camp Mogisca archives were available through the Northern New Jersey Girl Scout

²⁵ Salomon, Julian Harris, *Camp Site Development*, New York: Girl Scouts of the United States of America, 1948 and 1959.

Council in Bergen County, and Camp Glen Gray materials were located at the camp site itself. Eagle Island archives are available through the Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey, but were unavailable due to the current lawsuit over the selling of the camp.²⁶ However, as a former camper and counselor at Eagle Island and a current member of the Friends of Eagle Island, a group leading efforts to save the camp, there was not a lack of information on this site.

Despite the rich and significant history of organized youth camping in the U.S., until recently there had been very little academic literature written on the history of the camping movement as a whole and its place in the broader cultural context of the late 19th and early 20th century. Happily, this trend seems to be changing, with a number of relevant books and articles appearing the past ten to fifteen years. Barksdale Maynard was one of the first to note this gap in scholarship and in 1999 wrote an article for the Winterthur Portfolio, *An Ideal Life in the Woods for Boys*, in which he convincingly argued that the first three American youth summer camps were Camp Chocorua, Camp Asquam, and Camp Pasquaney, and also analyzed the social and cultural meanings of the architecture and activities of these camps. With this paper, Maynard set a foundation for others to build upon in the area of the architectural and cultural significance of summer camps.

Since Maynard's work, a number of scholars have looked at the issues of camp history, planning, and architecture on a larger scale, going beyond the earliest camps to consider both the history of the camp movement as a whole as well as its social and cultural meanings as part of the modern era. Abigail Van Slyck has been at the forefront

²⁶ Dedam, Kim Smith, "Friends of Eagle Island Sues Girl Scout Group" *Press Republican*, June 23, 2012, accessed March 23, 2013, http://pressrepublican.com/0100_news/x1915499177/Friends-of-Eagle-Island-sue-Girl-Scout-group.

of this effort; her book, *A Manufactured Wilderness* (2006), illuminates the ways camps tended to reinforce modern constructs despite the fact that they were originally meant and advertised as a counter-movement to the influences of industrialization and urbanization. Van Slyck has also published numerous articles on the similar topics, delving more in detail on subjects such as camp mealtimes, camp sanitation and the classic campfire circle.²⁷ Sharon Wall similarly explores this tendency in Canadian summer camps in *The Nurture of Nature: Childhood, Antimodernism, and Ontario Summer Camps* (2009). Leslie Paris has also been one of the main contributors in this area, writing a thesis, a book, and numerous articles on the subject, as well as co-organizing an exhibit on the history of camping in the Adirondacks at the Adirondack Museum. Her book, *Children's Nature: The Rise of the American Summer Camp*, published in 2008, provides an in-depth history of camps and an analysis of their place in culture and society throughout the past century.

In 2002, Courtney Fint, a student at Columbia, was perhaps one of the first to argue that traditional-style organized youth summer camps are cultural and historic resources and that this should be taken into account by those responsible for them. In her thesis, she discussed proposed plans for the complete overhaul of the Jackson's Mill 4-H Camp in West Virginia.²⁸ The purpose of the renovation was to modernize the camp and turn it into a conference center; however, the plan did not take into account the history and cultural meanings of the camp site. Fint addressed the fact that this was a situation

²⁷ Besides her book, *A Manufactured Wilderness*, Abigail Van Slyck has published numerous articles, including "Housing the Happy Camper," a discussion on the evolution of camper housing, with a focus on Minnesota camps, "Kitchen Technologies and Mealtime Rituals: Interpreting the Food Axis at American Summer Camps, 1890-1950," and a chapter in the book *Designing Modern Childhoods*, "Connecting with the Landscape: Campfires and Youth Culture at American Summer Camps, 1890-1950."

²⁸ Fint, "Jackson's Mill."

facing many camps today, and offered suggestions as to how Jackson's Mill could be updated to meet the needs of today's economy but still respect the history of the site. In fact, as Fint wisely argued, economic sustainability and historic preservation are not mutually exclusive; Jackson's Mill's rich history is one of its most valuable assets, and should be protected accordingly.

Subsequently, the work of historians and scholars such as Maynard, Van Slyck, Paris, and Fint has been vital in defining and contextualizing camps as historically significant cultural landscapes. To get a stronger grasp on the field of cultural landscapes itself, it was helpful to consult Arnold Alanen and Richard Melnick's *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*, and *Cultural Landscapes*, edited by Richard Longstreth (which includes a chapter devoted to camps, contributed by Fint), as well as professional guidelines, reports, and charters that cover the preservation of such landscapes including Charles A. Birnbaum's Preservation Brief for the National Park Service, "Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment, and Management of Historic Landscapes," (1994), the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Preserving Cultural Landscapes, the ICOMOS Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage, the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas report, "The Protected Landscape Approach: Linking Nature, Culture and Community," (2005-2006), and the UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2008).

This present work picks up where Fint left off, adding to current knowledge of the cultural and social meanings of camps' site design, architecture, art, ceremonies, and traditions, as well as addressing the preservation of camps sites and camp history. Through a comparative analysis of the three previously stated summer camps: Glen Gray,

Mogisca, and Eagle Island, this thesis will highlight preservation issues that many camps throughout the country are facing today and offer possible solutions.

Chapter 1: Development of the Summer Camp Landscape

A defining feature of youth summer camps is the land on which they are established. Much thought and planning went into the purchasing and designing of the camp site and its structures. An examination of the three camps presented in this paper, Eagle Island, Mogisca, and Glen Gray, will show that those in charge of developing camp sites, whether it was 1917 or the 1970s, paid close attention to the geography of the land, the aesthetics and atmosphere created by the camp design, and how their campers would interact with both of these aspects, with concern towards creating an environment that captured the values camp owners wanted to instill in campers. These early choices in camp design and architecture played a role in how campers related to the place, how connected they felt to it, and, as is the case with the three camps presented here, affected the outcomes of later efforts to sell the camps. Examining the diversities and similarities between the physical aspects of these camps and how they developed over the years can be informative as to appropriate ways to approach efforts to preserve not only these camp sites, but also camps in comparable economic situations.

One of the most important changes that occurred in the first few decades of the summer camp movement in regard to the development of camp sites was that the acquiring of permanent land for a camp site became more commonplace, as opposed to moving locations year to year. Over the years, camp owners, both youth organizations and individual private owners, realized the necessity and benefits of owning land rather than packing up and moving from year to year. As historian Susan Miller explains, camp attendees “developed strong loyalties to their particular summer camp, and if local councils wanted to ensure that the site would be available in perpetuity, they had to

consider purchasing it, instead of relying on the goodwill of the landlord.”²⁹ This is significant because owning land meant camp owners put more effort and resources into site design and building permanent structures.

The three camps examined in this thesis all went through slightly different processes in the eventual settling and designing of a permanent site. The first five summers at Glen Gray (1911-1916) were spent at different sites throughout New Jersey including Dudley Island in Sussex County, Forge Pond near the Wanaque River, and Durham Pond near Charlottesville. It was only after the summer of 1916, when they were forced to move mid-summer from the location at Durham Pond to another site near Earl Pond, that camp leaders made settling on a permanent site a priority and set about locating land and raising the necessary funds to purchase it.³⁰ The effort was supported by the whole community- camp leaders, Boy Scout troops who had been utilizing the camp, their parents, and local residents of the areas where the troops were located. Subsequently, scout leaders started searching for the new permanent location and through “a study of contour maps and by personal trips to many spots in northern New Jersey ... reached the conclusion that the site near Oakland, N.J., was the one.”³¹ The physical features of the site were deemed ideal due to its relative seclusion, accessibility to the Ramapo Mountains and good hiking which provided views of the surrounding area, a brook which flowed through the site, and its close vicinity to the suburbs of Essex County, where most of the campers lived.³²

The local councils allocated \$8,000 to put towards the purchasing of a camp, a

²⁹ Miller, Susan, *Growing Girls: The Natural Origins of Girls Organizations in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 93.

³⁰ Price, *Twenty-five Years of Scouting*, 21.

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

hefty sum in those days, close to \$170,000 in today's dollars, which clearly indicates the importance it held to those involved. Even after the initial piece of land was purchased, Glen Gray leaders realized they would need to buy more of the surrounding land to ward off encroaching development and protect the serenity of the camp site. However, the councils could no longer allocate money the way they had done for the original camp purchase. It was up to the involvement of the camp founders, campers, Scout mothers, and local community supporters to raise the funds, which they did successfully, acquiring a number of parcels in the years after the camp was first bought.³³ The campaign to expand and protect the natural surroundings of the camp clearly touched many people, including a couple who, when their young son died unexpectedly in an elevator accident, donated his piggy bank savings to the effort because he had been such a camp enthusiast.³⁴

Similarly, Camp Mogisca, established in 1930, moved often, renting numerous different sites from other Girls Scout Councils and in state parks, including sites at Bear Mountain in Harriman, New York, which was used the first year of the camp and Stokes State Forest in New Jersey, used during the mid-1940's. In 1948, a permanent site was purchased and a camp built in Sparta, NJ, which included a man-made lake named Lake Hopewell. This site was used until 1969, when it was sold for mining to the New Jersey Zinc Company. However, the Sparta camp was sold only after the Scouts knew they could relocate to another permanent site; they had received a gift of 1,000 acres of farmland in Glen Spey, New York from the Barnes Family in 1967. Despite the numerous location changes, the camp was able to maintain a level of consistency in its

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Gray, Frank F. Letter to T. Irving Crowell, February 27, 1918.

identity by keeping the same camp name (after the move to Glen Spey the name was officially changed to Camp Mogisca at Ambarnest in honor of the donors, but this addition was not commonly used), giving the Glen Spey site a layout similar to that of the Sparta camp (a decentralized site plan with a man-made lake as the focal point - Fig. 3 and 4), and bringing traditions, songs, and even certain camp artifacts and memorabilia, with them from place to place, such as a the Candleboat Ceremony (Fig.), a camper-made totem pole (Fig. 14), and a large bell used to call the camp together (Fig.).

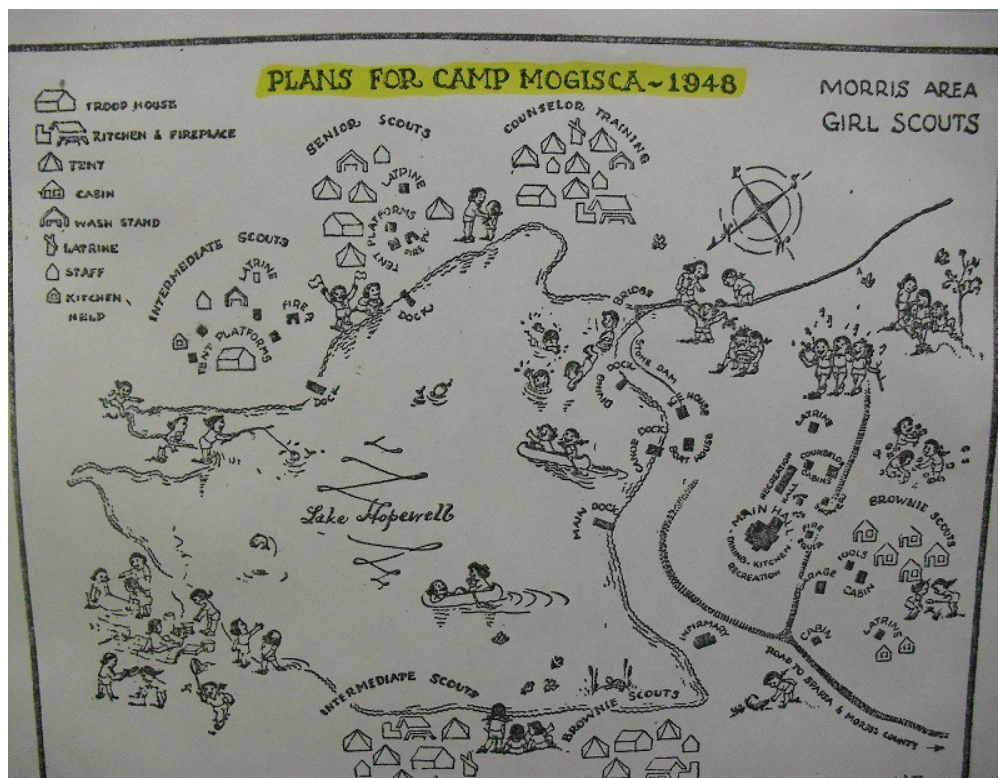


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Camp Eagle Island, as mentioned in the previous chapter, was sought out by the Girl Scout Council of Maplewood and the Oranges when they heard it might be for sale, realizing that they would soon outgrow their current camp site at White Lake in Blairstown, NJ. They were able to offer \$20,000 for the camp, a huge amount for that time, especially for a non-profit organization such as the Girl Scouts, but still below what would have been fair market value for the Adirondack Great Camp. Mr. Graves was a generous man and donated the island to the Girl Scouts, so they ended up not paying the \$20,000, but, as with Glen Gray, the willingness to put forth such sums of money for camp acquisitions clearly highlights where the priorities of the group were at the time.

The amount of both money and effort willing to be expended by Glen Gray, Mogisca and Eagle Island's local Scout councils highlights the lengths youth

organizations would go to acquire and develop camp sites from the early 1900's through the mid-20th century. The fact that the most recent Mogisca camp site was built in the late 1960's demonstrates how the Girl Scouts were still willing to put forward an effort to sustain their camps as well as build new ones at this late date. In fact, from 1950 through 1965 there was a concerted effort, led in part by architect and planner Julian Harris Salomon, who, by his own estimate, designed "some one thousand individual recreation sites by 1960,"³⁵ to assist any council that wanted a camp in finding one.³⁶ However, while the Girl Scouts took careful steps to ensure individual camp sites were not chosen in haste, in fact even stating that "haste is the one thing that should be avoided in the selection of a camp site," and advising councils that "the purchasing of a camp site, or the leasing of one on a long-term basis is a serious business that requires careful consideration, investment of funds, and judicious planning,"³⁷ the flurry of land acquisition and camp development in the mid-20th century has proven to be unsustainable, resulting in the numerous camp sales occurring today.

Today, both the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts have been actively trying to avoid their own type of "housing bubble" that caused markets to crash in 2008 and sent the U.S. into an economic recession. In this situation, however, it is a "camp bubble" that reached its height in the mid-1960's, with councils retaining lands and establishing camps with almost religious zeal. Through the 1970's and 80's camp numbers remained steady; while a camp might have been sold here or there, it was only in the 1990's with the Boy Scouts, and starting around 2007 with the Girl Scouts, that summer camps (and other properties)

³⁵ Van Slyck, *Manufactured Wilderness*, introduction, xxix.

³⁶ Copeland, Gregory A. and Elizabeth W. Iszler, "A Shift for Survival: The Impact of the Girl Scout Realignment on Camps," *Camp Business*, January/February 2010, 11.

³⁷ "Factors to be Considered in the Selection of a Camp Site." Girl Scouts USA Archives, New York, NY, accessed February 13, 2013.

began to be sold off with increasing frequency. So it is only in the last ten to fifteen years that we are seeing the burst of the Scout camp bubble.

Camp land acquisitions highlight one of the key tensions within the scouting movement today over camps. Over the years, many camps and the land they are built on have remained relatively unchanged, while the social and political world around them has changed drastically. This includes increasing land values, encroaching development, changes within Scouting organizations, greater pressure and expectations from parents, and changes in national summer camp trends, such as shorter camps sessions and the previously mentioned increase in specialty camps. One of the biggest challenges has been maintaining and managing the many camps owned by individual councils. As it was stated in the 2010 report *A Shift for Survival: The Impact of Girl Scout Realignment on Camps*, “land is the greatest asset and greatest liability for all...councils.”³⁸ This challenge of overseeing councils that own multiple camp properties is unique to large, non-for-profit youth organizations like the Scouts. Generally, if a private individual or group owns a camp, that is the only camp that they own, the only camp they have to worry about; most likely, running the camp and maintaining the land and the facilities is that person's year-round occupation. However, in the case of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, the local councils, which own the camps, are responsible for a huge range of programming of which camps are just one small, albeit historically significant, part. Adding to the challenge of managing multiple camp properties is that, over the past two decades, the local councils have been consolidated by the national organizations of both the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. This has resulted in fewer councils owning even more camp properties. Council employees have many other responsibilities besides running

³⁸ Copeland, "Shift for Survival," 11.

and maintaining a camp. A council's CEO must weigh questions of operations costs and efficiencies with the value of camps as a resource for current scouts.³⁹ Depending on the person, for example if they have a more business-oriented background versus a background in scouting and camping, they may reach a different conclusion on what the council's priorities are. Council board members give final approval to camp sales. Despite the fact that in many cases the Scouts have maintained the camp properties fairly well, many camps were built prior to 1965 and are reaching a point where either major repairs are needed for basic camp functioning or facility upgrades are needed to comply with local, state, and federal regulations, such as fire codes and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Scout camps are also more commonly the “general,” “traditional,” and/or “rustic,” camp type; these camps generally offer a range of classic camp activities including hiking, boating, swimming, arts and crafts, campfires, singing, etc., as opposed to specialty camps, which sell themselves based on expertise in one specific area. In keeping with this more traditional summer camp type, the setting of scout camps are also more likely to be rustic and blend with the camp's natural surroundings. The traditional camp was and still is facing competition from “specialty camps” that offer to teach children a specific skill as well as camps with more modern, upgraded facilities. This is why, ironically, during a time when camp attendance has actually begun to increase and in fact is at some of the highest levels it's ever been at,⁴⁰ scout councils have been faced with the difficult task of evaluating their camp properties and determining the best way to serve the young boys and girls who make up their membership. In many cases, this has

³⁹ Glen Chin, Girl Scouts USA Property Consultant, Phone Interview 3/5/13

⁴⁰ "Camp Trends Fact Sheet"

led to the decision to sell camp properties. Although camp attendance is up, the number of camps has also grown, meaning the summer camp field is more competitive in the early 21st century than it ever has been and both the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are trying to adapt to survive both economically and physically. While competition for campers is particularly stiff in the Northeast where the bulk of camps are located and where limited open space means higher land values, the problem of local scout councils selling off camps is happening nation-wide, with camps all across the country slated for closure and eventual sale.

Having a permanent site made both campers and camp leaders think differently about camp land. For campers, it engendered a stronger connection to place. For camp leaders, “ties of affection and loyalty became entangled with financial responsibilities, compelling even the most sentimental directors to view the landscape of camp from a more pragmatic perspective.”⁴¹ This meant that camp leaders were keen to make improvements to their land, such as replacing temporary tents with permanent cabins, building common areas such as dining halls and main lodges, creating hiking trails throughout the property, and even attempting feats of engineering such as creating man-made lakes. This was both to attract campers as well as for economic reasons: when camps were not in use by campers, they could be rented out and thus still bring in some income during the off-season.

At Glen Gray, architectural assistance was sought from those involved with the local Boy Scout troops who had professional expertise. Luther Edmunds Price, who wrote an early history of the camp and local troops, reported that “Frank Vreeland [Frederick K. Vreeland, for whom the lake was later named] contributed architectural

⁴¹ Miller, *Growing Girls*, 93.

plans,”⁴² while the opinion of “Clemens Herschel, an eminent engineer, was obtained” for the dam to create a lake, and “Charles S. McMullen...personally constructed the Mothers' Pavilion.”⁴³ Scout Mothers, who have been a highly involved group since the earliest days of Boy Scouting, were instrumental in planning and carrying out the building of Mothercraft, one of the larger camp cabins. In addition, Maine woodsmen were brought in to construct the mess hall and kitchen. There is a popular camp legend at Glen Gray as well that every summer until it was completed each camper had to carry a rock the size of their head to add to the building of the dam before they could go for a swim.⁴⁴ Whether hyperbole or not, what is true is that in addition to experts and paid professionals, many hours of volunteer labor were and still are provided by local community supporters, camp staff, camper's parents, and campers themselves in camp construction, maintenance, and fundraising at camps throughout the country. Nonprofit youth organizations such as the Scouts especially depend on this support for the smooth functioning of camps.

Community involvement in camp development was the case at Mogisca and Eagle Island as well. At Camp Mogisca, both the U.S. Navy and the Army Corps of Engineers were employed in the building of the man-made lake and the camp structures. (Fig. 5)

⁴² Although Price clearly states in his account of Glen Gray that plans were used, my inquiries to find them were unsuccessful. In fact, those I spoke with were under the assumption that buildings at Glen Gray were such simple structures as to not require any type of plans.

⁴³ Price, *Twenty-five Years of Scouting*, 28.

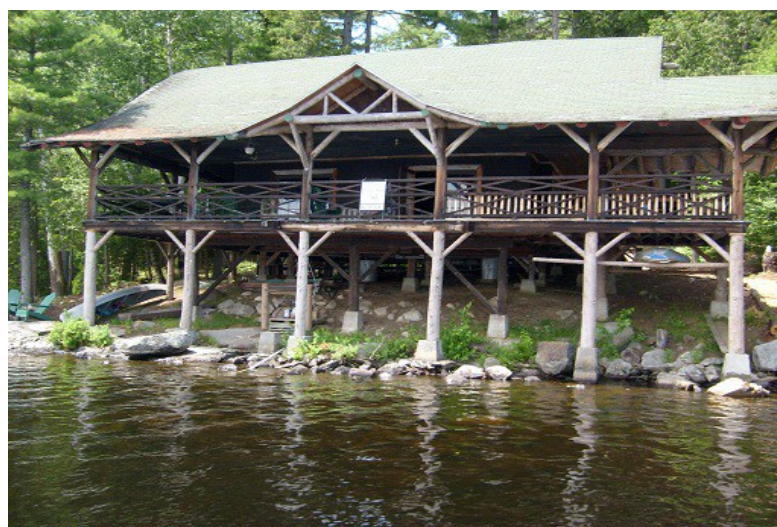
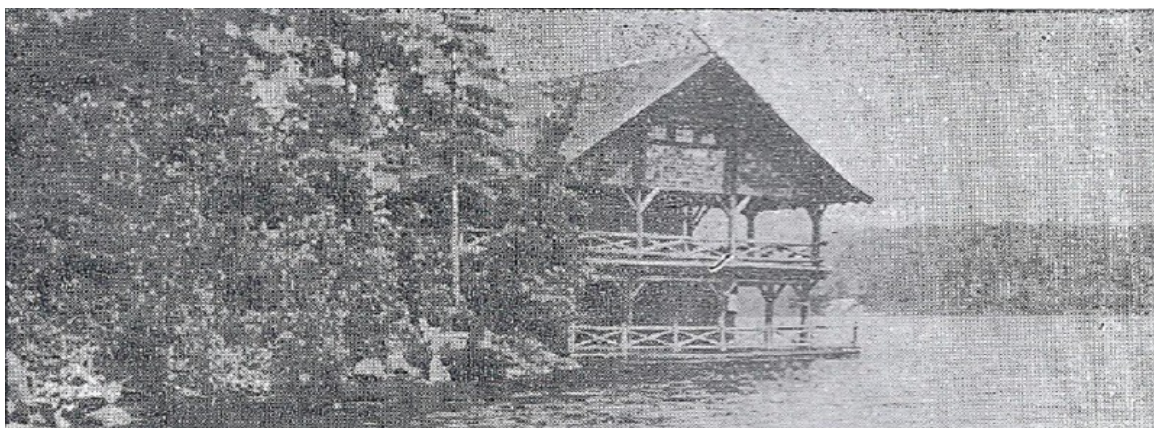
⁴⁴ Porter, Irving, "Memories of Camp Glen Gray," last modified July 20, 2003. <http://www.glengray.org/memories.html>.



Fig. 5

According to Dawn Ewing, executive director of Morry's Camp, a camp for under-served youth from the Tri-State area which bought the Camp Mogisca property from the Girl Scouts, a number of those people involved with the effort still stop by to see the camp each summer, explaining that they helped to build it, clearly still feeling pride in their job decades later. The man-made lakes of Mogisca and Glen Gray would likely be impossible to build today due to changes in environmental regulations. Also due to these regulations, repairs or changes to such elements of the landscape can pose significant logistical and budgetary issues, in many cases prompting local Scout councils to simply abandon rather than correct the problem. At Eagle Island, the Girl Scouts also turned to volunteers and camp supporters for help with a major project early in the life of the camp. Soon after the Girl Scouts began conducting camp on the site, in the 1940's, it became necessary to move the boathouse back onto land from out over the lake (built by Adirondack architect William Coulter, the boathouse and other structures were already

present at the camp when the Girl Scouts inherited it). Men from the surrounding area willingly helped in the effort, which entailed waiting until the winter when the lake was completely frozen, sawing the supporting beams off above the ice, and manually pushing the building back onto land. (Fig. 6 - top and 7 -bottom)



It is not unusual for this kind of site stewardship to continue throughout the life of a camp. Today at Glen Gray, efforts continue, led by the Old Guard (a tradition going back to the early days of the camp where campers are chosen to become camp leaders and hold some amount of responsibility in caring for the camp) and Friends of Glen Gray (FOGG), to renovate older cabins so that they can remain in use by campers. Over the

years they have rebuilt the camp library, made adjustments such as adding cabins and ramps so that buildings meet ADA requirements, and added an amphitheater with seating looking out over the lake. Most importantly, it was these same camp advocates who formed FOGG in the first place in order to save the camp when the Boy Scouts announced plans to sell the property; because of their work, the camp still exists today. Although the camp is no longer owned by the Boy Scouts, most of the campers are from local Scout troops and many of the Scouts still clearly feel a connection to the site. For example, one Scout took on the restoration of the camp's outdoor chapel as part of his Eagle Scout project, replacing the rotting old benches with new ones, clearing trails leading to the area, and removing debris from the area itself. This has made the area usable once again by camp attendees. (Fig. 8)



Fig. 8

As FOGG explains on the Glen Gray website, the camp relies heavily on this type of support, and in fact would be hard-pressed without it:

“We get no direct monetary support from the county. Instead, rental fees, donations and fundraisers provide the funds we need. But only about 60% of our needs are met by rental fees. Contributions and fund raisers must make up the other 40%. As stewards of this beautiful camp, we make every penny count. People make up the other part of the equation. With only a minimal paid staff, camp could not run without a large group of volunteers. Where ever you look around camp, you'll see projects done by volunteers. Families, groups, Scout troops and companies help us keep camp humming. The campmasters in the office and around camp are some of the volunteers. Camp work days see a friendly group of folks coming up to work and enjoy lunch.”⁴⁵

At Camp Eagle Island, in the Adirondacks of NY, there has been an ongoing tradition of volunteers helping in the set-up and break-down of camp every year during Memorial and Labor Day weekends. This involved raising all the platform tents, setting up metal camp cots and mattresses, cleaning, trail maintenance, building repairs, and any other tasks as needed. Also, in the past decade, when major repairs were needed but money was short in the council, camp alumni organized fundraising efforts and were able to help pay for upgrades to the boathouse and a new barge, among other improvements. Similar to what happened at Glen Gray, this same group of alumni formed an official non-profit, Friends of Eagle Island, and have been leading the charge in efforts to save Eagle Island, which is currently for sale by the new council.⁴⁶

Courtney Fint also documented similar events at the 4-H camp at Jackson's Mill, which "was built through the donations and work of thousands of people throughout the state, including 4-H children, community members and organizations. Each cottage was sponsored by a different county, the citizens of which worked with early founders to

⁴⁵ "Who Pays for Camp?" Friends of Glen Gray, last updated August 9, 2011, <http://www.glengray.org/whopays.html>.

⁴⁶ Di Ionno, Mark, "Former Girl Scouts Hope to Raise \$3M to Save Camp Filled with Memories," *The Star Ledger*, June 4, 2011.

create a structure that would represent the ideals of West Virginia and 4-H."⁴⁷

Longstanding traditions of camp stewardship are likely present at most summer camps, and serve to increase both the sense of ownership and loyalty for the site in campers and camp alumni. Local councils should utilize this stewardship when faced with the closing of camps by engaging camp alumni in planning for future uses of the site and fundraising efforts.

It is important for local councils that plan on selling camp sites to recognize the tradition of site stewardship and camp loyalty commonly found at summer camps and find ways to address what will no doubt be an upsetting announcement to many, as it threatens discontinuity of the scout camp tradition. In a report from 2010 on the state of Girl Scout camps, landscape architects Gregory Copeland and Elizabeth Iszler note that “we fully understand that long-time members of the Girl Scout movement will view the disposition of property as a tragedy. The strong emotional ties to the loss of a place where life-long friendships were created have to be acknowledged and dealt with as part of the process.”⁴⁸ Of the camps covered in this study, only one of the three, Mogisca, had any type of smooth transition in the selling process: in 2010 the Board of Directors approved the sale of the camp to Project Morry a nonprofit that would continue to use the site as a summer camp. A Closing Ceremony was held for camp alumni, which helped to alleviate some of the anxiety among former camp attendees and give them a sense of closure. However, Mogisca is clearly in the minority of scout camps in terms of this smooth transition. Judging by the number of lawsuits and protests,⁴⁹ this is an area that warrants further attention by the Scouts as well as intervention on the part of planners and

⁴⁷ Fint, "Jackson's Mill," 22.

⁴⁸ Copeland, "Shift for Survival," 12.

⁴⁹ The website www.savecamps.org has been chronicling events throughout the country

preservationists who may be able to offer some solutions that will allow Scouts to sell camp properties while also assuring camp alumni that the traditions and history of summer camps will be preserved in some way.

In addition to longstanding ties to a piece of land that become established when a camp establishes a permanent site, the aesthetics of a camp, too, can affect the way campers and camp staff relate to the place. From the outset of the camp movement, camp leaders, and later, professional camp planners, were aware of, and interested in, ways to shape the camp experience through the camp site layout and building design. Ideas and preferences in regard to camp aesthetics originated from a number of sources. The basic premise behind the earliest camps in the late 19th century was that by taking boys out of the 'feminizing' environment of the urban, Victorian-era influenced modern world and back to a world more closely linked to our pioneer, frontier-driven ancestors, or even further back, to a time before Europeans colonized the Americas, they were helping to build stronger men.⁵⁰ Ernest Seton Thompson, one of the most influential characters in the early development of summer camps, described the effect of campfires “to touch and thrill the cords of primitive remembrance.”⁵¹ This dictated that the look of camps remain simple and rugged; 'rustic' is possibly the most commonly used term to describe characteristics camp designers sought. Directors also found it a challenge logistically to adhere to the most puritanical forms of camping, such as having campers cook all their meals for themselves.⁵² While campers may have helped with certain aspects of food preparation, most camps had full-time cooks to prepare food for campers. This was

⁵⁰ For more discussion on how American Indian identity and imagery has been employed by non-native whites and others throughout U.S. history, see Philip Deloria Jr., *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

⁵¹ Seton, Ernest Thompson, *Book of Woodcraft*, (Garden City: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1926).

⁵² Maynard, Barksdale, "Ideal Life in the Woods for Boys" *Winterthur Portfolio*, 34.1 (Spring 1999), 3-29.

mostly a practical matter, in that requiring campers to prepare all of their own meals would occupy a large amount of time, leaving little time for other activities such as swimming, boating, and camp-craft, that both parents and children came to expect out of the camping experience.

This issue of striking a balance between the idea of true camping (which summer camps never actually were to begin with) and meeting some of the needs and/or demands of their customers also manifested itself in one of the key tensions camps have faced over the years; that is the question of whether to transition from tents to cabins. Around the same time councils began buying permanent camp sites, the national scout organizations began to push for the transition to cabins. Cabins decreased the amount of setup and take-down required every summer and also played to changing societal expectations. However, camp directors and staff thought cabins created too sheltered of an environment and basically defeated the point of the camping experience.⁵³

Some tent advocates had more practical reasons, such as sanitation. They argued that rodents and other animals were more likely to seek shelter in a nice cabin rather than a tent.⁵⁴ Interestingly, at all three camps studied for this thesis, there is a mix of both cabins and tents, however, platform canvas tents are predominant. Even though Mogisca was built in 1969, when the vast majority of camps would have chosen cabins as preferred housing, the Girl Scouts still erred on the side of rusticity and selected tents. At Glen Gray, they have reached an interesting compromise: there are wooden platforms, but instead of the current camp owners investing time and money into setting up and maintaining canvas tents, they simply let campers bring their own, modern camping tents

⁵³ Van Slyck, "*Housing the Healthy Camper*."

⁵⁴ Ibid.

and set them up on the platforms. At Eagle Island, there is one set of cabins and all the rest are tents, the cabins being generally used for the youngest group of campers.

Some of the early camp sites took their cues from another type of camp, the military one, lining up tents in neat rows and centralizing all tents and buildings in one area (Fig. 9).

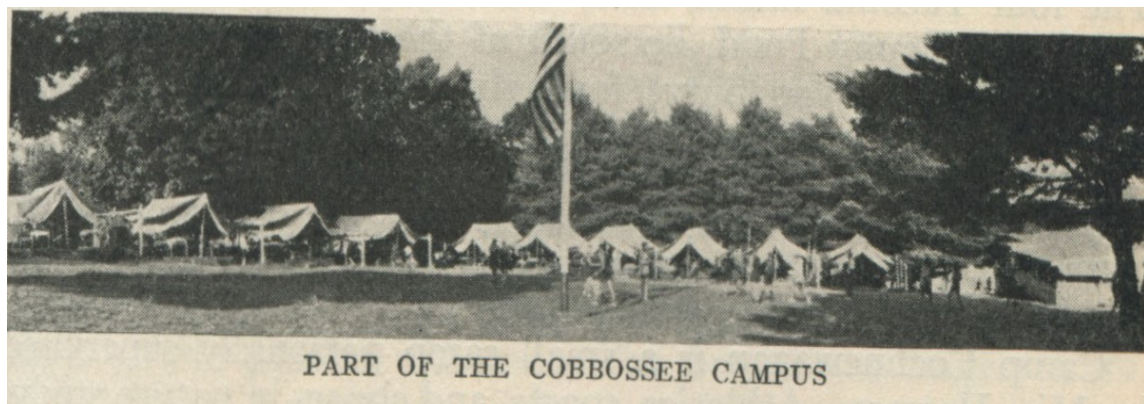


Fig. 9⁵⁵

However, as Abigail Van Slyck explains in *A Manufactured Wilderness*, this type of layout was quickly abandoned around the advent of the First World War, because camp leaders were concerned with being seen as too regimented and militaristic.⁵⁶ From that point on, the popular camp layout became the decentralized camp plan, with tents or cabins clustered in units, sometimes with a central unit building for program space, and other camp buildings and activity arenas spread throughout the camp.⁵⁷ All three camps presented in this thesis follow a decentralized layout plan. (Fig. 10, 11, 12)

⁵⁵ Sargent, Porter, *A Handbook of Summer Camps*, (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Company, 1924), 165.

⁵⁶ Van Slyck, *Manufactured Wilderness*, 19-39

⁵⁷ Ibid.

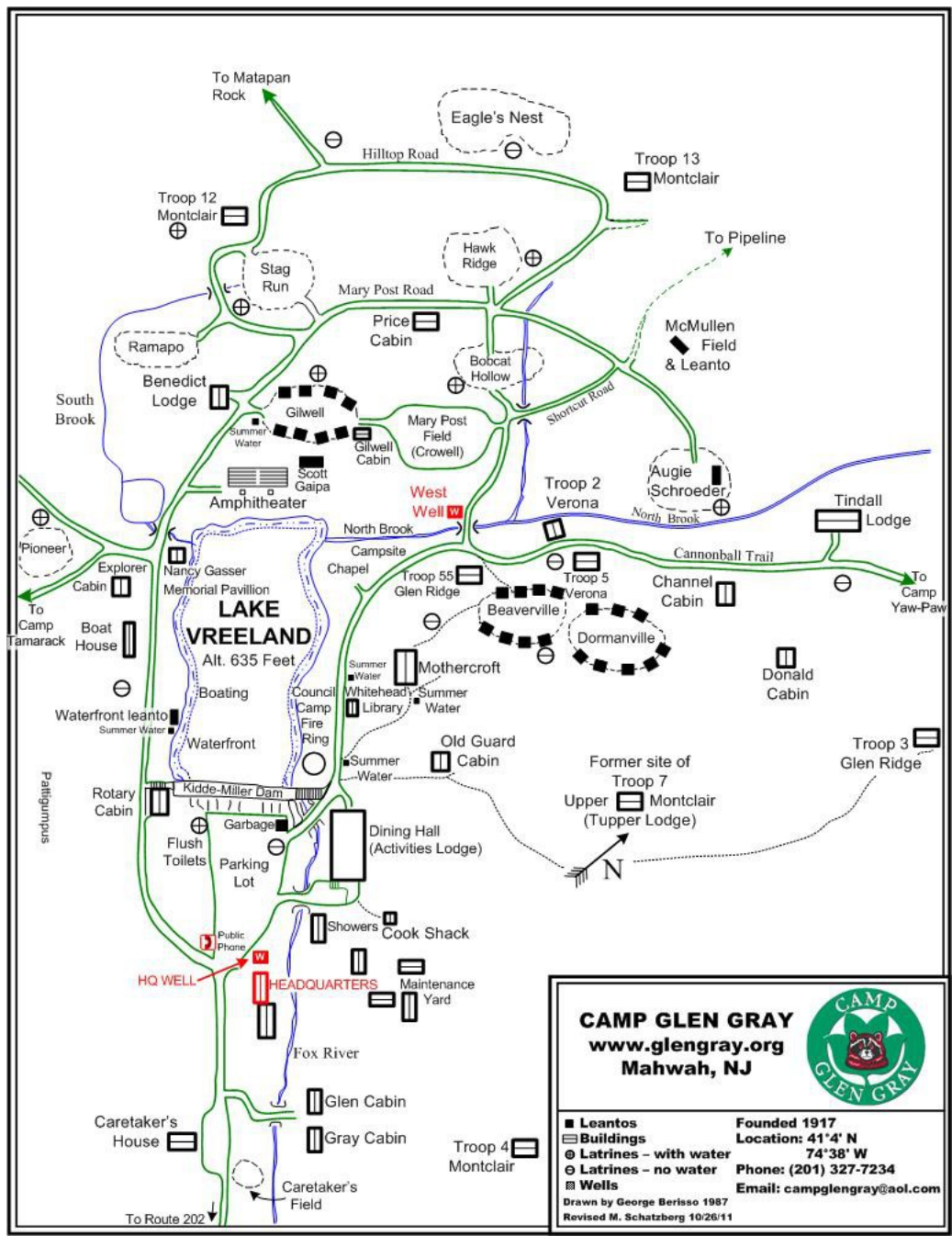
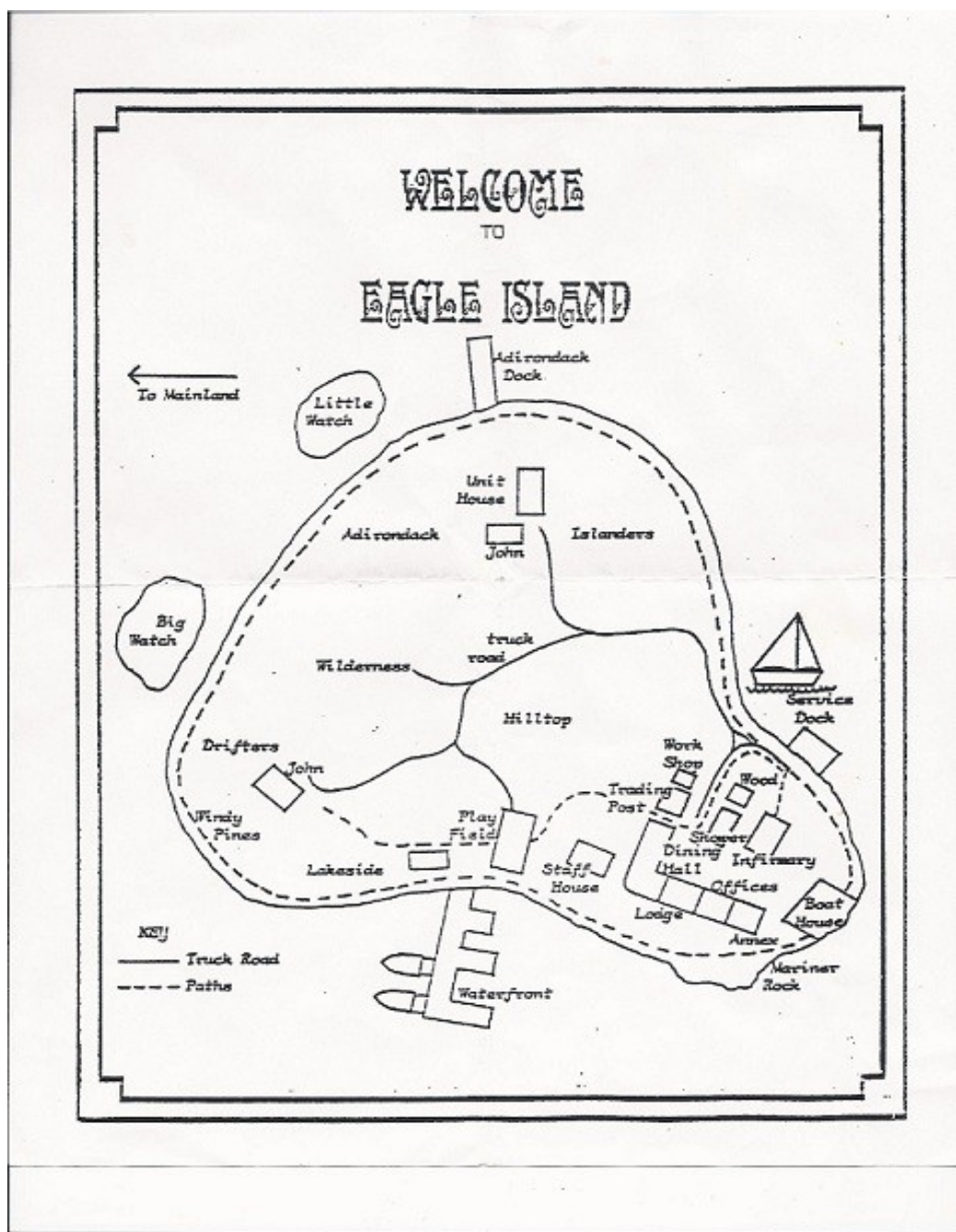


Fig. 10

Fig. 11



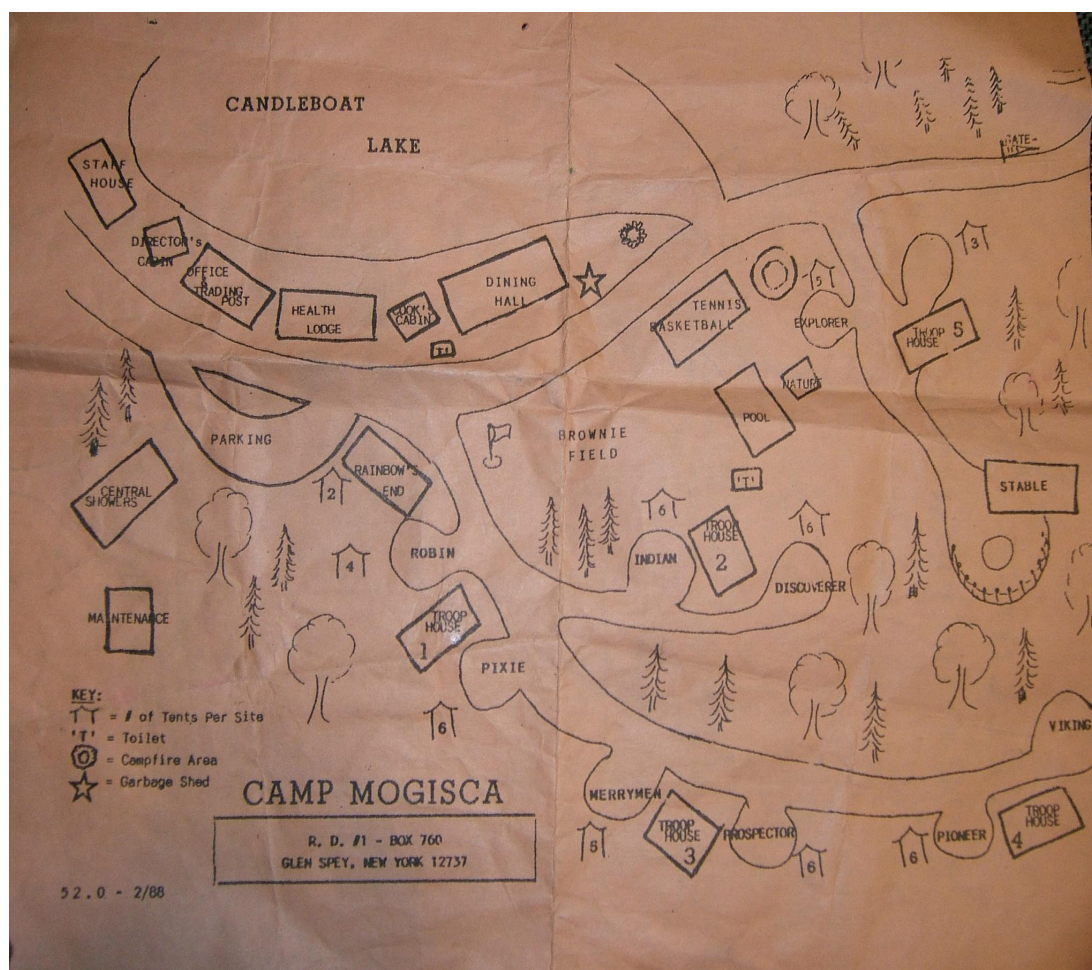


Fig. 12

Another influence on the design of camps run by youth organizations such as the scouts was other summer camps. The first summer camps were privately owned and got their start in the 1880's, preceding the advent of both the Boy Scout and Girl Scout organizations by about thirty years. These early camps set the precedent, so many of the ideas on camp aesthetics harbored by the Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts came from camps that already existed. Scout leaders studied different camps and choosing the elements they felt best fit their idea of what a camp should look like. Many youth organizations collaborated and shared ideas for site layouts and architectural plans. It is not

coincidence that in the GSUSA archive box for camp architectural plans there is an entire folder of suggested building types for Boy Scout camps created by the Boy Scouts of America as a guide for their camp leaders.⁵⁸ Especially within youth organizations such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, the formal structure of the organization itself allowed for there to be standards set forth as to what an ideal camp would look like. Although camps were not forced to comply with any set standards, camp leaders were usually members of the youth organizations that owned the camp, and so were likely to subscribe to similar ways of thinking and try to live up to the suggestions put forth by the group's national leadership.

While all camp sites are uniquely different and presented different challenges and opportunities, the over-arching goals of camp directors were, and in many ways, still are, very similar. Camps have always been intended to bring campers closer to the land and allow them to interact with nature, albeit in an environment where they are still mostly sheltered from the true wilderness and where adults could structure much of the time spent in the outdoors. To this end, the national organization of the Girl Scouts has, through the years, produced an extensive amount of advice and materials camp leaders could use when designing sites.⁵⁹ One common idea they advocated was using local materials and architectural styles to blend with the natural surroundings and vernacular architecture of the location: “each area of the country has its own basic type of architecture and the design of Girl Scout buildings should be in harmony not only with the natural landscape but with the general architectural pattern of the locality.”⁶⁰

⁵⁸ "Boy Scout Camp Site Development Plans," Girl Scouts USA archives, New York, accessed February 13, 2013.

⁵⁹ Salomon, *Camp Site Development*; additional memos and guides in Girl Scout USA archives, accessed February 13, 2013

⁶⁰ "Information Regarding Cabins," Girl Scouts USA archives, New York, accessed February 13, 2013.

However, they had a preference for *which* type of local buildings camps should reference; “by making a study of the old-time houses of a particular locality, especially those of the pioneer era, it will be found that many of the attractive and useful features of those buildings can be incorporated into plans for a camp cabin.”⁶¹ There was also a list issued that offered suggestion for which type of shelters to use depending the on the climate of the camp's location. Both the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts offered up examples of camps they thought fit the bill particularly well, including not just Scout camps but a number of sites from National Park Recreation Areas as well.

Another way in which the national organizations influenced camp design was to provide specifications on building types, including which exact buildings the organization preferred and the architectural plans to go with it. One particular area that was of great focus was the “waterfront,” a term used by camps to refer to the swimming and boating area of the site. Having a waterfront was critical as one of the biggest parts of summer camps was (and still is) the opportunity to “learn to swim and save life”⁶² and earn certifications through the Red Cross program. In this respect, the waterfront at Eagle Island is the poster child for Girl Scout waterfront, with a waterfront building, buddy board, canoe storage, and swimming area set up almost exactly to specifications put forth in Girl Scout camp planning material. The Glen Gray waterfront had the typical Boy Scout swimming area at their man-made Lake Vreeland, although space factors limited the actual beachfront and building that could be constructed. Also, since the change in ownership from the Boy Scouts to the Friends of Glen Gray in 2001, there is no longer a set swimming area. Camp Mogisca, being built most recently in the early 1970's, is the

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Price, *Twenty-five Years of Scouting*, 11.

only camp with swimming pool, (although at Eagle Island there is an old joke about there being a pool under the lodge), and so this is where camp swim lessons and free swim took place, while the lake was used mainly for boating. The importance of a body of water to these camps is further emphasized by building locations, the majority of which are purposefully located around or near the shoreline (this was also the case at Mogisca's original camp site at Lake Hopewell in Sparta, NJ). At Eagle Island, the main camp buildings were already present when the scouts got the camp, but what they did build (the waterfront, platform tent units, and unit buildings), they placed strategically around the outskirts of the island so as to take advantage of the beautiful lake views but at the same time to not disrupt the central core of historic buildings of the Adirondack great camp.

The national organizations of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts may have changed course in terms the number of camps they want local councils to own, and what they want those camps to look like, but what has not changed is the extent to which the national organizations attempt to manage and shape these camp sites. Similar to the camp site development guide by Julian Harris Salomon, the national organization of the Girl Scouts still today issues guidelines and preferred building types, and offers local councils help in developing highly detailed management plans for their camps, such as the Master Plan Guidelines created for Girl Scout Camps Cedarledge, Fiddlecreek, and Tuckaho in Missouri,⁶³ and planning process guidelines for councils looking to possibly divest themselves of their camps, such as those seen in the Property Planning Process Report for the Girl Scouts of Northeast Ohio.⁶⁴ The Boy Scouts have a 2010 publication issued by their Camping and Outdoor Program Committee offering guidelines ranging

⁶³ Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri, "Master Plan and Design Guidelines for Camp Cedarledge, Camp Fiddlecreek, and Camp Tuckaho," last updated December 16, 2009, <http://www.girlscoutsem.org/portals/0/master-plan.pdf>.

⁶⁴ Girl Scouts of North East Ohio, "Property Planning Process Report," July 30, 2010.

from running a successful camp to how to assess if a camp should remain open or not.⁶⁵

In the case of the Boy Scouts, the national organization is also setting an example through its own actions; they recently purchased and developed a state of the art camp on 10,000 acres of land in Fayette County, West Virginia that features high-adventure programming such as zip-lining, mountain biking, rock climbing, and skateboarding, at a price tag of \$400 million.⁶⁶ This is the direction the national Boy Scouts have chosen, clearly a departure from the simple, rustic summer camps that many former campers are familiar with. Through all this change and transition, former campers and camp alumni are fighting to save more traditional-style camp sites, arguably one of the most iconic American cultural landscapes of the 20th century. It is clear that those fighting to save traditional camps need help in doing so. In cases where camps are threatened by sale or modernization, planners and preservationists have a key role to place because it is the tools of these professions, such as easements, zoning laws, local preservation ordinances, and historic register nominations, that can be the most helpful in resolving conflicts over the fate of camp lands. The expertise of cultural heritage professionals is also useful because, as will be discussed in the next chapters, the controversy surrounding the selling of camps is not just about the land but also involves the history, traditions, ceremonies, and memories that are intertwined with the camp sites.

⁶⁵ Boy Scouts of America, "Camping and Outdoor Program Committee Guide," last updated 2011, http://www.scouting.org/filestore/Outdoor%20Program/pdf/34786_WB.pdf

⁶⁶ Adams, Noah, "Boy Scouts Find New Home Amid Mountains," *National Public Radio*, September 8, 2011, accessed January 5, 2013, <http://www.npr.org/2011/09/08/140250789/boy-scouts-find-new-home-amid-mountains>.

Chapter 2: Preserving the Intangible Heritage and Material Culture of Summer Camps

People in cities don't understand

Falling in love with the land

-Moon on the Meadow

(Girl Scout camp song sung throughout the 20th century to the present day)

Camp design and architecture was not the only aspect of camp that helped to imbue the site with special meaning for campers. The tradition of American youth summer camps is now over 130 years old. Although by definition summer camp life manifests only during the summer months, created within every successful summer camp is a community, and just like any other community, they have their own specific culture; and the longer a camp exists, the more history it has and the richer its culture is likely to be. In fact, perhaps more than any other aspect of American youth summer camps, the existence and importance of certain activities and objects has been one of the most consistent characteristics throughout the 20th century. Sometimes customs, traditions, and items of symbolic importance were developed by camp leaders in hopes of promoting certain values and ideals among campers. Other times they arose from camp staff and campers themselves. No matter how a tradition may have started, the campers had to embrace it for it to continue. For this reason, both the material culture and intangible cultural heritage of organized youth summer camps were instrumental in creating meaningful camp experiences for campers. As with other aspects of summer camps, the details may change from camp to camp, but the majority of camps had some combination of traditions, ceremonies, performances, songs, dances, oral history, camp legends and lore, camp crafts, memorabilia, art works, and any other number of items that might have become meaningful and of symbolic importance to the camp community.

Camp cultural practices may have been encouraged by camp leaders because of their usefulness as tools of value indoctrination, but these practices were also subject to the whims of camper approval, and therefore give a unique insight into summer camp life throughout the 20th century, children's tastes and preferences at camp, and the ways in which modernity influenced the camp setting.

The three camps considered here, Glen Gray, Mogisca, and Eagle Island, provide examples of just some of the types of cultural practices found throughout the country and highlight the importance they held, and still do hold, for the camps, current attendees, and alumni. The economic and social circumstances of Glen Gray, Mogisca, and Eagle Island are prime exhibits of how the cultural heritage of camps is threatened when camps face closure. In closing camps, the national organizations of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts have generally made the arguments that these sites do not serve a high enough proportion of their constituencies to rationalize their cost, and therefore, their existence.⁶⁷ At the same time, they have acknowledged the strong connection many people have to camps and that they know it will be upsetting to hear that camps are closing. However, as the numerous lawsuits against local council throughout the country can attest to, the process of local councils divesting themselves of their camps has clearly not been a smooth one.⁶⁸ The previous chapter addressed how local Girl and Boy Scout councils can and should approach preservation of the physical camp properties as a way of reducing the conflict over these sites. This chapter presents another possibility that has been both overlooked, and in some scenarios, clearly mishandled by local councils. This is the preservation of the intangible heritage and material culture of summer camps. Through examining what

⁶⁷ Glen Chin, Girl Scouts USA Property Consultant, phone interview with author, March 5, 2013.

⁶⁸ www.savecamps.org

has happened at Glen Gray, Mogisca, and Eagle Island, as well as other relevant camp preservation and memorialization efforts throughout the country, suggestions will be made as to how best to approach preservation of both the material culture and intangible heritage practices of camps.

Intangible Heritage

First, it is important to establish what camping cultural practices might be and what their significance is to the participants and to the camp itself. While some traditions or practices may come and go at camps there are some clear mainstays. In particular, camp songs, camp legends, camps fires (especially the final night camp fire), and a myriad of all-camp events such as color wars or other types of intra-camp competitions, are all examples of both long-standing and widespread practices that cut across almost all types of youth summer camps. These traditions are all certainly present in some form at Glen Gray, Mogisca, and Eagle Island.

For all three camps considered here, as well as the majority of youth summer camps, songs factor as an important part of the camp experience. Songs bring communities together and help express shared experiences. At Eagle Island, songs were taught and sung after every meal, as well as at all-camp events and at any opportune moment within each individual camp unit. The situation was similar at Glen Gray and Mogisca. Having attended Eagle Island as both a camper and counselor, I can attest to the way singing permeated the camp experience. Songs were used at almost every opportunity: as a way to “break the ice” when campers first arrive, on the second night of camp at an event called “staff intros” where staff would use songs to introduce themselves to campers, to keep campers occupied when unexpected downtime might

occur, before and after meals as part of the everyday program, as a way to bond with each other, and to see campers off at the end of the camp session. Singing was something that became second nature and it was not uncommon to hear people singing at random just for the sheer enjoyment of it. Songs are also something campers can take with them when they leave camp, serving as reminders of their camp experience throughout the rest of the year.

Mary-Ann Lewis, who was a camper and eventually the director of Camp Mogisca, and is currently the Outdoor Program Director for the Girl Scouts Northern New Jersey Council, confirmed similar patterns at Mogisca, emphasizing the importance of songs as a part of other camp traditions, such as the last night “Candleboat Ceremony,” when staff would form two lines and sing while campers would walk between them until they reached the water and then set the boats to sail.⁶⁹ According to Nancy Garelick, Friends of Glen Gray director, at Glen Gray songs “are sung all the time,” along with “skits and cheers,” as part of the evening campfire.⁷⁰ One of the most valued traditions at Eagle Island was itself based on singing; Song Contest, which had gone on since the very early years of camp (at least since the 1940's, and the first year of camp was 1938), was one of the highlight events of the summer. Each unit would choose two songs to sing: an old song and a new song. “Old” meant the song had not been taught or sung at camp in the last three years, and “new” was one that had never been sung at camp before. In this way, old songs were revived and new ones introduced. The contest was held at the end of the session, a culmination of the hard work and practice put in throughout the previous weeks. A panel of impartial judges (many times adult camp alumni would come back for

⁶⁹ Maryann Lewis, in-person interview with author, January 10, 2013

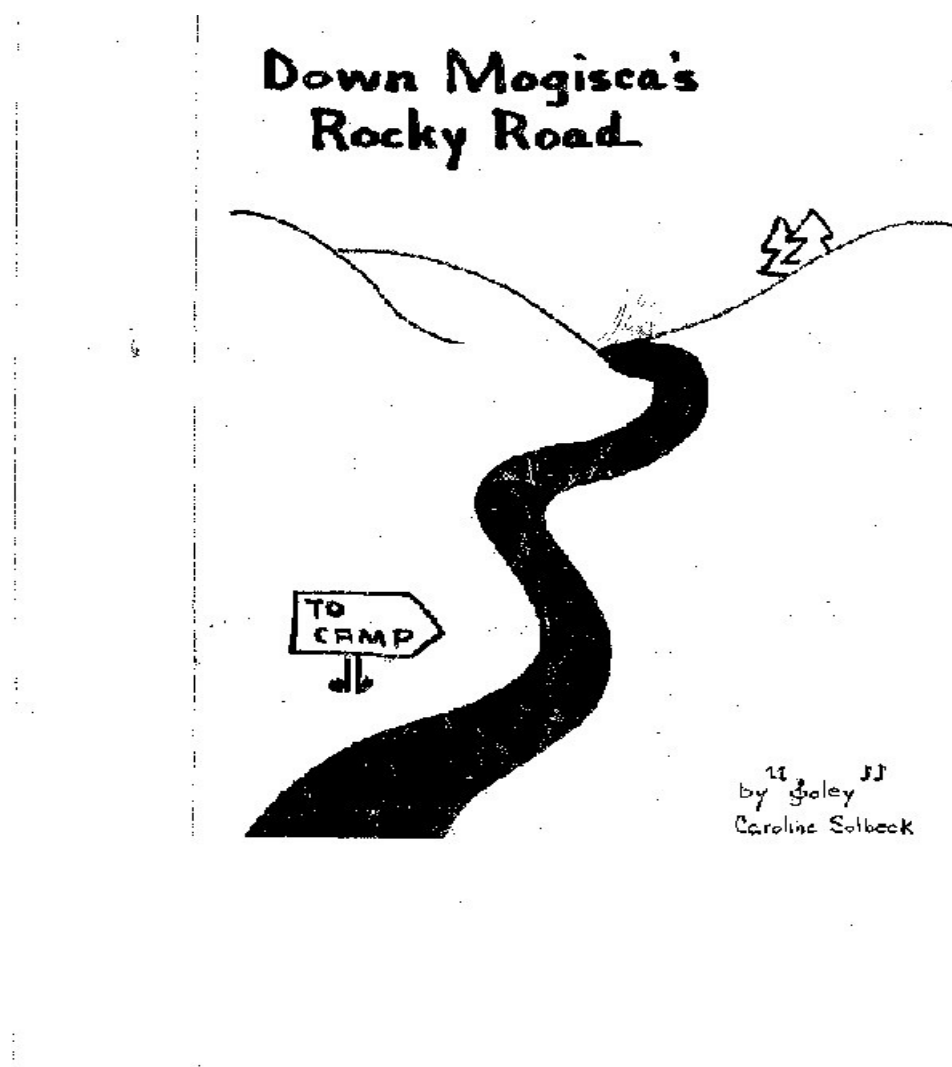
⁷⁰ Nancy Garelick, e-mail message February 9, 2013.

this night to visit and be a judge) would deliberate and choose a winner. There was no material prize, but the adding of the winning group's name to the Song Contest board in the dining hall was a great source of pride and honor. Afterward, units would teach their songs to the rest of the camp. Some songs would become incorporated into the camp song repertoire, while others might not quite catch on, but the result was that Song Contest was extremely successful in reinvigorating the camp singing tradition each year.

Camps' songs encompassed many categories and types of song. In an article for *Camping Magazine*, *Camp Songs-History and Traditions*, Jack Pearse highlights this diversity: "At camp, we sing songs that fun, upbeat, harmonious, or inspiring...We sing folk songs; spirituals; patriotic songs; religious songs; fun, nonsense, novelty, action songs; melodious (rounds, partner songs); popular songs that are 'catchy'; songs that we write (or adapt) ourselves." Most of all, however, Pearse notes, "the songs are easy to sing and remember."⁷¹ The mention of songs that are "written or adapted ourselves" is of particular note here, because these songs are site-specific they are perhaps the most threatened by camp closings, for the simple reason that it is unlikely for a campers to want to sing a song about another camp. Glen Gray, Mogisca, and Eagle Island, all sing site-specific songs. One song in particular, still sung at Glen Gray today, was written early in the camp's history by the camp's originator and namesake, Frank Gray. "Voices of the Glen" is a slower song that is very meaningful to camp attendees. Mogisca had at least one, called "Down Mogisca's Rocky Road," written by a camp attendee named Caroline 'Soley' Solbeck, which became the official 'camp song'. Songs such as this are the ones MaryAnn Lewis, former Mogisca Camp Director, recalls as meaning the most to

⁷¹ Pearse, Jack, "Camp Songs-History and Traditions," *Camping Magazine*, July/August 2010, accessed January 5, 2013, <http://www.acacamps.org/campmag/1007/camp-songs-history-and-traditions>.

her.⁷² Eagle Island also had many such songs. Some were original compositions written by camp attendees about the camp, some were adapted from church songs, folk songs, even pop songs and alternative music. The following are the lyrics to Voices of the Glen, Down Mogisca's Rocky Road, and a selection of songs are site-specific to Eagle Island:



by Goley JJ
Caroline Solbeck

⁷² Maryann Lewis, email message February 21, 2013.

Down Mogisca's Rocky Road

Words and Music by
Caroline 'Soley' Salbeck

VERSE ONE

Down a long and rock-y road, there's a place I long to be —, Down a
 mem-ry la-den path-way, there are ma-ny friends I see; And that
 long and rock-y road, comes a- live when leaves turn gre-en, and I
 hear the birds a sing-m', and — the laugh-ter of a stream. So I'll go
 back to Mo-gis-ca, I'll walk that road a — gain, Yes I'll go
 back to Mo-gis-ca 'cause I love to be there when I watch that,
 long and rock-y road, come back to life when leaves turn gre-en, and the
 voi-ces of the child-ren re — ec-ho 'in my dreams.

CHORUS

VERSE TWO

When the tent flaps roll up high, And you hear that old bell ring —; Then you'll
 see our flags un — furled —, And you'll know that camp's in swing; In the
 ev-ening watch the glow, of a camp-fire's radiant light — And a —
 round lake Hoperwell's shore, It makes such a lovely sight. So I'll go

CHORUS

back to mo — gis — ca, I'll walk that road a — gain, Yes I'll go

back to mo — gis — ca 'cause I love to be there when I watch that,

long and rock-y road, come back to life when leaves turn gre-en, and the

voi — ces of the child — ren, re — ce — ho in my dreams.

VERSE THREE

As the can — die boats sail on, And the last fare well is made — Then you'll

see Oh Au — tumn starting on his co — lor — ful pa — rade; Then that

long and rock-y road, Turns to shades of brown and gold — And we'll

close our eyes and dream of the friendships we still hold. So I'll go

back to mo — gis — ca, I'll walk that road a — gain, Yes I'll go

back to mo — gis — ca 'cause I love to be there when I watch that,

long and rock-y road, come back to life when leaves turn gre-en, and the

voi — ces of the child — ren re — ce — ho in my dreams.

The Voices of the Glen by Frank F. Gray

All day long I hear the voices calling From the dear old Glen;
 Ev'ry day renews the growing longing To be there again.
 There the cabin and canoe are waiting By the tree clad shore,
 While the voices of the Glen are calling To return once more.

CHORUS:

Voices appealing call from the Glen,
 Like the echoes of yesterday waking again;
 Voices of wild things, of streamlet, and tree;
 Soul of the wilderness calling to me.

Long the weeks of weary looking forward To those hours of joy;
 Slow the steps through weeks of work and study To the longing boy.
 Yet the time is no less surely nearing When we hear again
 All those well-known voices with their welcome Echo thro' the Glen.

-CHORUS-

Far away in other climes and countries, Still those echoes call;
 Nature's notes with dear old voices mingling, How I love them all!
 How my heart is ever longing, yearning To be back once more.
 In the sunshine, or in campfire glamour, By the cool, green shore.

CHORUS:

Voices appealing call from the Glen,
 Like the echoes of yesterday waking again;
 Call of the woods, of old comrades, and thee,
 Soul of the Scout, ever waking in me.

There's a Camp on Saranac

There's a camp on Saranac and it's just the place for me
 From the tents of unit three, the blue lake you plainly see
 Where the mountains high, reach up to the sky
 Dressed in green and purple and gold
 And the lake at night is a glorious sight
 With the whitecaps breaking beyond
 There's a camp on Saranac and it's just the place for me.
 (hum the tune again)
 (sing last line)
 There's a camp on Saranac and its name is EIC.

We're a Camp

(Senior Waterfront Song Contest 2nd Place 1962)

We're a camp that really can't be beat
For united we will never meet defeat
We've got pep and personality
Eagle Island you're the camp for me.

Hear our voices raised in harmony
Eagle Island spirit lives eternally
Heads held high we proudly march along
Join us as we sing this rousing song

Our shouts will rise up to the sky
As our banner's raised on high
Eagle Isle will reign for evermore
As the camp we all adore

Cherished thoughts we always hold so dear
Memories of camp remain throughout the year
Always striving to pledge loyalty
Eagle Island, you're the camp for me
[slower] Eagle Island, you're the camp for me

Eugene's Ark Song

(written ca. 2001, sung to the tune of "After Hours" by Velvet Underground)

-- indicates two snaps

If you take -- the Ark --, your trip could last an hour
Leave the dock -- behind --, smell that diesel power
Well, the LBH is fast and the Gastron is faster, and the Whaler just got a new engine
But if you take -- the Ark ---, you'll never have to be in a hurry again

If you take -- the Ark --, your trip could last all session
Leave the dock -- behind --, return at your discretion
Well, you might get there much sooner on the Lillian Babbitt Hyde,
But would you know what you missed along the way?
If you take -- the Ark --, you'll never have to be in a hurry again
Well, the Ark is quite large, but not as big as the barge, and the LB can hold 26
If you went skiing around, behind the Ark you would drown, but it gives you your boat-
driving fix

[repeat 1st verse]

(that's right!) You'll never have to be in a hurry again
(once more!) You'll never have to be in a hurry again!

Songs praising the meaningful aspects of each camp were a way to boost morale
and camp spirit among campers, but the practice of singing also shows the dedication and

true feelings of both camp staff and campers, many of whom were the songs' composers. However, there are also many songs that while no less-loved or enjoyed as other camps songs, came to camps in a more "top-down" fashion, especially within Scout camps and other camps run by larger youth organizations. The Girl Scouts issued song books, such as the *Girl Scout Song Book* (1929) and *Sing Together!* (1949), which provided camp songs that camps could insert their name into, such as "Big Folks, Little Folks," "Green Trees," and "We Welcome You," to make it sound as if the song was written specifically about that camp. The American Camp Association (ACA) also issued similar songbooks. Ms. Lewis recalled using two books in particular at Mogisca, the GSUSA-issued "Girl Scout Pocket Guide" and the ACA's "Sing!" The ACA continues to encourage the tradition of singing at its annual conferences, offering conference sessions on how to successfully teach songs and lead campers in singing.⁷³

Beside singing's use as a morale booster and indoctrination tool, another reason for its appeal may have been that it harkened back to earlier, pre-European American eras, which camp leaders idealized and were hoping to emulate. Pete Seeger describes this ancestral connection to song in the film *Pete Seeger-The Power of Song* when he explains that "Once upon a time, wasn't singing a part of everyday life as much as talking, physical exercise, and religion? Our distant ancestors, wherever they were in the world, sang while pounding grain, paddling canoes, or walking long journeys."⁷⁴ Not only would campers be taking part in similar activities such as canoeing, hiking, and preparing food, they would be carrying on, almost reviving, the "ancestral" tradition of singing. Lyrics to the popular camp songs *Music Alone Shall Live* speak to this enduring,

⁷³ Pearse, "Camp Songs-History and Traditions."

⁷⁴ Ibid.

timeless quality of song:

All things shall perish from under the sky
Music alone shall live, music alone shall live
Music alone shall live, never to die

Once a camp closes, many of the singing traditions that were a part of the camp will also likely come to an end, but this does not necessarily mean the singing ends. According to a UNESCO publication on intangible heritage, “to be kept alive, it must remain relevant to a culture and be regularly practiced and learned within communities and between generations.”⁷⁵ In fact, although the setting may be different, the singing of camp songs is perhaps one of most readily available parts of a camp's cultural heritage for those looking to celebrate and continue camp traditions even if the camp itself is no longer there. For instance, when Mogisca had a 'closing ceremony' to provide a sense of closure for camp alumni, singing was featured as part of the campfire, just like it had been when the camp was operating. Eagle Island Camp alumni have gathered for a number of reunions and events since the camp has closed, at which singing is always an expected and popular feature. Even though Glen Gray is no longer an official Boy Scout camp, or even a youth summer camp, songs are still sung around evening campfires, including Frank Gray's “Voices of the Glen,” allowing the history of the camp to live on and giving camp alumni and campers an important sense of continuity.

There are many examples of intangible heritage at camps beyond song. Another example is in the oral history and camp legends that are passed down through generations of campers. At Camp Glen Gray, one tale is the legend of Mary Post, the supposed Revolutionary-War era tavern owner who was hung by British Loyalists in what is today

⁷⁵ UNESCO, What is Intangible Cultural Heritage? p.7

known as “Mary Post Field.”⁷⁶ An Eagle Island camp legend told of “Chief Eagle,” a Native American who supposedly lived on the island and was forced to leave when “the white men” came. Although camp stories may not be completely historically accurate, they should not necessarily be dismissed altogether as fiction. Both of these camp legends are based partially in reality – there is a Revolutionary War-era trail at Glen Gray, and Euro-Americans did force Native Americans from their land.

Camp such as Glen Gray and the Schiff Reservation in Mendham, New Jersey, show how oral history can be helpful in identifying actual historical events that might aid in camp site's case for preservation. When Schiff Reservation was being considered for inclusion as part of the Ralston Historic District, the firm conducting the study of historic resources, Historic Conservation and Interpretation, Inc., began their research by investigating the oral history and camp lore that had been passed down by the Boy Scouts.⁷⁷ This included “the oral tradition that parts of the Continental Army camped and defended the western approaches to Morristown on the hills of the Schiff Reservation”⁷⁸ parts of which turned out to be true.⁷⁹ The telling of stories around a campfire is not unique to summer camps, but because summer camps are linked to places, there tend to be stories that relate to that place, and in this way history is passed down that might not otherwise have persisted. It is the cultural landscape aspect of camps- that people are interacting with the land and its history- that preserves this history and even helps it to flourish. This is important to consider in the case of camps that are closing or being sold, since knowledge of significant historical events that occurred at the site may add weight to preservation efforts, and also because thought should be given as to how to preserve

⁷⁶ glengray.org

⁷⁷ Rutsch, An Evaluation of the Schiff Reservation's Potential Cultural Resources

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ National Register, Ralston Historic District

the oral traditions of camps.

Other annual traditions at camps can run the gamut from performances to competitions, events dances, and a myriad of other activities. Just a few examples include the “Rededication Play” at Eagle Island, which recounts the camp's history, the previously mentioned Song Contest, the end of the session Candleboat ceremony at Camp Mogisca, and a similar version of this which happens at Eagle Island, and Glen Gray's Old Guard “Calling” ceremony, where certain campers are chosen at the end of the season to become members of the Old Guard, considered a high honor.

Camp songs, customs and traditions are a core part of the camp experience because they help to create bonds between individual campers as well as between campers and the camp site itself. They also reaffirm the shared values campers are assumed to be learning throughout the summer camp experience. If Girl Scout and Boy Scout councils are genuinely concerned with acknowledging the strong connection camp attendees have to camp sites, intangible heritage is something that cannot be ignored. It would behoove both local councils and the national organizations to take a leadership role in actively promoting the preservation and/or memorialization of significant camp practices, customs, and traditions. The local councils and national organizations must take responsibility for caring for the intangible culture they helped to create.

Some councils have established systems such as archives for the purpose of preserving a camp's history, and the national Girl Scout and Boy Scout organizations both have their own museums and archives that have information on camps. However, there is not a formalized or institutionalized process for the local councils, and therefore conservation and documentation of camp history does not happen on a regular basis. In

many cases, it is the employees, such as Mary Ann Lewis of the Northern New Jersey council, who have realized the necessity of this on their own and taken steps to protect and share this heritage. At Camp Mogisca, due to Lewis' efforts, the local council was proactive in reaching out to camp alumni and held a successful Closing Ceremony with over 100 people attending, while the council that owned Eagle Island did nothing to help former campers feel that even though their camp was being closed its memory and history would still be honored and preserved. This type of "Closing Ceremony" event is could easily be held at all camps faced with closure. It is important that the local council responsible for closing the camp is part of the event because it allows the camp alumni to see that the council is not ignoring their sentiments. Local councils should also consider holding camp reunions annually or at important landmarks such as five or ten year reunions (similar to high schools). Many 'Friends' groups, such as Friends of Eagle Island, have done this already on their own, but the local councils should be more involved and proactive in this, which, again, will show that they understand the importance camps holds to their constituents. Another positive effect of this will be that it will help memories and certain traditions to live on, especially camp songs, which are bound to be sung whenever camp reunions are held. Certain camp ceremonies could also be re-enacted, even if modified, and camp stories can be re-told.

Aside from reunions, Scouts can be better stewards of the intangible heritage of camp by physically preserving songs and stories. Visual or audio recordings can be made of performances, ceremonies, events, songs, oral history, and camp legends and lore. Books can be written on camp history. The Scouts could also create camp websites where stories and memories can be shared, similar to the Camp Memories Project at the

Adirondack Museum. The Scouts have the resources to do this themselves, but they could also support 'Friends' groups in doing so. In fact, by supporting and encouraging the 'Friends of' groups that commonly form when camps are closed or put up sale, the Scouts can prevent some of the discontent and confrontation that has occurred when camps are closed. The Scouts should celebrate the fact that there are such enthusiastic camp alumni who want to see their camps preserved, as opposed to alienating them, as was done with Glen Gray and Eagle Island, because it is a testament to how successful the camps were in the first place.

Material Culture

In the early 1900's, organized camping advocates such as Ernest Thompson Seton promoted “camp craft” and “nature craft” as an important part of the summer camp program. The ways camps interpreted and implemented this could vary greatly. Until the 1950's, "camp craft programs developed along gender lines," with certain aspects of crafting such as decorating, basket-weaving, and art projects commonly emphasized more at girls' camps.⁸⁰ Today, this tradition has evolved into what is commonly known as “Arts and Crafts.” Although the activities encapsulated in camp craft and today's arts and crafts programs tend to be individual projects, insignificant to anyone but the maker (and perhaps the maker's parents), there are some examples of camp crafts that were done on a larger scale and came to be items of significance for the camp, and sometimes even became part of long traditions.

An old photograph (circa 1950's - 60's) in the Camp Mogisca archive shows a camper carving a long wooden pole into animal shapes and words. (Fig. 13)

⁸⁰ Bond, *Paradise for Boys and Girls*, 46.



Fig.13

Mary-Ann Lewis remembers that this was planned camp program that brought in an artist who showed campers how to do wood-carving and teach them about totem poles. The campers and camp caretaker then created a totem pole for Camp Mogisca. (Fig. 14) This pole became very important to the Camp, everyone was very proud of it. It was such a part of the camp's identity that when the camp moved locations in the late 1960's, it was dug up (not an easy task as Ms. Lewis recalls) and transported to the new camp site. Sadly, the totem pole was fair game to the many woodpeckers in the area of the new camp site and has disintegrated over the years.

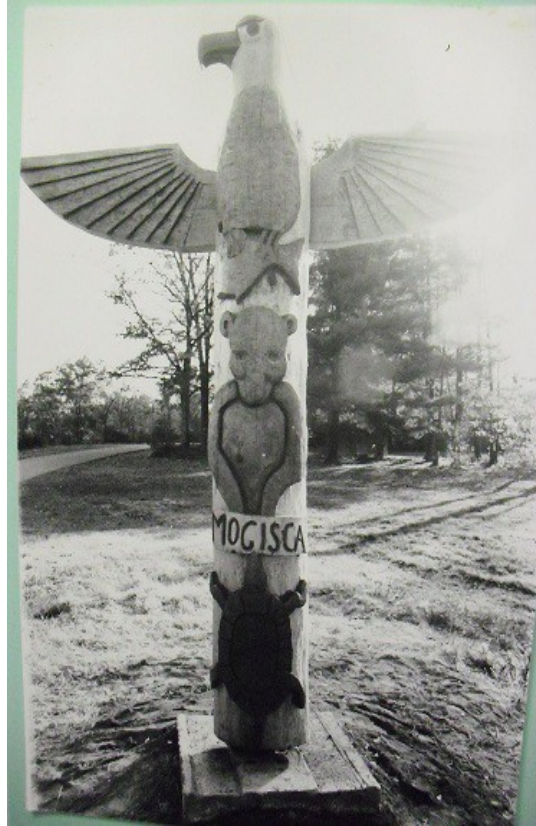


Fig. 14

This is a prime example of the type of object that might warrant preservation in the case of a camp closure; made by both campers and staff, it was admired and accepted by the camp at large as something they felt represented the camp well. The Mogisca totem pole also represents a problematic side of camp cultural heritage, which is the common use of Native American imagery as a part of many traditions and camp crafts. This goes back to the early times of the camp movement in the 1900's, and the influence of Ernest Thompson Seton.⁸¹ Further examples of this type of imagery and the ways it might be addressed when looking to preserve camps and their cultural practices will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁸¹ For more discussion on how American Indian identity and imagery has been employed by non-native whites and others throughout U.S. history, see Philip Deloria Jr., *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998)..

Objects imbued with some type of meaning or significance to the camp community can be found at every camp site. At Eagle Island, staff plaques were made at the end of every summer with a list of staff names and a quotation from a camp song. All staff took part in choosing the quotation, and many times it was from a camp song that was particularly popular at camp that summer. These staff plaques were works of art that had a lot of skill and hard work put into them. Once completed, they were hung in the dining hall; at every meal, campers were surrounded by reminders of the camp's history, not just the works of art but also the people who had worked there and the songs they had sung. (Fig. 15)



Fig. 15

When Eagle Island was put up for sale, because it was being marketed as a private residence, all indications that it had been a camp were taken down, including the staff plaques. When camp alumni questioned the Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey council,

who owns the camp, as to what happened to them as well as other items that had been removed, the answer was that everything was “in a safe place.”⁸² This answer was clearly not what camp alumni were looking for to reassure them that important parts of the camp's history were being well cared for. Perhaps the more important question is, what will happen to items like the staff plaques when the camp is sold? Should they belong to the camp staff who made them? Should the Girl Scouts, who seem to only be interested in selling the site and not with preservation of the camp's history, keep them? Do the Girl Scouts have some obligation to make these items available to camp alumni for whom they hold important memories and meanings? Whether they do or not, being evasive about these important items that relate to camp history has not helped Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey to have a smooth process in selling Eagle Island.

Interestingly, another camp owned by the New Jersey council, Camp Madeline Mulford, built for the Girl Scouts in 1927, had also made staff plaques. At some point, after the camp had closed, the Madeline Mulford plaques were brought to Eagle Island and hung up in the “changing room” of the waterfront building, where campers would change before and after swimming. These staff plaques were made of lighter colored wood and were more uniform than Eagle Island’s, but it was clearly the same idea of listing staff names along with a song quote. Out of context, and without any historical information, the Madeline Mulford plaques were confusing to me as a young camper. I remember trying to figure them out– I didn’t recognize the song quotes or the names the way I did with the Eagle Island plaques. While it is great that the plaques were kept and hung up in the first place, if the Eagle Island plaques do go to another camp, it would be both more meaningful and educational to campers and staff if they are placed in a central

⁸² As reported to me by Chris Hildebrand, member of Friends of Eagle Island

location, along with contextual history of the camp from which they came, such as how the camp was started, where it was located, the years of operation, why it closed, information about staff members, songs and stories specific to the camp, photos, and any other available camp memorabilia. The bottom line is that these pieces of camp history should be accessible to people for whom they hold special meaning, not stored away or discarded.

Glen Gray is another camp with the tradition of plaques lining their dining hall walls. These plaques are made by the campers and depict the Boy Scout troop campers were part of and the year they attended camp, along with any other images and memories of camp they wish to include. (Fig. 16)



Fig. 16

Even though Glen Gray is no longer an official Boy Scout camp, these plaques have been left on the walls by the current camp operator, Friends of Glen Gray (FOGG). As with Eagle Island, this tradition keeps the site's history in plain view of anyone who sits down to a meal in the camp dining hall. In addition, many of the Glen Gray campers still participate in Boy Scouts, so these plaques are relevant to them and in fact may hold names of past family members who attended the camp in previous years.

Other common material items of importance found at Scouting camps include

logs of daily camp happenings, flags, camp uniforms, badges (in the case of Scout camps), canoe paddles (campers would commonly decorate them), musical instruments (such as the bugle that might have been used to call campers to breakfast), and any item that holds some type of special meaning to those who are familiar with the camp. Even those items that may seem of no significance, such as the popular "lanyards" that campers make actually have a long history and are quite iconic in the summer camp world. The value of these items lies in the fact that they represent a long-lived camp tradition that is still alive today. The image below, taken from *A Paradise for Boys and Girls*, shows a scene of female campers from the 1940's around a table doing various crafts. This next image was taken in 2005 at Eagle Island, showing campers in an almost identical setting. (Fig. 17 and 18)

Fig. 17



Fig. 18



These categories of objects deserve consideration as to their importance to the camp, and former campers, and to how they might be preserved. If a camp is being sold and will not be used as a summer camp any longer, such as at Eagle Island, it is critical that care be

taken to consult stakeholders such as camp alumni to ascertain what are the items of significance and to devise a plan as to how to preserve these items, whether it by keeping them at the local council, bringing them to another camp, distributing items among camp alumni, donating them to a museum or other institution willing to care for them, or any combination thereof. Girl Scout and Boy Scout councils that own camps should do this because it will alleviate much of the bad will that is created when camps are put up for sale and also because these items actually represent important parts of their own council's history, Scouting history in general, and also an important part of our country's history.

If a camp is sold but still remains a camp site, it is possible for material culture from one camp to remain and live on in the new camp, even if the original community from which it originated does not still use the site. Camp Mogisca, now Morry's camp, provides a wonderful example of how the material culture of one camp can carry on if the camp site is sold and becomes another camp. Dawn Ewing, the current director of Morry's Camp, was looking for a way to honor the oldest group of campers at the end of the summer, since they would be too old to return to camp the following year. In the basement of the dining hall, she found some old, large wooden signs painted with old unit names such as 'Pioneers' and 'Mountaineers' that had been left behind by Mogisca staff. She decided to present one of these signs to the oldest group of campers, along with a story about why the name on that sign was relevant to them. The campers loved this tradition because when they come back to visit the camp they can point to one of the signs and say "My year was the Pioneers," or "I was an Explorer." The tradition is only enriched by the fact that these signs were also once a part of Camp Mogisca. (Fig. 19)



Fig. 19

A number of camps have made efforts to house camp memorabilia and artifacts on-site in camp museums. This scenario can have both positive and negative aspects. At Glen Gray, old camp artifacts, such as the bible of Frank Gray, are housed on-site in a display case in the camp library building. (Fig. 20)



Fig. 20

It is admirable that there is an attempt to preserve and display items, that the items are within their originally context at the camp, giving those who view them a more complete

story, and that on-site location makes it possible for campers to view these items and learn about camp history anytime they come to the camp. On the negative side, professional standards of materials conservation are certainly not being met by keeping these items in a cabin that is subject to the elements, having no heat or air-conditioning, and that is possibly more susceptible to theft or vandalism. However, these are problems that can be easily fixed, given the correct resources and guidance. Other camps have proven that camp museums can be very successful, such as the Ten Mile River Scout Museum founded in 1997, which is "dedicated to preserving the history and artifacts of the Ten Mile River Scout Camps and the Upper Delaware River Valley, and is located on-site at "Headquarters Camp," the central camp site of the Ten Mile River Scout Camps in Sullivan County, New York.⁸³ The museum has been supported by dedicated alumni and has grown to offer its own set of programming such as walking tours, movies, geo-caching, and a museum merit badge.⁸⁴

Camp museums are an idea that should be seriously considered by all summer camps, as they offer a solution both to camps that are currently in operation that want to preserve their history as well as to camps facing closure. A camp museum (or scout museum with a camp display) might be a more logical location for the Madeline Mulford staff plaques. Camps that are closing can appease former campers by assuring them that important camp artifacts will be taken care, either by placing them in a camp museum or other repository. Museums actually located within a camp may be most ideal as they help to give greater context to museum collections, even if items in the museum are not all from that specific camp site. However, if this is not possible, there are many other

⁸³ Ten Mile River Scout Camp 2013 Museum Brochure - Fundraising, accessed March 20, 2013 <http://www.tmrmmuseum.org/Fundraising%20Brochure%202013.pdf> .

⁸⁴ Ten Mile River Scout Camp 2013 Museum Brochure-Programs, accessed March 20, 2013 <http://www.tmrmmuseum.org/Program%20Brochure%202013.pdf> .

museums that would be appropriate. Just a few such places might be the museums of the national Boy Scout and Girl Scout organizations, the New Jersey Scout Museum, and the Adirondack Museum in New York. As camps are a significant part early 20th century American history, it is not a stretch to say exhibiting some local summer camps items would be appropriate for most historical museums across the country. It is key that local councils consult with alumni to determine what might be the best location for such objects.

Native American Imagery in Camp Traditions

Items and traditions at camps associated with Native Americans are vestiges of Ernest Thompson Seton's popular Woodcraft League and his visits to many summer camps around the country where he advocated for the use of his version of a “veritable smorgasbord of tribal legends, games, songs, dances, crafts, and religious rituals from across North America,” which soon “circulated widely at camps.”⁸⁵ Although the Boy Scouts and other organized youth organizations became much more successful than the Woodcraft League, Seton's influence on camps is felt to this day. As Leslie Paris explains, “Native American imagery resonated...with camps' efforts to introduce children to a pre-industrial, romantic landscape.”⁸⁶ However, “historical accuracy ... was not the genre's central concern.”⁸⁷ The driving factor was more that the appropriation of Native American history worked so well with the narrative summer camp leaders were trying to sell. Today, the country as a whole, as well as many camp leaders are more aware of problems inherent in this type of imagery in general, and many, if not most, camps have foregone the more overtly insulting customs such as Indian dress and dances around

⁸⁵ Paris, *Children's Nature*, 43.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 203

⁸⁷ Ibid, 207

campfires.⁸⁸

There is, however, a more difficult gray area where some of these traditions and practices involving references to this version of Native American history adapted to fit the needs of summer camp movement by a predominantly white, male, non-Native American majority continue to persist at camps and it is unclear what, if anything, should or can be done about this. Should these traditions, which can be central to a camp's identity, but at the same time, culturally offensive and inaccurate depictions of Native American history and life, be preserved or done away with? Is a compromise possible? Courtney Fint chronicles a challenge made against by a camper's parent about certain camp traditions and ceremonies at Jackson's Mill 4-H Camp which were taken directly from Seton's "Peace Pipe Ceremony" in his *Book of Woodcraft*, published in 1921. The end result was the removal of most of the Native American imagery and a re-working of the ceremony itself to focus more on the 4-H aspects of the camp. Although Fint with much of the changes, especially the removal of Native American costumes and makeup, she believes the changing of the ceremony has removed a lot of its important cultural meaning.⁸⁹

This is clearly a difficult balance, to bring camp customs and traditions up to date, while also making sure they do not lose their meanings to campers. Camp alumni who are fighting to save their camps, including its traditions, should be aware that some of camp cultural practices may need to be reconsidered and perhaps altered. These practices should be evaluated and changes should be determined with all stakeholders involved. If possible, campers should be given a role in helping to create new traditions and customs

⁸⁸ For more discussion on how American Indian identity and imagery has been employed by non-native whites and others throughout U.S. history, see Philip Deloria Jr., *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

⁸⁹ Fint, "Jackson's Mill," and email message to author March 1, 2013.

where needed. This will ensure they are authentic and meaningful to those involved.

Chapter 3: Camps as Cultural Landscapes

Charles Birnbaum, in the Preservation Brief *Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment, and Management of Historic Landscapes*, written for the National Park Service in 1994, defines cultural landscapes as “a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.”⁹⁰ Without question, organized youth summer camps are cultural landscapes. It is the interaction between people and the land that is inhabited that gives these sites their significance. In this case, it is specifically the action of conducting organized youth summer camps within natural settings that has made these places meaningful to generations of campers, both children and adults. Summer camps are also relevant to the public at large for what they teach us about larger societal concerns of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in America. As the same Preservation Brief explains, this is exactly the point of why we look to preserve these “special places, [they] reveal aspects of our country's origins and development through their forms and features and the ways they were used. Cultural Landscapes also reveal much about our evolving relationship with the natural world.”⁹¹ Summer camps originated in America, although other countries have since adopted the custom. Therefore, these camps are living examples of the unique history and culture of the United States. As discussed in the previous chapters, it is especially those older camps that have remained more rustic and generalized in function (as opposed to specialty camps) that give us insight into the theories, ideas, and opinions of the time in relation to child-rearing and society; they are also the camps which are

⁹⁰ Birnbaum, Charles, "Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment, and Management of Historic Landscapes," *Preservation Brief* 36, Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1994.

⁹¹ Ibid

most threatened, for a number of reasons. In light of the many Boy Scout and Girl Scout camp closings that have either already happened, are in process, or are anticipated, it is important to consider how to preserve these sites as cultural landscapes. It would be an incomplete picture to preserve the land and ignore the physical buildings and structures, and vice versa. It is also important for the site's past use as a summer camp to be reflected in any plans to preserve, maintain, and protect the site. Too commonly, the summer camp aspect of a site is considered ancillary to the historicity of the site, or to whatever else may be deemed the most important element the site has to offer, such as the environmental resources of the site. Given the increase in attention from the academic community summer camps have seen in recent years, it is clearly time for the historic and cultural preservation field to begin to include and recognize summer camps as important contributors to historic cultural landscapes. Additionally, approaching summer camps as cultural landscapes allows for a more holistic approach to preservation and a more accurate interpretation of the site.

Nancy Garelick, Director of Friends of Glen Gray, while giving me a tour of the camp, explained that camps are “loaded with history.”⁹² She didn't just mean the history of the camp, even though that is surely one aspect of it; she was also referring to the stories and history of all the people who become involved with a camp, as well as any history of the site's use before it became a camp. Summer camps were often established on sites that had some previous use. At Glen Gray, “it is believed that many Native American artifacts are located at the site as well as evidence of early homesteads”⁹³ Long established legend at the camp claims part of the site was once a tavern and inn dating to

⁹² Nance Garelick, in-person interview and camp tour, December 12, 2012.

⁹³ Deetz, Aaron, “Camp Glen Gray Makes Endangered Sites List,” *Suburban News*, May 23, 2001.

the Revolutionary War era, owned by a woman named Mary Post, and that parts of the foundation are still visible at the camp.⁹⁴ Additionally, part of the Cannonball Trail, "used during the Revolutionary War as a munitions pathway supplying arms to the early American armies,"⁹⁵ passes through the site. Eagle Island is an Adirondack Great Camp originally built as a summer home for a wealthy family. Camp Mogisca was a functioning family farm, and the home and barn are still present on the property. Besides the human history at these sites, camps usually encompass some amount of undeveloped land which tend toward other resources inherent in the site, such as logging or mining. For example, a former Boy Scout camp, Pahaquarry, now part of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, was once a booming copper mining site.⁹⁶ Having significant history beyond the camp itself is the typical situation for many camps. It is these alternate historical and environmental resources that commonly play a part in both how and, perhaps more importantly, *why*, summer camps are preserved.

Having history at the site beyond that of it being a camp can play out in favor of the preservation of threatened camp sites in some form, although it usually does not prioritize the preservation of the use of the site as a youth summer camp. For example, at Glen Gray, the important Revolutionary War-related aspects of the site, its location in the New Jersey Highlands, which is important source of the state's drinking water, and the fact the Bergen County has such little undeveloped land remaining were the main motivations for the involvement of the county government and the Trust for Public Land (TPL), which provided the funding for the camp's purchase. The push to maintain the

⁹⁴ Nance Garelick, in-person interview and camp tour, December 12, 2012.

⁹⁵ Deetz, "Camp Glen Gray Makes Endangered Sites List."

⁹⁶ Kopczynski, Susan, "A Ride Down Old Mine Road," *Spanning the Gap*, Newsletter of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Vol. 22 No. 2, Summer 2000, last updated October 2012, <http://www.nps.gov/dewa/historyculture/upload/cmsstgOMRIWSE.pdf>

site's use as a camp was mainly the concern of Friends of Glen Gray (FOGG).

Preservation New Jersey, a nonprofit preservation advocacy group did list Glen Gray as one of the "10 Most Endangered Sites" in New Jersey in 2001, citing its importance as "among one of the oldest scouting camps in the nation....and well-preserved Adirondack-style camp buildings from the 1920s."⁹⁷ However, it was the other factors, as noted above (open space and a water source), that were of interest to the county and the Trust for Public Land that were the driving forces in cutting a deal to preserve the site; they were not primarily motivated to preserve the site as a functioning youth camp.

The preservation of summer camps, or lack thereof, highlights the common problem in the historic preservation field of sophisticated, high-style architecture being valued over vernacular architecture and landscapes, which is exactly what camps were purposefully aiming to be. At Eagle Island, groups concerned with historic preservation, such as Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH), have voiced their support for preservation of site, however, although they may not be opposed to the site continuing as a summer camp (in fact AARCH supports the Friends of Eagle Island's effort to reopen the camp), this is not the prime reason they are concerned with site. In a letter from AARCH Executive Director Steven Engelhart written to the Friends of Eagle Another for their camp reunion in October 2012, he explains, "When an important historic property such as this goes on the market and changes hands, there is always great risk that the new owners won't love and respect the special qualities of the buildings, landscape, and natural resources of the island. So, we are thrilled that, in the Friends [of Eagle Island],

⁹⁷ Preservation New Jersey, "10 Most Endangered Historic Sites: Camp Glen Gray," accessed March 1, 2013
http://www.preservationnj.org/site/ExpEng/index.php?/ten_most_12/archive_by_name_detail/2001/Camp_Glen_Gray

the island and buildings would be in such good hands."⁹⁸ Grand Isle in Vermont is another example of the common choice to reflect other parts of a site's history over that of its history as a camp. Camp Mary Crest was originally the Island Villa Hotel, a summer resort for city residents from 1903-1956. After this, it became Camp Mary Crest and was run by a group of Catholic nuns primarily as a camp for Vermont girls who would not otherwise have been able to afford to go to camp. In 1992, the nuns announced they could no longer sustain the camp. In 1996 it was bought by a private citizen but then donated, along with additional funds for preservation, to the Preservation Trust of Vermont. The site was then restored to the look of the time period from when it was the Island Villa, which was deemed its period of significance.⁹⁹ The Island Villa Hotel now functions as a venue for meetings and events.¹⁰⁰ While this is clearly laudable and a preservation success story in terms of the building and site, it is unclear if anything at the site reflects the part of history during which it served as a summer camp.¹⁰¹ The restoration is harkening back to the building and site's original intended use, however, forty years of the site's history as a youth summer camp should also not be completely ignored.

The Schiff Reservation in Mendham, New Jersey is yet another example of the lack of recognition of the significance of a site's use as a summer camp, or, at least, the prioritization of other histories over both scouting and summer camps in our nation's history. It also shows the disregard of the Boy Scouts in being stewards of their own organization's significant history. The Schiff Reservation is an area of land in Mendham

⁹⁸ Friends of Eagle Island Reunion Program, October 27, 2012.

⁹⁹ Preservation Trust of Vermont, "Grand Isle Lake House," accessed January 5, 2013, http://www.ptvermont.org/grand_isle/lh_booklet.php

¹⁰⁰ Grand Isle Lake House, <http://www.grandislelakehouse.com/> accessed January 5, 2013.

¹⁰¹ I tried to contact the owners but did not hear back, the website stated that it was their off-season.

that has remnants of important history from the 18th through the 20th centuries. It was a Revolutionary War outpost in the 1700's, a farmstead and mill site in the 1800's, and in the 1900's became home to the Brookrace Estate and later the National Boy Scout Training Camp. The area is named for the Schiff family, who were the last to inhabit the estate. One of the Schiff family members had been highly involved in the Boy Scouts, and due to this the family donated the site to the Scouts. Starting in 1933, many early and important Boy Scout leaders spent time at the Schiff Reservation, including Daniel Beard and Bill Hillcourt; it is where the first Boy Scout Manual was written, as well as early editions of the Boys Life Magazine. During the fifty years of the Boy Scouts' residency, many buildings were added to the land, including a cabin moved to the site that had been part of the Boy Scout Camp Exhibit at the 1939 World's Fair in New York City, now known as the Daniel Beard Cabin, and a film studio that was at one time "the largest film studio on the east coast," donated by artist Norman Rockwell and Thomas Watson (of IBM).¹⁰² In 1979, the Boy Scouts sold this land to AT&T and moved their National Headquarters to Texas.

Eventually, after many years of uncertainty and encroaching development, in 1999 the Schiff Reservation was included through a boundary increase as part of the Ralston Historic District in Mendham, New Jersey, which is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.¹⁰³ Studies of the cultural and historic resources within site were commissioned in order to identify structures considered to be contributing to the historic district. One of the reports, by Historic Conservation and Interpretation, Inc., highlighted the importance of the site's use by the Boy Scouts, stating

¹⁰² Rutsch, Edward S. and Brian H. Morrell, "An Evaluation of the Schiff Reservation's Potential Cultural Resources." Historic Conservation and Interpretation, Inc. 1994.

¹⁰³ National Register, Ralston Historic District

that “the Boy Scout-associated use of Schiff is primary, national importance in the Boy Scout organization and as such is a major part of the property's historical significance,”¹⁰⁴ It appears someone in the Historic Preservation Office concurred, writing in an unsigned memo, “as Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, I concur with the Lenik report...the property' significance is of exceptional importance to the Nation, justifying an extension of the period of significance to 1950...completing the Reservation's essential physical complex of structures used for Boy Scout Training.”¹⁰⁵ Despite this, according to the most recent copy of the Historic Register nomination, the period of significance still predates the Boy Scout camp, meaning those structures built by the scouts are not considered to be 'contributing' to the historic district. Apparently, at some point the report's recommendations to include the period of the Reservation's history when it was used by the Scouts in the period of significance was either overlooked or decided against. Currently, only three of the Boy Scout buildings remain on the site. It is telling that this site, which was not just a summer camp but perhaps something even more historically important in terms of Scouting history, can be so overlooked by both historic preservation professionals as well as the national Boy Scouts organization.

A chain of Boy Scout camps located along the Delaware Water Gap in New Jersey provides another example of summer camp history being overlooked in favor of other historical events. This group of camps, including Camp Ken-Etiwa-Pec, Camp Mohican, Camp Cowaw, Camp Phaquarra, and Camp Weygadt, were all in relatively close proximity to each other; they would often borrow supplies from each other and share resources as needed.¹⁰⁶ These camps were bought out by the government when the

¹⁰⁴ Rutsch, A "n Evaluation of the Schiff Reservation's Potential Cultural Resources," 8.

¹⁰⁵ Unsigned memo from NJ Historic Preservation Office Staff, Ralston Historic District File in NJHPO Office, Trenton, accessed February 6, 2013.

¹⁰⁶ Zusman, Albert Z. "Boy Scout Camps along the Delaware," *Spanning the Gap*, Vol. 21, No. 2.

Tocks Island Dam was in its planning stages and it was thought these sites would be in the flood plain. However, the Dam was never built¹⁰⁷ and the Scouts chose not to move back to their camp sites. The camp sites were eventually incorporated as part of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Today, some camp buildings are still present and have been put to different uses. The dining hall of Camp Mohican is a storage facility, while other portions of the site are used by the Appalachian Mountain Club; Camp Pahaquarra's parade ground is the parking lot for the Coppermine visitors; Camp Ken-Etiwa-Pec is now Camp Mason, a YMCA camp. Others, such as Camp Cowaw, have "almost entirely disappeared in to the forest."¹⁰⁸ Although some Park Service employees and former campers may know the history of these sites as Scout camps, the former Boy Scout camps are physically not represented at these sites; instead more focus is put on other former uses, such as mining and farming.¹⁰⁹

As has been covered in the previous two chapters, each Scouting camp has its own unique history, architecture, and traditions, yet at the same time, many camps, especially those that fall under the category of "general/traditional/rustic" category, tend to share similar characteristics. This is in part because all camps are part of the over 130 year-old tradition of organized American youth summer camping and in some way owe their existence to those who first experimented with summer camps, such as Ernest Balch, who started Camp Chocorua in New Hampshire in 1881, which is considered to be the first youth summer camp in America, and the many that followed thereafter. Both the early and later proponents of summer camps had very strong opinions about camp and

Summer 1999.

¹⁰⁷ Albert, Richard C., *Damming the Delaware: The Rise and Fall of Tocks Island Dam*, (State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990).

¹⁰⁸ Zusman, "Boy Scout Camps Along the Delaware."

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

about what was and was not “camp-y.” Youth organizations such as the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts were some of the leading advocates in establishing and popularizing these ideas and aesthetics, especially within the camps owned by their local councils.

The preferences of early 20th century summer camps for certain activities and aesthetics, such as campfires, canoeing, and rusticity, have become ingrained in our collective public imagination as "default" expectations of the summer camp experience. These expectations based on historical traditions combine with the modern wants and needs of both parents and campers to shape the look and feel of camps today. This creates an interesting dichotomy. While camps are pressured to update facilities, teach specialized skills, and provide unique experiences, there are also still expectations for a “classic” camp experience, which might include campfires, singing, living in cabins or tents, swimming, canoeing, hiking, and little to no interaction with technology. Summer camps have reacted to these competing pressures in different ways. Camp Timber Lake, in Shankaden, New York, has installed air-conditioning in their cabins, while Adirondack Camp in Putnam, New York, proudly embraces the fact that their campers still sleep in open-air structures and lean-tos. Buck's Rock Camp in New Milford, Connecticut pushes its specialty arts instruction, including “jewelry-making, pottery, weaving, knitting, drawing, and performing Point o' Pines on Brant Lake in New York, teaches campers organic gardening at the on-site 500-acre farm.¹¹⁰ Letter writing is an activity that has long been encouraged by camp leaders, but today, “e-mail has decimated [the] patience” of parents when it comes to campers writing letters home. One solution has been to use technology to appease parents, but in a way that still keeps the technology at a distance from campers. New software programs have been developed that camps can

¹¹⁰ “Camp Tales,” *Town & Country*, June/July 2012, 92, 103.

use that to turn parents' emails into postcards that can be printed out and given to campers, and campers' responses can be scanned back to the parents.¹¹¹ Camps also rely on value indoctrination, that campers will eventually come to realize that "they like gadgets, but . . . love camp, and on some level . . . understand that the twain probably shouldn't meet,"¹¹² to keep certain technologies such as cell phones and electronic game systems, out of camps.

These logistical pressures are not new; camps have always struggled with precisely how rustic or camp-y to appear. Should they have tents or cabins? How involved should campers be in preparing meals? Should buildings and cabins have electricity? Today, however, the question for youth organizations such as the scouts is a bigger one- to keep camps open or not? At the same time that camps try to balance the rustic-yet-modern requirements, they also must work to make sure economic ends meet. Again, in this respect, different strategies are employed. Jackson's Mill 4-H Camp was considering major upgrades and renovations to its buildings in order to be able to host conferences and other events; the situation and the proposed plan's effect on the landscape and cultural significance of the site to campers was explored in depth in a master's thesis by Courtney Fint of Columbia University. The plan has since been revisited and adjusted to fall more in line with cultural and historical significance of the site, yet still accommodates the need for the camp to bring in other forms of income. Camp Little Notch, a Girl Scout camp close to Lake George in the Adirondacks which had been operating for over 70 years, was put up for sale by the Girl Scouts in 2009 (a situation that closely parallels that of Eagle Island). Also, like Eagle Island, Little Notch

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² Ibid

had extremely supportive alumni who organized a nonprofit group, Friends of Camp Little Notch, to save the site. In the end, they made a compromise with the Open Space Institute, in which OSI would purchase the land and sell a majority of it (around 1,900 acres) to a local and sustainable timber company, but reserve about 400 acres, including the main camp site area, which they would then lease and eventually sell back to the Friends of Camp Little Notch. As of 2012, Little Notch has successfully reopened for summer camp as well as a number of other expanded camping opportunities throughout the year for both children and adults.¹¹³

There are many aspects of summer camps that merit the attention of the preservation community. Camps also have many valuable resources beyond the fact that they are summer camps. These elements must all be considered equally, at least initially. For example, while it is possible that the earlier Revolutionary War history of a camp site may be found to be the most historically significant aspect, it does not mean that the Scouting camp period is insignificant. There are some summer camps that have been listed on the National Historic Register solely on the basis of being youth summer camps, such as Jackson's Mill, Camp Dudley, located in New York, and Camps Merriewood and Arrowhead (now named Camp Glen Arden), both in North Carolina, but it is far more common for camp sites to be considered significant for something other than the summer camp itself, as is the case with Eagle Island and the Schiff Reservation. This is something historic preservation and cultural heritage professionals need to take a closer look at, especially considering the many camps, especially Boy Scout and Girl Scout camps, that are being sold and the way current summer camp trends are pressuring camps to constantly modernize and upgrade their facilities and programs. Acknowledging the

¹¹³ Camp Little Notch, <http://www.camp littlenotch.org/> accessed February 13, 2013.

historical significance of Scout camps and other summer camps through the National Register of Historic Places, museum exhibits, and academic studies will in turn raise awareness and pride among camp leaders and camp attendees that their camps are important places that warrant this preservation.

Conclusion

Organized youth summer camps in the northeastern United States such as Glen Gray, Mogisca, and Eagle Island, highlight the challenges faced by the numerous Scout camps throughout the country today. The national Boy Scout and Girl Scout camps have dramatically consolidated their local councils, and have set on a path to reassess what properties should, and should not, be kept. Scout camps established prior to the 1960's are commonly characterized by the leadership and boards of local councils as unable to meet the needs and mission of council, underutilized, and too expensive, and are therefore put up for sale. The national Scout organizations correctly anticipated that these decisions would not be well-received by those of their members who attended and loved these camps, however, judging by the numerous lawsuits, negative press, and even boycotts,¹¹⁴ the Scouts have not been able to manage the precarious process of selling camp properties in a manner that addresses the concerns of camp alumni.

What those specific concerns are is made clear from the three cases presented in this thesis. Camp alumni of Glen Gray, Mogisca, and Eagle Island were, and are, advocating for the preservation of traditional Scout summer camps. Both current and former Scout campers who have been faced with camp closures have expressed their desire for these places remain as youth camps, whether they continue to be owned by the Scouts or not.¹¹⁵ If it is not possible for a site to remain a camp, the next best option is that the land becomes open space that is accessible to the public. In both cases, because

¹¹⁴ The website www.savecamps.org has been chronicling events throughout the country

¹¹⁵ For example, the Friends of Eagle Island mission statement, which is "to perpetuate the legacy of the Graves Family's donation by providing an environmentally responsible Adirondack island camping experience for diverse youth, with an emphasis on girls and young women, while preserving Eagle Island's natural and historic character," uses the intentionally broad phrase "island camping experience" in order to leave all possible options open.

either option will mean a significant change for the camp, the history of the site should be preserved and made accessible to campers, camp alumni, and the public. Keeping a site a camp or preserving it as open space and honoring the history and traditions of camp sites is not as easy or profitable as putting camps up for sale to the highest bidder, but it will foster good will between the local Scout councils and those they claim to be serving, will be less likely to result in a dispute, and is more in keeping with the organizational missions of the Girl and Boy Scouts¹¹⁶ than selling camps for simply an outright profit. For example, Camp Mogisca was sold to Project Morry, another non-profit that planned to continue to operate the site as summer camp; in this instance, there was little to no objection from camp alumni. Girls Scouts of Northern New Jersey, who sold Mogisca, may have been lucky to find such an appropriate buyer for their site, but it is to their credit that they did not try to sell the land for a higher price on the open market. They also gave campers the opportunity to say good-bye to their camp with a Closing Ceremony that was held at the camp site. These steps resulted in what, Dawn Ewing, director of Morry's Camp, the camp that replaced Mogisca, described as “possibly one of the happiest camp sales ever”¹¹⁷.

In the case of Glen Gray, the Boy Scout Council of Northern New Jersey evoked immediate criticism when they announced the sale of Glen Gray in 2001 because, although they expressed their preference for the site remaining an open space, they also did not rule out selling the land to developers.¹¹⁸ A coalition of groups who wanted to

¹¹⁶ Girl Scout and Boy Scout mission statements: Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. ; The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

¹¹⁷ Dawn Ewing, in-person interview and camp tour, 1/6/13.

¹¹⁸ "Save Camp Glen Gray," Editorial *Montclair Times*, April 26, 2001, accessed March 21, 2013. <http://www.glengray.org/fogg/NewsArticles/MontTimesEditorial.htm>

save the camp including Friends of Glen Gray, the Trust for Public Land, Preservation New Jersey (who listed the site on their 2001 New Jersey's 10 Most Endangered Sites list), and Bergen County government mounted a public relations campaign, criticizing the Scouts for even considering selling this valuable parcel of open space, which was "the largest private undeveloped tract in Bergen County," to developers who wanted to put "McMansions" on the site. The situation was resolved without resorting to legal means because the Boy Scouts agreed to a \$5 million deal with Bergen County, the Trust for Public Land, and Friends of Glen Gray. Camp Glen Gray continues to thrive under the leadership of FOGG, hosting approximately 60,000 campers every year.¹¹⁹ However, the Boy Scout Council, who sold the site and reaped the monetary benefits, seems to still be unhappy about the controversy that was created over the sale, and still will not communicate with the Friends of Glen Gray, who now runs the camp, even though many of the campers who come to Glen Gray are Boy Scouts from that council.

Part of the nature of summer camps is that campers create a strong bond to the site; because of this, it is not an overstatement to say the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are likely to see resistance to any proposed camp sale. Why not, then, work out a preservation plan with those interested in saving the camp from the start, instead of making waves by putting the camp on the open market? The situation with Glen Gray is likely to have had the same result with much less drama if the Boy Scouts had searched out such a solution in the first place, instead of threatening to sell the land to a developer. The Girl Scout Council is now going to waste much of the money they were trying to make in selling the camp over a lawsuit. Both of these situations could be avoided if the Scouts councils reassess the way they approach the sale of camps.

¹¹⁹ Nancy Garelick, email message to author, 2/1/13.

It is understandable only to a point that the Scouts want to make sure they receive a certain amount of money from the camps they are selling. Many of these camps were bought for pennies compared to their worth today, and in some cases, literally for pennies: Glen Gray was purchased for \$8,000, Mogisca was given to the Girl Scouts for \$1.00, and Eagle Island was a donation. If the argument, which is being made by both the national and local Scout organizations, is that camps are costing so much money to upkeep, then simply getting rid of them as efficiently as possibly is the best solution, not aiming to make the most profit off of them. Judging by the three camps covered in this thesis, summer camp supporters are not letting camp sales happen easily, unless they see the site is being preserved. To put it bluntly, especially in the case of Eagle Island, the Scouts seem to be shooting themselves in the foot by taking this approach of selling camp land to the highest bidder, instead of first trying to work out a deal with camp alumni who might want to save the site.

The details of the Eagle Island case highlight this especially well. Against the very strong objections of camp alumni (which included a protest outside of the final board meeting that decided the sale of the camp), the camp was put on the open market, with no restrictions on its use, for \$3.75 million in 2010. It is now 2013, the site has not been sold, and they have lowered the price to \$3.25 million. In the meantime, Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey have had to pay for a caretaker and continued upkeep of the site, and have turned down an offer of \$1 million from the Friends of Eagle Island. Now that the Council is involved in a lawsuit with the Friends group, as of June 21, 2012,¹²⁰ the camp can not be sold until the suit is resolved. At this point, one questions if the Council will even net any money if they ever do sell the camp, and if not, why would they not just sell

¹²⁰ Friends of Camp Eagle Island Newsletter, "The Wind Has Shifted...Slightly!" Issue 4, June 2012.

to the Friends of Eagle Island, who they know will be good stewards of the site? The Scouts could have had this whole situation out of their hands in 2008, when they first closed the camp, if they had just negotiated a deal with camp alumni who expressed interest at that time in wanting to keep the camp open.

Unlike the closing ceremony held at Camp Mogisca, no one has been allowed back to Eagle Island unless it is to view it as a possible buyer. During the summer of 2008, the last year camp was open, there was no indication to campers or staff that this might be the last year. Therefore, there was no real opportunity for closure for camp alumni. This is surely not the best way to “acknowledge and deal with...the strong emotional ties...”¹²¹ that the national Girl Scout organization has recognized are present between their camps and campers. Ironically, these strong ties are exactly what camp leaders for Girl Scout and Boy Scout camps hoped to engender in their campers in the first place when they first began to open camps in the early 1900's. The Scouts have been very successful at doing this, but are now unfortunately faced with selling these same camps. The Scouts are not necessarily wrong for selling camps, but the way it has been approached is problematic and inefficient. If the Scouts want to avoid more lawsuits and public relations disasters, they should look to the fields of historic and cultural heritage preservation for guidance.

There are a vast array of tools and guidelines that both Scouts and camp preservation advocates can turn to in cases where a camp is being considered for sale or closure. The majority of successful camp preservation stories involve some type of partnership between a government entity, the camp advocacy group, and land preservation organizations such as the Trust for Public Land, the Land Conservancy, or

¹²¹ Copeland, "Shift for Survival," 12.

the Open Space Institute. Partnerships such as this were successful for camps such as Glen Gray and Camp Little Notch. Camp alumni groups have proven fairly successful in raising enough money for camp operations, but are generally not able to raise the millions required upfront to purchase the camp land. Government or land preservation organizations are more easily able to front this money, while the camp alumni group takes on the burden of daily camp operation. One reason this option has not yet materialized for Eagle Island is that the government entity or land conservation group generally wants something in return for their investment. In the case of Glen Gray, Bergen County wanted the site to be publicly accessible; for Little Notch, the Open Space leased some land to a sustainable logging company. Eagle Island is just over 30 acres in size, and located on a small island that is not always accessible during the winter months, therefore this type of trade-off has not materialized yet. However, by researching alternate uses and resources of a camp, the local council might identify groups that would be willing to partner with Friends of Eagle Island to help make the purchase and future sustainability of the camp viable. To this effect, an important step for the Scouts, or any group considering sale of a camp, would be to perform an evaluation of possible alternate or additional uses of the site, before putting the camp site up for sale. Investing in this initial research will payoff for local councils in that a deal will likely be made more quickly and smoothly. For example, Eagle Island has been marketed as a private residence; however, the site is not winterized and it is currently set up to be summer camp (tent platforms, cabins, shower house, commercial kitchen, etc.). Someone willing to pay over \$3 million for a summer home is probably looking for something slightly different. In its current state, a private residence is not the best use for the property, which is likely

why the Girls Scouts have had trouble selling it. The Girl Scouts might do better by researching and advertising more creative uses for the site that would work in conjunction with the site also being used as a camp, which is what it is currently set up to function as, and then see if a buyer materializes.

Possible alternate uses and other resources a summer camp site might offer to a potential buyer include: 1) continued use as a camp site but with an expanded time frame (year-round camping) and audience (open to the public, such as at Glen Gray), 2) environmental resources that can be exploited (although this must also be carefully considered, since part of the significance of camp sites is the connection with natural surroundings they offer, and extractive industries may cause as much controversy as the selling of the camp itself), and 3) if the site has historic resources or significance such as Eagle Island, it can easily be an educational resource for the public, and use as a venue for conferences or other events (again, this must be carefully considered and does not mean a camp should be 'revamped' into a conference center; Courtney Fint has discussed the problems inherent in this type of plan).¹²² Investigation into each site's unique characteristics in terms of the site's location, size, resources (environmental, historic, cultural, or otherwise), accessibility, condition, capacity, and other relevant factors will reveal the many possibilities for alternate site uses. Local council may even have already assessed a number of these factors when they were determining whether or not to sell a camp site, in the first place, so this would not be too much of an extra step to take, especially if the outcome is that they can more easily sell the site.

The burden for preservation of Scout camps does not fall only on the councils that are selling the camps. The scouts have not hidden the fact that they are looking to sell

¹²² Fint, "Jackson's Mill."

many camp properties. Anyone concerned with the preservation of these important summer camps, whether they are historic preservation or cultural resource management professionals, former campers, or members of the general public, should be paying close attention to these sites and considering preventive measures. Taking steps now, such as performing cultural resource surveys of camps and camp landscapes, listing camp sites on local, state, and national historic registers, setting up conservation easements, and applying for grants for site maintenance and repairs are just some of the options available that can be employed, before a camp goes up for sale, that may help to ensure that camps sites do not become condominium or strip-mall sites.

Although the fact that Eagle Island is a National Historic Landmark may not provide complete protection should the site be purchased by a private individual, its listing as a landmark does raise the public's attention to the site as a significant historic resource, and it is surely better than the alternative of not having any designation. Additionally, a site's listing as a local, state, and/or national historic site commonly makes it eligible for more funding sources, such as grants and historic tax credits. It was wise for Eagle Island staff to list the camp as a National Historic Landmark when they did, since it is unlikely the current Girl Scout council would have done so in the current situation.

It is also necessary for the field of historic preservation to put the importance of summer camps on the same footing as other significant parts of our history.

Another important aspect of planning for camp closings is to consider how to memorialize these camps once they are gone. All camps should consider their options in terms of ways to preserve camp history; museums, displays, exhibits, written histories

(both printed and online), and websites and social media sites dedicated to the camp are just some of the possibilities. Many camps have done this already, such as the previously discussed display case in the Glen Gray Camp Library which holds memorabilia and historical camp items and the Ten Mile River Camps Scout Museum. The national organizations of the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts include camp artifacts and memorabilia in the museum displays at their national headquarters, in New York City, and Irving, Texas, respectively. The New Jersey Scout Museum in Morganville, New Jersey, which recently re-opened in March 2013, also features items related to camp history.¹²³

An interesting camp history preservation project worth considering comes from an exhibit mounted from 2003-2006 at the Adirondack Museum titled *A Paradise for Boys and Girls: Children's Camps in the Adirondacks*. Part of this exhibit was the Camp Memory Project, where exhibit visitors could submit camp memories either while they were physically at the museum to see the exhibit, or via a museum-sponsored website, and these memories would then be posted on the Memory Project website.

Unfortunately, there was not enough money to keep this website active, and the many memories deposited into the site have since been lost. Today, staff of camps currently in operation as well as alumni of those that have closed, mimic this type of project on a smaller scale with their own individual camp websites, blogs, and Facebook pages, and other social media sites, which house camp history, photos, memories, songs, and anything else deemed important to memorialize online. Eagle Island, Mogisca, and Glen Gray all have some form of online presence. Currently, Friends of Eagle Island uses its online presence to help build up its network of camp alumni involved in the effort to save the camp. There is also a much older Eagle Island website, started in the late 1990's,

¹²³ New Jersey Scout Museum, accessed March 30, 2013, <http://www.njsm.org/>.

when the camp was still open, which had a message board that was very popular with campers and staff in the off-season. Although the message board is not longer active, it can still be viewed and looking back at it is almost like opening up a time capsule. Glen Gray's website functions as a source of practical information for potential campers, but it also has detailed information on the camp's history, including interviews with former campers and old pictures. Camp Mogisca's has a fairly active Facebook page, filled with camp memories and stories.

Summer camps have suffered from a lack of recognition of their relevance to American history as cultural resources, having shaped the lives of both children and adults from the late 19th to the present day. This thesis has put forth the argument that Boy Scout and Girl Scout camps are rich sources of history, heritage, memory, culture, identity, and experience, sadly, due to social and economic pressures to sell or modernize these sites, Scout camps have become some of the most vulnerable of our country's historic sites. Hopefully, this thesis will aid in their recognition as both cultural and historic resources as well as examples of living heritage. Additionally, preservation tools and practices have been identified for both sustaining the business of traditional, rustic Scout camps as well as preserving the history of these camps. The 1999 Eagle Island staff plaque says "Each of us leaves a part of our hearts here;" it is a sentiment with which most former campers would agree, and the reason why it is imperative steps are taken to protect these special places.



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