

History of Holy Spirit Led Aspects

Tri-State Christian Camp

DeFuniak Springs, Florida
February 2012

Isaiah 42:16 "I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them."

We look at the Tri-State Christian Camp today and see a labor of love produced by many hands and know the dates of each part of the process and who did the work. But – when did God begin the work of preparation in the people He had chosen to do this ministry and who is He working with through this ministry? This part we will never know – only God knows - but there were many workers who, as young people, had come to know Christ at camp and felt the need to produce a camp in the Panhandle of Florida. And – there were some who had never been to camp as young people, but God worked ahead of time to prepare them. And – in God's timing, it all came together.

It began with the Tri-State Men's Fellowship who realized the need for a camp in this area. The other camps in North Florida, South Georgia, and South Alabama (the Panhandle area) were too far away for the churches and the rental camps were becoming harder to find and to use satisfactorily. Clifton Savoy of the Tallahassee Capital City Church was the President of the Fellowship and they agreed the camp site chosen should not be more than 150 miles from any of the churches involved and the map pinpoint was in the Marianna, Florida, area.



Lorraine Huggins, Clifton Savoy and Cauly Huggins in front of their camper

At this point Mrs. Bill Sisk of the DeFuniak Springs, Florida Concerned Christian Church (Now in 2012, the First Christian Church) offered to give ten acres of her land next to the church with the option to buy more land at \$1,000 per acre. She said that in past years as she and her husband traveled past on the railroad paralleling Highway 90. That her now deceased husband would point out the area and say he would like to see a camp there so, she felt led to have the camp on her property. The Fellowship agreed to meet at the Concerned Church to make a decision. All the churches were small and there was little money available, but the site was in the designated area. In the meantime, the First Christian Church of Tallahassee had called a new minister, Johnny Arnold, and this meeting was held on his first weekend in town, so he and his wife, Carolyn, were in attendance. The meeting was held during a rain storm so the only way we could see the property was to ride down the sand road and look out the car windows and all that was evident were deep woods so, when we voted to accept Mr. Sisk's offer and buy twenty more acres, none of us had really seen it.

Clifton Savoy called a meeting at the Concerned Church shortly thereafter with as many as possible to come for a work week with the whole group to come on Friday. He and Cauly Huggins (First Christian Church, Tallahassee, Florida) agreed to go together – Cauly and Lorraine (his wife) in their travel trailer and Clifton with his pup tent. Much to his dismay, only one other person showed up for the work week. Becky Jones (Capital City Church, Tallahassee, Florida) with her pup tent. The Concerned Church had camping hook-ups and allowed us to park there and use their facilities. The first thing the group wanted to was clear the areas for the survey crew so we could see the land

boundaries. God kept them safe as they cut through the underbrush, but they were concerned about how much of the area was wetland and wondered if we should proceed. Lorraine stayed in the camper and cooked meals for them all, and although the church bathroom was available, the only shower was in the camper so they lined up and took turns. On Wednesday Clifton asked Lorraine if she could cook for the group on Friday. She was willing, but did not have any large cookware in the camper nor was there any in the Church Kitchen. At that time we were looking out the camper window and saw K.J. and Irene Starzinger arrive for Prayer Meeting. We did not know they were living in DeFuniak Springs, but Clifton had Irene meet with Lorraine later and she had everything we needed. So we planned a menu and started a cooking ministry that lasted all through the building of the camp – and beyond! On Thursday Ali and Marion Jarmin (Bayou George Christian Church, near Panama City) came to bring cold drinks to the workers and they were horrified to find there only three. They went back to Panama City, cooked food, and came back with their camper. On Friday night, others arrived and, as Clifton met with some of them in our camper - showed his diagram of the wetland and questioned going forward, Johnny Arnold positively announced: “God gave us this land. We’re going to build a camp on it.” And the issue was settled.



All of a sudden, Cauly and Lorraine Huggins, who had never attended camp as young people, were completely involved – but – there again – God had made the preparations. Cauly was able to close his business and retire at age 59 (Cauly and Lorraine owned “Huggins Business Machines” in downtown Tallahassee), so he was still able to work. At a Christian Campus House Board Meeting he told Steve and Linda Smith, who were going to Burns, Tennessee, to manage a camp that, if they would provide camper hook-ups we would come and help them for a month after we retired. When the time arrived, the camp was going through a time of transition. Both Steve and Linda had accepted teaching positions at Johnson Bible College and a new couple – Doug and Jenny Bowman – was taking over.



Entrance to the Christian Camp in Burns, Tennessee



Pool that was used by the Camp and Community



Steve and Linda Smith with their children



Jenny Bowman with their new child



Doug and Jenny Bowman with their young child at the Huggin's



Group in the Huggins Camper in Tennessee

Steve was setting up at Johnson and Linda was finishing a degree at a near by college. Jenny was expecting a baby and it arrived soon after we did. We had an immediate rapport with her since her sister, Cora Girard, had attended our church. Doug was overworked and immediately gave Cauly a board with a long list of to-dos. We had barely set up the camper when we were washing 50 mattresses. Steve had the camp rented full-time and it was a push to get thing cleaned and ready between groups. After the baby came home, Lorraine became a full-time grandmother and family cook for seven people until the real grandparents arrived. In the meantime we shopped at night filling

our station wagon at a nearby city 24 hour grocery store for each group. There was a standard menu for the cooks at the camp. Some groups brought their own cooks. Before we left, we had done some of everything, including tending the concession stand when the pool was open to the public. God plans well and we are completely unaware.

The first big job at the Tri-State Camp was clearing the land. One of the area ministers was also a forester so he marked the trees to cut and the ones to save. One of the Tallahassee First Church members – Ken Fore – was a geologist – so he checked the land and gave the go-ahead to build. Volunteers from the churches spent time to clear the land, Cauly kept getting burning permits to burn the debris. When they had the land cleared for the first building (Dining Room and Kitchen), they put up a large wooden cross and we gathered around it for a prayer session! The Minister from Bristol – Rev. Ham – prayed: “Lord, we don’t know what you want us to do here, but You will show us.”



Greg Davis, Julie Davis, Johnny Arnold, Skip Martin, Cauly Huggins and Gerry Wilkinson (First Christian, Tallahassee)

Each Church made a contribution of money (never enough), but the real contributions were in time and labor. There, again, we found that God had already prepared the ones

needed to build with the hearts to serve Johnny Arnold had building experience and a contractor from Bristol – Glenn Oneal - joined him. Johnny also had much camp experience and said the buildings should be of cypress wood (inside and out), because it doesn't need to be painted and can handle the rough treatment of campers, and we should have cabins holding no more than 16 so the counselors would be available for small groups – especially at night.



Cauly Huggins



Cauly Huggins and Wesley Marsh (First Christian, Tallahassee)

Little by little each need was met – in the churches we had plumbers, heating and air conditioning people and many, many willing hands, but the big hurdle was electricity. Cauly was asking an electrician friend, in the Tallahassee Disciples Church, questions about how to handle it when he said, “Find me a helper and I’ll do it.” Cauly answered, “I’m, your man.” This man – Lloyd Marsh – was a master electrician who had wired State buildings, so he knew how to handle big projects and wanted it all underground. Under his union rules he could not work for pay, so all his labor was volunteer. There was a member from Bristol with heavy equipment, who dug trenches connecting the buildings – main building and 5 dorms – and Lloyd and Cauly connected conduits and pulled wire through those trenches – 5000 ft. of wire in the main building alone. They moved their camper to the camp and lived there and Lorraine cooked for them and the fellowship was sweet – with the added joy of Lloyd’s wife, Dot, joining us at times. Lloyd had the State of Florida Electric code book in his truck and consulted it carefully. When the inspector came, he looked at the multi-breaker box and asked Cauly who did it. When Cauly told him – the man in the trench – he said he needed no more inspections – this man knew what he was doing! God gave Lloyd (you can see his wonderful workmanship in connecting conduit in the workshop building) a beautiful legacy of serving before his death shortly afterward. We reaped the benefits of his knowledge later during a camp time when lightning struck one of the dorms, but it caused little damage, because the dorm was well grounded. After Lloyd’s death, his son, Wesley, also an electrician, did some volunteer electrical work in a new building.



Cauly & Lorraine Huggins Motor Home



Cauly & Lorraine Huggins in front of Cabin #1 – constructed mainly by members of First Christian, Tallahassee

As we built, the women were always involved – from pounding nails, working on the roofs, putting the metal bunk beds together, and bringing in their sewing machines to make curtains for the dorms – as well as cooking! We developed teams that worked together – like Paul Weaver - Alabama Church - (a classmate of Johnny's at Johnson Bible college) and Cauly who worked on Cauly's shopsmith to make base boards – like Fred and Mary Jordan (First Christian, Tallahassee) who did carpenter work or cooking work as a team – like K.J. and Irene Starzinger working on the main building bathrooms as well as building stalls in the dorms – like all the preachers in the area finding they had many practical skills, or, at least, willing bodies to help – like Tom Hart (First Christian, Tallahassee) and Cauly who learned to lay tile – like the cooking Smith Brothers (Panama City Christian) who polished the main building floor and started a fund for Cook's quarters, which became a small motel and was expanded and called the staff dorm – like Norman and Mildred Brown (Bayou George Church) doing the heating and air conditioning –



Norman and Mildred Brown with Lorraine Huggins in the Foyer of First Christian, Tallahassee for Cauly and Lorraine's 50th Wedding Anniversary Party

Like the senior minister we called “the Pope of the Panhandle”, Ali Jarmin and his wife, who were always overseeing and encouraging. Ali would wake up the campers in the RV section walking around and singing “Oh what a beautiful morning”, One morning he knocked on our camper door and said to Lorraine “thank you for all you do!” – She answered “but Ali, I’m not doing anything. I’m just here with Cauly.” His response: “And that may be the best thing you could do!”



Ali Jarmin and his wife at their 50th Wedding Anniversary

Like John & Norma Marr (First Christian, Tallahassee) who were often present helping Cauly and Lorraine as they could Norma was not well, but knew she always had a bed in Cauly's motor home when she got tired. That motor home – a 35 ft. Holiday Rambler was the scene of many gatherings – with the neighbors of the camp coming to visit in the evenings. Before the buildings were up. We cooked for the work crews in the motor home and they ate on the picnic tables in the RV section. We also had many smaller groups – up to 10 eating and visiting in the evenings. This motor home was a home away from home while we were working on the camp. Cauly had a small Dodge truck he drove back and forth carrying supplies from Tallahassee and cypress lumber from Chipley. We formed many friendships during his time. We also remember so many little things – the kindness of the Concerned church – Kent Reeves (First Christian, Tallahassee) building the front steps of the main building – the family who gave us the fireplace – Roy Rice (First Christian, Tallahassee) building the Mantle. Cauly worked on the sheetrock ceiling up on the scaffolding, (one Saturday, Tom Hart and Glenn Oneal were on the high scaffolds, putting on first and second coats of drywall mud) with the stiplers right behind him – when the lights were hung and turned on – Irene Starzinger, Cauly and Lorraine shopping for the kitchen equipment – the large refrigerator – the stove – the stainless steel counters – the sinks – the pots and pans – some were gifts from the churches, but all the effort helped put the kitchen together – Cauly and Tom Hart setting the tile in the kitchen and, at midnight – finding a way to make a mosaic pattern for the drain. Bill Graham, former member of First Christian, Tallahassee, and Lorraine's brother-in-law donating the blind in the window between the kitchen and main room –

Steven Reeves (First Christian, Tallahassee) delivering the large hanging screen for the main room – Johnny’s brother, Kenny (Panama City Christian) one of the church pastors, working on the dorms and the pool – served later for many years as the camp manager in the Summer during the 5- 6 week camping season.

God gave us the leaders we needed as the years went by and protected us from some who – would have been detrimental. He also gave us a fellowship of joy working together with time for fun too in the evenings like our “Chicken Foot” (a dominos game) contests.

There were some like Loran Carlton (First Christian, Tallahassee) who had become Christians at camp in their youth and were determined that any child who wanted to come to camp could not be denied and would pay for their opportunity out of their own pocket. (I always wondered how God used this sacrifice). At Loran’s death his children gave considerable money from his estate to build a new 6th dorm. Another example of God’s provision – money was always an issue and we did not have any to go forward so we had a meeting trying to decide what to do next – without any clear cut ideas, when a man sitting at the back of the room (he had just ridden to the meeting with a friend) asked “Would \$15,000 help? I would lend it to you.” So we borrowed it on a promissory note which he turned into a gift when it became due. This was Gordon Dykes from Panama City Christian Church (the Dykes Scholarship Fund). This was not the only note turned into a gift that he gave to a camp. Later he and his wife cooked for camps and furnished the motel rooms.



Cauly & Lorraine Huggins in the Camp Kitchen



First Christian, Tallahassee – Retirees Fellowship at the Camp

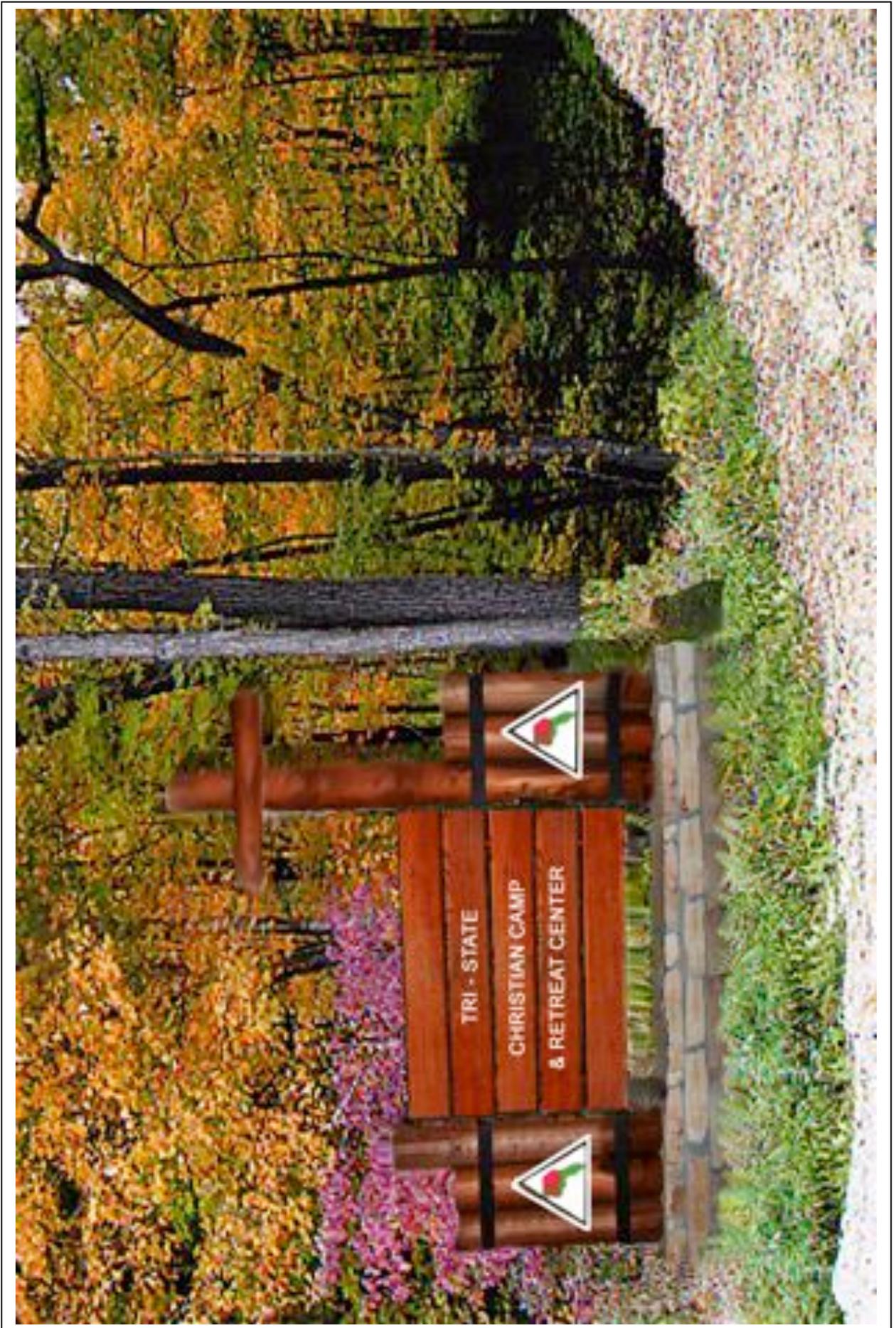
As the buildings were being built, we needed someone on the land to protect the property. The first ones were Bill and Sarah Gates (former missionaries to Alaska) who moved in their travel trailer. Later, Cauly and Johnny bought and hauled in two other trailers which served as homes for caretakers until we acquired some more land with a small house This served until Johnny finished building a fine home for the Tri-State Fellowship Director in December 2011.

In 2009, Jim Dunahue (Panama City Eastside Christian, Trustee) won a considerable award in the PowerBall and gave \$50,000 to the Camp. Those funds have grown to \$56,000 in 2012. The Tri-State Fellowship owes \$64,500 in Faith Promise Notes, which will become due in 2020. Hopefully many of the Note Holders will donate these funds to the Fellowship, as in the past.

Johnny Arnold served as the Senior Minister for First Christian, Tallahassee, for 20 years before he became the Tri-State Fellowship Director in 2002. For two years Johnny and Carolyn lived in two of the Motel rooms and then lived in the “Cottage”, beginning in 2004 through 2011. Johnny now oversees a handsome camp and retreat center.

-----And wasn't this God's plan from the beginning?

Camp Memories by Lorraine Huggins, Tom Hart and Johnny Arnold



Backgrounds of People helping at Tri-State Camp

Clifton Savoy (Capital City, Tallahassee)

Cauly & Lorraine Huggins (First Christian, Tallahassee)

Cauly Huggins – Came from Lakeland, Florida and was based at Dale Mabry Field and served as mess sergeant in the Medial Detachment. Cauly had a professional baker on his staff who baked a beautiful wedding cake for them.

Lorraine (DeClercq) Huggins – She grew up in Delray Beach, Florida. Her parents didn't have the means to send her to college and she really wanted to go to FSCW (Florida State College for Women). While in high school she worked after school and on Saturday's at a small apparel store. The owner paid for her registration (\$9.00), she was Valedictorian of her class and the local Lions Club (it took her some time to pay it off, but they told her later that she was the only one to pay them back) loaned her the money to go to college. While at college she worked for the FSCW Business Manager. Lorraine attended First Baptist Church before she met Cauly. They met at a hillbilly party at the home of Irene Hoffman (Sunday school teacher at 1st Christian, with a class of 50 college girls and service men). She had invited Lorraine to the party and even though she had been attending 1st Baptist, she accepted the invitation. Lorraine came dressed with pig tails and her blind date was

Johnny Arnold (First Christian, Tallahassee)

K.J. & Irene Starzinger (First Christian, Defuniak)

Ali & Marion Jarmin (Bayou George Christian)

Tom Hart (First Christian, Tallahassee)

He grew up in Spencerville Indiana and attended for 12 years "Lake James Christian Assembly (a camp near Angola, Indiana, near the Michigan line. It is considered a Tri-State Camp for Indiana, Michigan and Ohio) A camp song was sung through the years and is still being sung in 2012:

“There's a camp that has the banner.
Up in northern Indiana.
Up at old Lake James.

For a week every summer
Every day is a hummer
Filled sunshine, work and games.

There old friends there to greet you.
There are new friends there to meet you.

At the camp that has the banner.
Up in Northern Indiana.
Up at old Lake James.”

(In 2009, Tom, Carolyn Arnold and two visitors from Ohio originally discovered at “Lilly’s Café” that they had gone to “Lake James” and locked arms to sing the Camp Song.)

Tom became a teacher and within 5 years, an assistant professor at Purdue University. He started a graduate library science program at Ball State University. While at Ball State he directed two year long Institutes for graduate students, funded by the U.S. Government. As the final speaker for each year he invited Professor Sara Srygley from Florida State University. She eventually encouraged the Dean of the School to convince Tom to come and teach at FSU in 1971. Tom, Sherry and their son Chris (2012 the Worship Leader at First Christian of Tallahassee) began attending 1st Christian of Tallahassee, eventually Tom became Sunday School Superintendent, a Deacon and an Elder. In 1973 Tom was invited to be a CCF (Christian Campus Fellowship or Campus House) Board Member (Treasurer in 2012) . He was often over at Tri-State Camp helping with clearing, building and laying tile, often with Cauly Huggins. From 2006-2012 he has been President of the Tri-State Christian Fellowship Board of Trustees. He often helped Johnny Arnold construct (grunt person) the Director’s House from 2009-2012.

John & Norma Marr (First Christian, Tallahassee)

John Marr – Grew up in Columbus, Indiana and came to Tallahassee during World War II, while training to be a fighter pilot. He and Norma built and operated the “University Motel on Tennessee Street. John was a Deacon, Elder and Sunday School Teacher at 1st Christian Tallahassee. He retired in his early 50’s and was very active in founding the CCF (Christian Campus Fellowship or Campus House) and serving on the Board of Directors for years. John and Norma were very active in constructing the Camp in the 1980’s and early 90’s.

Norma Marr – Grew up in Tallahassee, as the daughter of motel owners. She met John

Glenn Oneal (Bristol Christian)

He has helped construct nearly every building at the Camp. He organized and assisted with the construction of several Dorms. Generally he and a crew from Bristol would come over on Friday and cut lumber for walls and other aspects of

the building, so on Saturday, when others came to help, they only needed to nail them with their hammers and put them in place. Generally, they were able to have a Dorm under black paper by Saturday Evening.

Don & Linda Meeks (First Christian, Tallahassee)

Don Meeks

Linda Meeks

Cindy Meeks (First Christian, Tallahassee) (now Capital City, Tallahassee)

She grew up attending and participating actively in First Christian Church, Tallahassee. She was on the Bible Bowl team. Cindy eventually earned her PhD and accepted a job near Monticello, Florida and bought a home there. She now attends Capitol City, Tallahassee and is their Trustee for Tri-State Christian Fellowship.