THE HISTORY OF CAMP KRIETENSTEIN

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Quietly off the beaten path, east of Terre Haute, Indiana, there is a tract of land officially known as Camp Krietenstein. Lovingly referred to as Camp K, Boy Scout Camp for the Wabash Valley Scout Council. Every summer since 1921, the camp comes alive from the first of June until the middle of August as boys from age eight through eighteen enjoy the lessons and the pleasures of outdoor living.

Camp Krietenstein was made possible by the donation of land from George W. Krietenstein in 1921. George W Krietenstein was a native of Terre Haute and a prominent business man. Working with his father, Carl, in the drug, paint and glass business, he was an active individual in local, as well as state, politics, business, and high society. He is claimed as a generous and fair man. He had a vision that the boys and young men of the Wabash Valley needed a place to grow and become responsible individuals.

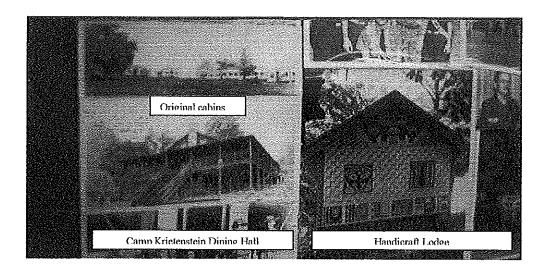
He and his wife, Minnie, were blessed with a daughter, Bertha and son, Carl Mount. It was to his son Carl's memory that Mr. Krietenstein donated a parcel of land approximately twenty seven miles east of Terre Haute for the expressed use as a camp facility for the Boy Scouts of America. The property was dedicated with a brass plague placed on a boulder with the following inscription:

"This tablet commemorates the gift of these grounds by George W. Krietenstein, in memory of his beloved and lamented son Ensign Carl Krietenstein who served heroically on the seas in the World War: and Who sacrificed himself for a righteous cause exemplifying the great Lesson that justice, liberty and progress are more sacred even than life." Dated 1922.

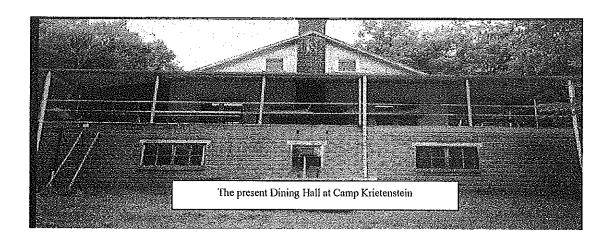
The general appearance of camp has changed throughout the years. Property that was populated by young trees, now are mature specimens providing shelter and shade for summer campers. Originally the property was home to the dining hall/office/meeting room and 12 cabins. The cabins were donated by local merchants and named in their honor, i.e. Coke-a-cola, etc. The third facility was the handicraft lodge.

The original building that still remains is the Dining Hall, built and financed by the Rotary Club of Terre Haute. Set into the hillside with a full balcony, a basement with fireplace and a modern kitchen, the dining hall serves 3 meals a day every day of the camping season. Originally the front of the dining hall sported a grand staircase as the main entrance of the building. Inside was the dining area, kitchen, walk in pantry and refrigeration, the camp first aid station and camp office were also housed there. Under the dining hall was open, Naman Goodman, an Evansville, IN native served many years at Camp Krietenstein, armed with a cot and mosquito netting set up his summer home as

camp cook. Kitchen duties have changed throughout the years since Mr. Goodman was cook. In the early years, patrols washed their own dishes and returned them to the table after each meal and were not dismissed from duty until the dining steward approved their job. Today the duties are performed more by dining hall staff than the troop. Each troop has dining hall duty to do, and approval of cleanup is still in the hands of the steward, the task is not as demanding as dishes are now the disposable brand than the washable brand.



Through the years, changes have occurred. The kitchen has been moved to a larger area, the pantry enlarged, a washer and dryer have been added, as well as a modern restroom. The grand staircase has been replaced with a handicapable ramp and one side of the porch is enclosed by screen to accommodate the overflow of hungry campers. Under the dining hall has also been renovated. It is now completely enclosed and has been used as the trading post and storage, meeting area for the Order of the Arrow and for staffers when the weather is inclement. As time effects all, this year there are changes still. The basement has undergone a facelift with the removal of one wall to enlarge the main room, a new coat of paint and the back smaller areas have been renovated as the first aid station and residence of the Health Officer.



The second building was built on the adjacent hill to be used as the handicraft lodge. It was painted white and then embelished with an Indian design representing the Order of the Arrow, shown in the photo (previous page). The handicraft lodge is still standing and being used for the same purpose today, and as the years and weather have been unkind to the artistry, work has begun on the refurbishing of this artwork, using old photographs as reference.

Activities offered at Camp Krietenstein were the usual scout fair of Archery, Shotgun, Rifle, Pioneering, Nature Study, Swimming and Handicrafts such as, basketry and leather work. Swimming was accomplished in the nearby Eel River. Today the Eel River is still used for older scouts and scouters for two day canoe trips and tube trips. Scouts involved in the Order of the Arrow would fabricate an Indian camp just outside camp property on the hill above the dining hall. They would participate in Indian traditions such as leg wrestling, costume making and fire building. The members of the Order of the Arrow would stay in fully constructed teepees while at camp. This area today is part of camp property and is utilized as the staff campsite, bearing the name of Dan Beard, who served as the National Scout Commissioner in 1910 and co-founder of the Boys Scouts of America.

Many hours of service has been volunteered through the membership of Kickapoo Lodge 128 from the Order of the Arrow, service organization of the Boy Scouts of America. Throughout the year, the Order hosts three weekend gatherings at the camp specifically for the promotion of their membership. Any new member will complete their Ordeal, the first step in the Order, as a work weekend providing time of service and contemplation for the new member. Opportunity at this time is also provided for further advancement to Brotherhood and Vigil. Just a few of the credits of service to the camp provided by the Lodge are construction of the platforms in the camp sites, reinforcement work on the dam, spectator bleachers for the campfire circle and the Order of the Arrow tap out ceremonies, clearing of brush through out camp, set up and tear down of wall tents and dining flies for camp season, and digging of water lines for the shooting sports latrine. The ordeal members moved the contents of the old storage shed, labeled "The Tin Can" to the new storage area in the pole barn. They also host additional work days throughout the year for general clean ups and for any special needs that arise to help maintain a clean and well maintained camp.

Camp Krietenstein flourished for many years before a decline in activities brought about a sad state of repair to the buildings and grounds. In the early 1970's dedicated Scouters banded together to rebuild Camp Krietenstein before it would be forced to close. With all volunteer labor, donated materials, and a generous donation of \$40,000.00, Camp Krietenstein opened for camp the summer of 1972 with several major improvements.

The Dining Hall had been remodeled, the cabins were repaired, and a first aid and camp office had been built. A new entrance opened, latreens with wash stations, a modern restroom and shower house facility installed. With the donation from Dr. L. A. Malone, a Terre Haute physician, Lake Malone was implemented as the new swimming area, expanding the opportunities at the water front to include canoeing, row boating, kayaking, life saving, the mile swim and the newest addition of sail boarding were implemented.

When Lake Malone was first built, the swimming area was in the corner by the cabins. With time and improvements, the water front area was moved to the opposite end of the lake. Here a boat dock is used for the Canoes and row boats. There is a sandy beach front, where there are challenging games of volleyball and a floating dock divides the swimming areas according to skill level. There is an additional dock in the swimmers area for resting, and where diving and cannon ball competitions are held daily. A shower platform has also been utilized for campers to clean up before going on to the next merit badge station. The original dock pilings are being incorporated as a fishing pier.

The cabins have all been razed, except one. It was moved to the top of the hill, separated and became the health lodge and the camp office. The site of the original cabins is facilitated today as the campfire circle with bleacher benches built into the hill to create a natural amphitheater; and an Ecology Lodge at the top of the hill, formally used as the boat house. Instead of cabins, campers are provided with platforms and wall tents in camp areas throughout the woods in seven different camp sites. A new Trading Post has been provided through the generosity of VFW Post 972.

Transportation to and from camp has also changed throughout the years. In the early years, troops would gather at their meeting areas in Terre Haute with saddle packs strapped on the back of bicycles and ride together the 27 miles one way to camp, and ride home again at the end of the week. One week of camp was special for a group of boys residing in the Rose Orphan Home when they would put their bedroll and change of clothes on their back, making the journey to and from camp on foot. Today, troops roll into camp with multiple vehicles and trailers carrying enough equipment for an army, with boys complaining they have to carry their clothes to their tent, fifty feet down the path.

Tradition is strong at Camp Krietenstein as they encourage all points of the Scout Law. Each day begins with posting of the colors and general announcements. The day closes with the retrieving of the colors, giving troops the opportunity to do the honor, and reinforcing the importance of what patriotism means. Chapel services are offered every Sunday and Thursday evening and grace is reverently prayed vanward of each meal. Helpfulness is countenanced by each troop, designating dining hall stewards for each meal.

The camp staff decided sometime during the 1960's to leave their mark on camp. Each year a canoe paddle is painted with a replica of the year's patch and all the staff members names are either signed or painted onto the paddle, it then takes a place of honor around the top of the wall in the dining hall.

Familiar names on the paddles reflect the loyalty of scouts and scouters of the Wabash Valley for Camp Krietenstein. One needs only to read through the names of the youth staff, adult staff and look around at the scoutmasters, assistant scoutmasters and fathers of new scouts attending camp in a new role.

There are a few names that stand out as continuing influences at Camp Krietenstein. As a youth, Ed Pease, attended summer camp, earned his rank of Eagle with Troop 200 and worked on camp staff. He has continued as an officer for the National Order of the Arrow as chairman, and continues to advise on the council board. Another name found on the paddles as a youth and adult staffer is Dave Bedford. He continues today as Scoutmaster and counciling youths to join him in the elete rank of Eagle Scout. Another volunteer whom Camp Krietenstein would never be the same without is Albert Seibenmorgan. Although his road to Eagle rank was sacrificed by his call to service in the War, he continues to serve as

a valued Scouter. Mr. Seibenmorgan serves as the general handy man for the camp as well as the council and is most certainly considered one of the resident historians.

Troops build camaraderie with not just their own group but other troops by participating in two campfire programs during the week. Sunday night is opening night for the week. The camp staff is in charge of the opening campfire. Wednesday night is "Family Night" with the parents, and whatever extended family the scouts have, are invited to bring all the favorite foods and have a pitch in dinner with the troop. After dinner, all are invited to watch as the troops perform skits and sing songs for their visitors. While the skits and songs are entertaining the guests, Arrowmen from the Lodge are lining the pathways with smudge pots and preparing to launch their canoes carrying the Ceremonies Team across Lake Malone. Ordeal candidates are lined across the dam, visitors are seated in the bleachers in silence as the beat of the bass drum and the shooting of flaming arrows announce the arrival of the chief and his fellow lodge leaders. This ceremony will mark the end of Family Night for another week.

Friday night campfire is a closing ceremony for the week. Once again troops and staff alike perform skits and sing songs and reminisce the weeks highlights, accomplishments, and jokes. While the campfires are a fun time, Friday night's closing is always bittersweet, as this signifies a closing of another week of memories and fun for the scouts and scouters. The final act of the night is a Flag Retirement Ceremony. There is an echo performance of "Taps" while the flags are presented and burned. Many campers are somber with the meaning of the ceremony, many expressing afterward being a first time witness of a retirement.

Having withstood eighty years of scouts, and the changes of time, Camp Krietenstein is as strong today as it was in the beginning. Any camper attending for either a one week visit, working for the summer as a Counselor in Training, or as Staff, the "Camp K" experience will remain with them throughout their life.

In Memory of



Carl Krietenstein



Taken from the Biography of Baden-Powell:

The Two Lives
of a Hero
By William
Hillcourt and
Olave Lady
Baden-Powell

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- 4. Bedford, D, (2001 August 25). [Personal Interview]. Veteran Scouter of Wabash Valley Council, Terre Haute. Indiana.
- 5. Photos displayed in the Dining Hall at Camp Krietenstein. Copied with permission of Wabash Valley Council, Boy Scouts of America.