

TITLE PAGE

CAMP FIRE GIRLS OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

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CAMP FIRE GIRLS OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

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INTRODUCTION

CAMP FIRE GIRLS OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

BY GLORIA JABAUT

WO-HE-LO !

The watchword of Camp Fire Girls since it's founding in 1910 and as it remains today. The salutation is contrived from the first two letters of Work, Health and LOve, a triangle of words meaning "WORK; IN CONSTRUCTIVE WORK, LAY THE ROOTS OF TRUE SERVICE TO HUMANITY AND THE REAL JOY OF LIVING. HEALTH FUNDAMENTAL TO LIVING LIFE HEALTHY IN MIND AND BODY. AND LOVE OUR HIGHEST LAW IN REGARDS TO OUR TREATMENT OF ONE ANOTHER." (Mrs. Charlotte Gulick, 1910)

Camp Fire Girls became the first non-sectarian, inter-racial organization for girls in the United States in 1910. The organization was formed with the support of a group of unusual men and women, a joint effort of both sexes. It was not a group with mere theories but a group of working experts. The fields of their expertise included health, education and the arts. Experts in character development and human relations; in recreation and social

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Interaction. A great respect for the American Indian enhanced the group and especially Charlotte Gulick. She enriched the girl's lives with their inheritance of Indian lore, which added mystique and education to the venture. Camp Fire Girls was unequivocally an American product of its day.

Luther Halsey Gulick, MD and his wife Charlotte Vetter Gulick were the driving force in the founding of the organization. Along with friends like Charles H. Farnsworth, active in the field of recreation and Ernest Thompson Seton, Naturalist, author and with Gullick active in the Boy Scout movement and John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Not only were they friends but they were professional associates in advanced educational and recreational work with youth and all were to become involved in forming that new creation, unlike anything that had ever existed in the United States Camp Fire Girls.

No sooner had the Boy Scouts become incorporated as a national agency in February 1910 than inquiries began to pour in. Was there a similar organization for girls? There was not.

The Gulicks' had operated a summer camp in Sebago Maine in 1907 for their four daughters and their daughter's

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Friends. The Camp was named Camp Wo-He-Lo. Taken from, the first two letters of the three words which the Gullick's recognized as words, which epitomized the focus of the summer program. Later this was to become the heart and core of the Camp Fire Girls program.

Dr. Gulick was instrumental in the design of the YMCA logo as a member of the founding committee of that organization. His resume underlines his active participation in the establishment of the Boy Scouts as well. If we look at the design of the YMCA an inverted triangle, the tri-foil of the boy scouts and later, the double triangle of the new organization, Camp Fire Girls, we can see the Gullicks influence in the social activities of boys and girls of the turn of the century. Mrs. Gullick had been active in the recreational field and in medicine. Her true expertise, however, lay in her love of nature and her knowledge of outdoor living. She wanted the girls of that day to learn how to appreciate their surroundings and live with nature.

Other individuals involved with the initiation of Camp Fire Girls were Ernest Thompson Seton with his knowledge of Indian lore, and symbols, Charles Farnsworth who developed the attainable levels to be achieved in the

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Program and William Langdon an associate of the organizational committee of the Boy Scouts.

As the formation of the organization moved forward, the committee found it necessary to identify it immediately. Hundreds of names were presented and considered. The committee decided on Camp Fire Girls symbolizing the girls keeping the fire burning in a camp or in a house as a feminine activity. Fire symbolized the home, the place of comfort and cheer. Around the fire centered theme and activities. Friends gather and the family gathers around. The word Camp symbolizes the out of doors spirit of the organization.

As the Boy Scout movement swept across the country, more inquiries came in for information on the new Camp Fire Girls program. In 1911 at the Horace Mann School in Ohio, the organizational committee presented the first draft of the new Camp Fire Girls program.

March 1912, women from around the United States actively involved in leadership roles within their community were invited to attend the first training session for new Camp Fire leaders. Albeit that in some areas of the United States the Camp Fire Girls had already started in bits and pieces. The women worked from the first manual

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A 100-page book with additional blank pages for the leaders to make entries of their own selections. The manual also contained the first stated purpose of the organization as stated in their by-laws: **THE PURPOSE OF CAMP FIRE GIRLS IS TO PERPETUATE THE SPIRITUAL IDEALS OF THE HOME AND TO STIMULATE AND AID IN THE FORMATION OF HABITS MAKING FOR HEALTH AND CHARACTER.BECAUSE CAMP FIRE GIRLS BELIEVES THAT A GIRL'S EXPERIENCES AS SHE MATURES AFFECT HER ENTIRE LIFE IT PROVIDES OPORTUNITIES FOR ENJOYABLE AND WORTHWHILE LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES THROUGH WHICH SHE MAY DEVELOP HER BEST POTENTIALITIES AS AN ALERT CITIZEN. THIS PROGRAM PROVIDES BOTH FUN AND FRIENDSHIPS.**

Attending that Training was a young, new, teacher from Los Gatos California, Elizabeth Florence Smith. Miss Smith along with her sister and three of their mutual friends had started a Pioneers Girls program loosely based on some of the broader activities incorporated in the new Camp Fire Girls organization. They later became a Camp Fire group but were not recognized immediately as a formal group by the organization.

The young teacher became enthralled with the new girl's program and determined to introduce it to her circle of friends in Los Gatos, California. Though similar to the

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Pioneer Girls at that time, the autonomy, and recognition of the American Indian's contribution to our own values gained her respect and enthusiasm.

CAMP FIRE GIRLS OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

CHAPTER ONE

IN THE BEGINING

The original small group of girls that started as Pioneer Girls then renamed Camp Fire Girls remained as a small group of friends other than an established group. However, their small group followed the Camp Fire Girls new manual. Thus, their establishment in 1912 was authenticated in the national Camp Fire Girls archives as "Pioneer Girls dissolved (only to be resurrected in the future if sponsorship is provided for Camp Fire Girls)."

In 1915, Miss Florence Smith along with Olive Nelson and Leof Mills of Los Gatos formed another Camp Fire Girls group with Mrs. Mills as the First Guardian (leader). The group did receive a charter from the Camp Fire Girls national Office in New York as the Makaula Group. The name chosen by the six sophomore girls from Los Gatos Union High School means "Camp in the Woods."

The names on the original charter (March 1916) presented to the group included- Roma Mcabee ,Aleine Baker, Elizabeth Hobbie, Margaret Owen, Mary Corbus, and Marian Curtis.

Edith Titcomb, a young college student organized a second group in 1917. She later became an outstanding educator and community leader in San Jose. Philoma Goldsworthy who was a Camp Fire Girl in Pacific Grove California in 1916 also organized a group while in college. In 1918, her small group of high school girls became the first chartered Camp Fire Girls in the Cambrian area at the time known as the Campbell district. Her members; Beatrice Ralston, Patrice Smith, Florence Anderson, Wanetta McConnell and Francis Durcer.

It was through the admiration and love of the American Indian Mrs. Gulick planned programs using their symbolism and desire to improve themselves through rank association.

A Girl in Camp Fire in the early 1900s received her priceless gifts at special recognition ceremonies, a ceremonial gown and her symbols of honors or rank .

"To many of the girls at that time," stated Philoma Goldsworthy one of the first members in Pacific Grove in 1912, "the name 'camp fire' was used to symbolize the girls as future homemakers, and the center of the home.

Since fire was the center of the home in olden days, this seemed very practical."

Audrey Butcher of San Jose recalls, "Any girl could become a member of Camp Fire Girls when she learned the Wood Gather's Desire, later called the Law of Camp Fire Girls.

The girl would announce her desire to:

Seek beauty

Give Service

Pursue knowledge

Be trustworthy

Hold on to health

Glorify work

Be happy

This original Wood Gather's Desire, later called the Law of Camp Fire Girls, is still in use in the organization. In October 1942, the words "worship God," implicit in the whole statement, were given as the first item of the law".

"Law" is a misnomer for at no time in the organizations history has a Camp Fire Girl been asked to take any oath or make any promise, failure in which might cause her to feel untrustworthy or guilty. Rather, she has expressed her feeling of responsibility in the Desire.

In general, the first manual for Camp Fire Girls was written for adults to be leaders or Guardians of high school age girls.

Geo Howen, formerly a San Jose resident, never had an opportunity to be a Camp Fire Girl but was a counselor for one of the first Day Camp programs in California sponsored by Camp Fire Girls. Later she became a leader for her daughter, Helens, group in west San Jose. "I liked the idea from the beginning of the Camp Fire Girls focus on maintaining the environment," Howen states. "I also liked the idea the groups were small maybe six to eight girls. It gave us a chance to know the girls and many times to act as a counselor to them."

Camp Fire Girl members had ranks in which they could advance if they chose to do so. The ranks started as Wood Gather to Fire Maker to Torch Bearer. The "honors" the girls received were in the form of beads of a variety of colors.

In 1915 came the appearance of another booklet *The Shulutamna*, or ceremonial dress of the Camp Fire Girls. In the forward Mrs. Gulick wrote, "This is the first larger organization that has adopted a ceremonial uniform."

The Camp Fire Girls uniform is patterned after the dress of the Indian woman. It was chosen because the lines of the primitive American woman's dress were simple and becoming to all girls and would never go out of fashion, and it could be made individual without destroying its uniformity."

The honors or beads the girls earned then were sewn upon their ceremonial gown. Only a few honors were actually, what one would say, required honors; the greater numbers were elective. A girl had a wide choice in seven fields; Health Craft, Home Craft, Nature lore, Camp Craft, Hand craft and crafts in business, patriotism

Some of the early Health Craft honors represented new standards of hygienic living for women. "Be free from colds for two consecutive months between October and April." In addition, under Home Craft the girls had to "know the best season for the chief fruits and vegetables available in their locality and a reasonable price for each."

Marcia Evans, a retired schoolteacher, remembers when she was a Camp Fire Girl in the early 1930's. "I was the youngest girl in my group in Campbell. Two of the older girls had graduated from high school but stayed with the

Us to help some of us younger ones to complete our work for honors. I can remember making prune bread for Christmas. We all lived on orchards and everyone contributed so many prunes for the receipe that some girls tried to double the amount in the receipe. It was so funny because they looked like footballs when they came out of the oven."

In the first manual from Camp Fire Girls, it was suggested that a girl could explore and develop her chosen activity in her home. Since traveling in those early years was difficult especially for many girls who lived in the Santa Clara Valley, the idea of belonging to a group and still being able to work from home was enticing.

In 1916, the girls and the guardians were delighted to receive the first magazine for Camp Fire Girls. The cover carried the word WO-HE-LO in hand lettering while the Indian motif was carried out in two totem poles of Camp Fire significance on either side. The main article was on **Camp Fire Girls Symbols** and was written by Mrs. Gulick. The magazine announced the new Camp Fire Girls Song book. The California groups were thrilled, instead of receiving letters with ideas and information they would have their own magazine.

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Camp Fire Girls flourished in Santa Clara County as the movement grew out of camp life for girls. The motto of Camp Fire Girls, which continues to exist, is **GIVE SERVICE**.

During the First World War President Wilson urged women to enter upon a food saving program in order to supply the men in service the necessary food they required. In Santa Clara County, the 100 hundred girls involved with Camp Fire Girls went all out in helping with canning and preserving at home, helping elderly neighbors harvest their crops and some became involved in making bread, which was wrapped and sent to the Red Cross for distribution in hospitals for returning veterans of the war.

During this period, President Woodrow Wilson became aware of the Camp Fire Girls organization and its efforts by these young girls to go all out in working toward the war effort. After recognizing the organization with a plaque for Citizenship (the only one given at that time to an established organization), President Wilson met with Luther Gulick in the White House. Gulick informed him that the Camp Fire Girls organization was proposing a national uniform for the girls.

It was a Minute Girl Uniform, red tie, white blouse, blue skirt, and a white navy cap. It was to be worn to work school and college commencements. Wilson gave his approval. The girls now had a ceremonial gown for special ceremonies and a red, white, and blue uniform they could wear as they went about proclaiming their new slogan "GIVE SERVICE."

**CAMP FIRE GIRLS OF
SANTA CLARA VALLEY**

CHAPTER TWO

VALLEY GIRLS

During the early years of the Camp Fire Girls organization, the movement in Santa Clara County was slow compared with the mid-west and Eastern part of the Country. Miss Smith's group in the Los Gatos area, Philoma Goldsworthy in Campbell and other small groups developed but were scattered throughout the county. That is until 1914, when younger girls could not wait until the older girls organization was perfected. Thousands of smaller girls begged to join and in some places, they had been allowed to become part of work parties and other service type activities of the older girls program. Suddenly nine and ten year old girls became and auxiliary to their older sisters Camp Fire Girls groups. They were named Blue Birds, for the Blue Birds of Happiness song (1912) and "Nests" therefore, were formed other than the more familiar 'groups' of their older siblings. Their leaders chose from the Camp Fire Girls Manual activities that seemed suitable for the younger girls.

The Camp Fire Girls' board acknowledged that the new Blue Bird program, was to give "little girls their true inheritance of childhood's joy and experience"

"It is our aim to have Blue Birds as different from Camp Fire Girls as girls six to twelve are different from girls twelve to twenty." stated Mrs. Charles Lanier, member of the board and of the committee on organization. The younger girls would not be eligible for honors. A program of free play built on three ideas of SING, GROW AND HELP. The Blue Bird Wish written by Theodore Acland Harper in 1938 became somewhat of an outline of the activities approved by the Board.

THE BLUE BIRD WISH

To have fun

To learn to make beautiful things

To remember to finish what I begin

To want to keep my temper most of the time

To go to interesting places

To know about trees and flowers and birds

To make friends

Between 1914 with approximately fifty older Camp Fire Girls active in the valley. . . to 1925 with a record of three hundred girls from Gilroy to Los Gatos, San Jose to

Los Altos,. . . Camp Fire Girls groups grew like the fruit orchards and canneries of the day, sprouting up as the population grew.

It was during the early 1930's that a young schoolteacher from Chemeketa Park in the mountains above Los Gatos came forward to establish a Camp Fire Girls group in that small community. Gladys Rose Vonfelt, once a Camp Fire Girl in one of the earliest groups from Arcata, California, wanted the girls in her remote mountain community to enjoy the same activities of the new organization.

Gladys earned her elementary teaching credential from the University of California in Los Angeles then in the spring of 1927 married her college sweetheart, Paul Vonfelt. Their love and appreciation of nature drove the young couple to establish their home among the Redwoods and forest ferns on the edge of Santa Clara County.

Gladys became a substitute teacher in the small elementary schools in the hills in 1930 and an art teacher in the adult education department of the Los Gatos Union High School district.

Her roots in Camp Fire Girls gave way to the urging of fourth and fifth grade girls at Alma school and she organized the first group there in 1937. The first Camp

Fire Girls Group was composed of the following; Evviva Filmer, Jean Maurer, Phyliss Burkett, Nona Thomas, Betty Ann Wurtsbaugh, Marian and Margie Sinclair, Marg Sinelau, Merilee Thompkins and Shirley Weaver. Taking the Indian symbolism for friendship, service, and tall trees the club chose their Indian name, Wacankiya.

Gladys eventually organized groups at Loma Prieta, Lexington and Van Meter schools in Los Gatos.

By 1938, Camp Fire Girls had established itself in Santa Clara valley as a thriving girls organization. The groups worked closely with the San Jose YWCA in presenting workshops for the girls and special ceremonies were held in the Y's Schofield Hall. The roster at the newly formed Santa Clara Council of Camp Fire Girls contained the following names of group leaders who had received their charter from Camp Fire Girls National office in New York: Nina Walters, Herbert Hoover Junior High school, Helen Crawford Hester School in San Jose, Lucille Hartley Burbank School, Leona Uhel Peter Burnett Junior High School, Ruth Eldrige Willow Glen School, Beatrice Briggs Almaden School, Claire Coolidge Pala School, Roberta Trickly Lowell School, Mary D'Arteney Roosevelt Junior High School, Thelma Barnwell Olinder School, Betty Hughes Ann Darling School, Marion Ely Trace School, J.E. Townsend Campbell School(2

groups), Myrtle McLane Jefferson Union School, Rachel Walters Cambrian School, Irene Farnham Cambrian School, Marie Collins Gardner School, Gladys Vonfelt was Guardian for four groups from Alma, Lexington, Los Gatos Elementary and Loma Prieta with the following acting as leaders for the groups; Mrs. William Capenier, Mrs. R.B. Chandler, Mrs. Richard Houghton and Miss Ruth Fowler.

The Santa Clara County Council of Camp Fire Girls, though formed in 1937 became incorporated through their national office in New York in 1940. As an official council Edna Sefton, accepted the role of Executive Director. Jessie Shelley who was the acting director at the time formerly introduced her. The ceremony took place during the Grand Council Fire which was held at the San Jose YWCA.

As the council grew, Districts were established throughout the Valley with volunteer directors. These volunteers had the responsibility of the annual membership drive, recruiting new members and leaders. Group leaders met monthly in their district offices with their volunteer directors and their own officers. This was their opportunity to learn about new program materials from the National office and exchange ideas about group project from other leaders in their district. The volunteer directors took leadership roles in the annual product sale as well.

The product sale brought funds into the groups and helped to support the national headquarters develop program materials. During that period, the product sale in Santa Clara valley consisted of an assortment of donuts supplied by San Jose's own Langendorf Bread Bakery on Montgomery St.

The **Valley Girls**, as the Camp Fire leaders sometimes referred to themselves, took on new responsibilities as the United States entered World War II. Gladys Vonfelt and Alma Oneal, American Red Cross Director, in Los Gatos worked on projects that would aid the Red Cross in their service while giving the girls a feeling of active participation in the war effort. The groups signed up to learn how to roll bandages. Some of the groups helped with Red Cross mailings while others helped to pack supplies going overseas to the men and women in active service.

The onset of rationing everything from gasoline to shoes to butter created more projects for the groups. Older girls from Santa Clara Valley Camp Fire Girls groups attended several workshops at the YWCA to learn how to cook using new guidelines on stretching dairy products and meat. They learned how to bake using applesauce, fruit, and oil in place of butter. Some of their better cooking experience outcomes were sent over to the USO hut on San

Carlos Street in San Jose to be enjoyed by the many service personal who frequented the club nightly.

Meanwhile, other winds were blowing in the East Coast groups of Camp Fire Girls. Those winds would reach Santa Clara County in 1942.

**CAMP FIRE GIRLS OF
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CHAPTER THREE

BIRTH OF THE HORIZON CLUB

Perhaps one of the most important accomplishments of the 1940 period was the introduction into the program of the Horizon Clubs for high-school girls.

It seemed like a spontaneous movement springing up simultaneously in dozens of cities on the East Coast. Obviously, the older girls enjoyed their Camp Fire Girls experiences but as their interest changed, they wanted to be distinguished from their younger members.

Before the National office could get materials out to the councils, local executive Directors and staff were leading the way to change. Before much of the materials appeared for this age group the girls and their leaders were largely following their own ideas and had the responsibility to carry them forward. Their adult leaders reverted to being called Guardians because the girls saw themselves in the role of leadership. They would guide their club along the interests of the group. Guardian training materials came down quickly from National to help guide the new program. One of the first activities of the

new level was for each of the girls to take an Indian name, which would also be used exclusively during their camping experiences. Gladys Vonfelt had taken an Indian name, as was the custom, early in her career as a leader for the first groups of Camp Fire Girls in Los Gatos in 1937. Gladys established the first Horizon Club at Los Gatos Union High School in 1943, under the sponsorship of Ruth Comfort Mitchell, a renowned author of the era. Oh, yes, Gladys Vonfelt's Indian name. . . Ta-Wan-Ka meaning, "Willing to undertake or attempt."

The Horizon club members of the first high school club were; Janice Nickson, Helen Snyder, Elizabeth Zublin, Jean Zumwalt, Carole Dean Keating, Audrey Helm, Jo Ann Rapock, Sally Folmer and Geraldine Harris.

Horizon clubs stress the development of a well-rounded personality, wholesome relationships with others, social activities with boys and girls indoors and out, vocational exploration and community service. The girls at this age were encouraged to develop their own program within the parameters of the Horizon Club Desire.

The Horizon Club Desire written by June Schibel Weber a counselor with the Oakland Council of Camp Fire Girls exemplifies the thoughts and wishes of the high school aged girls during that period.

HORIZON CLUB DESIRE

***As horizons are ever changing
and always distant
I shall not stand still and look into their
purple Shadows.
Instead, I shall seek the higher purposes
and the new Adventures that lie beyond
I shall reach ever outward to the horizon that is
Always just beyond my grasp.***

The Horizon Club program brought about the change to the word Camp Fire Girls 'groups'. They too, now all became Camp Fire Girls Clubs. The emphasis on Ranks, which had to be passed by adult leaders as well as the youth, was dropped. A suggested outline in the manual gave the girls the option of working toward the higher high ranks while they continued to be recognized with Camp Fire special honors, the beads for their work in the crafts program.

The 1940's became a time of looking back to what had been accomplished since the organizations inception and a time to look forward to what it could become.

In Santa Clara Valley, the organization enjoyed the influx of teachers into its ranks. Teachers became interested in leading junior high school clubs, working on

the Camp Fire Council or district committees, and stepping into officer roles within the council.

Nowhere was that more evident than with the faculty at Herbert Hoover Junior High School in San Jose. Principal, Marguerite Shannon served on district committees, Lucille Snyder and Ruby Ferguson camp counselors, and Francis Woodrow school nurse took leadership positions and the official nurse at summer camp. Bernice Aldrich and Florence Stahl contributed time and their talents to leader training and district committees. Perhaps one of the most outstanding contributions came from Teacher Helen Hughes who wrote the Camp Fire Girls Processional and Recessional songs, which have been used at every Grand Council Fire across the United States even today. Lois Pryor a long time counselor at Hoover junior High school served two terms as president of the Santa Clara Council.

The Grand Council Fire was a ceremony to give the girls the honors and recognition they had received during the year. As the various clubs grew throughout the county, it also became a gathering of all of the clubs in the valley. Blue Bird members entering the fourth grade received their "wings", a gold pin symbolizing that they were ready to fly up to be a Camp Fire Girl. They also received a red tie, a piece of uniform worn by the Camp

Fire girls on the next level. The Camp Fire Girls in the fifth and sixth grades received their ceremonial gowns as a symbol of becoming Horizon club members. Guardians too were recognized at this year-end ceremony with special recognition for their service and or tenure.

In the early 1960's a new recognition was added to the Horizon Club program. The recognition was a Wo-He-Lo Medallion. To be recognized for the highest achievement in the Horizon club program a member had to devote her high school years to a project. She worked with an advisor to develop the project then had to work out in the community demonstrating her knowledge of the project. The Wo-he-lo Medallion steps and recognition was quite similar to the Boy Scouts Eagle Scout award. The first recipient in Santa Clara County was Cheryl Acrea, a senior at Saratoga High School. Cheryl received the award in 1965 at a Grand Council Fire.

**CAMP FIRE GIRLS OF
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CHAPTER FOUR

THE SPELL OF WO-HE-LO

It has been said that the summer camp the Gulicks programmed in Sebago Maine in the early 1900's became the prototype for all Camp Fire Girls out-of-doors experiences. Indeed, some have gone as far as to say it is THE SPELL OF WO-HE-LO which continues to wind its way into a lasting segment of the organization . . . even today.

Dressed in long skirts, mitty blouses and high button shoes the girls in Florence Smith's group took to the hills surrounding Los Gatos in 1912 to practice archery. Camping was a new and untried experience to most girls in those days. Miss Smith wanted to introduce her group to the beauty and vastness of the area through a familiar sport of archery.

The camping experience for the girls in those early times meant coping with heavy skirts. Once out of those confines and into voluminous bloomers and middies, with long black stockings and white tennis shoes, life took on a new freedom. Charlotte Gulick, who directed the Sebago

Camp, would cry out every morning, "This is a new Day."

She would always have some thing new for them to do.

One of the earliest overnight camping experiences recorded in Santa Clara County was in 1919. Philloma Goldsworthy took her group of girls from Cambrian School to Big Basin for a week. In 1923 seven leaders in the area ventured with their groups to the private estate of Mrs. Bertha Rice for a week and in 1924 the girls used the Boy Scout Camp in Boulder Creek.

It is no surprise that when Gladys Vonfelt and her husband Paul moved into their small cabin in Chemeketa Park with its surrounding five acres, she knew that she too would enjoy many "New Days" with her girls.

One of the first experiences the new Alma School Camp Fire Girls had was preparing for a hike in the hills above Alma School. In the summer of 1938, Gladys held a day camp for one week on her property and one overnight to the delight of the girls. The Camp Fire Girls learned to make a fire pit, cook their meals, and identify trees, rocks and plants on their daily hikes. They used articles found in nature, twigs, leaves, soil to complete their craft projects.

As the groups grew in Santa Clara County leaders clamored for more training in taking their girls on hikes

and camping skills. Gladys Vonfelt was invited by Camp Fire Girls National office to attend a three-day training in Butte County in order for her to be the outdoor trainer of the Santa Clara Council.

In 1939 the Santa Clara Council of Camp Fire Girls was given fifteen acres of redwoods and trails at Big Basin State park through a 'use agreement', under which the girls did not need to pay for the use of the land but they did agree to keep their camp in good repair. They also had the use of an old log cabin type building which they used as a lodge.

The council agreed to prepare the area for a summer resident camp and maintain the area on a yearly basis. Gladys Vonfelt and her husband Paul accepted the responsibility of organizing camp work crews to help prepare and maintain the site. The Camp was named WA-STA-HI, taken from the first two letters of **W**ATER, **S**TARS AND **H**ILLS. All of the beauty of nature and of that area was captured in the name and Camp Wa-Sta-Hi lived up to its contrived Indian name.

Camping became an all-year activity for the Santa Clara Valley Camp Fire Girls. The Big Basin site was used for weekend and overnight excursions, Vasona Station, the ground around the old depot in Los Gatos, Stevens Creek

park in San Jose and other sites were locations for overnights, summer and school break day camps. Even the leaders enjoyed their outdoor training under the redwoods in the Big Basin camp. In the summer of 1949 275 girls from Santa Clara County enjoyed summer camp at big Basin's Camp Wa-Sta-Hi.

By 1951, the number of girls attending the camp recorded over 475 girls attending summer camp with many more on a waiting list. However, the old lodge had grown more dilapidated despite all the work done by parents and friends before each summer session. Finally, the state and the Camp Fire board agreed it had to be replaced.

The community backed the Camp Fire Girls through the new adventure. Candy sale money through the annual product sale and donations from the community came into the council. Chester Root drew plans and specifications free. Carpenters through the leadership of Frank H. Orahod, office secretary of the District Council of Carpenters, the carpenters union agreed to work on the lodge on weekends Bob Brent of the Teamsters Union promised to aid the organization. Other donations for materials, plumbing etc. came forth from the community. The fireplace in the lodge already had been provided through a memorial fund backed by Florence Stahl, Mrs. Sanborn Young, Philoma Goldsworthy,

Miss Edith Titcomb, Miss Marguerite Shannon, and Miss Ruby Ferguson. The fund was called the Helen Hughes Fund in honor of a woman who aided Camp Fire for over 25 years. The San Jose Lions Club donated a much-needed stove, Clarence Leese president of the Lions made the presentation. Fred Ross was chairperson of the building committee and Paul Vonfelt Chairman of the Camp planning committee. The building actually started in January 1952 to be ready for the following summer camp season. Mrs. Erman Stadler was Council president during the construction of the lodge and Miss Frances Malefyt was Camp Fire Girls Executive Director. Through all the efforts of so many generous citizen of Santa Clara Valley, the lodge was completed in the spring of 1952 just in time for the Council to program Camp Wa-Sta-Hi's six weeks of resident camp.

The next four years the girls enjoyed their beloved Camp Wa-Sta-Hi every summer and during the other seasons as well. Some early Camp Fire Girls who had attended Camp when they were young had opportunities to become camp junior counselors during this time.

Unfortunately, as the population exploded after World War II more space became needed for recreation and Camp Fire Girls was asked to leave their Big Basin home.

The Santa Clara Council established a new Camp Wa-Sta-Hi on land purchased for \$20,000 on 159 acres of a hill above Felton in 1956. Paul VonFelt with the assistance of parents of Camp Fire Girls painstakingly dismantled the lodge and fireplace at Big Basin and rebuilt it in the new location of Camp Wa-sta-Hi on Zayante Road in Felton. The swimming pool on the land was made ready and the camp held resident camping during the summer of 1957.

Camping and learning how to appreciate and live in the out-of doors continued to be an integral part of the Camp Fire Girls program.

**CAMP FIRE GIRLS OF
SANTA CLARA COUNTY**

SUMMARY

"IT'S A NEW DAY"

Camp Fire Girls celebrated its sixty-fifth birthday in 1975. The Santa Clara Council of Camp Fire Girls celebrated its sixty-third anniversary. While the country prepared to celebrate its bicentennial birthday in 1976 the winds of change once more propelled from the boardroom of Camp Fire Girls inc., now located in Kansas City Missouri.

It was also the year I was hired as a District Director for Camp Fire Girls in the Santa Clara County Council located on Winchester Boulevard. Ellen Shea, Executive Director, had just returned from the Camp Fire Girls semi-annual congress, which was held in Kansas City.

"It's a New Day!" she proclaimed. I was somewhat perplexed by the unusual greeting.

"It is a new day." I responded, not sure, if I should have made a questioning remark or a simple reply. I chose the latter.

I soon learned I would be stepping into an organization, which had recently spent two years in an independent survey of itself to discover if the organization was still relevant to girls. Yes, relevant to

girls but the survey showed that Camp Fire was not to young girls and boys in the Kindergarten and first grade levels. Boy scouts, at that time, enrolled boys in the third grade and up, Camp Fire Girls in the third grade started as Blue Birds.

"It's a New Day!" Boys were now invited to join Camp Fire. Now Blue Birds included six-year-old boys and girls, A new Kindergarten program 'Sparks' was being piloted by a mid west council. There was a name change for the organization. . . Camp Fire Inc. (Recognizing the inclusiveness of the organization.)

"It's a New Day!" and a new purpose was written as an introduction to Camp Fire by-laws:

The purpose of Camp Fire is to provide, through a program of informal education, opportunities for youth to realize their potential and to function effectively as caring, self-directed individuals responsible to themselves and to others; and, as an organization, to seek to improve those conditions in society which affect youth.

Thus began my employment With Camp Fire... Actually. As Ellen Shea stated, "'It's a new day!' and this is your challenge."

Little did I dream that I would retire twenty-four years later as Executive Director and open my retirement dinner speech with; "WO-HE-LO"

"IT'S A NEW DAY!"

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***CAMP FIRE GIRLS OF
SANTA CLARA COUNTY***

BY GLORIA JABAUT

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I am extremely grateful to the following for their time and words of wisdom

Bonnie Ford Camp Fire Trustee, Audrey Butcher former leader, Marcia Evans
Former leader, volunteer district executive, Geo Howen, Leader, District
coordinator. In addition, the many outstanding Camp Fire people I had the
privilege of working with during my tenure as District Director and Executive
Director.

THIS ESSAY IS DEDICATED TO

**ERNA HOLYER
3/15/1925 – 3/15/2007**

**A BELOVED TEACHER WHO TAUGHT WRITING FOR 43 YEARS
THROUGH ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES FOR OLDER ADULTS
AUTHOR OF OVER 20 BOOKS AND NUMEROUS ARTICLES.
SHE WILL BE MISSED BY MANY**