

## **“Veggie-Rice Cedar Bluff Style”**

### **Umpy Osborn, Ole 97 Eagle Scout**

I love Cedar Bluff.

1952 was my third year at Kamp Kia Kima. It was two weeks before my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. Buddy had to be in Memphis the week of June 30 thru July 5. and left us in the care of Scoutmaster Jim Walker. Before Buddy left for Memphis he put me in charge of the “buddy hikes.” These were hikes made near camp.

Jim had only about five or six boys at camp and there were 14 OLE 97 scouts. We shared the same schedule of activities and ate together in the mess hall. In addition to the daily canoeing and swimming classes we had other activities together such as rifle range and compass yard.

On Monday afternoon June 30 we hiked to Otter Creek for free swim. We also hunted for arrowheads. This would later be the center of Cherokee Village.

Tuesday afternoon we had “buddy hikes” to climb Cedar Bluff. This was something I had wanted to do since I first saw Cedar Bluff in 1950. We explored several routes to the top and found that any route was difficult climbing but could be accomplished without ropes or any special equipment. Our biggest fears were rattle snakes, scorpions and falling rocks.

Wednesday we had a canoe trip to Hardy Bridge with a stop at Rio Vista falls for free swim; this was my favorite swimming spot on the Southfork or Spring River.

Thursday afternoon we left on our overnight hike to Cedar Bluff. This would become one of the highlights of my entire camp experience.

For some reason we split into two groups; one group set up camp in a grove of trees near the rapids directly below the bluff. This group consisted of eight OLE 97 guys; Kent, Bobby and Billy Osborn, George and Owen Wallace, Don Meek, Jerry Findley and Jackie Wineman. This is the group I would ordinarily have been with but I thought I should stay with the acting scoutmaster Jim Walker.

My group hiked by road to the top of Cedar Bluff and set up camp at the overlook. This group consisted of Jim Walker his five or six boys, Bubby Blumenthall, Jackie, Jerry and Joe Wilcox, Raymond Mattei and me. We all went about finding a place to bed down for the night. I put my bedroll down on a large flat rock. The Wilcoxes and Blumenthall erected an elaborate lean-to with a thick layer of cedar branches for a mattress. They worked on this arrangement all afternoon until we prepared for dinner.

We cooked all the trail pack food we brought for dinner and discovered we had an extra #10 can of veggie-rice. Jim Walker thought it belonged to the other group and wanted to take it to them. I tried to discourage this idea and told Jim that the guys would do just fine without that can of food. But Jim would not relent; the veggie-rice must be taken down the bluff across the river at buttermilk falls and delivered to the other group. Reluctantly I agreed to be the guide; we would make the trip.

By now the sun was getting low in the sky and I knew there was no way Jim and I could make the delivery, ford the river and climb back up the 300 foot cliff before dark. I told Jim we would need to take flashlights and off we went. I had the open five pound can of veggie-rice in one hand and a flashlight in the other hand.

The trip down was pretty easy because I had found a route two days earlier on my "buddy hike" to Cedar Bluff. The route down was steep, zigzagging from ledge to ledge at sharp angles crossing the face of the cliff to the river. We forded the river at the rapids without any mishaps to our valuable cargo of veggie-rice.

The guys were finishing dinner and were surprised to see us walk up with a can of veggie-rice. They all said they had plenty of veggie-rice but would like to have some big juicy hamburgers from Hardy. Well I said to Jim, I told you so. I really *did* know those guys. Now I was shocked that Jim was determined to take the veggie-rice *back* to the boys on top of the bluff. The sun had set and I told Jim we should ford the river and find our trail to the top before it was totally dark.

Now it was pitch black and with flashlights blazing we started the long, rocky 300 foot ascent to the top. It was really an ordeal having to help this old guy find hand and foot holds, with my flashlight in one hand and a five pound can of veggie-rice in the other. After making wrong turns and inching along the rocky ledges for what seemed like hours we finally reached the top.

I am proud to say we safely delivered the veggie-rice back to where we had started and the contents were in good shape except for the small addition of sticks, rocks and leaves. Needless to say no one was interested in more veggie-rice that night. Exhausted, I spread out my bed roll and had a good nights sleep.

The next morning Scoutmaster Jim gave an award to the scout he thought displayed the best Scouting Spirit. I must tell you I did not receive the award.

I did not climb Cedar Bluff again. Today, as in 1950, it remains one of my favorite places.

A Scout Is Brave.

Umpy Osborn - December 28, 2005