

Seymour Histories—Camp Winape

by Ron Kolar

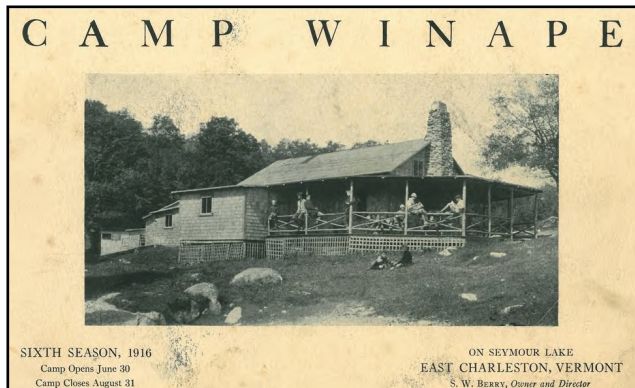
The Early Years (1911-1937)

Sylvester W. Berry, Headmaster of the Irving School in New York City, founded Camp Winape in 1911. Mr. Berry bought the first of many parcels that would become Camp Winape from Curtis F. Barney, a woodsman and farmer on Echo Lake, who inherited the

sands of boyhood memories. Long hikes, canoe trips, Sugar-Offs and Fire Nights were added to the summer program.

By 1921 there were over one hundred boys and fifteen counselors at camp during the summer season. Non-perishable foods such as canned fruits were shipped to Island Pond and transferred to camp by horse teams and stored in a large building near the kitchen. A large icehouse,

Great Depression, causing the number of campers to drop rapidly. From 1931 to 1934 Camp Winape was operated as a girls' camp under the name Camp Winape OE-CE-CA by Miss Hilliard of Burlington, VT. The head counselor during the 1933-1934 seasons was Sass Kolar who had married Edward Kolar on June 24, 1933. Ed was a head counselor at Camp Cadahoe in Connecticut and Camp Rotherwood in Maine from 1933-1934 and visited Sass at Winape several times during those summers. Both loved the camping life and wanted to purchase and operate Winape them-



1916 Camp Catalog showing the "Big Lodge," the recreation building built in 1911.

land from his grandfather, Martin Barney. Martin Barney came to Charleston from New Hampshire circ. 1825 and was one of the town's four revolutionary pensioners. The name "Winape" is derived from the Winape spring which was famous in the Morgan/Charleston area at the turn of the century. Some of the first Native Americans who hunted and fished in the Seymour Lake region must have been the Ojibways, for the name Winape means, "clear water" in that tribe's language.

Campers and counselors arrived for that first summer at Winape in 1911 after a long horse and wagon trip from the Newport railroad station and were handed boards, hammers, saws and nails and instructed on building tent floors and cabins. Winape was really built from the ground up.

Each summer after 1911 saw Winape growing and customs starting that would become part of the traditions and lore that now make up thou-

also near the kitchen, was filled each winter to keep perishable items during the season.

Chief Berry was taken ill in 1928 and following Mr. Berry's death, the camp continued but struggled during the

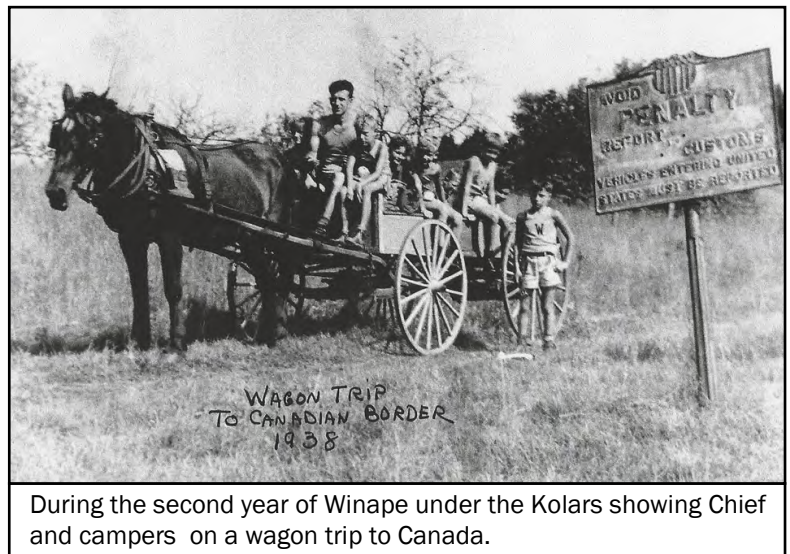
selves.

In the summers of 1935 and 1936, facilities at Camp Winape were used by the Northern Vermont Boy Scout Council.

The Kolar Family and Winape 1937-1984

Edward and Sass Kolar purchased Camp Winape in the spring of 1937. Edward took on the name of "Chief" from the boys' nickname for "Chief" Sylvester Berry. Chief Kolar was Athletic Director, teacher and coach at Hoboken Academy in New Jersey while Sass was a teacher and coach for women in High School.

Chief and Sass were very energetic and experi-



During the second year of Winape under the Kolars showing Chief and campers on a wagon trip to Canada.



The first winter ski trip to Winape in 1942. This was long before Jay and Burke, so the ski terrain was around the camp, while uphill transportation was provided by strong legs.

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Horseback riding was one of the most popular activities at Winape. Here is a group leaving for a ride around Echo Lake in 1953.

enced camp operators and started a chain of improvements and new features that made Winape a first class camp. Ed Kolar served his country in

fires, flag lowering and taps.

In the 1940's and 1950's the boys took overnight Pull-

Officer during the Korean Conflict while Sass operated the camp during Chief's absences.

Camp life at Winape was well organized, and the boys had a carefully defined daily schedule—the parents wanted it that way. They started with a bugle call for reveille, flag raising, breakfast, activity periods, rest hour, general swims, meals, evening activities, camp

man sleeper cars to Newport and the next morning boarded two buses from the Greenwood Bus Line and were transported to Seymour Lake. When Northeast Airlines began service to Newport Airport, many boys travelled by air on charter DC-3 planes. Winape campers originally came from New Jersey and southern New York, but as the

hiking trips to Bald and Gore Mountains, Mt. Pisgah overlooking Lake Willoughby, Burke Mountain, Owls Head in Canada, and Jay Peak, culminating with multi-day hikes to the Presidential range in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Canoe trips started around Seymour Lake with overnights on Wolf's Point, then on to Lake Memphremagog and into Canada. After being condi-



The riding ring with the Kolar residence in the background, circa 1965.



Sass and Chief in 1983. This picture looking east down at the waterfront shows the dock, sailboats and boathouse, since torn down.

World War II including the Battle of Okinawa as a Marine Aviation Officer. He was also a Marine Aviation Intelligence

camp's reputation grew, the campers came from the entire eastern United States, Canada and the Caribbean.

Winape was well known for its variety of activities and the training and preparation of the boys for long trips and outdoor camping. The boys' training included camp crafts, hiking on Mt. Elon, swimming, boating and canoeing on Seymour Lake. As they progressed and learned more skills they went on

tioned, the older boys paddled four days on the Ranglely Lakes in Maine. A favorite local hike was to Morgan and the Annual Maple Sugar on Snow Party at the Community House. It was always a favorite event for the campers.



Counselor Tom Irwin helps campers prepare for a hike at one of the shelters, circ. 1962.

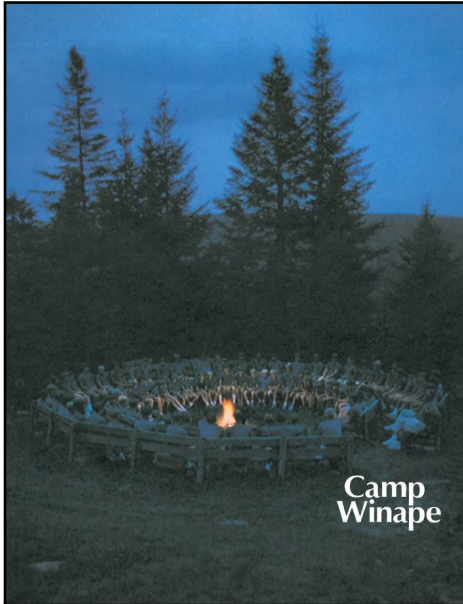


Aerial view of the main part of Winape circa. 1965. The red building in the upper left is the dining hall.

Athletics were an important part of

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Winape activities. Boys learned and became proficient in softball, basketball, volleyball, tennis, and lacrosse. In the 1950's Winape played other camps at Dartmouth College's summer camp tournaments and was champion and runner-up. Other favored activities were target rifle shooting and archery.



The Sunday night campfire, a weekly event featuring stories, singing, and lots of fellowship.

Horseback riding was another treasured activity which included instruction at the riding ring and trips on the nearby gravel roads. In the early days the boys would take overnight rides as far as the Line Farm on the Canadian border north of Holland and would be accompanied by horse drawn wagons carrying their supplies.

Parents wrote many letters to Chief and Sass thanking and complimenting them on the great job Winape had done with the boys who learned and developed proficiency in so many different sports and activities as well as becoming more physically fit by the end of the camp season.

The Winape waterfront is located in a protected cove at the southwest end of Seymour where the boys improved swimming and diving skills and through instruction courses earned American

Red Cross proficiency patches. They also learned boating, canoeing, and sailing skills. An all time favorite for the older boys, was water skiing behind the 1934 Chris-Craft which still participates in annual SLA, 4th of July Boat Parades.

The camp had a weather station, "Winape Wail" newspaper, and nature programs. The Winape band performed Friday night concerts conducted by Wells Jenney, Winape's Head Counselor and late husband of Charleston's Betty Jenney.

At the end of the summer, the campers were split into two teams for a two day Blue-Gray competition in all of the activities. It was a great way to practice what they had learned and a culmination of the summer.

After Chief and Sass renovated their residence at the camp in 1963 and installed a dorm, they conducted winter ski trips for boys, girls, and parents. The groups skied Jay Peak, Burke Mountain and joined the ski schools.

In 1979, *Town & Country* magazine designated Winape as one of the outstanding traditional boy's camps in the eastern United States. The "End of an Era" for Camp Winape came in 1984 when Chief and Sass retired. They had operated this very active and successful

and counselors had many wonderful memories of summers at Winape. The Kolars said at that time, "It has been forty-eight wonderful years since we first came to these hills which we now call our home. Each summer we have seen campers arrive without friends and with



Two tents adjacent to Indian Point Shelter in 1962. The oldest campers resided here right next to the lake shore and had their own small dock.

little confidence; we have been delighted seeing 'our boys' leave at the end of the summer, happy and fulfilled."

When Chief and Sass retired, they wanted the camp to be utilized by Vermont children. So the Camp was used for several years by the Vermont Lions Clubs for the Hearing Impaired and the Vermont Association for Mental Health.

Today, although many buildings and campers are gone, Winape continues to



The current Kolar clan with Ron and Janet in the middle.

be used throughout the year by Janet and Ron Kolar and their sons, Eric and Alan, with their wives Megan and Jenie, and grandchildren Val, Shelby, Eli, Clayton, Sara and Mary Caroline. Ron's sister, Nancy Bowen and husband Ken live adjacent to Winape while Ron's cousin, Erik Lessing and wife Rhealene spend summers just north up the lake. For most of the summer, the Kolar, Bowen, and Lessing families and friends enjoy the camp, especially the dining hall, which comes back to life just like the old days. The bell is rung for meals and the Winape tradition continues. □

boys' camp for one hundred boys, each summer for forty-eight years. Children and grandchildren of previous campers