

# Carbide Camp

by

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For those of you reading this and have never heard of Carbide Camp allow me to start this story by talking about the movie "Meatballs" that came out in the year 1979 starring Bill Murray. Meatballs was about a cut-rate summer camp called "Camp Northstar" located in Upstate, New York. Their Rival Was Camp Mohawk located just across the lake. Even though "Meatballs" was not based off of Carbide Camp the similarities are remarkable. Non-stop practical jokes by staff members and kids who get homesick the first night. Camp Northstar, like Carbide Camp, was a camp where children loaded up on buses, spent the summer at camp doing activities, had dances, swam in the lake, got scared of the dark, told ghost stories, and had fun. None of this basketball or computer camp that goes on today, this was a good old fashion summer camp. Interesting sidebar about the movie in one of the opening scenes as both camps have their buses parked at a Kmart parking lot and are waiting for children to load. Bill Murray is being interviewed by a news reporter and is pretending to be a counselor from Camp Mohawk, a rival camp of Camp Northstar. Bill is standing by one of Camp Mohawk's very luxurious buses as he does this interview. This film was shot on location in Canada but if one pays attention very closely a 1970's West Virginia State Inspection sticker can be seen on the front of Camp Mohawk's bus.

The place Union Carbide selected to put the camp could not have been a better one. Even now that the camp is gone it is so quiet, peaceful and serene. The sound of the creek babbling is soothing. Out there the sun does not come up until 10 am and goes down at around 4:30 because of the mountains. There are a lot of rhododendron trees that bloom in the summer and are gorgeous. At places Blue Creek makes a mini waterfall and there are endless places to play in the creek, each more beautiful than the last.

Now my memories of going to camp as best I can recall. Somewhere in my basement, in storage is a trunk that has the words "Camp Carlise" painted on it. Every kid took a trunk to camp and it seems we all used the same kind of paint on it to either paint the words "Camp Camelot" or "Camp Carlisle" on the top or sides. As a child this trunk would be pulled from the attic days before going to camp, repainted, aired out then packed. At Carlisle the boys at Camelot call us "Troggs" please don't ask me why. There was a movie called "Troggs" starring Joan Crawford but not sure if this was the inspiration for our lifelong nickname.

I still remember my mom driving us up to the South Charleston Tech Center where we would board KRT buses marked "Charter". The big sign out front down by the road that read "Union Carbide Technical Center with a pretty garden around it. We would have to pass a guard shack and tell him "Going to camp!" and he's smiling then wave us through. Up at the top of the hill was the iconic water tower that looked like a giant golf ball on a tee with the

words "Union Carbide" also on it. Seeing all this made a child feel proud that his or her parents worked there. We would go to the back of Building 740 where there were two box trucks waiting with JC's loading our trunks and sleeping bags.

After saying goodbye to mom and sometimes dad we would board the KRT's thinking there might have been 10 or 12. We would ride these busses to the top of Dutch Ridge road and walk in from there. Remember as soon as we boarded and waved goodbye to the parents and the buses headed down Kanawha Turnpike the staff had the kids singing. One thing at Carbide Camp is they taught you to sing, non stop. The staff usually started with the same official camp song which varied depending if one went to Camelot or Carlise. I went to Carlise so it's:

"Now listen my children and you'll learn a lot, about a Knight they dubbed Sir Lancelot, who went up the valley and down the creek saying Camp Camelot is WEAK WEAK WEAK!"

A friendly rivalry between the two camps. My last year on the bus to Carlise, I remember just before we passed through Clendenin some people knew we were coming and held up signs saying "Have a good time" as the bus drove by.

When we got to Dutch Ridge Road as said before we walked down to the camps. We walked past Camp Galahad, then Camelot and on to Carlisle.

Walking up to Carlisle we would stop at the Carlisle Camp sign and all the campers would get down on their knees and say "Hail Carlisle". Behind us the counselors were saying something that I could never hear or understand. Then we would all sit down in front of the Castle and find out which cabin or "Wing" as they were called we would be staying in. Each Wing also had their own CIT's and JCs to help out with the campers.

To this day several things remind me of Carbide Camp. The number one is the smell of creosote. Back in the day creosote was used to preserve wood. All the cabins were coated with it. On a hot day the creosote would fill the air. Now whenever I smell it, hot days near a telephone pole brings back good memories. I actually went to one of those candle shops at the flea market and asked them if they could make creosote smelling candles but would seem Carbide Campers are out of luck on that scent.

Often girls would go in the wing with just their sleeping bag and put it on the bunk they wanted, top bunks going quickly. We then helped each other with moving our trunks to the wings. It took two girls to carry one trunk so everyone had to be helpful. The trunks would fit under the bunks and each bunk would fit two trunks. All day long those things would slide in and out as campers retrieve things from them or put something back. Every Wing had a bathroom and the bathroom had a light in it. Only Wing 3 had a light in the main room because once that had been the Nurses' Wing and now Nurse Blackie had a new white building and what was Wing 3 was used for the JC's and the Nurses Wing was now Wing 3. Confused? Read that again. Wing

3 was the largest one and hardest to clean, don't think those poor girls ever won inspection but it was nice for the newcomers to camp.

Then it was lunch time. Every year the menu never changed. The first lunch there was always lunch meat and you could make your own sandwiches. Remember poking out those black things in the salami. Every wing sat together in the dining hall which was called "the Castle". There were six groups of tables in all because there were six wings. Can still remember the layout of those tables and which Wing sat at which table. My first year? My first year I got confused. I was in Wing 3 and sat at Wing 1's table by mistake. I was wondering why that counselor was looking at me so funny then my counselor had to come over and get me.

We always sang `` Grace" before meals. Later I found out these prayers were stolen from the Girl Scout handbook.

At breakfast here is what we said:

"God has created a new day! Silver and green and gold.  
Live that the sunset may find us, Worthy His gifts to hold."

At lunch:

"Noontime is here, the board is spread, Thanks be to God  
who gives us bread. amen"

At dinner:

"God is great, God is good and we thank him for this food  
by his hand. We all are fed and give us Lord our daily  
bread. Amen".

We also had to learn the rules of dining at Carlisle. At all times while eating be it breakfast, lunch or dinner one must keep her napkin on her lap the punishment for not doing so is being made to go around the table while everyone sings "round the table you must go, you must go, you must go, round the table you must go you're a white duck". For the second offense of this it was "back again the other way..." and so on. Remember one time they made one JC go all the way around the Castle and back again the other way.

Eating meals in the Castle brings up memories of staff dancing in, while singing the lyrics of "Oh what a beautiful morning" from Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Oklahoma". They would sing it loud, off key but with sincerity and joy.

On the first day after lunch and after we were settled in our wings we went around to the various activities at the camp. Each counselor was the head of a certain activity. There was a rifle range, archery range, craft shop, corral, swimming lessons, and special activities.

I loved the craft shop and special activities the best, with the rifle range coming in a second. Was too afraid of the horses but did ride them once or twice.

The names of the horses that I hardly ever rode. King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, King Pellinore, Lady Elaine, Sir Kay, Sir Gwain, Sir Ector and Sir Lancelot.

In the craft shop we made all kinds of cool things. Pot holders, things from popsicle sticks, jewelry out of wire and beads,

painting, One time I remember being in the craft shop and seeing the counselor Kelley Shamblin cutting boards with a jigsaw. She was cutting them in mass production. Then when I noticed the shape of them they were the same shape as hanging on the wall in the Castle. These were the plaques that bore the names of the COTY or "Camper of the Year " Campers from past years. When a girl won that award she received that award and one was placed on the wall. There were other awards given out on these plaques as well. I actually won the COTY award but it was not until 2007 decades after the camp closed and it's a long story of how this happened.

The first day you got to meet the camp nurse Blackie Morgan. If you were a kid like me you had to go see her every day because if you had any meds you must give them to her and she gave them to you as needed. You also came to her if you had a boo boo or got bitten by the local copperhead which thank goodness never happened. Blackie Morgan was also employed at the Union Carbide Tech Center as a nurse and during the summer she gave her time to Carbide Camp doing the same. With her pleasant smile, she loved the camp and the children, and the children loved her. The story was that Nurse Blackie even had a "homesick medicine" for the kids who got homesick. All the campers said it was a dark liquid that tasted good and really took away the feelings of being homesick. Nurse Blackie usually gave this dark liquid with a can of Ginger Ale. The backstory was the Tech Center made this homesick medicine for the children Nurse Blackie and she brought it down to use at the camp. One time while in her office I

saw a jar on her shelf marked "homesick medicine" with a Union Carbide Tech Center label on it. So it would seem the rumors were true, she really did have some "homesick medicine" made at the Tech Center. I asked Nurse Blackie about it. She said "yes that is for the younger children". I later found out the Tech Center did not make pharmaceuticals, in fact Union Carbide as a company never did this. Nurse Blackie had just taken a bottle of Pure Cola Syrup and put a Union Carbide label on it and told the kids the Tech Center made it. The placebo worked and the kids got better. So simple and so ingenious that is how Union Carbide people were. Cola or Coke syrup is an old fashion, carbonation free, over the counter remedy for nausea or stomach upset. This product is still sold today at any pharmacy.

A typical day at camp began with waking up to that bell. DING DING DING DING DING DING DING. Can still hear it now was the bell off an old steam engine. They rang that bell to tell you to get up, go to breakfast, lunch, dinner, activities, and bed. How I miss that bell. We got up with the bell, got dressed in what felt like an arctic winter. Blue Creek always felt cold even in the middle of July, and it was not till about 10 or 11 am that it felt warm. We would wear sweatpants to breakfast but by lunch had on shorts and a tank top, by dinner we were sweating bullets. Before breakfast we'd all line up for flag salute. Wings 1, 2, and 3 on one side of the Castle and Wings 4, 5, and 6 on the other in a straight row, yes it had to be straight or the director and assistant director would not walk out. Then when both of them did march they marched like Russian soldiers who

were half lit on vodka, a funny sight to behold. They would get the flag up, we would say the pledge and they would march back in every such funny way and as soon as they made it back to the line we'd make a wild dash to the Castle to eat.

After breakfast we had to clean up the wing because there was an inspection. This was done every day. Floors swept, bathroom cleaned, beds made, trash taken out. The Wing that was the cleanest got the "white flag" the Wing that failed to get the "black flag".

After we cleaned a bell would ring that meant time to go to activities. Everyone must go too, no one must be caught in the Wings when the staff comes to inspect.

As I sit here and type this the memories of the staff come back to me. Should take a few minutes to explain the order so it's understood. There were "JC's" or Junior Counselors. "CIT's" or Counselors in Training' ' and at the top Counselors. After that was the Director and assistant director but you hardly ever saw them. Most of your interaction was with JC's, CIT's and the Counselors. They seemed old to me then but now looking back most of those JC's are not that much older than me. 15 or 16? Yet they were given a lot of responsibility and they handled it well. No way kids today could handle a rifle range or horses in a coral like kids back then did. Kids today can't get off the darn phones. Only honor campers moved up through the ranks at Carbide Camp and to get the title of honor camper it had to be earned, it was not a participation trophy just

handed out like candy. So it goes without saying that every member of the staff at Carlisle and Camelot earned his or her spot there and could be trusted with it.

Can still see the JC's working in the kitchen running the tank after each meal.

Some of them did painting, carpentry, plumbing, whatever the camp needed they at least tried to fix up the place. I say try because sometimes they were not always successful but remember their age, they just lacked experience.

Anyway after breakfast we did activities until the bell rang for lunch. After lunch we would sit on the floor in the Castle and sing songs. All the counselors would lead in this. Somewhere is a songbook of Carbide Camp songs. Other than the traditional "Carbide Camp " song for some reason as I'm writing this "Frankie and Johnnie" comes to mind. The counselors would "act that out" as they sang it. One would be Frankie and the other would be Johnnie acting out the entire love song. Carlisle had music videos before there was an Mtv. They had such a flair for the dramatics it's a wonder none of them ever went into acting. I mean okay Simon Cowell may not be impressed but we sure as hell were and at the end of camp that was all that mattered. They would entertain us for hours by acting out old songs or just get us to sing songs that involved hand motions or movements. For those of you who remember the song, I can't show the hand movements here but:

"Indians are high minded,  
bless my soul they're double jointed.

They climb hills and don't mind it all day long"  
Sing it and it will come back to you Carbiders.

Sometimes after lunch I'd have to run to the wing to go to the bathroom. Since my Wing was at the very end it was a way off. Even that far away I could hear them singing and every word, it was that loud.

As I would sit in the Castle when we would sing songs I'd look around at all the plaques on the wall. So many girls who had won the COTY award. Some of them read "Camp Camelot " because at one time girls went to Camelot for a session then boys went the next before Carlisle was built. All over the walls were pictures of girls who had won Honor camper some so very old. There were girls with cat eye glass and black and white saddle oxford shoes. They were wearing t-shirts that said "Camelot " on it in old English lettering. At some point the T-shirts changed over to Carlisle then they were wearing their own tees in the photographs. One favorite place the girls loved to do is have their picture taken while standing in the creek if it was not taken at the campfire at the "Seat Royal ". We would sit in the middle of the room, the kitchen at our back, and the counselors at our front. Behind the counselors was an office of some kind. In that office there were more pictures but believe that was of past staff members. In front of the office were a bunch of chairs for the counselors and they would sit there and tell us stories or sing songs with us. The walls, ceiling, and floor were all wooden. I can still smell that place, it had the smell of all the food cooked, the campers and that wood. The chandeliers in the Castle were

wagon wheels with lights on top of them and I believe there were about three in total.

Was also after lunch that the staff would hand out mail. All of our mail came in general delivery to the Glen Post Office in Glen, WV. Every day a staff member would have to drive to Glen and pick up the mail. We received letters and care packages full of candy from our parents. Just before mail call the song we would sing was "Mail call mail call real great, mail call mail call can't wait!"

After Mail call sometimes AD Teresa would stand up and say "I have an announcement to make" This is when we would start singing "announcements, announcements, announcements, announcements, announcements, ANNNOOOUNCCCEEMMEENTSSSS! That last "announcements" ' we really did drag out that long! Think of the cartoon of "Long-Haired Hare" when Bugs Bunny is playing Leopold Stokowski and is giving it to the Fat Opera singer and that is what we were literally doing. It did not end there! Then we would sing "Theresa's got another one, another one, another one, Theresa's got another one she has them all the time" It would take Theresa about five minutes to finally make her announcement once the singing was done.

Want to take time to say something about the food at Carlisle. There was always enough for everyone and a lot of times campers could have seconds or even thirds if they wanted it. The food was not that bad really, or at least I thought so. I mean it was my fault that I was too stupid to know to

put milk on my oatmeal and that why it tasted like wallpaper paste. Had I done that and added some ciniminun it would have actually tasted good. The french toast was excellent. One year my fellow campers called me the "Bacon Trog " because of the way I put away the leftover bacon that no one wanted. If I was the Bacon Trog then Jody Asbury was the Peach Trog. Never saw a person put away so many peaches. She would eat peach halves hole and thought for sure she would choke but she never did. Once Carlisle had a peach eating contest and she won, no surprise. If my memory serves me correctly Jody ate the whole industrial size can. After every prayer at meal times the first thing a staff member would shout "GLASSES UP FOR MILK!!" and you would set your glass up for milk and one of the staff members would fill your glass. They also had water and Kool aid. At the head of the table the counselor would ask you what you wanted, fill your plate and campers would pass it down to you. On Wednesdays we always had spaghetti and all the silverware would be taken away because this was an "animal meal". We ate the spaghetti by putting our hands behind our backs and going at it. Sometimes we'd have a "loud meal" where everyone would shout at the table or a silent meal where everyone had to use sign language to ask for something. At the end of every meal we would all help with the clean up. We would scrap plates into one plate then take the dirty plates, silverware and cups to the kitchen. Throw away all the trash and wipe down the table. If needed we'd put the chairs up on the table.

After lunch we'd have a rest hour in the wings. Then the bell would ring for activities to begin again.

At 4pm was the bell for general swimming in the swimming pool and was that a nice one! It was built in the late 60's and was Olympic size. I still remember that before we could enter the pool area we had to shower off, there was a stall with 4 shower heads facing down and we had to turn around three times in that freezing cold water before going in. They made sure we did it too, so much sand out there so we had to wash it off.

Then there is the matter of the pool. Spoke before how Union Carbide made homesick medicine now am going to tell how they also made pool chemicals. One year a kid named Manuel took a dump in the pool and it had to be emptied, cleaned and refilled. The staff at Camelot told him "Manuel you may do this in the old country but here in America we use a toilet". Really it was a wonder that kid did not get kicked out. To combat this problem in the future the counselors told us that the Tech Center came up with a chemical that if we tried to use the bathroom in the pool it won't go into the water it just turns to a green slime and sticks close to the skin. Then they said "Ask Jody, she tried it. She had green slime on her privates for days". Spoke with a Carbide Camper who now owns a swimming pool business and he told me that if any chemical company came up with such a product they would be richer than Bill Gates. Would seem Carbide Camp was not the first to spread this rumor just the first to have a chemical factory to make it in which made the story more believable.

Otherwise we had lots of pool parties and one was an event where each wing competed against each other for points.

The first and last day we always had a campfire. Remember we'd walk down after dark and after a certain spot we'd have to be quiet. The campfire was a circle of logs to sit on. In the middle was a chair made of logs with a sign over it that read "Seat Royal" in old English lettering. Only the staff that won the CODY or Queen Guinevere award could sit there. We'd sit around the campfire as the counselors got the fire started. It always started the same way. The counselors would bend down on one knee and chant and Indian chant while moving their arms, have no clue what they said. Then they would all stand up and one of the counselors would say "As translated from the Indian to the White man..." then all together they'd sing and dance the song "Disco Inferno" by the Trammps "Burn baby burn disco inferno...".

When we went to bed at night we said the Lord's prayer. We were not supposed to talk after that but we usually did till we finally knocked out. While at the younger kids camp the boy JC's would come in and kiss us on the cheek goodnight. At Camelot the girl JC's would do the same there.

Mary Black was one of their favorite ghost stories. On the hill behind Camp Galahad was a Cemetery. The last names Hill, Carter, and Black can be found on the tombstones. Several of these tombstones are of adults but quite a few

are of children. The tombstones belonging to the children are the old fashioned kind that have a lamb on them and the dates put them at a very young age. The Hill and Carter family all lived in this area in the late 1800's and died around the early 1900's the fact they even have very nice tombstones like they did shows they had serious money. We have never located where their home was or even its foundation which was made of extremely large stone boulders but these people's graves remain to prove they were here. Every summer at Carbide Camp we were taken to this cemetery and told of "Mary Black the witch". The Carbide Camp story on her and how it was told over and over and over. Mary Black was hired as a nanny, which is why she had the words "mother" on it for the Hill family who was very rich. One day when they took their wagon in to Charleton which back then was a trip that took several days. They came home to find one of their children dead. Mary said the child died in it's sleep, and since SIDS was common back then she was believed. Later on The Hills took another trip to Charleston by wagon that lasted a week or so and upon returning another child was found to have died in their absence. Mary Black was questioned and she gave the same story, the child died in his sleep. Eyebrows were raised but still Mary Black was believed as many childhood deaths were common back then. It was after the death of a third child that Mary was suspected and somehow it was determined that Mary had poisoned the children while the Hill family was away and that she was a witch. So they took her to the lake to give her the "test" if she sank she was not a witch and if she came back up she was. Story was that she not only came back up but she

smiled an evil smile at the townspeople. They all rushed in and drowned her at that point. This was to explain why her grave was away from the rest of the family. In recent years more information has come about the Hill family, where their home was located which is where Camp Galahad is now, and what they did. No information on who Mary Black really was however. Due to the expense of a tombstone and the fact it bore the name "Mother" on it we can assume she was not in fact a witch, but someone's loving mother. When I asked CIT Beth Blair once if she knew more about the real Mary Black she told me "she was born, lived, died, and is now buried on a hill". True and now thousands of Carbide Campers only remember her as a witch who killed children, sure hope that woman had a sense of humor as we all may have to meet her one day.

Walking to the Hill/Carter family cemetery was an interesting experience. Starting up the hill from the road we climbed a few stone steps that were carved out of rock into the hill. It's really odd how or why those steps are there in that we can not imagine if a house was behind it at one time. To this day if one goes out to Blue Creek the stone steps are still there, they go up then cut to the right. Once turning right one just kept hiking right at an angle up the hill until past Galahad and would come to the cemetery. Thousands of campers had worn down a path that is surely overgrown to this day but a trace can be seen. As we would hike to the cemetery remember one time a staff member said "do you see all those piles of rocks? Those are graves of Indians". There were indeed a lot of piles of rocks about six feet long and maybe a body could be under. Years ago I asked some

tribal members local to this area if any tribes were out there and they said the Chickasaw were and that they did bury their dead.

Have to stop at this point to tell you about Jody Asbury. She was my counselor, and she's also a funny one. See about now while telling ghost stories at Carlisle all the girls are facing the other counselors. So what is Jody doing? Well she has a megaphone that has a sticker on it that reads "Union Carbide " and she's sneaking up in the kitchen behind everyone. She has a devilish grin on her face, the counselors can see it but the girls can't. The Counselors keep telling the ghost stories and have the girls enthralled . Right at a quiet moment what does Jody do? She takes that megaphone and makes it go SWEEEEEEEEEEEEKKKKK!! Scaring the living daylights out of every girl in the room. Then she laughs into the megaphone "HAW HAW HAW" All the girls would shout "'JODY!!!" when they realize it's her, again. Jody did this countless times and never failed to terrify the campers.

Another favorite campfire story was "The Trotter". This one is dicey in my memory so please forgive my age. Most That I can recall of "The Trotter is that it's a ghost story of a dead horse that haunted the camp. Someplace near Camelot? One would be walking and hear the cloping of a horse yet would turn around and there was nothing here. Am not sure of the origin of this dead horse either. Did it die at camp one year or was it one of the Hill/Carter family or other settlers passing through? One thing is for sure old rusted horseshoes are found in the creek still to this day so

really it's hard to tell. Vaguely remember one story about a male counselor coming back from either Camp Galahad to Camelot or Camp Carlisle to Camelot not sure which but he was spooked by this "Trotter". It is said he heard the "clopping of a horse" and when he looked back there was no horse but heard one braying. When he got back to Camelot he was a nervous wreck. On the other side of this coin also remember some of the boys from Camelot giving their two cents on this and what they thought it really was. Union Carbide had a lot of gas wells out there and it is thought the gas running through the pipes sounded like a horse clopping at times. Don't know as I have never heard a gas well then again looking back also wonder if they were as scared of the dark as us girls.

Creekers and Mutants was a favorite of the staff at both Camelot and Carlisle. The primary mission of this scary story was to keep the campers from leaving their Wings after dark not that it really worked. Don't remember too many creeker stories but do remember the mutant ones. It was said the mutants came from Clay County and were the generational product of brother and sister incest. The children of this incestial union were said to be so deformed and mentally retarded that they were left to wander the woods as their family couldn't or didn't know what to do with them. These people were said to have very long hair, finger nails and very ragged clothing. These mutants would roam the woods looking for food to eat and would attack any humans they saw with their long fingernails. It was said that one night a male staff at Camelot was in a Wing when one of the mutants proceeded to run their long nails down the window

screen while screeching and howling giving the staff member a coronary.

As an adult I got the chance to watch the movie "Wrong Turn" and just had to wonder if that movie was written by a former Carbide Camper.

Carbide Camp had their own Lady of the Lake story. The story goes that Union Carbide was clearing some land to make way for Lake to be put in. Not sure if this was Upper Lakes or the one at the Hunting and Fishing Lodge but was around that area. It is said that Union Carbide had bought all the homes in the area and was just going to bust a dam in order to let the lake fill up. This would happen when all the homes were empty and everyone was gone. Well in one home the couple had a very ugly daughter they kept hidden and locked up in a basement away from all their neighbors. When they left the home after selling to Union Carbide they did not take their daughter but left her locked up in the basement. No one checked the houses and one the day the dam was busted a horrific scream could be heard from that house before the water completely covered it. It was said on certain nights a very ugly woman could be seen walking back and forth across the lake .

There was a ghost story involving the legendary pilot Amelia Earhart and the full tale of which fully evades me now. Only know it had something to do with a Carbide Camper from Camelot by the name of either Joe or Tony, who was from Morgantown, West Virginia and may have been attending WVU. Somehow a cemetery is involved with

this story but can't remember how. It ended with Amelia Earhart landing on the 50 yard line of the old Mountaineer stadium. However the story really does not end there as it is said every time this story is told you can hear Amelia fly her plane overhead at night. One night at camp after telling this ghost story we had just returned to our Wings, we were still talking about Amelia Earhart and how scary this story was when I heard a plane flying low and it's engine was a bit loud. I shouted "IT'S HER IT'S HER, IT'S AMELIA!!" and ran out and looked up. All the other girls started screaming and one of the CIT's in the Wing said sharply "Kristiin that's not Amelia, that's just one of the many planes that fly over all the time en route to Kanawha Airport now calm down!" I still remember looking up for that plane but it had already gone on the other side of the mountain but it could be heard, it even sounded like the type of plane Amelia would have flown.

This was not a ghost story per say but was a story that was told for years regarding the Camp and the area surrounding it. When driving out to the camp if you looked at the top of a certain mountain the trees formed the shape of a swan. The story behind this was during the pioneer days a little boy was running from Indians when he came to a cliff. With the Indians behind him and a big fall below him he was out of luck until it is said a swan came, scooped the boy up on his back and carried him away to safety. So it is said as long as that swan keeps its shape in the trees the area around Camelot/Carlisle/Galahad will be safe. The last year of Camelot/Carlisle the swan looked as if it was over growing and trying to ' ``fly away". Later even Camp

Galahad was sold and suffered greatly after this but that's a criminal story we need not discuss here. Have no idea if this Swan story had any basis of truth but it seems as soon as this swan was gone everyone's luck did run out.

Once a week we went on over nights, that is to say we camped out somewhere in the woods. Unless we signed up to stay at the Carbide Hunting and Fishing Lodge which I did a lot. The lodge had a roof over it's head and toilets. It also had a picnic area and a cook shack where we would hold our food for safe keeping. At the picnic area there was a massive grill in the middle with a smokestack. I used to look up the hill at all the camping trailers parked there, years later after Union Carbide was gone and the lodge was under new ownership some of those same trailers were still there it seemed. There was a playground area out front of the lodge where we could play on swings, slide down a slide or swing around on a maypole. There might have been a monkey bar too.

There were several other overnight one including a horseback overnight that 4th year campers went on but I never made it to 4th year because the camp closed. There are several things to learn at a Carbide Camp overnight, one is Stayfree maxi pads make wonderful pot holders while cooking. Not the modern kind, the 1970's version that Cathy Rigby made famous. Yes even the boys at Camelot used these to remove hot pots from the campfire. Don't try this at the Girl Scout Camp in Milton WV any other camp but Carbide however or you will have your ass drug before the Director, Assistant Director, Nurse and one other important

person of the camp whose title I can't recall. They will give you a look like you are from outer space even though you told them it was not a used maxi pad but a new one. Then when they asked where you learned that idea and that boys at Camelot did the same their heads will explode and they will tell you Carbide Camp taught you bad things. So they teaching me how not to burn my hands on a campfire pot was a bad thing? GS camp I have two words for you: BULLY BULLY.

Another thing we learned on overnights was how long it took a can of beans to explode on a campfire. This all depends on how big the campfire and can of beans is. Still remember the first time seeing this happen. Heard what I thought was a gun going off then looked over and the campfire was totally gone, just blown away.

On overnights we learned how to keep cold food cold by putting them in the creek overnight. This was done by building up the creek rocks in a circle and putting things like bacon, cheese and other things to keep cold then setting a rock on it so it does not float away.

Could be very wrong about this but for some reason when we made smores at Carbide Camp I recall we toasted marshmallows and put them on a graham cracker with peanut butter instead of chocolate.

Peach toast for breakfast. Peach toast is made by toasting a piece of bread over a campfire. Then butter the bread with real butter, add brown sugar and one peach half.

Carbide Camp actually had Co-ed overnights for the older campers. As one can imagine the staff got no sleep whatsoever all night long even though they were very strict on where the boys and girls slept. I remember my first Co-ed overnight because I met a boy who would later be my first kiss while at a Carlisle dance. I met him on a path near the overnight and we started talking. While we were talking a big copperhead darted between us. I shouted "SNAKE!" right into his left ear. He is now deaf in that ear so he tells me. The counselors pulled out machetes and proceeded to hunt around in the overgrown vegetation for the snake and they caught it. To this day I can still remember that dead copperhead laying over the machete because of its size. Seems all the snakes out there we're on steroids. This guy has never let me forget that for the longest time.

It was at the last year the camp was open I hit upon the idea to bring my camping tent with me for the overnights. No other camper had ever thought of this and since the Dynel tents were at camp no tents had been used to my knowledge. My tent was a simple orange two person tent for a child. Got it for my birthday at about 6 years of age. Looking back was probably the kind Sears or Kmart sold. Was a regular A-line, with a floor and one small window in the back. Looking back I know the staff was worried that one of the boys might get into it when I took it to the Co-ed overnight but really I was more worried about the rain that always seems to happen when we had overnights. I was correct and that night we had a torrential downpour but I

was dry. Still the staff pulled us out and took us back to camp. I remember the staff bringing back my tent all bundled up but okay along with all the other stuff left behind in a hurry when we had to evacuate.

Was also on that same overnight I went exploring out in the woods with some boys from Camelot and we found some Foxfire. For those of you in Rio Linda, Foxfire is wood that glows in the dark because of a certain kind of fungus that grows on it.

Remember one overnight very well it was at upper lakes. By this time the dam at Camelot was long gone so in order to go canoeing we had to do this activity up there. We could not do this in the lake at the Hunting and Fishing Lodge because of Snapping Turtles. The canoes were very old, had holes in them and we had tendencies to tip them. Canoeing and swimming in upper lakes was fun but when you got out the water you smelled like a corpse. Later that night while camping by the lake one of the staff said "there's going to be a meteor shower tonight". Indeed we were camping out in the best time and place for the Perseid meteor shower. As we lay in our sleeping bags we watched the stars fall down. Some for a few seconds some streaking across the sky. Some were white, some were red in all sizes big and small. We could not have had a better view of a spectacular show. Next thing I knew I opened my eyes and it was morning and the show was over.

After every overnight when we got back to Carlisle they made every camper take a shower, no exceptions. A shower

could be taken before general swim ended and a special call was given to go back to Carlisle to take one. However, after an overnight everyone must have one. The first 15 girls got hot water after that it was cold as ice. Did not mind the cold shower when taking it after swimming because that was the hottest part of the day and the cold felt good.

Evenings at camp were spent doing certain activities. For younger campers it might be a pajama contest. Seems like we shopped at every department store in town looking for the cutest PJ's in order to win that stupid contest in which the prize was a tin foil crown and a baked potato. The staff would push the tables together in the Castle forming a kind of runway and walk all of us down it talking about our PJ's like it was a fashion show. They would point out every detail and tease every girl who came up in line. In the end though it was just a cutest girl contest and the girl with looks like Shirley Temple would always win, but we had fun trying and always came to camp with the latest style in PJ's.

There were several forms of talent shows. One such was "The Gong Show" after the TV show of the same name. Years after this show was off the air Carbide Camp still did their own parody of it. A gong was made of kitchen utensils but only Camelot or Carlisle staff was ever "gonged" never the campers. When the staff was gonged they tended to go overboard with the gonging.

Skit night was very popular and this would sometimes involve Camelot coming down and joining in. My brother was in

once such skit called "JC Penny". The scene opens up with a boy standing on the stage and another boy walks out with a t shirt. The first boy asks him "Oh man cool t-shirt where did you get that?" and the other boy said "I got it from JCPenney" and he walked away. Well the boy sees another kid walk by with a nice pair of jeans and he says to him "Oh man, nice jeans where did you get them?" and he replies "I got them from JCPenney" then he walks off the stage. This goes on and on with each boy coming out with an article of clothing like socks, underwear, shoes, raincoat, and the boy standing there asking each of them where the articles of clothing came from only to find it they came from "JCPenney". The last boy to walk across the stage is my brother who comes out wearing nothing but a towel and the boy says to him "Dude! Where are your clothes? Why are you only wearing a towel? Who are you?" and my brother says "I'm JCPenney". and walks off the stage.

That same skit night my Wing did one about a newspaper reporter jumping off a cliff. This skit starts off with one girl going to the edge of the stage and says "I've had no luck as a reporter I think I'll jump off this cliff" but before she can another girl yells "WAIT!" Then she runs out on the stage to her and says. "I'm an air traffic controller and I've caused planes to crash may I jump with you? The reporter says "sure" They both start to jump when a third girl shouts "WAIT!" Then she runs out and says "I'm a cook but my cakes always sink and no one likes my cooking. May I jump with you?" and the first two say `Sure". Now three of them are about to jump when a fourth girl shouts "WAIT!" She runs out on the stage and says

"I'm a painter but no one ever buys my paintings. May I jump with you?" and the other girls say "sure" and this goes on for 11 other girls you get the picture. We move on to the 12th girl who was me. Just as they are about to jump I shout "Wait!" then walk out on the stage. I say "Hi I'm Brooke Shields' Sister and I'm so unpopular. I'm so unpopular that no one even knew Brooke Shields had a sister. May I jump with you?" and of course all the other girls say "yes". So we all jumped and landed on the floor, all except for the first girl who was a reporter. She startings writing on her notepad "11 girls jump off a cliff, a, air traffic controller, a painter, Brooke Shields' sister..."  
The end.

There was a "Carnival" where we used to spend brass as currency. Know there were all kinds of booths and activities. At the end of the night all the spent brass collected by campers could be traded in for candy and other treats but can't remember what those were. To this day the only booth that comes to memory is the kissing booth the CIT's held as my CIT at the time, Sarah Campbell told me all the boys were lining up for her and she was collecting brass left and right and kicking over the male CIT's from Camelot. Remember this was usually held on Saturday and we ate with the boys at Camelot at an open picnic style. The staff would hold a cookout and we would hamburgers or hotdogs out on the lawn. They would serve us Kool aid to drink that was made in a giant kitchen pot. There was even a chocolate cake for dessert.

Want to talk now about walking back to Carlisle from Camelot after any night event. Both camps were well lit at night but the road between the two was pitch black. This was a one lane road with the forest on both sides, but sometimes passing beside Blue Creek. While walking back to Carlisle the normal forest sounds can be heard but the sky can't always be seen because of the trees. About every camper would carry her Union Carbide Eveready flashlight and batteries that she more than likely either bought at the Union Carbide store in Building 82 or at Heck's. These flashlights are top quality for their day but not as bright as compared to today's LED's. So with the technology we had 78 girls walk in the dark back to Carlisle afraid the Creekers and Mutants would attack any moment. I can still see all the flashlight beams on the road and someone would scream at the slightest inclination of being attacked by monsters in the dark.

The older campers had dances several times a session. Each dance had a theme. Remember one was called a "Beach Dance " for this dance which was held at Carlisle we actually hauled in sand from the creek and dumped it on the Castle floor. We then proceeded to decorate the rest of the Castle like a beach. Still remember the feeling of that sand while dancing on it. After the dance felt so sorry for the JC's who had to clean up all that sand that I offered to stay up and help but the AD told me to go to bed.

Remember for one Dance at Carlisle they decorated the outside of the Castle to look medieval. There was a CIT by the name of Lisa Austin who was dressed as a pageboy from

King Arthur's court and to this day am wondering where she got that costume. Was the first time I'd seen anything like it at that camp. Yea it was named after Camelot but I'd never until that point seen anyone dressed like they were from Camelot.

While taking a trip down memory lane and looking up old photos of the camp, I saw a 1960's picture of Dynel Tents that Union Carbide had sent down to the camp for the kids to play with. It's interesting because I remember those tents. One time while there the staff drug a whole bunch of tents out of storage and had them out on the lawn in between the Director's Wing and Wing Six. I was shocked because this was the first time I had ever seen these and they looked about military size. I asked one of the staff if we were going to be using these tents but they said "no". Could never understand why because they looked very nice.

On Sunday the routine was different. To even Carbide Camp it was a day of rest so things were a little more laid back. We got to sleep an hour late. Instead of morning activities we had "Vespers". The place we had Vespers was a place located behind Wing 1, we had to walk straight up the hill and do mean straight up. There was a campfire circle but instead of a campfire there was a stone altar with a cross on it. To this day I wonder how they hauled those rocks from the creek all the way straight up that hill. Can't remember if we told Bible stories but know we did a lot of praying.

Later on Sunday we cleaned out our Wings and did really clean them. We had to drag out our trunks on the lawn and let them air out. Then sweep the floor of the Wings and run a mop on the floor. This and the last day was the only time a mop was used. Somewhere I have pictures of us outside unpacking and repacking our trunks getting them ready for the next week.

Camelot and Carlisle loved pulling pranks on each other. This was usually done by committing petty theft. Camp Camplot had a sword of Excalibur they had two actually. One was a real sword used in ceremony the other was made of cardboard covered with tin foil and was about 5 feet long. Well one year the girls from Carlisle stole Excalibur, the tin foil one, and hid it so well the guys from Camelot never found it. They guys got it back but as memory serves me it is because we returned it to them. One year the girls from Carlisle stole the Camelot Camp sign and while in possession all the counselors painted their names on the back of it. Camelot however was not to be outdone. Please don't ask me who she was but one of the staff members at Carlisle had a blue and pink teddy bear that was handmade. I know this because panels for it were sold at Piece Goods Shop. It's basically a panel to make a pillow and it looks like a bear. The bear was named "Bubba" and somehow the guys at Camplot got their hands on him.

Upon his recapture a "Sign Raid" was done at Camelot celebrating the safe return of "Bubba Bear ". I remember this one so well because I owned a bear identical to Bubba and wanted to take him on the sign raid but the Assistant Director Theresa was afraid one of the boys would steal

him too and she insisted I put him in her Wing for safe keeping.

For the record a "Sign Raid" is when we made up a bunch of signs on brown paper, usually painted with Tempera paint, walked around Camelot and at the end of it left the signs all around the place. In the case of Bubba Bear the signs would have pictures of Bubba and messages of Bubba's freedom.

There is one prank that was told to me at camp, that the counselors at Carlisle did to the Counselors at Camelot. One night the Carlisle staff snuck down to Camelot and crept into the Wings of Camelot and stole the pants, shirt and hats of all the male counselors. They then proceed to stuff them with hay and set these dummies around the camp in odd places to be found in the morning. Their scheme was thwarted however when one camper woke up and had to use the bathroom. The bathrooms at Camelot were not in their Wings as were at Carlisle but in and seperate buildings. So this boy found one of the dummies and drugs back into his Wing. His counselor woke up and saw what he was doing. When his counselor realized what the child was dragging in he yelled "THE GIRLS ARE HERE GO GET THEM!" and everyone started to wake up. All the Carlisle staff started running back but did not make it before they were caught and thrown into the creek.

There are two vehicles out at Carbide camp that come to memory. One was the Covered Wagon. This was a wagon pulled by a tractor that would sometimes take us to certain

overnights or just on rides. At one time it was covered but the last years I attended it had lost its covering. The other was the blue pickup trucks with the "Union Carbide Tech Center" logo on the side. This too would sometimes transport us to overnights or for emergency purposes.

Should take time to speak of the pranks pulled at Carbide Camp. Be careful when taking a shower as one never knew when it was loaded with Tempera paint and the first plast might be red, blue or green. Throwing cold water on a person at just the right or wrong moment was another one. My first night ever at Carlisle the JC's crept in our Wing and painted our faces with watercolors. At Camelot, my brother told me they were more sinister. When at 2 am the boys had to make a bathroom call the toilet seat might be greased with vaseline. Or steal your clothing when you were in the shower and you'd have to run back to the Wind and hope no girls were around. Also at Camelot the counselors loved picking up the campers and hanging them up by their underwear on nails thus giving them a "wedgie". When the campers came down they would have a size XXXXXXL underwear and all the other boys would call him "wedgieman".

The staff at Carlisle used to do the propane prank on the girls. The camp's hot water and cooking elements ran on propane gas so there was a big propane tank behind Wing 1 for this. Well the staff would wake the girls up at 2 am and tell them the propane was leaking and they all needed to walk down to the rifle range which was clear down at the other end of the camp to escape the leak. This prank does not end there.

Because they were told they had inhaled the propane gas in their sleep now they had to jump up and down as they went to the rifle range in order to get the propane out of their body. So imagine all the girls in their PJ's, half asleep, jumping up and down on their way across the camp. Once they got to the rifle range they would then wait for staff to say "it's all clear" and they could go back to bed which was usually when the staff was done laughing themselves silly.

The UFO incident at Camelot. The staff at Camelot went to great lengths to scare the boys and the UFO one took the cake. Two staff members climbed on Wing 6, one had a street sign the other had a frisbee with red and green lights on it attached to a fishing pole. The staff member with the street sign would hold it in a way to make it sound "WAH OOOO WAH OOOO WAH OOOO", the sound most UFOs make in movies. The guy with the fishing pole would spin the frisbee and lower it so it could be seen in the windows. It was amazing that those two were able to climb to the top of that Wing and make no noise whatsoever. Now while those two were doing this on the roof a CIT runs in the Wing and shouts "WERE BEING INVADED! BLUE CREEK IS RUNNING BACKWARDS! ALIENS ARE COMING! WAKE UP BOYS!" All the boys wake up see the frisbee flying saucer and outright pandemonium breaks out. Boys were running out of the Wing while screaming and crying. Some of the older boys caught on and started laughing but some of the younger had to be consoled by the staff because this prank scared them so bad.

The last campfire of the session is when awards are given out.

Each activity gives out awards to kids who acceled the best. Each kid got a funny award for what they were best known for during camp. One session my asthma bothered me the whole time so my counselor gave me the "I can't breathe" award because that is what I kept saying during my asthma attacks. Other awards were that of Honor Camper and the COTY the camper of the year award.

The very last campfire ever and I was there. I remember the girl who got the COTY award. Her name was Aundrea Polsen. I can still see her reaction to getting that award, she was holding that plaque like she had won the lottery. Now her name would be remembered like all the others before her, if only.

After the campfire was over we walked back to Carlisle. We stopped by Wing 1 where there was a floodlight hanging by the side of that building. Can remember what happened to this day. As soon as everyone got to Wing 1 all of us just spontaneously stopped and started hugging each other. Whatever was in the air that night I can feel it to this day. I do mean every one, campers hugged other campers, staff hugged other staff, campers and staff hugged each other, this went on for a long time. This had never happened before after the last campfire of a session I had attended; this was very extraordinary. This was the last night of what would ever be a Carbide Camp and we were hugging each other and telling each other how much we loved each other. If it has to end at least it ended like that.

The last breakfast at Camp was always kinda special. It was always cereal and milk so it was easy to clean up, but there were always donuts. They would ship in glazed donuts from a bakery on the last day. Remember when they were trying to save the camp and looking for things to cut back cost wise one thing that came up was how much money was spent on donuts. We were willing to go without donuts and a lot of other things in order to save the camp but Union Carbide still said no.

After Carbide Camp closed I was too broken-hearted to attend another camp. It was not until I was in my late 30's that I became a Counselor for a Girl Scout Camp and after two years that place failed to impress me and never went back. I just hope to live long enough to see the day camps like Carbide are built again.

Riding the bus back to the Tech Center we would be singing all the way from Dutch Ridge road to Union Carbide Drive. In fact as the buses would be pulling up Union Carbide Drive just by Building 740 the parents said they could hear us sing:

"We just go back to civilization  
We just got back to civilization  
We just got back to civilization  
I WANT TO GO BACK TO CAMP!!!"

**BULLY BULLY!!**

Thank you to my Dad, Charles W. Glancy for sending me there.

Thank you all the People who made Union Carbide what it was  
to have such a wonderful place like Carbide Camp.

Thank You Jody Asbury