

# **CAMP PINELOCK**

**AN ANECDOTAL HISTORY, CANDID OBSERVATIONS, AND  
MEMORIES OF CAMP PINELOCK, ONCE A UNIQUE BLOOMFIELD  
GIRL SCOUT CAMP IN KNOWLTON TOWNSHIP,  
WARREN COUNTY, NJ.**

(1946- 1961)

By S. David Phraner

(Offered In Memory of Florence C.C. "Pepper" Phraner, Camp Director)

Dedicated to the Historical Society of Bloomfield and the former Bloomfield Girl Scout Council

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## **An Anecdotal Recollection and History of Camp Pinelock\*** (rev. 12/22)

(\*The Bloomfield Council Girl Scouts' Summer Camp in Knowlton Township, Warren County, New Jersey)

By S. David Phraner

### Purpose in Telling Story of Bloomfield Girl Scout Camp Pinelock:

This story began as an idea to memorialize Bloomfield Girl Scout's Camp Pinelock. The task first started with a probing and comprehensive research into Camp Pinelock and its legacy. I found nothing readily available on the history of the camp. Moreover, I found no mention of Camp Pinelock on the internet or almost anywhere else; even in an all-time historical listing of all the summer camps in New Jersey. Primary and secondary sources seemed absent. It's as if the camp never existed. As recollections faded with age and the passing principal staff and leadership of the Girl Scout Council and the camp, so has the oral or written record of the camp disappeared.... almost.

I write this in the first person for three reasons: I was a first-hand witness to the earliest six years of Camp Pinelock's 15-year existence. I lived at the camp as the only male resident for its first three years since my mother was Florence "Pepper" Phraner, the camp director during the camp's formative years. Finally, the purpose of this monograph is to preserve the essential history of the camp for the Town of Bloomfield, its historical society, for the Girl Scout's Council and to record the camp's heritage for Knowlton Township, in Warren County, NJ. As to the name "Pinelock" we never found the origin of the name, though that species of conifer dominated its landscape. A photo scrap book, camp artifacts and three 200' reels of 8-mm films donated by my family to the Historical Society of Bloomfield accompanies this monograph that illustrates what my memory struggles to describe. Some may ask, "What is the point in recording the history of a Bloomfield institution that expired over 60 years ago?" Pinelock helped build the character of the women who are the mothers and grandmothers of today's women leaders in contemporary society. These leaders passed that Girl Scout and Pinelock character on to their women of today.

The Mystery and Obscurity of Pinelock: A search of the internet GPS and tax maps and contemporary aerials indicated that the construction of Route I-80 and encroaching development changed the road alignments and almost everything else in the area of Centerville, the little crossroad cluster of dwellings near the former Pinelock camp grounds. Again, clues to the camp's existence are meager, but the remains of the pond and former mess hall are visible from the aerial images. The road address is now 112 Polkville Road. The rest of the camp's dozen or so structures are either demolished or obscured by aggressive and undisturbed tree growth. It became clear that the only primary sources of anecdotal information on the camp's existence would be clippings from the *Independent Press* and the then young, preadolescent son of the camp director ....me; now in my 83<sup>rd</sup> year.

"Pepper": Much of the Pinelock story and formative years, centers around its first successful camp director for most of its early existence; Florence Coryell Cooper Phraner. At the camp she was known only as "Pepper." The first in her family to receive a college degree, she practiced teaching physical education, but had never managed a Girl Scout summer camp before. Her credentials in Boy Scout and Cub Scouting were extensive. She was head den mother at Bloomfield Cub Pack 2, based at the Westminster Presbyterian Church, its sanctuary is now part of Bloomfield College. She and Mr. C. Browder Woodward, a Silver Beaver award recipient, co-authored a guide book on cubbing crafts and activities, and curriculum guidance for cubmasters and den mothers. Her three sons Phillip, Robert Cooper, and David Phraner, (she

was twice widowed) all advanced through scouting with Phil becoming an Eagle Scout and Bob achieving the Order of the Arrow distinction. Bob was also a camp counselor leading mule hikes at the Bloomfield Boy Scout "Camp Tamarack." To advance her Girl Scout credentials, Pepper took advanced courses in Girl Scout Camp Programming and Management at Edith Macy Girl Scout Conference and Training Center in Briarcliff Manor NY. As an education professional, "Mrs. Phraner" at school but "Pepper" at the camp, taught physical education and girls health subjects in public schools of Belleville and Caldwell/West Caldwell School System for over 30 years. Pepper knew young people and how to manage facilities for learning, for appreciating nature and for having fun safely. She had been recommended for the Pinelock director position to the Girl Scout camp committee by Bloomfield's then popular multi-term mayor, William Huck. There is more about Pepper and her influence on Pinelock.

The post-war years were tough on our family. Previously, she had returned to teaching when she lost her first husband Phillip Cooper. Later, Pepper had lost her second husband (Spencer W. Phraner, and my dad) to cancer. When she had remarried to my dad, they together raised her two fatherless boys, my half-brothers. I came along four years later. Following Spencer's death, she had to reenter teaching physical education and health, but at a teacher's starting salary even after over a decade of prior teaching experience. As my two brothers were about to enter college, Pepper had to work summers. She had me to take care of, so I became part of the Pinelock adventure for the next few summers. When I started to become interested in Pinelock's girl campers more than the camp, I was packed off to Bloomfield Boy Scout Camp Tamarack.

Pepper resigned from Pinelock in 1952 at the close of the camp season. Her resignation was reluctantly accepted by the camp committee. It was stated in the *Independent Press* that she had medical issues. That was partially true, but the other compelling reasons were that my brothers had graduated from Lafayette College and were fully independent. The Garden State Parkway had identified our side of Spruce St. in Bloomfield as an exit ramp from the highway. Our house would be condemned by the highway authority, demolished and we had to move. The task of moving from our family's three-generation 16-room house to temporary quarters was daunting. A recently widowed grand uncle accepted us into his home. We eventually found space to store our house contents. Moving was a massive undertaking, especially for a single Mom with a junior high kid and her widowed mother to provide for. We moved ourselves, while also serving as general contractor on a new replacement house being built. All the while, Pepper was teaching and serving as a volunteer gray lady at the Veteran's Hospital at Lyons, NJ. In succession, she headed the Caldwell/West Caldwell Teacher's Association, was president of the Essex County Education Association and was active in NJEA, serving on its teacher ethics committee. Earlier she was the Women's Guild President at our church (Westminster) and led Christian Endeavor for youth.

Origins of Pinelock: In 1946, Joseph R. Gardener and his wife Arline, donated to the Bloomfield Girl Scout Council, 20+-acres (Pepper in greeting the campers of the first 1947 encampment stated it was 23 acres). The Gardner's real estate donation had served as a former private summer camp, dating back to the 1930s. This magnanimous gift did not include all their real estate holdings but did encompass what became known as Camp Pinelock. All the elements of a summer camp were part of that gift; a central mess hall, a pond (called "The Big Spit") for aquatic activities and instruction and a series of units adapted to house girls from Brownie-age to teen-aged Girl Scouts. The origins of the property were a complex mystery. I never engaged in an extensive, pre-1930s real estate search, but a brief search yielded the some of the camp origins in the appendix section of this document. Sources are referenced in the text.

Prior to Pinelock, the Gardeners had developed and configured the property *as a co-educational* summer camp. During the co-ed years prior to 1946, the girl campers occupied a large log cabin that later became the Pinelock “Sleepy Hollow” Brownie unit. It was *isolated* from the boys and rest of the camp by the 15-acre pond that Pepper later called the “Big Spit.” A narrow path along the top of the dam on the west side of the pond was the single access from the core of the camp. There was also a small swampy pond called the “Little Spit” separated from the bigger pond by a narrow isthmus and a rickety timber bridge, providing the single vehicular entrance to the camp. It was reported by one of the farmers interviewed for this monograph, that there was once an icehouse on the site of the later Brownie unit and the pond had been harvested for ice. The boy campers at the former co-ed camp were separately housed in a two-story block house structure and four small knee-wall cabins. An additional cabin with improvements appears to have been used for administrative and staffing purposes. The surviving original mess hall structure currently (2022) on the property appears to have been built in the 1930s and later enlarged by the Girl Scout Council.

Pinelock Transportation: Transportation played a major role in the operation and ultimate disposition of the camp. The construction of U.S., Interstate I-80 in the 1960s took a part of the former (by that time) Pinelock property and altered the local road system accessing the camp’s entrance. The highway changed everything in the area by encouraging development. In the 1940s and 50s, Pinelock’s camp site was still rural, situated in the rolling rural Warren County farmland. At that time, county roads serviced the hamlet of Centerville, the closest cluster of dwellings to the camp. Pinelock property had frontage on Polkville Road, and this was the only vehicular way to reach the camp. The entrance road to the center of the camp was restricted from large vehicles because of a narrow wooden bridge dividing the two ponds (“Spits”) on the property. A map of Camp Pinelock and vicinity appears on Page 33 of this document.

Change Days on alternate Sundays were big events at Pinelock. Buses brought new campers and their luggage up and returned earlier campers to Bloomfield. *Modern Omnibus Corporation (MOC)* was the motor coach operator of choice in Bloomfield. The author remembered going on various school trips using Modern Omnibus’ coaches to museums and instructional venues while he was in elementary School (“Center School” on Liberty St., now gone). Vocational school students also used this same charter coach company. Modern Omnibus favored coaches built by White Motor Corporation and their most modern vehicles were 1940s-vintage White model 788s. Occasionally one of their older engine-in-front White model 54 motor coaches were used on the Pinelock Camp destination trips. MOC was a locally-based Bloomfield charter coach company with garage and offices located on LaFrance Ave.

It’s hard to imagine now, but it was once common practice to run camper specials elsewhere to very large summer camps. These “Camp Specials” consisted of long, camp-dedicated trains or reserved passenger cars filled with kids going to camps in the Poconos, Catskills, Adirondacks and Berkshires. These special trains exclusively serving the summer camps, were routine parts of the seasonal camp experience in the 1930’s ‘40’s and ‘50’s. Access to camps transitioned from trains to motor coaches on public highways. Pinelock being a smaller camp and not near a railroad had to rely on motor coaches to transport campers.

Direct access to the interior of the camp was denied buses and other large heavy vehicles since the timber bridge dividing the big and small “spits” (ponds) was too weak to support the weight of any large bus, particularly an over-the-road coach. The buses disgorged campers on, at the time unpaved, Polkville Road at a point now covered by highway I-80. Camper’s luggage was stowed in the rear of the buses or on the roof of some of the White 788s so equipped. A camper’s grip, usually a duffle bag and suitcase, was

removed from the coach and stowed on the neighboring Hillyard family farm's Model "A" Ford light-weight stake truck. The Ford truck was used to carry the luggage from the buses for distribution to the various units of the camp. The campers first introduction to Pinelock was a short hike of a half mile to the mess hall from the Polkville Road entrance to the camp.

After buses dropped their cargo of passengers and campers, they were driven further down Polkville Road to the Hillyard Farm where there was adequate space to turn these large (for the time) 35' coaches. I recall that the teen-aged Hillyard farm boys that handled the campers' luggage had never ridden in the motor coach and enjoyed the short trek down to their farm and back before loading the returning campers' possessions into the buses at the end of their encampment. I also recall, but did not understand at the time the admiration of the older girl campers of these young farm boys stripped to the waist to manhandle the baggage on hot summer days. The only cars on site were those of the director, nurse, one or two of the first line staff and the camp truck... "Asthma." (Note: During research, we found three different spellings of "Hillyard" family name; also "Hillyerd" and "Hilyard.")

While not strictly functional transportation, there was another conveyance that moved campers about; the hayride. Again, the Hillyard family farm provided the means to accomplish this highly popular event. The conveyance consisted of a farm tractor pulling a large hayrack with its flatbed filled with fragrant new-mown hay. It was later that I learned the true nomenclature of that tractor (Allis Chalmers WC-45, or just plain "Allis" to me). A reminder of the hayride logistics occurred on a recent trip back to the camp site and to part of the Hillyard farm retained by the family after Route I-80 cut the farm in two. One of the Hillyard sons Dorrance, now nearing 90, owns a gentlemen's farm near the former camp site.



When I visited him in the summer of 2021, he had clear recollections of the hayrides. He called to me, "come this way, I have something for you to see." He showed me into his barn and pointed me to "Allis," the very tractor that had pulled the hayrides 70 years earlier. He said that the family had purchased that tractor in 1945 for \$5,200. It was hardly recognizable as it had been disassembled by the contemporary Hillyard generation to restore and had not been fully reassembled. Dorrance then took me to the outside farm yard and lifted a tarp covering a nearly identical

1952 A/C WD-45, still assembled and operational, that very closely resembled the WC-45 in the barn. I could not have told them apart. A photo of "Allis" and Dorrance appears on page 28. A typical hayride shown is on the photomontage above on the top right. Also shown in the background is the camp office/director's quarters in 1947.

One of the comical incidents that reveal the character and collegiality of the camp staff is a short movie film sequence of Pepper and a counselor in the front-loading bucket of Allis being pivoted in a circle as farm tractors can do in the manner of an amusement ride while other counselors use water fire extinguishers to douse the hapless occupants confined in the bucket. All administered and received in good spirit and laughter.



Two of Pinelock's 1947 camp counselors (above) contemplating changing Asthma's flat tire. Ann Siena (on the right) was a teacher in the Caldwell School system and may have been one of those who painted "Pinelock" to the camp truck's battered flanks. The staff called this vehicle "Asthma" because of its asthmatic performance, unreliability, and the constant aroma of unburned fuel and exhaust. No mistaking its owner as the name of the camp was a prominent advertisement of Pinelock thanks to the earliest generation of staff. After Asthma expired on the highway once too many times, it was interred in a junk yard and replaced with a leased Ford "woody" station wagon. One of my duties was to wash Asthma and later, the woody. Eventually the practice of having an official camp truck was eliminated, possibly for reasons of economy. Our family sedan, a 1938 Buick Century and later a 1942 Buick were used for camp transport functions when Asthma failed or later when the leased camp truck was eliminated. Also shown above is the typical canvas domicile at early Nomad and Frontier sections with folding cots on tent platforms. I'm not sure what events are depicted in the other photos of campers engaged in some activity.

Early Camp Operations: The first post-war camp season (1946) for Pinelock was troubled and the first camp director did not return in 1947. The detailed circumstances of her departure are not known to me. "Pepper" Phraner was interviewed for the job and was hired. She inherited early camp problems and set about to correct a variety of issues threatening the continuance of the camp. Staffing the first year was a serious problem. The camp cook and assistant had left. For weeks Pepper bought and prepared food with staff help for the campers and staff while recruiting another cook and assistant. All this was in addition to her other duties as a new camp director. She finally was able to hire Agnes Schelman, a jovial and talented lady whose winter job was running the cafeteria at Newark's Barringer High School. An assistant was brought into help Agnes. They shared a small apartment of sorts over the mess hall. Also sharing the second floor was a dormitory for staff not assigned as counselors, for example waterfront, crafts instructors, nurse/business manager. These young women and the older cooking staff worked on different schedules that sometimes led to problems. The two early rising cooks and the later night fun



and music loving youth cohabiting the second floor of the mess hall created some friction and another issue for Pepper to mediate.

Camp Facilities and Management: Before continuing the Pinelock saga, a description of the camp facilities is necessary to grasp how the place operated. The camp covered a little over 20 acres. One source claimed it was 14-acres, another, 40 acres. For me as a kid of seven, it seemed like 50-60 acres.

The Pinelock campgrounds was divided into four separate precincts based on the age of campers; *Brownies* for the youngest girls (8-10), *Caravan* for the intermediate Girl Scouts (10-12), *Nomad* for 12-14 older Scouts and *Frontier* for the teen girls up to 17. This age-based structure approximated the hierarchy and even the succession of uniforms in American Girl Scouting; brown, green, khaki to blue.

The Brownies building, sometimes referred to as “Sleepy Hollow” was a single large frame structure divided into three large dorm rooms and wash facilities. It was located across the dam and spillway from the mess hall and was relatively isolated from the rest of the camp, as appropriate for its earlier function as the girl’s precinct separated from the boys in the pre-Pinelock former co-education camp. Caravan consisted of four wood frame cabins each with toilet/sink enclosure within but otherwise rudimentary shelters with planked floors, semi open sides consisting of waist high walls, screens to the roof eaves and a gable roof. Each cabin held 7 girls and one counselor. Because of increased camp enrollment in 1950, five tent platforms were erected for the Nomad and Frontier units. Nomad consisted of these tent platforms and eventually more robust and permanent lean-tos but were not part of the building inventory when the camp opened in 1946 and ’47. Tent platforms were an inexpensive way of increasing camp capacity when demand required more, but affordable space. Similarly building lean-tos later became the economical way to expand camp capacity, and they could be built by unskilled volunteer labor (“Dads”). Camp enrollments grew at about a 10% increase each year from 1947 to the mid-1950s.

Frontier section for the oldest scouts later consisted five large timber platforms, with canvas tents shared with Nomad, each platform having bunks for six occupants. Initially however, Frontier girls were housed in the “block house.” Staff counselors and assistants lived in the same accommodations of as their camper units possibly excepting Frontier. The nurse, waterfront activities director, craft counselor and other general camp activity staff at one time, lived above the mess hall or in the first floor of that curious structure called the “block house”. It indeed, looked like a colonial fort, being a log-type two-story, four-square building sided with milled simulated logs. It also served as an infirmary briefly. There was also a cabin for the camp director with a separate room for the camp office and store. The store was open for a short period after lunch and girls were urged to write home about all the fun they were having. Pinelock sold two original postcards, candy and trinkets and charm bracelets as shown left, below.



My memory may be faulty, but I think that the camp store was operated on a debit basis. Upon entering camp some campers, at the option of their parents would open an account at the store, so purchases could be drawn from the account. This solved potential issues about young children carrying around cash and exercised parental control over camper spending habits.

Another permanent building built on a concrete slab was relatively isolated, adjacent to a field nearest to the original alignment of Polkville Road frontage. I recall this being used for crafts, special events and at

one time some dormitory space for senior staff. The adjacent field was used for field sports. Occupants in buildings without full sanitary facilities had a wood frame wash house with showers, not unlike those tents for the nurses and staff in the MASH television series, except that the Pinelock washhouse was a permanent structure. Absolutely off limits to me. My residence was unique.

Being the only male in the place, I was confined at certain times during the day to a 1920s vintage canvas covered wood house trailer parked across from the mess hall and the director's cabin. Pepper had obtained it from a family relative after the first year of her directorship. I seem to recall living in the director's cabin our first year at Pinelock. Due to the openness of the cabins and tent platforms, I was forbidden to take walking tours of the camp during certain hours when the girls were changing or otherwise likely to have on little or no apparel.

None of the buildings at the time were equipped with central heat, so Pinelock was solely a summer camp, though the camp was used in the early spring and late fall for special weekend encampments. Air conditioning in rural New Jersey or most anywhere was unheard of in the 1940s. My two college-age half-brothers had summer jobs to help with expenses. They were employed by the Hunter Fan Company in Manhattan. Their job was to trundle these large pedestal commercial fans on city streets to offices.



The photographs on the left show the variety of camp lesser structures: Center - Caravan Unit cabin, Below - Brownie Unit House, Upper Left - Block House for senior girls and staff, lower left - Pepper dressed up as nature girl with pet monkey "Pappy" on her shoulder getting ready to lead the 4th of July Parade through Centerville (it became a tradition) Lower Right - the camp bugler for taps and reveille, Upper Center - a parents

day demonstration of outdoor cooking over fire with foil. Upper right - square dancing, I think. The original of these photographs are contained in an album presented to Pepper by the counselors at the end of the 1947 season. The album is donated on file with the Historical Society of Bloomfield, along with a 200' reel of 8mm movies of camp activities described in this monograph.

Water Safety and Instruction: were very important in the camp life at Pinelock. Over the initial years, facilities at the waterfront facilities were greatly improved to enable to enable better instruction. Initially there was one dock. A second one was built a distance away and calculated to create swimming lanes for competition, exercise, and instruction. Much later, the lake was partially dredged, a sandy waterfront beach created and a crib was built in shallower water to monitor and instruct novice swimmers or those who were just learning to swim. It was common for some girls arriving at the camp with limited or no swim capability, but leaving camp having acquired that skill. Those with better swimming ability had the opportunity to advance and receive Red Cross swimmer badges. To manage and supervise the waterfront activities, girls were divided into classes based on their swimming abilities and identified by the color of



their bathing caps. There were four classifications of swimmers, ascending in skill level from red caps to yellow to blue and finally the highest, white caps. The camp *Echoes* news sheet typically detailed who had moved up to the next color cap as their swimming and safety skills advanced.

The 1947 season, the waterfront staffer “Eensie” swam multiple laps of the “big spit” pond setting an example for others and establishing the “88 Club;” those who swam 88 laps on a measured smaller course equivalent to a mile. Waterfront entertainment for visitor’s day evolved to include the aquacade, water ballet and swimming races.

Animals: In addition to Pappy the family monkey that Pepper brought to camp with her, other animals made their appearance including a skunk (with spray sacs removed) and Mickey, Pepper’s tame pet racoon. Mickey’s antics were so entertaining and popular that some of the staff would assemble in the evening and watch as Mickey went through his tricks at the director’s quarters.

One of the aquatic critters unwelcomed at Pinelock were snapping turtles in the “Big Spit” pond. Some grew to enormous proportions and surfaced near the swimmers. Obviously, their presence, menacing appearance, and proximity to the campers caused alarm. The largest of these turtle invaders was named “Caesar” by the campers. Following concern by the campers and staff, Pepper set about to remove Caesar from the pond. Two kinds of snapping turtle traps were set. The largest of these was a small plank raft with a wildlife clamp trap attached to the underside and set afloat. The second type were glass jugs used as buoys with a stout wire attached to the handle with a large heavy-duty hook attached to the end of the wire. In both types, pieces of chicken or meat were used as bait. When the raft or the glass jugs bobbed or navigated the pond quickly, another turtle was to about to be relocated. Eventually, Caesar was apprehended and dispatched from the pond. Regulations on snapping turtles were absent at the time.

#### Pinelock’s Seasonal Operating Routine:

The camp’s annual season typically ran between mid-June to early August. The Pinelock season was divided into three encampments of two weeks each, with every other Sunday being a change day and the mid-encampment alternate Sunday being an open house for parental visits, inspection and frequently some entertainment for parents and other visitors.

Priority for admission to the Pinelock encampments were given to Bloomfield resident Girl Scouts and members of the local council. If additional space was available, Girl Scouts from neighboring towns could apply. Finally, if additional space was still available, non-Girl Scouts could apply and be accepted under those circumstances, even from other the jurisdictions. One girl came from Long Island for an extended stay. Later girls from abroad were admitted on a space available basis. Obviously, Pinelock campers ultimately represented the diversity found in all of Girl Scouting. The standard rate in Pinelock’s first (1946) season was \$16.00/week and \$19.00 if the camper was from another counsel or a non-scout.

Work sessions by parents, volunteers and contractors occupied the pre- and post-encampment activities on site during the time shoulders of the camp season. Opening up and shutting down a seasonal camp was very labor intensive, particularly with Pinelock’s vintage plumbing facilities, as meager as they were. Volunteer weekend sessions involved plumbing, carpentry, electrical and other civil projects.

Having lived at Boy Scout and Girl Scout camps, it became my opinion, that the level of amenity for girls was appropriately greater than that for boys. The commitment of volunteers at Pinelock reflected that priority for female amenity needs. Regardless, camp life at Pinelock was basic and a surprise (shock!) to

some campers who were accustomed to a much more comfortable life style. I recall one camper who had requested a menu from which to make meal selections. The unit counselor gently reminder her that they had taken the trouble to make the meal selections on her behalf. I read the reminiscence of another camper who claimed she was “forced” to finish her vegetables, yams being the featured veggie of the meal. She protested, but in an attitude fit, wolfed them down anyway. She then barfed up the undigested remains of the offending legume.

The Girl Scout Council obtained the services of a dietician. Meals were carefully balanced nutritionally, well prepared and family style in bowls and platters served to each table seating eight to ten. There was no excuse to leave food on a plate. The ruling motto was similar to one I learned in the military, “Take all you want and eat all you take.” I was always gratified to observe that campers were held to the same strict but loving standard that I was experiencing growing up. No privileged characters at Pinelock. The 1946 prospectus for the camp claimed at each camper would have a ration of one quart of milk daily.

One of the terms that became familiar at camp and other Pinelock gatherings was “nosebag lunch.” I am not sure where it originated, but it creates an image of a horse feed bag tethered to harness. “Nosebag” at Pinelock was defined as a paper bagged lunch usually taken in hikes based from the camp. It consisted of a sandwich, fruit, cookie and perhaps a beverage. Often, the nosebag was delivered at a predetermined location during a hike and sometimes I recall, it was carried by campers on short hikes that ran over the lunch hour. The *Independent Press* reports the use of that term for events held at Girl Scout meetings and celebrations in Bloomfield like the annual camp reunion at Westminster Church. In that case an announcement indicated that campers should bring a (nose) bag lunch, but beverages would be provided.

Wasting food and picky eating were discouraged. Not surprisingly, some campers came from privileged surroundings where their personal dietary whims were routinely satisfied unquestionably. Pinelock gave those campers a different perspective and lessons on life in a community that they could carry back to their more refined surroundings. I observed these conditions, but did not fully comprehend their significance in forming the personalities and maturation of youth till later as an adult. I never fully appreciated the camp experience till looking back at my own observations and experience. Pinelock was a learning experience...and healthy fun as well.

The upper photo of an adult group on page 8 above is likely Parents Day, observing an outdoor cooking demonstration. The photos below show the first views of the camp introducing Pinelock to a novice camper. The driveway along a corridor of pines today is bisected by Route I-80. Most of this drive was taken by the highway. Little survives of this scene except for the far distant part where the driveway turns to the right. The photographer is standing at the former entrance to the camp off Polkville Rd. The lower photo is of the mess hall in its original size before a fireplace was added and the dining hall was expanded. The path to the left is on the face of the dam. The photographer is standing on the small wooden bridge across the dam spillway. The Brownie unit is behind the photographer. Contemporary photographs reproduce this vista in color.



Part of the maturing and education of some campers at Pinelock was to learn to live and thrive in a semi-wilderness condition. While hardly a hardship, it was a disciplining but beneficial experience for them and for me as well, since I was not accorded any privilege other than having my exclusive abode in the ancient leaky 1920's vintage wood frame canvas-covered trailer. It was sort of a tent on wheels. The watercolor (below) was rendered by a cousin, the late Mary Phraner Warren. She was a Brownie counselor at Pinelock for two seasons and went on to author children's books and champion causes for marginalized sectors of society. She and her husband Rev. Lindsay Warren adopted or fostered a host of native American children at their home on the west coast. She exemplified the kind of counselors at Pinelock.

I learned from these counselors as much or more than the campers, as an observer of camp protocols being played out and the effect of camp nurturing on camp residents. Again, I feel exceptionally privileged to experience both the Girl Scout and Boy Scout camping experience. Few can claim that kind of familiarity and understanding. Truly, regardless of gender, I was fortunate to immerse myself totally in all the activities of Pinelock. I always considered myself part of the Pinelock camper experience, like all the other campers. The campers accepted me as such regardless of gender.



#### Special Events at Pinelock:

Most summer camps, whether scouting, YMCA or private, offered a conventional array of activities for campers. Typical are crafts, nature skills and education, sports, water safety related to Red Cross standards in lifeguarding, swimming and boating proficiency. Pinelock had all these, though the boating (initially only two wooden row boats and a couple of canvas covered canoes) was lacking until the mid-fifties when instruction in canoeing and rowing were offered. Several philanthropies and individuals donated additional watercraft at that time.

Pinelock created some innovative activities somewhat unique to summer camping. These special events fell into two categories; those that occurred within each encampment and those that were once a season. The routine for each encampment included hayrides, wishing boats (lit candles floated on paper plates on the pond) at the end of each encampment, "Scouts Own," progressive camping supper, square dancing (Pepper called some reels and others came from 78 records in her collection).

The hayrides, though routine for each encampment, also merit special mention. They were a special treat for me because at times, I was permitted to ride up on Allis the farm tractor with the "men" (Hillyard brothers) pulling the hay rack full of girl campers. The hayride route followed scenic lesser traveled rural

roads, that usually featured a view of the distant Delaware Water Gap. These were typically loop trips seldom covering the same public roads to and from.

The furthest distant objective usually being a magic place I later learned was called Hainesburg Junction. There, two railroads (NY Susquehanna & Western and Lehigh & New England) crossed under the mighty landmark Paulinskill Viaduct, one of the largest poured-in-place concrete railroad bridges in the world. It was featured in a *Weird New Jersey* series. An abandoned railroad station, turntable and a derelict tumble-down boarding house completed this scene depicting forgotten mid-nineteenth century commerce and transportation. The main line of the Delaware Lackawanna & Western RR occupied the awesome concrete viaduct as part of an engineering feat called the "Cutoff." All the railroad infrastructure (except the viaduct) is now gone, but today you can visit the Hainesburg site by hiking the Paulinskill Rail Trail on the old Susquehanna Railroad vacant trackbed that follows its namesake waterway.

Special Events described below were the kind of high points that happened only infrequently during the short camping season, though they were later repeated once each year to become a tradition. Most of these innovations occurred in the first two years of Pepper's leadership:

*Christmas In July:* A feature of this event including having campers write letters to well-known personalities of the period. The gist of each letter sent was that the temporal spirit of Christmas should be a year-round custom of giving and sharing as practiced for two-week character-building encampments at Pinelock. Some of the letter recipient's names may be forgotten today, but they were popular personalities in the post-war period into the 1950s. These included radio station WOR personalities Tex and Jinks Falkenburg, Dorothy Killgallen, the Fitzgeralds, John Gambling, (John Jr. married Sally Lopacker whose parents owned the Bloomfield Chevrolet agency), Perry Como, the NJ governor, Eleanor Roosevelt, and even President Truman. I was always surprised at the strong response rate. Some of these letters are preserved as part of the artifacts included in the donation to the Historical Society of Bloomfield by the Phraner family.

*Movie Night:* (courtesy of Helen and Bill Bogie, friends of Pepper). At times, this treat occurred twice during the camp season. Leaving work early (they both worked for a legal firm), the Bogies would drive from Newark up to the camp and show 16 mm. movies of the period. Abbott and Costello comedy features were favorites along with female stars of the day; Esther Williams, Deanna Durban, Sonja Henney and other near forgotten names as this is written in 2022. Forgotten or not, these female role models were intentionally selected by the Bogies to exemplify female success stories. Everything at Pinelock was designed with the objectives of maturing the campers as young women, developing respect for nature while instilling Scout exemplary behavior, learning skills and of course, fun.

*Farmers Night:* The idea behind farmer's night was to establish a good neighbor climate between the campers and the neighboring farmers. Often, Movie Night and Farmer's Night would be combined. The staff worked hard to create a program that would entertain the farm families on their wholesome terms. Refreshments, theatricals, square dancing and non-challenging games were the basic activities.

*4th of July Parade:* The first parade was held in 1947 camp season to commemorate the founding of our nation. It was another example of Pinelock outreach to the community surrounding it. This parade consisted of campers dressed in various costumes that portrayed some character of America's heritage. One of the counselors dressed up as Miss Liberty. The one possible dress exception was Pepper who led the parade dressed up as nature girl with Pappy the pet monkey on her shoulder. The parade route was



out the camp driveway, turning left on to Polkville Road and continuing up the hill through the center of Centerville. The marching accompaniment was a chorus of kazoos. One movie reel portrays this event.

*Away Trips to Special Venues:* These were numerous and varied and will be described as they happened in the chronology below.

*Long Distance and Special Hikes:* The longest distant hike I can recall was from Pinelock to Jenny Jump State Forest, a distance of nine-miles. The state nature facility was located on a mountain between Hope and Great Meadows. This was a challenging distance even for the senior girls in Nomad and Frontier units. The typical routine was an early start after breakfast with “nosebag lunches” to carry along provided by the camp cook at a prearranged lunch/rest stop, near the midpoint of the hike. The camp truck would meet the hikers to provide beverages to prevent dehydration, to check on progress and take back any camper unable to complete the hike. The hiking route was along county roads, but at that time, Warren County was very rural and vehicular traffic was less frequent and far less menacing. Safety was observed.

Other shorter day-hikes were to historic hamlet of Vail and other attractions within a 4 to 6-mile radius from Pinelock. Vale stands out because of the Mott General Store where cold drinks were available from the elderly Mrs. Mott. Bicycle and canoe trips were also featured for senior girls. Once, four of the camp staff on their day off, rode bikes from Pinelock to Portland Pennsylvania; out and back in one day covering some twenty miles. Beside the entertainment factor, I believe it was to reconnoiter a route for potential future overnight camper bike trips to the Delaware River campsites.

*Scouts Own:* Though held once in each encampment, it was special. This was a secular service held in a grove of trees intended to reinforce the message of Girl Scouting as moral and ethical behavior. Scouts Own had a solemn, almost reverent mood about it with singing, poetry reading and sometimes a homily on nature, or growing in scouting. It was typically held Sunday evenings. Counselors and sometimes senior campers gave testimonies on what scouting meant to them. Scouts Own was the only dress up event at Pinelock. Counselors wore dark slacks and white blouses, while campers wore their scout uniforms or next best “duds.” The camp station wagon took campers feeling compelled to attend more formal worship services. There was a Catholic church and other houses of worship in the Blairstown area.

*Aquacade:* Much of camp activities and instruction was built around waterfront safety, instruction and getting the girls to learn swimming and advance their water skills up to and including lifesaving. The Aquacade was intended to show off these acquired skills and were usually held on a parents visit weekend. The event featured diving and swimming competition and water ballet.

#### Familiar Names:

While researching Pinelock history, certain familiar names kept appearing from my Bloomfield past. These were the major personalities that formed the leadership of the Bloomfield Girl Scout Council, the Camp Committee and the staff at the camp. These families were notable for their consistent dedication and work ethic on behalf of Pinelock, but also for their reputation for civic volunteer work within greater Bloomfield area.

From my personal standpoint, these names were parents of my schoolmates at Center School and South Jr. High. They were my scout and cub masters, my cub den mothers, my leaders at Bloomfield Boy Scout Camp Tamarack, and my church mentors. Their offspring were peers in my cub pack and scout troop (2). They were my schoolmates and in one case, a girl I much later, briefly dated. At risk of excluding some



family names I offer these names that kept appearing in *the Independent Press* articles on the camp and the council that sponsored it: Saunders, Polkinghorn, Schoeler, Van Giesen, Fager, Cetrulo, Dwyer, Phraner, Parker and Chichester. Forgive me for not listing all other volunteers, many working for both boy and Girl Scout causes. There were countless other individuals and families dedicated to the management and grunt work of maintaining a 20-acre seasonal camp with eleven permanent structures, not including a dozen or more lean-tos and tent platforms.

The use of the diminutive form of camp staff and camper names became common. So much so that I have forgotten many of the proper names and recall them only by their more familiar camp “handle.” In many instances, campers that started in the Caravan and Nomad units rose to become counselors and serve on the informal Junior Camp Council. Their camp names remained regardless of status. This semi-governing council consisted of campers from each building in each unit that would adjudicate minor camper infractions, discuss event programming, suggest changes. It was Pinelock’s summer dwellers’ “camp-speak.” One or more counselors were assigned to monitor the council meetings and pass along matters needing attention to the greater staff pool.

#### Camp Pinelock Chronology:

Now that the general layout of the Pinelock property, routine activities, personalities, and operations have been described, we offer a brief story line sequence of important events to impart a cohesive sense of Pinelock history 1946-1961. Some of the events described earlier are repeated here to sequence them within a chronological context. Since most of the innovation in camp programs occurred in Pinelock’s first two or three years, those years will appear to be the most active. To the extent possible, events are described in the order that they happened. Assume that major events that became traditions and were repeated in subsequent years. They are mentioned only in the initial year of their appearance.

This chronology is derived largely from 187 pages of *The Independent Press*, Bloomfield’s own newspaper. Bloomfield Councilman and active member in the Historical Society of Bloomfield, Richard Rockwell was responsible for conducting the search of the newspaper archives and providing the foundation for this Pinelock chronology.

**1946:** Camp is opened as the new Girl Scout camp on the grounds of a former and failed co-ed camp. The 20+-acre site was donated in large part by the Gardiner family. The first camp director/manager was Miss Dorothy J. Stivers, nicknamed “Skipper.” For reasons never disclosed in our sources, she did not return the next year. The first camp season totaled nine weeks; a one-week and four successive 2-week encampments, June 25 to August 27. The 1947 season reduced the camp season to six weeks; three encampments of two-weeks each.

**1947-1948:** Pinelock Camp Committee of the Bloomfield Girl Scout Association appointed Florence “Pepper” Phraner to be camp director for the 1947 season. Pepper faced serious challenges. The first cook had left and Pepper with the staff help became the part-time cook until she was able to hire a replacement. Another challenge was the relationship of the camp with the neighboring farmers that was not uniformly warm toward the camp in its opening year. That was remedied by Pepper, in part by an event called “Farmer’s Night” in which local farmers were invited to camp, saw a movie, observed various entertainments, including square dancing by the campers, fed cookies and “bug juice” (an early version of “Tang”) and participated in other fun activities. It ended at 10:00, late night for farmers who typically

got up at 5:00 AM to milk cows. Regardless, they came back year after year, turning that event into a Pinelock institution to bond campers with their agrarian neighbors.

At that time there were two Bloomfield Council camping facilities; Camp Pinelock and Stoney Brook cabin in the South Mt. Reservation, the latter used for Girl Scout short duration weekend and overnight retreats. Pinelock opened the first 1947 encampment July 1 and closed August 26. That turned out to be a typical three encampment summer. Initially change day was alternate Tuesdays. Mrs. John Roberts was the President of Bloomfield Girl Scout at this time. Camp Nurse was Anne Lee and subsequently after 1949, the position was held for several years by Virginia Harrison RN, also a member of the camp committee. Mrs. J.P. Mather was the camp business manager. Miss Janet Frantz and Ellen Rose Wright "Eensie" were the Red Cross certified swimming instructors and in charge of the water related instruction and safety. The waterfront program at Pinelock was a major focus in getting the girls to increase their swimming and water safety skills. Mary Griffin was the dietician and Pepper hired Agnes Shelman as cook replacing the one that had departed, after Pinelock's first year. There also appeared to be an unexplained change in the membership of the camp committee after the 1946 season.

While many of the hundreds of campers and camp staff were listed in the *Independent Press* camp or scout column with the arrival of each encampment, the names are too numerous to list here. A good season for Pinelock totaled over 300 enrollees for the summer.

Before the campers arrived, there was an early training orientation for counselors and other staff commencing June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1947. At that time there were eleven buildings on the site, including the Brownie House called "Sleepy Hollow" located in a former apple orchard. The 1947 camp season was managed with 17 instructional and counselor staff. The counselors were drawn primarily from teachers and students at teacher colleges. My future sister-in-law Betty Slater (later Cooper) was among these counselors for two seasons. Junior Assistants were recruited from high school seniors. The staff for the first year was broken down as follows: five waterfront instructors, some doubling as craft tutors and other functions, three unit leaders, four assistant unit leaders. There were several positions, like the bugler, who had multiple responsibilities. Mrs. Robert "Bobby" Schoeler was a constant off-site worker, performing a major role in the startup and shut down of the camp. I don't recall her formal title, but her name stands out in my memory as a strong and dedicated worker.

The initial encampment at the beginning of each season was instructional as well as pleasurable. I have in my notes camp protocols to include; camper weighing in, assigning bunks, cabins or tents, unpacking, and assigning chores. Each camper had them. At Pinelock work assignments were called "kapers." A big part of acclimating to camp life was just getting acquainted. The first full day for campers started with reveille, breakfast at the "mess hall" (except it wasn't always called that) and chores/kapers.

Speaking of chores, campers were responsible for keeping the area around their bunk clean and tidy. This included making one's bed each morning. Campers brought their own bed linen. Weekly laundry service was provided. This tidiness became a competition among the cabins, lean-tos and tents within a unit. One of the early camp institutions that became a tradition was the awarding of the "Pinelock," a sprig of long needle pine gathered with a red ribbon and a large decorative brass lock. This was awarded to the cabin that most complied with camp regulations on cleanliness and orderliness. It was awarded by the full-time camp nurse after inspecting the campers' dwellings while they were at the morning waterfront activities.

Crafts and other instruction were usually in the early afternoon. For the first day of the encampment, there was an orientation on the activities of the next two weeks of the encampment so no one was surprised at what came up. I was not aware at the time of the weighing in and examination by the camp nurse, but now, as an adult, I understand the purpose of that practice. A more complete typical day at Pinelock is found in the Pinelock Chronology section under 1953, in the following pages.

The Frontier (senior) girls usually composed and produced the camp newspaper. I recall that this three or four-page sheet was produced at a messy mimeograph machine in the camp office/store. The unfortunate initial name of this publication was "*Kids Kamp Korner*." This title was replaced with "*Pinelock Echoes*" around 1950. Some original early issues are part our family's donation.

Pinelock had a camp song, whose composer is lost in the mists of time. It was more a chant than a song, but it was popular on the hayride to serenade the farmers and village residents along the hayride route. The first stanza went like this:

*"Ki-Yike, Ki-Yike-Us, nobody like us, we are the girls of Camp PineLock...."* (that's all I remember).

A singular event occurred at Pinelock on August 13<sup>th</sup> of 1947. It was to forever seal Pinelock's good relations with neighboring farm community. I recall this serious event vividly as I was there. There was a violent thunder storm with thunder and lightning during that afternoon. We heard a particularly loud clap of thunder followed by distinct sound of crackling fire and smoke billowing from the neighboring farm to the west along Polkville Road. Pepper quickly analyzed the situation and had senior staff pile into Asthma along with the camp fire extinguishers of the day. These were galvanized 5-10 gallon cans with manual pump handles and spray hoses plus all the buckets we could muster.

The last 1947 encampment issue of the camp newspaper tells us that the staff participating in this heroic challenge were Georgia (Georgina Moritz), Chippy, Salty, Babs, Jackie (Jaqueline Parker), Eensie and Pinkey. It seemed that everyone had a Pinelock nickname. Pepper drove us down Polkville Road to discover that the neighboring farm barn had been struck by lightning and was fully engaged. Pepper instructed the staff to off-load and form a bucket brigade and to fill the fire extinguishers from the pump at the farm to wet down and save the lumber shed and dwelling adjacent to the fire. Pepper drove Asthma, the camp truck with just the two of us, past the fire. The flames were so intense and the proximity of the driveway to the fire so close that the hairs on Mom's left forearm was singed. The local volunteer fire brigade from Blairstown had not yet arrived. While the barn was a total loss and the well ran dry requiring bringing up water from the brook flowing out of Pinelock's "Big Spit," the two adjacent buildings, including the farm house, were saved. The Blairstown fire truck was taken to the adjacent Hillyard farm to refill its tanks from that well. During that night the fire truck continued to douse the fire with the water truck replenishing water supply from the camp "Big Spit" pond. Power was restored by 11:00 that night.

Several weeks later, 100 ears of fresh Jersey corn were delivered to the camp in gratitude for efforts to save the two other farm buildings. The Blairstown Volunteer Hose Company #1 also wrote Pinelock a letter of commendation and gratitude for providing "valuable assistance" in fighting the barn fire.

Almost everything in that last encampment of the 1947 season was an anti-climax to the fire, but camp activity resumed with a progressive supper, treasure hunt, a Backwards Day (with clothes worn backwards), square dancing, cookout with each unit preparing a course for the meal, a 9-mile hike to Jenny Jump and overnight camping there, a bike excursion to the Delaware Water Gap and a circus with

all the kinds of traditional big top events shrunk down to Pinelock size. Example: trained “wild” frog and box turtle races.... On August 22<sup>nd</sup> over 50 neighbors attended a camp open house with entertainments and refreshments. Gallons of “bug juice” were “on tap” and Agnes baked numerous batches of cookies.

The camp officially closed its second season on August 26, 1947 with a total of 360 campers living on site during the three encampments. Three of the campers stayed the entire 6-week season, and 14 stayed 4 weeks.

**1949:** With the successful completion of two years and the camp attendance growing, Pinelock settled into more of a routine for each encampment of the season in 1949 and in the seasons to follow. Since the program of events and instruction had been developed and time tested, the emphasis of the Bloomfield Girl Scout Council and camp committee leadership concentrated on improving and expanding camp infrastructure to accommodate additional campers. I have no official confirmation of this improvement program since I do not have access to the camp committee minutes, if they still exist which is unlikely. There is enough evidence that the improvements were planned, undertaken and accomplished. Innovative programs continued to emerge from the fertile minds of Pepper and camp staff.

Taking historical advantage of the 1949-year, the camp was converted into a wild west “Forty-Niners” gold rush theme. With each of the buildings in the camp core being given a wild west name and decoration. Pepper’s cabin became “Robber’s Roost.” My trailer became “Dynamite Dave’s” and so on. The “Dry Gulch Girls” won the frog jumping contest. Gold painted rocks “salted” the camp grounds as rewards for prospecting treasure hunts....

*The Independent Press* reported that a fund drive was launched in early February of ‘49 hoping to raise \$27,000. His Honor, Mayor William Huck issued a proclamation in support of the funding appeal. The funds were intended to liquidate a \$22,500 mortgage on Pinelock and provide \$2,500 to make repairs on Stoney Brook Cabin at South Mt. Reservation. It is not clear how the mortgage on the camp came about since the camp grounds were donated by the Gardner family. Suspicion is that significant expenses were incurred and mortgaged to bring the camp back to a level of amenity and safety for Girl Scout occupancy. The property had deteriorated from disuse and neglect during the great war.

Also, it was announced that the 1949 camp season would run the usual three, two-week encampments. The results of the camp council funding campaign were disappointing with only \$726 collected, in spite of the fact that about 14,000 letters were sent out in support of the appeal. To make matters worse, the Bloomfield Community Chest reduced their normally expected funding for the camp that year. Pepper returned as director for her third season at Pinelock. A camp reunion was celebrated on April 25<sup>th</sup> at Westminster Church. “Bobby” Schoeler continued as chair of the camp committee. Leadership stability had been achieved. Pinelock was expected to open on June 30<sup>th</sup>, with subsequent encampments opening on July 14<sup>th</sup> and July 16<sup>th</sup> and ending on August 8<sup>th</sup>.

The protocols for application to attend camp has by this time been well established. Preference was given to *Bloomfield* resident Brownies and Girl Scouts. Next in priority for acceptance were Bloomfield non-Scout residents and finally those non-resident, non-scouts. Applications under these categories were accepted in the order received. Rates were assessed accordingly. Cutoff date for 1949 season accepting applications was in mid-May, except for Brownies whose cut off was for June 1<sup>st</sup> for reasons unexplained. After June 1st, if there was still unfilled capacity at the camp, girls from other jurisdictions were offered admission. I was surprised to learn that the reach of the camp promotion and reputation resulted in

attendance by campers from other states and from Jersey locations long distances from Bloomfield. One of the impressive local promotional displays for Pinelock was at Lipton's Department Store, a Bloomfield institution on Broad St. then selling camping supplies among a great variety of other goods.

One of the unique challenges of this third year of Pinelock's existence was an attack by "saw worms" on Pinelock's namesake long needle pines. Two-hundred trees were infected, but a remedy must have been applied because the overall appearance of the camp was not adversely affected. The routine work sessions prior to opening occupied most of June. Entire families served in the volunteer annual Pinelock refurbishing. It was becoming apparent that maintaining the camp was very labor intensive. There was a sustained demand for volunteers. Highlights of the work effort for '49 was the re-shingling of the Caravan unit cabins, and the restoration of one of the four structures in that unit. Roofing nails and other building materials were donated by a local Bloomfield hardware store. The annual caulking of the camp's two wooden planked row boats became routine. This involved inserting oakum into the seams between the planks in the boat bottoms and then adding a putty-like caulking material, followed by painting. The boats were then launched so that the treated seams would close as the wood swelled from being exposed to pond moisture. This activity became part of opening the camp before the days of aluminum rowboats. The need for newer and additional boats persisted. Two additional row boats were donated later.

The first encampment of the season had 39 campers, nine of which stayed for the second encampment. Staff for the '49 season consisted of 14 counselors with Virginia "Ginny" Harrison RN assuming camp nurse and business manager roles on site. Counselor staff was drawn from Trenton, Newark, Montclair State Colleges, Bethany and Ohio Wesleyan Colleges and a neighbor Mary Quick, down Spruce Street from the Phraner residence. Disturbing false rumors started to circulate about possible sale of Pinelock and Stoney Brook Cabin. By this time, Pinelock was given a dedicated column on camp news during the summer season by the *Independent Press*.

Farmer's night held on August 5<sup>th</sup> was very popular this year attracting 65 neighboring farmers' families. They were treated to a water ballet by the camp staff, followed by a movie, songs, the usual cookies and "bug juice" concluding with a camp fire. Other '49 highlights included a senior girls bike trip to Portland PA, crossing the Delaware River on an old (1869) 775' covered bridge (that the hurricane and flooding of '55 took out). It was never replaced. I recall the three-covered bridge spans sagged between the mid river support piers resulting in a mild up and down sensation in an automobile crossing *over* or was it *through* the old covered bridge. For the bike trip logistic, the camp station wagon brought supplies for camping on a sandy beach on the river and served as escort vehicle in case of breakdowns. The camp's drinking and swimming water was routinely tested and found to be satisfactory. Water testing regimen continued thereafter. During the 1949 season, it was tested every two weeks.

Another innovation was the use of the camp in the post season fall period by various Bloomfield Scout troops for weekend camping retreats. This role for Pinelock continued and expanded to include Boy Scout troops as well. Toward the end of the camp's existence, it became practice to use the camp for short duration weekend camping by Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops.

**1950 - 1951:** A Girl Scout cookie sale competition among the troops starting on March 31, 1950, kicked off the fourth Pinelock season. The resulting revenue benefited Pinelock and other Girl Scout missions. The four top cookie sellers (each 300 boxes plus) won two weeks at the camp. In April, Pepper gave a talk at Berkeley elementary school showing a movie and explaining the features of Pinelock and camp life. This was one of several presentations made in the off-season through the years to promote the camp. In

May, Marianne “Bobby” Schoeler, camp committee chairman introduced plans over the next year for improving the camp’s pond or “Big Spit.” In the fall after the closing of the 1950 camp season, the main pond would be drained in preparation for dredging and expanding the swimming area and applying over 50 tons of beach sand. The old original dock would be removed and new docks installed in a “T” configuration as recommended by the Red Cross. A float/raft would also be provided for white cap (most proficient swimmers) as a target swim destination. The Bloomfield Women’s Club donated money to purchase an additional row boat resulting from a card party fund raiser. This waterfront improvement was the culmination of four years of planning and consulting with the Red Cross, National Scout Executive Board, NJ Dept. of Agriculture and the Pinelock Camp Committee.

Pepper announced a new “Pioneer” camping initiative with Nomad girls domiciled in group tents erected on wood platforms and engaging in more outdoor type activities; i.e., “roughing it.” To prepare for this new camp venture, in early May, a team of volunteers was assembled to build tent platforms and stain the block house. The latter building’s bottom floor would be used as an infirmary this camp season. As customary, Pepper held the annual open house orientation for the camp committee and the new staff. The camp committee (Schoeler and Ellsworth Woodland) reported to the local Rotary Club, not having to increase camper rates over the past five seasons. More details are shared below.

The 5th Season for Pinelock started with a bang. The first encampment on June 29<sup>th</sup> attracted 60 campers (two busloads), filling the camp facilities to near capacity. The Modern Omnibus Inc. coach trip back then took about two hours from Bloomfield to the camp. There were no interstate highways at that time. The route taken was Bloomfield Ave. to Route 46 (then named Route 6) to Great Meadows, thence by a county road passing through the villages of Hope, Mt. Herman to Centerville and the camp. The campers’ duffle bags were then transferred from the motor coach to a farm truck that distributed the gear to the various units of the camp. The girls trudged down through the corridor of pines to the camp mess hall for admissions processing.

July 4<sup>th</sup> was big this year as seen in Pepper’s 8mm “home” movies with an unusually large and innovative parade up to and through Centerville. The campers in the parade dressed up in costumes representing; the characters in the novel *Little Women*, the *Dionne Quints*, a troop of mice, angels, devils, “Men” from Mars, and 1910 bathing beauties. Each unit counselor came up with the ideas and ways to scrounge or make the costumes with materials on hand. For me it was a totally humiliating experience. My Mom, (Pepper to the campers), decided that she would go as a washer woman with a wash tub and scrub board strapped to her waist and a clothes line with crazy clothes pinned to the line. I was trailing behind her to serve as a clothes pole with the line draped around my shoulders. I felt like a prisoner of war being dragged to an uncertain fate, all captured in the movie. The day ended well with fireworks and gallons of “bug juice.”

The second encampment for 1950 (July 13-27) had 58 campers and 15 staff. Dr. and Mrs. Albano donated \$100 for yet another row boat apparently as a result of their daughter Edwina’s enthusiasm at experiencing Pinelock for the first time. July 23<sup>rd</sup>, *Independent Press* reported that visitor’s day was a success. The Nomad girls had an opportunity to show their pioneer “roughing it” skills. Activities included woodcraft, campfire building (probably ignition with fire by friction, as the Boy Scouts called it), log sawing and nail driving. Caravan unit staged a relay swimming race with a difference. The first stage was run in pajamas and for the return stage, the girls stripped down to their bathing suits. Caravan unit cabin #4 won the event. The waterfront events ended with an exciting greased watermelon “fight” in the pond.



For the adults, The Dads and the Counselors played an exhibition softball game with the dads winning 5-3. Each alternate Sunday visitors' day at Pinelock was planned somewhat differently. The one in July of 1950 was particularly eventful as it is detailed here, but it typified the variety of events held on subsequent visitors' days. Christmas in July was held as described in previous years. The third and last encampment for 1950 season attracted 52 campers.

Other activities for the 1950-1951 season included visits to the State Fish Hatchery located in Hackettstown, a Brownie 6-mile round bike trip to the historic hamlet of Vail. In early July, a newly-formed camper advisory panel was formed and met with Pepper as their advisor. The purpose was to get direct camper opinions on issues raised from the camper perspective. There was a short hike by Caravan to Hillyard's farm and overnight camping in a farm field amid the cow flops. The next morning the reward was blueberry pancakes. Work began on a new Nomad camp site, as reported "across the lake" with tent platforms and stone fire places for outdoor cooking.

After Pinelock was closed for the season and prepared for the winter months (shutting down and draining water lines etc.) some outreach activities commenced. In early October, the camp committee gave a talk to the local Rotary Club. It highlighted the impressive progress the camp had achieved over the past five years. Each encampment in this year had been filled at or near capacity with 65 girls and 17 staff. The camp had finally had achieved financial self-sustaining status. Needs still to be addressed were an enlargement of the mess hall and building a new infirmary. Later in October the first of several volunteer work sessions was scheduled. Screens in the cabins were replaced, buildings were painted and repaired. The camp flag pole was moved to the top of the hill next to the blockhouse. Speedy, the new cook prepared meals for the volunteers. Pepper provided stories and anecdotes of unusual camp experiences for entertainment. The volunteer families also learned that Warren County October nights are chilly with no heat in the sleeping quarters.

**1952:** Plans advanced for expanding the mess hall dining room to almost double its original size. A generous benefactor (DaVella Mills Foundation) offered a match of 50% of the project's \$6,000 capital cost. Corporate donations were encouraged and Bloomfield Rotary, Kiwanis, Optimists, Lions, and The Women's Club responded positively. Plans were drawn up in February of 1952. The dining hall expansion proposed was 18'x30' with stone piers built almost to the pond edge, simulated log siding matching the original, steel supporting structure and a stone fireplace. The architectural treatment objective was to make the addition fully compatible with the appearance of the original building. Even now, it's hard to see the new building segment from the original. The second floor of the mess hall extension was to be used for expanded handicraft instruction. The planned construction schedule was very ambitious to complete in time for the opening of the 1952 camp season on June 26. Another important capital improvement and capacity expansion in '52, was the construction in May of six lean-tos for the Nomad Unit on a new site within the camp property.

The hard-working camp committee that year consisted of familiar names: Saunders, Schoeler, Phraner, Candy, Harrison, Brainard, Lowery, Van Giesen and Woodland. Seasonal closing this year would be August 7. Some good news for campers; fees for camper admissions would not increase this year. Oh Yes, Pinelock got a new cook, Ms. Josephine Fisher.

For the first time, Pinelock would host foreign campers, one each from China and Puerto Rico. The camp had become so popular and well known, that there was a waiting list of 24 girls from outside the Bloomfield Council! The camp continued to function as a Girl Scout retreat in the off season while all this

construction activity was underway. In late May, an overnight, 2-day encampment was scheduled for outdoor skills and Girl Scout badge instruction. On June 22nd, *The Independent Press* reported that the new mess hall extension was formally dedicated. The ceremony was attended by 125 persons.

Animal pets continued to “rule” at Pinelock during the ’52 camping season with a new brood; “Lucy” the duck, “No-Bo” (no B.O.; get it?) the skunk and nurse Ginny Harrison’s black cocker spaniel “Doc.” Lucy who had pretty much the run of the camp preferred to stay around the mess hall area. She was boarded at a local farm for the winter months.

**1953:** After Pepper’s resignation, Margaret Dwyer was announced in April as the new camp director. Dwyer was experienced in Scouting and managing organizations. She formerly was Executive Director of The Passaic Area Girl Scout Council for eight years. The first of three encampments commenced on June 20<sup>th</sup>. August 13<sup>th</sup> would be the last active day in the 1952 camp season. The October 1, 1953 issue of *The Independent Press*, reported that the total attendance at Pinelock for the ’53 season was 200 girls, of which 153 were scouts from Bloomfield, and a compliment of 21 staff, 9 of which had advanced as former campers. Though the leadership of the camp had changed, the typical daily routine and schedule did not. We learn of that routine from *The Independent Press* issue of June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1953. A typical day at camp started with 07:00 AM reveille bugled from the highest elevation of the camp next to the block house. It was repeated twice, once toward the north and the Caravan cabins and to the south toward the Brownie unit and the rest of the camp dwellers. The camp assembled for an 08:00 flag ceremony at the flag raising. Breakfast followed at the mess hall, excuse me, “dining hall.” By 09:00, the campers were engaged in laborious “kapers” and holding unit meetings on plans for the day. Swimming instruction and waterfront safety played a large role in the camp daily schedule. The various units engaged in waterfront activities were on separate waterfront schedules with: Frontier at 09:30, Nomad - 10:00, Caravan - 10:30, and Brownies - 11:00. Those not at the waterfront did sports, crafts, hikes, or special instruction. Lunch was at 12:00 noon and was considered the heavy meal of the day.

The Trading Post in the Director’s cabin/office was available to campers after lunch. This camp store was open for an hour each day except Sundays. Mail call was at 1:30 and then there was a rest period, letter writing, reading, or just personal time hour. 2:30-4:00 PM was reserved for a variety of individual unit projects and activities, while senior girls who wanted instruction on water lifesaving could achieve Red Cross certification at the end of the encampment. Between 4:00 and 5:00 PM, there was an optional general swim with all camp units participating. 5:00-6:00 PM was additional free time and 6:00 PM was supper time. Retreat was scheduled for 7:00-8:00 PM followed by evening programs and entertainment. Taps was at 9:00 PM. Sleep came easily for the campers and some counselors so engaged in such a busy, almost military-type programming.

There were few truly typical days as the units’ schedules were varied by special events. Some of the major ones are detailed above. Others are listed here; half day hikes with nosebag lunches, bike and canoe trips, cookouts, campouts (overnight), progressive suppers (to give the cooks a break on their infrequent day off – where would they go without a car in the deep recesses of rural farm country?), Christmas in July, Fourth of July, skits and rehearsal for camp productions, conservation and clean up sessions, intern counselor training programs for older girls thinking about becoming scout and camp leaders and later education careers, and special trips to places like the N.J. State fish hatchery.

So successful was the season, that a seventh week was added to the 1953 camping year! Instead of the season ending on August 6<sup>th</sup>, it ran till August 13<sup>th</sup>. The status of regional Girl Scouting appeared healthy

in 1953. The Bloomfield Girl Scout Council encompassed 32 active troops, registering a Scout population of 556 Brownies (8-10), 536 Intermediate Scouts and 525 Senior Scouts while acknowledging 237 volunteers and some 1,164 engaged in some kind of pro-scouting work. Camp Pinelock joined six other camps from other councils in support of a Fresh Air fund event. The '53 year closed out with a successful reunion with 143 attending on December 29<sup>th</sup> at the usual venue: Westminster Church. Camp Committee Chair, Mrs. Richard "Bobby" Schoeler awarded sisters Lynn and Betsy Fager, Red Cross certifications. Other recognitions were announced. Former camper and now counselor Valerie Cetrullo designed the printed program for the event. Camp Executive Director Dwyer recommended that a Pinelock Junior Camp Committee be organized and on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1954, it was established by the Camp Committee. In some ways, 1953 could be considered the peak year for Pinelock, at the half way point in its fifteen-year history.

**1954:** The newly formed *Pinelock* Junior Camp Committee got to work immediately in early March 1954 to plan activities and events for the '54 encampments. For the second year, the camp season would be extended an additional week in August for a total of seven weeks ending the season August 19<sup>th</sup>. The camp cleanup was scheduled early this year on the March 18<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Alan Lindsay replaced Mrs. Schoeler who resigned as chair of the camp committee because of undisclosed illness. Schoeler was presented with an award for the many years of service as the camp committee chairwoman. Other changes in staff added Elizabeth Quinn - nurse and Barbara Wood - business manager, Ida Gephardt - cook, Jack Lowery - volunteer maintenance committee chairman. For the first time, Pinelock hired two Boy Scouts for the season as resident custodians and maintenance personnel. They were quartered separately, but it was not disclosed where on the camp grounds, maybe the old trailer that I had vacated years past.

Getting the Pinelock ready for the season was always labor intensive and largely accomplished by volunteers. Aside from the routine preparatory work, the Girl Scouts from various Bloomfield troops planted 1,250 seedlings in celebration of Arbor Day. Later Boy Scouts from Tamarack Council planted more mature trees as a conservation project. In May, Boy Scouts from Bloomfield's Tamarack Council also cleared brush and pruned trees that were starting to obstruct movement by people and vehicles. In June, a camp orientation session was held at the Bloomfield Community Center for parents of first-time campers. Camp director Dwyer held a 3-day instruction curriculum for all staff.

An innovative plan was devised for advancement of former campers to join the ranks of entry level camp staff. These positions were intended to recruit and train future paid camp staff employees. They included maintenance assistant, junior counselor, and assistant unit leader. The camp would open this year on July 1st. In an unusual occurrence, the first application by a camper for the season, was for a 5-week stay! Later, a few registrants applied for a 7-week stay, indicating the growing popularity of Pinelock for returning campers, and for the entire season.

In April, the Frontier unit got new large tent platforms (6 to a tent with a counselor) and for a portion of their stay, would sleep in pup tents as a new program developed under Mrs. Polkinghorn, President of the Bloomfield Girl Scout Council. The idea was an extension of a "primitive living" education program for senior girls. Primitive or not, facility improvements continued at the waterfront with pond dredging and new catch basins to control runoff. Mrs. Chichester assisted with these efforts (this writer advanced in Cubbing and Boy Scouting with her two sons, Fred and Tom). It was another demonstration of involvement of some Bloomfield families in both girl and boy scouting simultaneously.

After a successful season another reunion was held December 9<sup>th</sup> with 140 campers and 20 staff members attending. The '54 year closed out with Camp Director Dwyer meeting with the Junior Camp Committee to get their ideas on further improvements of the Pinelock activities program in the coming year.

**1955:** The work detail to prepare Pinelock for the '55 season was organized by Henry Saunders (my former scoutmaster at Boy Scout Troop 2). It was a bit different than previous years in that it involved Boy Scouts as well as parent volunteers over two work weekends. Four additional lean-tos were to be built as well as the normal cleaning, utility start up, and painting. Early in June, before the regular season began, senior campers provided an orientation for Brownies at the camp. This orientation was further enhanced by a trip to the fish hatchery in Hackettstown and the Land of Make Believe, a new child amusement venue, based on popular fables that had recently opened on a former farm near Hope.

The "Fly Up" ceremony merits brief mention. This was very important for the Brownies who graduated to the Caravan unit and in doing so also became Girl Scouts and got full Girl Scout (green) uniforms. The final encampment week for the season attracted only 42 girls, though some had signed up for the full 7-week 1955 season and this seventh week had been added to the normal 6-week season.

I found fragmentary historical information on Bloomfield's Boy Scout Tamarack Council camp while doing research on Pinelock. Hopefully, someone will volunteer to write a comparable history of the camp and Boy Scout Council of Tamarack. I interject a brief census of the Tamarack Boy Scout Council as of October 1955. The Tamarack Council encompassed half a dozen communities in Essex and Bergen Counties, managing 15 Cub packs (ages 8-11), 14 Scout troops (11-14), and 4 Explorer posts (15+). The average duration for individual Boy Scout participation was about nine years. An estimated 560 men and women volunteers supported the council and its camp.

**1956:** A major event for this year in March, was the commitment of the Bloomfield Rotary Club to dedicate funds to build an infirmary at Pinelock. It was planned to start construction in March so that the building would be ready when the camping season opening in late June. Margaret Dwyer was reappointed as camp director for her fifth season. Somehow, her Pinelock nickname came slowly into practice, but we learn this year that it was "Misty." She and Pepper were the directors with the longest run of Pinelock leadership, (five successful years each).

This was the year that the reunion and open house were held simultaneously at the camp on May 5<sup>th</sup>. All former campers were invited to come and tour the improvements at the camp. The tour was provided by the Caravan unit veterans. The Fresh Air Fund again contributed funds for campers' stay at Pinelock and other camps. Pinelock became a venue for pre- and post-camping season activities and instruction. In May there was a program on outdoor cooking held in a *Camporee* type event at Bloomfield's Brookdale Park and at Stoney Brook Cabin at South Mt. Reservation. Because of lack of volunteers, Pinelock was not used for these pre-season events. A census of the camp use in '56 disclosed that the first encampment attracted 66 campers. In the second encampment (July), Pinelock attendance was 22 Brownies, 26 Caravan, 24 Nomad and 8 Frontier, for a total of 80. The second encampment was always the most popular and heaviest attended. Campers attended from eleven communities outside of Bloomfield, including one from Long Island, NY who attended during the entire 1956 season. The new lean-tos became the housing of choice for weekend stays at Pinelock during pre and post season special events and stays by individual troops. "Misty" Dwyer was honored for her five years of service as the Pinelock camp director at a buffet dinner hosted by Mrs. Henry Saunders at their residence on Willard Ave.

**1957:** At the end of January, new officers for the Girl Scout Council were elected. It was reported that 380 girls attended camp in the previous year. It is not clear from the report if Stoney Brook cabin was included in this total because it well exceeds the total typically attending the three encampments at Pinelock. It may have included Bloomfield girls attending scout camps, other than Pinelock. Also, it is not clear if this was the beginning of the regionalization of the Girl Scout Councils to include communities other than Bloomfield. This trend consolidating the local councils was to continue into the four regional councils in the State of New Jersey that exist today.

March 14<sup>th</sup> was celebrated as Girl Scout Week and the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Girl Scouting in America. During the ceremony, the names of many of the volunteers were read. A \$1,200.00 donation was announced for Pinelock. Rotary added a check for over \$1,300.00 to the camp for additional improvements to the waterfront. Mrs. Robert Leach accepted the leadership of the camp committee. Other staff changes included at new camp director Miss Jean Severence. She came to Pinelock from directing the Burlington County (NJ) Girl Scout camp during the 1955 and '56 season and before that, director for the Schenectady NY area Girl Scout camp during 1954. Three other staff were appointed to waterfront and craft counselor positions.

The second encampment for 1957 set a record of 90 campers, not including those who stayed over from the first encampment. To recruit senior girl campers as counselors and program new activities for the camp, a new programs unit was established within the 11-volunteer camp committee. Three work weekend sessions were scheduled, one in May and two in June.

In late May, before the camping season began, senior girls went on a 25-mile, 2-day canoe voyage on the Delaware River starting at Dingman's Ferry and landing downstream at Portland PA. Troop 4 of Bloomfield's First Presbyterian Church spent a weekend at Pinelock. By June 20<sup>th</sup>, 209 new registrations had been received for the 1957 camping season to begin this year on June 29<sup>th</sup>. The new program planning unit developed several new ideas. A major change was to open boating and canoe safety and instruction to all age girls now that sufficient boats and canoes had been obtained. The lack of water craft had hampered more comprehensive boating instruction in past years. I recall in the first years, there were only two old row boats at the camp. More folk dancing was added to the normal square-dancing routine. More free time was experimented, specifically Sundays became a day of rest when campers could sleep late or attend religious services. Buffet style meals were served or progressive suppers were provided by various camper units. It was a day of rest for staff and cooks as well.

October 3rd, Pinelock was closed and shut down for the winter. It was reported that 39% of the campers were from outside of Bloomfield. Though the camp was officially shut down, selected staff and leaders camped out on October 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> learning "*primitive*" camping skills, cooking and sleeping on bare tent platforms. It wasn't reported what the temperature or precipitation was that weekend. It's clear that this innovation may have been judged successful since it was tried out on the campers, in more moderate April weather the following year. I have camped in a lean-to with my Boy Scout troop in October at Camp Tamarack during an ice storm. It was a memorable event, not in an entirely pleasant way.

**1958:** Signs of a troubled future for Camp Pinelock were becoming evident. After only one year, Director Ms. Severence left and was replaced in March with a new camp director Kathryn Hartley. She came from directing camps in West Virginia and Lowell MA. Hartley was the fifth Pinelock camp director in thirteen years, but two of the directors, award-winning Pepper and Misty served for five-years each. The other three directors basically serving only one-year each. Three Girl Scout troops braved off-season primitive

camping of the weekend of 9-13 April at Pinelock. One troop stayed one night and the other stayed 2 and 3 nights respectively. Mrs. Paul Kohlman became the new Girl Scout Council President.

We pause here to review how the camp staff and organizational structure had evolved. The Bloomfield Girl Scout Council was the executive board for the camp and other major Girl Scout endeavors. The Pinelock camp committee however, was where most of the off-site camp management work was accomplished. By 1958, the camp committee was divided into six sub committees: transportation, finance, program, medical, publicity, and conservation. The camp director was hired by the council, but she reported to the camp committee. It was more of a collegial arrangement since the director was often a member ex-officio on one or more of the committees. The hierarchy below the Council level was similar to Boy Scouts; that is, troops were usually organized around church congregations and below that level, each troop had a varying number of patrols.

At the camp, the director was the boss. All counselors, unit leaders and assistant unit leaders along with maintenance and food service staff reported to the camp director. The camp nurse was a separate domain as a medical professional except with some non-medical duties as assigned. There was close cooperation on decision making for individual camper treatment in cases of illness or injury, at least that is what I observed in the early years in the collegial relationship between Ginny Harrison RN and Director Pepper. The business manager was also somewhat semi-autonomous, mainly because as the camp grew, the details of purchasing, hiring, and disbursements became too distracting for the early camp director who had shouldered those tasks. Volunteers also came under the scope of the camp director's responsibility during the active camping season on site. Increasingly, the Mariner Girl Scout troop 67 provided volunteers to help, as these were senior girls who had worked their way up through the Scouting ranks. During the off-season work sessions, the camp committee filled the role of volunteer management and organized volunteer personnel efforts.

Another perhaps ominous note was the major change in policy allowing one-week stays during three periods for the summer of 1958. Increasingly, Pinelock was being used in non-traditional camping ways, especially in the shoulders of the season. There was more use of the camp for staff training retreats, special camping events of short duration and conservation projects, also of limited duration.

More intensive instruction in camping and outdoor skills dominated the program. Forty 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade girls from troops 2, 20, 55, 61, and 62 participated in this instruction called "Pinelock Lodge" at the camp. They stayed in the Nomad lean-to colony and the Caravan cabins. Instructors taught rope knots, tree-limb lash construction, use of hatchets and axes, fire building, trail blazing, map reading, compass use, and orienteering. These skills are very much more sophisticated than past fun-oriented programming at Pinelock. This activity was well before the introduction of contemporary GPS devices.

Yet another troubling sign was the first (June 29<sup>th</sup> to July 12<sup>th</sup> 1958) encampment enrollment attracting only 21 girls. The practice of promoting the camp with presentations and orientation at the public and parochial elementary schools had continued through the years, even back to 1947. Regardless of these and other promotions, except for some unexplained surges, enrollment at Pinelock and at Stoney Brook cabin at the reservation was dropping. Occasionally there were encouraging signs. An open house tour and orientation at the camp drew over 100 attendees. An essay contest "Why I Want to Go to Camp Pinelock" encouraged enthusiastic entrees. The usual volunteer work sessions to open the camp, Brownie Fly-Up ceremonies, off-season troop visits to the camp to learn outdoor camping skills and the other programs continued, but on a somewhat smaller scale.



**1959:** A community-wide audio-visual program promoting Pinelock was organized and presented by Mr. Edward Carter, a member of the camp committee. In April, there was a “curved bar” awards ceremony which is comparable rank to the Eagle Scout (earned) award. The usual work sessions were scheduled but the *Independent Press* did not report on Pinelock with the frequency as it had in past years.

**1960:** The January meeting of the camp committee decided to open the camp on June 26<sup>th</sup> for the first encampment. The Bloomfield Girl Scout Council had by this time become the “Girl Scout Council of Greater Essex County.” Two volunteer work sessions were scheduled for April 9<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. An open house was planned for May 14<sup>th</sup>, 12 noon to 3 PM. Bring your own picnic lunch; beverages will be provided. Former campers will provide tours of the camp for novices.

No mention was made of the annual camp reunions. They must have been curtailed several years back. Westminster Presbyterian Church where those reunions were held, was having troubles of its own at this time. April 7<sup>th</sup> was Arbor Day in 1959 and the Girl Scouts planted 1,250 trees (seedlings probably) on the camp property to celebrate the day. It also qualified as credit toward individual scouts achieving a conservation badge. May 12, 31 Boy Scouts planted additional trees at Pinelock. There appears to be some traditional summer season camp activities during the summer of 1960 but we found none reported. THAT IS THE LAST NEWS ITEM FOUND FROM *THE INDEPENDENT PRESS* ON CAMP PINELOCK.

**1961 ?.....**

#### Camp Pinelock- Closed and Sold:

We near the end of the Pinelock story on a somewhat sad note. The Girl Scout camp was closed, but the camp site lives on with successive private owners and is now undergoing a major renovation to the two, possibly three surviving structures. More about that below. The camp’s last scheduled seasonal encampments ended with the 1960 season. Following that closure, “the camp was used entirely for Scout troop (short duration) camping,” (Livingston-based *West Essex Tribune*, July 20, 1961, notes:). The loss of Pinelock is symptomatic of major changes in American culture:

- Diminishing of all Scouting participation at the national level overall,
- Lessening of the communal camp experience in favor of family and individual-based vacations,
- Similar diminution of formerly strong Boy Scout camps in the Tamarack and Montclair Councils,
- Unreliable sources of manual labor volunteering, important to the sustainability of Pinelock,
- Intensive land development pressures in The Skylands Region of North Jersey,
- Including the disruption of a new Interstate highway that bisected the Pinelock site,
- Turbulence in the management of summer camps of all types, and
- Changes and centralization in the organization of Girl Scout councils from municipal to regional.

From researching newspaper and other sources, the author concludes that these series of events and circumstances beyond the Pinelock management’s influence, combined to result in the camp’s demise. The Bloomfield local newspaper *The Independent Press* stopped reporting on Pinelock around 1960. I believe that this signaled the end of conventional summer encampments at Pinelock after a 15-year operation and the change in camp management from municipal to regional council structure. The paper had reported increased use of the camp by individual Girl and Boy Scout troops and explorer posts for short duration weekend camping, outdoor education and special nature/conservation projects. This substituted for the normal June to August encampment period and extended both pre- and post-camp

season. The Bloomfield Girl Scout Council was merged with other local Girl Scout Councils to form the Essex County Girl Scout Council. That county-based institution became burdened with increased and diverse camp acreage, including Pinelock. The council's convenient cabin at South Mountain reservation outlasted Pinelock and continued to be used for short overnights and day trips. It reportedly burned and may have been replaced on the site by a Girl Scout multiple cabin unit called "The Oval" that's still active.

A specific major change in the Council's camps acreage inventory may have also contributed to sale of the Pinelock property. Girl Scout Camp Madeleine Mulford was a well-known 35-year-old facility located on leased property in the State's Stokes State Forest. The Council was notified that the State would not be renewing the lease on the camp grounds at the impending lapse of lease. The Council responded by purchasing an over 400-acre site in the Pennsylvania Pocono Mountains near Dingman's Ferry. The financial obligation resulting from the purchase may have been eased by the proceeds from the sale of Pinelock. I admit, that I found no direct connection between this new Pocono camp site purchase and the sale of Pinelock. I further suggest that the surplus of marketable former camp land seemed to converge with other contributing circumstances that rendered Pinelock financially and functionally obsolete. The author and the Historical Society of Bloomfield would appreciate any confirmation of this conjecture and circumstances surrounding the Pinelock sale including dates and details of the sale.

#### Personal Prognosis for Scout Camps and Scouting in General:

Sadly, during the research for this monograph, I discovered that the Pinelock demise was a bellwether for other camps and losses in Scouting membership. In the past five years nationally, 200 camps in 30 states have been sold. The major Girl Scout Eagle Island (former great camp) on the Upper Saranac Lake used by Bloomfield Girl Scouts for training, was sold in 2015. It was one of the Great Camps of the six-million-acre Adirondack Park and on the register of historic places. It was mentioned in some of the Pinelock correspondence found, as used by the Greater Essex and Hudson Council between 1957 and 2015. Just within the last three years, Girl Scout membership has plummeted by 30% nationally, though the Heart of New Jersey Girl Scout Council experience is less dramatic. Boy Scouting during the same period experienced an even worse membership loss at 43% nationally (D. Crary, Associated Press). When I was in Scouting, there were three Boy Scout camps clustered on the mountain above Oakland in Passaic County; Tamarack (Tamarack Council including Bloomfield communities in Essex and Bergen Counties), Glen Gray (Eagle Rock Council including Montclair and other communities in Essex), and Todd (Hudson County communities). All three were closed as traditional scout summer camps, but the acreage has been naturally preserved as part of the Bergen County Park system with independent camping and outdoor activities managed by a contractor.

Accompanying the loss of membership and the closure and sale of camps is a major centralization of Girl Scout organization. The Bloomfield Girl Scout Council was merged with the other councils to form a Greater Essex Girl Scout Council and then the Greater Essex and Hudson Council. That in turn was further centralized by merger into Heart of New Jersey Girl Scout Council covering Hudson, Essex, Union, Warren, Hunterdon, Somerset and part of Middlesex, owning three Girl Scout camps: Camp Agnes Dewitt in Hillsborough, Camp Lou Henry Hoover in Sussex County, and The Oval in South Mountain Reservation. To my knowledge, none of the original Bloomfield and adjacent council Girl Scout camps of the 1940s and 1950 survive as Scout camps. In a sense, they followed Pinelock into oblivion; yet another reason for memorializing Pinelock on these pages.

The author resisted the temptation to record the history of earliest and other Bloomfield Girl Scout camping venues, even those connected with his family like Camp Demarest at Lake Glen Wild. That pre- and post Pinelock research will fall to others. SDP.

#### On a Happier Note for Pinelock:

Following the disposition of the Pinelock Camp property and after a succession of private owners, at least one of which did not maintain the property well, there is now (2022) a new caring ownership. The author visited the site in the company of a former Warren County Freeholder Director. He is familiar with the area and has relatives living on a nearby farm, once owned by the Hillyard family. That farm family described in this history of Pinelock, is still living elsewhere on adjacent farms.

Our one-day visit included connecting with one of the Hillyard “boys” who drove the hayride tractor during Pinelock years. He manhandled camper baggage on camp change day and removed organic kitchen waste for a pig farmer. Widower D. Hillyard, lives on a beautiful old farmstead. He showed us the remains of “Allis,” the original hayride 1945 *Allis Chalmers* farm tractor (model WC-45) in a dismantled condition in the barn and the successor tractor, a similar AC tractor (WD-45) under a tarp in the barnyard that pulled subsequent Pinelock hayrides. Dorrance Hillyard, a teenager when I last saw him driving it, now stands beside “Allis” below.



In spite of encroaching residential development tracts and the Interstate highway that impelled them, much of the farmland surrounding the former Pinelock site is still under cultivation or in dairy use. The rolling Warren County farm land with views of the distant Delaware Water Gap remain unimpeded over the treeless fields and pastureland. There is a long-term proposal to restore the famed “Lackawanna” (railroad) Cut Off, foolishly allowed to be abandoned, lay fallow and deteriorate. The substitution of I-80 for the Lackawanna Railroad Cutoff had a major and irreversible impact on this part of rural Warren County, as it did with Pinelock and its immediate surroundings.

The entrance roadway to the camp site has been shortened by over half its original length with the construction of I-80. Polkville Road alignment and former camp frontage have also been considerably altered. The internal camp dirt and gravel roadway alignment remains the same as in camp days with a small bridge dividing the large and small pond, both of which are silted and filled at a much lower level

than previously existed. The small pond or “Little Spit” is silted over and appears more like a marsh than an open water pond. The dam and spillway on the west end of the large pond are intact and functioning. We found only three original camp buildings surviving: the enlarged iconic mess hall on the northwest shore of the pond, the former director’s quarters/camp office building, and one of the four Caravan unit cabins, now in a deteriorated state. Two of the former buildings are being restored and greatly improved to upscale living standards without altering their overall architectural rural theme. A regional and site map appears on the last page of this document to help orient the reader.

As the “before and after” photographs reveal, the mess hall and pond compare with little outward visual change, though the mess hall was modestly extended in the last days of the camp. The waterfront docks on the opposite side of the pond are gone and the formerly sandy beach area has grown over. The landmark and namesake pines are still prevalent on the site. The office director’s cabin suffered a fire, but most of the structure was saved and a mild expansion of that structure includes a major upgrading. Again, like the mess hall, the alterations retain the same basic appearance, but much more upscale and modern than that of the camp era. The property is now well maintained with added enhancements by the current owner. Ambitious plans for restoration of the grounds and preservation of the sole surviving Caravan unit cabin are advancing. Though we were unable in the time available, to fully inspect the outer reaches of the camp site, we were impressed with current restoration accomplishments and future plans.

The contemporary (2021) photographs below depict the current appearance of the former camp main building. The upper photo is taken from the dam looking northeast showing the former mess hall in its enlarged state. The original mess hall was the part nearest the photographer. The “Big Spit” is in the foreground. The water level of the pond was slightly diminished from when the camp was active. Compare these images with the earlier post card views of the building during Pinelock days. The lower photo is taken from the bridge dividing the Big “Spit” from the Little “Spit.” Further up the hill behind the mess hall is the enlarged former office and camp director’s quarters just barely visible.





Many of the iconic views of the Pinelock buildings and grounds are preserved and the current vision continues for the future to commemorate the camp's brief heritage. As mentioned earlier, an album of photographs, Pinelock trinkets and three 400-ft. reels of 8mm movie film and digitized versions accompany this historical monograph as donations to the Historical Society of Bloomfield and The Girl Scout Council library/museum. The photo album was given to Pepper at the first Pinelock Reunion December 1947. The Phraner family hopes that the Historical Society of Bloomfield and the current "Heart of Jersey" Girl Scout Council will encourage its members and Bloomfield residents to add memories and artifacts of this forgotten special place. In a sense then, we are happy to report that the spirit of Camp Pinelock seems to live on, in a new form and function. SDP.

#### **APPENDIX: Real Estate Origins of the Camp Pinelock Tract.**

During the course of research for this monograph, our son who is acquainted with title searches performed a brief internet search of the Pinelock property. He concentrated on the original title transfer to the Gardner family and the Gardners' sale (\$1.00) - donation of the property to the Bloomfield Girl Scout Council. He pulled this interesting but not fully complete information off the internet property court records for Warren County, NJ. Subsequent sale of the former Pinelock property, not involving the Bloomfield Girl Scouts is beyond the scope of this literature.

Tract 1 - To Gardner by Charles P. Harris, 4/3/34 - 3 acres (Book 275, page 55)

Tract 2 - To Gardner, from James Harris Farm - 12 acres (no citation or date)

Tract 3 - Conveyed to J.R. Gardner by John A. Walters, 4/11/1932 - 12 acres (Book 267, page 59)

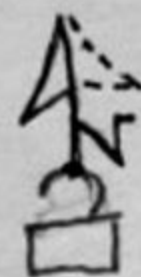
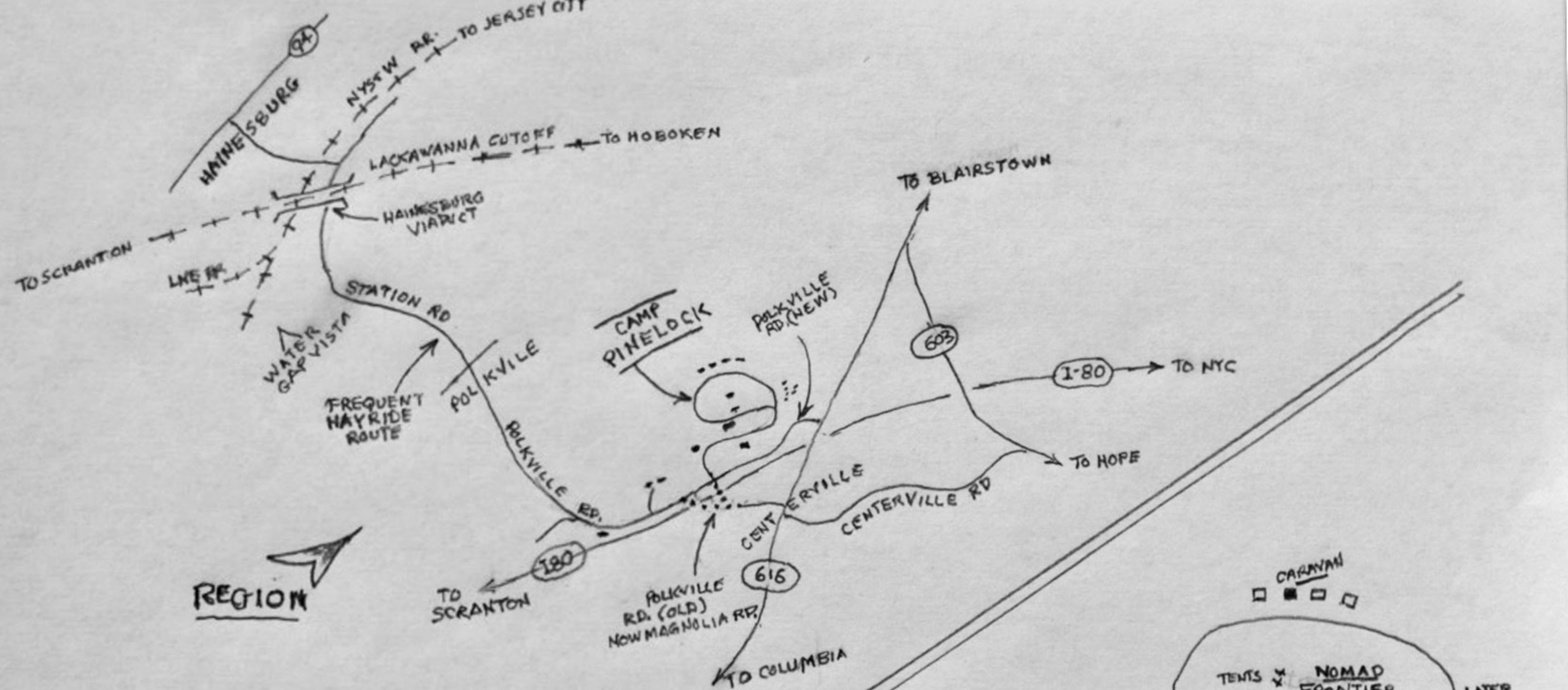
Three above Tracts Conveyed by Joseph R. and Arlene W. Gardner (grantors) to Bloomfield Girl Scout Council - 27 acres, 3/19/1946 (Book 321, page 372) with the following exceptions:

- Excepting 1.7 acres from Tracts 2 and 3 to be retained by the grantors
- Excepting 1.0 acre to Paul and Anita Seidel.
- The net total acreage to the Bloomfield Girl Scout Council is approximately 22 acres including buildings of the unnamed former co-ed camp.

Note on Style: No particular writing style manual has been applied in drafting text or using names and titles. Every effort has been made to conform to correct Girl Scout nomenclature and protocols. Accordingly, the document has been reviewed and corrected by a Council official. The author chose to capitalize "Girl Scout" and "Boy Scout" uniformly regardless of whether it is applied as an organization, title, or generic. Upon completion of full review and final alterations and additions, the document will be archived with the Girl Scout Council, Historical Society of Bloomfield and other jurisdictions as appropriate in the fall of 2022. Any subsequent additions will be recorded as supplement(s) in separate documents. SDP

Sources: As described earlier, most of the formal written source material came from the *Independent Press* as researched by Councilman Richard Rockwell. Rockwell is also very active in the Historical Society of Bloomfield and in other historic preservation pursuits. The 1947 Camp Pinelock Photo Album photos rekindled memories and confirmed information from other sources. Additional material was provided by current Girl Scout Council officers: Kelly McDonald, Dolores Kresge and Danielle Bonastia.





# CAMP PINELOCK

(1946-1961)

- ROADS (ABANDONED)
- RAILROADS (ABANDONED)
- STRUCTURES EXISTING
- STRUCTURES REMOVED
- X TENT PLATFORM SITES
- O LEANTO SITES

NOT TO SCALE SDP 6/22

## DETAIL

