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Chapter 2: The First Conference, 1918

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The First Conference
1918

How did those early leaders find the faith to launch a new project during a period of national stress and strain? War clouds hung heavy and dark over the country. People were tense and fearful. Prices were exorbitant. Bell Badley said once in retrospect, "Why, bacon was 40¢ a pound!" The high cost of living was only one of the difficulties that abounded on all sides, but the first annual summer Conference was held August 21-30, 1918, at Ocean Lake Park, Garibaldi Beach, with 75 present the first day. Most lived in tents, though a few rented cottages. Cooking, dining and meetings were all in tents. It rained some and the wind was often cold, but in spite of physical discomforts and inconveniences, an earnest, enthusiastic group studied, prayed, worked and played together. Had it not been for the loyal support and willing cooperation of everyone who took part, the first conference would have failed. Each one seemed eager to make it a success. So the vision of a Christian vacation became a reality. Perhaps there is nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come!

of Y.M.C.E.
The first suggestion of a summer conference for the Christian Endeavor Union of Oregon Yearly Meeting of Friends came about 1916. Chester A. Hadley had become the ^{Superintendent} president in 1913 and served five years. As he worked with the young people in Oregon, Washington and Idaho, it became apparent to him that a feeling of unity and mutual fellowship was virtually impossible because of distances separating them. Travel was difficult and costly. Only a small representation of the young people could attend Yearly Meeting to transact their business and outline the work for the coming year. Another need expressed by C.E. Societies' members was for more intensive Bible study than the regular channels could provide. Also, the young people often mentioned their desire for Christian vacations. After working all year with non-Christian people, they wished for fellowship with other Christians during vacation days.

There were attempts to meet these needs. Some mid-winter conventions were held, two or three days in length. On occasion these followed the Ministerial Conferences and were tied in with their program. They were planned to be inspirational. The annual business meeting of the C.E. Union was sometimes held then instead of at Yearly Meeting. Although these efforts helped in some ways, they did not meet all the needs or solve the problems. It remained for one man to find the solution with an idea that was simplicity itself: a summer conference for the young people of Oregon Yearly Meeting!

Early in the 20th century, Bible conferences sprang up with mushroom growth in various parts of the United States. Before this, such gatherings were hardly thought of. Dwight L. Moody had organized annual Bible conferences in several eastern states and Canada. The Y.M.C.A. was an early sponsor of such conferences across the country. They founded the popular Seabeck Conference in Washington state. (The Episcopalians met in conferences at Gearhart, Oregon. At first, Bible conferences were held for two weeks or more. Later, shorter gatherings of two or three days were developed.) In the East, Friends began holding gatherings for their young people. As the benefits became increasingly apparent, Christian camping in various formats was a natural outgrowth of these early experiments.

In 1915 Chester Hadley, then pastor at Rosedale (Salem), Oregon, attended a Young Friends Bible Conference in Cedar Lake, Indiana. On his way home the inspiration and fellowship of those days lingered with him, mingled with thoughts of the needs and problems of the young people of Oregon Yearly Meeting. He thought of the opportunities afforded at Cedar Lake, and suddenly an inspiration came. Why not start a conference in Oregon! So on that train speeding westward, he felt the Lord speaking to him about a summer conference on the Pacific Coast. He could see the potential of a gathering where young and old could enjoy a Christian vacation and at the same time study God's Word together. That night he dedicated himself to the great work he saw ahead, and the development of his vision proved to be a pioneering project in the Pacific Northwest.

It was to Homer L. Cox, pastor of Sunnyside (First Friends) Friends Church in Portland, Oregon, that Chester Hadley went upon his return from Indiana. From him he received sympathetic interest and enthusiastic support. These two worked together in the development of the idea, sharing the discouragements, solving the problems and rejoicing over the victories. Many others in the Yearly Meeting caught the vision, too, and gave support in various ways. Among the early leaders were Elizabeth Ward, Gurney and Ida J. Lee, J. Sanger Fox, Levi T. Pennington, J. Emil Swanson, Harlan Smith, Worth Coulson, Nathan Swabb, Floyd Perisho, Blaine Bronner and others. Thus the vision of one became the vision of many.

Chester Hadley presented his vision and potential plans to the Christian Endeavor Union in 1917 at the Ministerial Conference. Later, at a mid-winter convention held during the winter of 1918 at First Friends Church, Portland, Oregon, the summer conference was discussed again. A committee was appointed to ascertain the desire of the societies and work with the Executive Committee in making

definite plans, if it seemed advisable to pursue the proposal. At Yearly Meeting the following June the report of the committee, recommending the carrying out of the plans, was accepted. The first summer conference was announced and promoted with enthusiasm and vigor. The young people felt the conference idea was a solution to their needs and held great possibilities for the future. The decision was made that the proposed conference should serve a two-fold purpose, "it should offer a Christian vacation, and it should afford opportunities for spiritual development and inspiration." So they proceeded.

The logistics involved in setting up the physical accommodations for a large group must have seemed formidable. Questions faced the planners: where was the best place to hold such a gathering? How could attenders be properly housed and fed? Who would teach the classes? Would the government in war time allow the purchase of the large amount of food necessary? With characteristic zeal and the enthusiasm generated by their vision, they set to work. Various beach resorts were considered, only to be disqualified because of inaccessability or high rentals. Finally, Lydia C. Gardner of Portland offered her property on the ridge at Ocean Lake Park, between the beach and the railroad track, for use free. Her lot had on it two tent frames which could be used for the dining room and store room. The Tillamook Bay Land Company allowed use of property nearby for camp sites, for putting up a tent to be used as the kitchen, and for a large enough space for a large tabernacle tent. They also allowed free use of water. Clarence and Lowell Edwards of Tillamook supplied free electricity. Tents were rented, cottage owners contacted and the large Yearly Meeting tent trucked down from Newberg, Oregon.

Providing food was a major consideration. It required a special concession from the Food Commissioner under the War Department to permit the purchase of the necessary amount of food. There were rigid restrictions on buying flour and sugar, so menus had to be planned with that in mind. Sugar sold for \$25 per 100 lbs and other foods were proportionately high. There was the difficulty of raising funds to purchase the food. Then, people had to be recruited to do the planning, cooking and serving ^{meals} ~~the food~~. Chester Hadley's mother, Mrs. Lewis I. Hadley, acted as overall housekeeper, spending many hours seeing to details of eating, sleeping and meeting. Mrs. J. A. Dunbar consented to be chief cook. Lesta Cook (Bates) and Bell Badley acted as servers, carrying the food from the cook tent to the dining tent. Mildred Hadley (Brown) and Thelma Eiler (Gunn) were waitresses. Among the many duties which fell to the camp leaders was moving a heavy stove into the cook tent, evident by this facetious advertisement in "A Friendly Endeavor" of September, 1918: "Castiron Transfer Company, Heavy-

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weight Pennington, president; Spindlearm George, vice-president, secretary-treasurer; Floydie Perisho and Chettie Hadley, minor stockholders. Stoves moved on short notice, rain or shine."

It was difficult to estimate the costs involved in this pioneering venture. In the August, 1918, issue of "A Friendly Endeavor" suggestions were made of known costs, such as the round trip railroad fare from Portland of \$5.15. A tent, including cot and mattress (straw tick), could be rented for \$5.00 for the ten days. A "club plan" was offered, estimating costs per meal from 9 ¢ to 20¢, children under three free and from three to six half price. This cooperative plan was adapted from the one used in the dining room of Pacific College and other institutions. Costs could not be specifically known till the end of the conference, although attenders were assured that every effort would be made to run this boarding plan with little or no overhead so that the actual cost of the food would represent the outlay. Eating together was encouraged because of the opportunity for getting acquainted and enjoying Christian fellowship. However, it was made plain that all were at liberty to make their own arrangements.

The greatest emphasis by the planners was on the purpose and program of this first experience. Chester Hadley wrote in "A Friendly Endeavor" of July, 1918, "Its purpose will be to strengthen the spiritual life of all who attend, to inspire and train them for more efficient service in the church, and to make possible a pleasant, profitable and healthful vacation. A good program has been arranged with this purpose in mind. The Quiet Hour season alone brings one closer to Him and serves to unify the conference and bring upon the day's plans a Divine blessing. No one can come in touch with a personnel such as our program presents without receiving spiritual uplift and valuable suggestions along every line of religious activity."

Oregon Yearly Meeting had excellent leadership on which to draw for speakers and class leaders. Pastors, evangelists, college professors and active laymen ^{freely} shared their talents, experience and concerns ^{freely}. The topics offered at the first and future conferences reflect a surprisingly broad spectrum of Christian concerns and interests considered by the planners important for Friends ^{young} people to study. Among them we find personal evangelism, prophecy, missions in war times, teacher training, reaching children and young people, church finance, pulpit supply, emphases in present-day Quaker message, Friends meetings in the country, town and city, Quaker baptism and communion, evangelistic methods and realization of a life mission.

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While the details were being worked out, the planners were actively promoting the coming Conference in various ways. Many pastors encouraged attendance of their C. E. Society's members. The officers of the C. E. Union urged all whom they could contact to attend. It was talked about at Yearly Meeting in June.

¶ Perhaps the principle vehicle for communication was "A Friendly Endeavor" published monthly under the supervision of the Board of Publication of the Christian Endeavor Union of Oregon Yearly Meeting. Homer L. Cox was chairman of this board and was one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the conference idea. Each issue devoted space to promoting the Conference. Chester Hadley wrote in the July, 1918, issue, "If you attended Yearly Meeting, this appeal and announcement will be, perhaps, a trifle old, for upon every occasion 'in season and out' the summer Conference was talked of, and its advantages and pleasures dilated upon, until the cool lake, the ocean breeze, tennis, and fellowship with each other, made it all but impossible to wait till August 21!" The delights and pleasures of the coast were listed and their healthful benefits underlined. "The afternoons are to be devoted to rest and recreation, and a host of pleasant surprises are in store...tennis on the beach, volley ball, hikes in the mountains back of the lake to Beauty Falls, to the Life Saving Lookout, and excursions to Bay Ocean and all points up and down the beach, trout fishing in such streams as the Miami, Trask, and Wilson Rivers, and deep sea fishing offer a splendid variety of enjoyable outings. Those interested in tennis and fishing should bring necessary equipment. One evening will be given over to stunts and campfire on the beach."

After all the labor and promotion, how did it turn out? The September, 1918, issue of "A Friendly Endeavor" reports, "Well, it's all over but the shouting! The cold cream jar has been called upon, the brush and comb are doing valiant duty, the liniment bottle has done its share to repair damages, and life again runs in its accustomed grooves. Yes, the First Annual Summer Conference of the Young Friends of Oregon Yearly Meeting at Ocean Lake Park, Aug. 21-31, was a distinct success. It is to be regretted that this first time it seemed to be impossible to adequately and systematically register attendance, but it is conceded that probably 150 were there all or part of the time, with a steady attendance of about 50. For a start we are satisfied, and the cooks are wondering what we ever could have done had there been more."

As it turned out, most brought their own tents so these arranged for were not needed after all, leaving the planners holding the sack, so to speak. They learned from experience! It was reported that "seating accommodations in the tabernacle threatened to make a difficult problem till the rain kindly descended. Thereupon there was a scramble to get the automobiles parked inside, and presto!

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our garage with seven cars parked in an orderly row, with a goodly sprinkling of camp chairs dotted in and out among the headlights and fenders, effectually and comfortably settled the seating question. Did I say comfortably! There was one exception. There was a fellow with a Buick with such an everlastingly sensitive warning button that the unfortunate occupant of that particular seat couldn't even cross his knees or stretch himself without a disturbing and bloodcurdling 'honk' which pretty nearly disrupted the meeting more than once."

The report of the Conference tells about the eating, "the eating arrangements were a wonder, and only one party brought their own cooking outfit. And such meals! And such appetites we all had, and then the delightful news that in spite of everything a price of 20¢ per meal for the club members would cover the actual cost. Some who were present had their ten-day vacation for less than \$10 outlay, and one family of four reports a total expense of less than \$20, which shows that a summer conference is practically within the pocket-book reach of all."

The recreation features proved to be delightful, attenders reported. Though the wind was cold much of the time and it rained some, nobody seemed to mind, especially when they found out it had been very warm in the valley. The report says, "The briny seemed particularly salty and tempestuous and cold, but every day there was a large band of devotees who once or twice disported among the breakers—and felt better for it. The sand proved a delightful place to curl up for a nap, the lake proved a fascination for both boat-lovers and followers of Isaac Walton, and hiking trips to Beauty Falls and other places gave almost endless variety."

Stunt night on the beach provided fun and hilarity as C. E. Societies presented humorous skits. Newberg C. E. wrote a "Conference Alphabet" reported in part. "B" is for Bell with blacking and brush, who composes the posters that make us all blush. She sketches ideas so quick and so true, it makes us all wish we were geniuses, too. "C's" for our cooks, with their good things to eat; our meal-time is always a wonderful treat. We like all your pancakes, puddings and hash; just how have you done it with so little cash? "C's" also for Chester, who's on the dead run; he comes when you call him, and sure makes things hum. For his help freely given and his smile that's so bright, here's nine Rahts for Chester, he's surely all right! "F" is for Fox, our great financier, with his clothing of palm-beach and mustache so dear. We like your white clothing, it does us no harm. But we wonder, J. Sanger, how do you keep warm? "G" is for Gertrude, whose last name is Cook. Look at her face and you'll want one more look. Sweet disposition and voice like a bird, would that her voice might be oftener heard! "G" is Doc George, of "Let George do it" fame. He's ready for any old kind of a game. Moving the stove or washing the dishes, setting up tents or catching the fishes. "H" is for Homer from Portland, you know. Though not a Greek writer,

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he isn't so slow. His father's a preacher of wonderful fame, and we have decided that he is the same. "L" is for Levi, which he says means "stick to it"; who fishes each morn as he knows how to di it. 'But where are the fishes?' we all of us cwy? 'Are there any more hotcakes?' his ready reply. "L"s also for Lewis I. Hadley, you know; the mysteries of prophecy gladly he'll show. Most of his relatives he thinks upon gladly, but his daughter-in-law's sister has turned out quite Badley. "T" is for Tamplin, who enjoys a stroll with Dorris along where the deep sea doth roll. That's all right, Carroll, keep up the good work. If she comes to P.C., we won't call you a shirk. "T"s for Lurana M. Terrell from Lents; earnest in spirit, sincere and intense. For a preacher, of money she must have a hoard, and she spends it—for haven't you seen her new Ford? "W" for our waiters so nifty and neat; they surely are swift on their four little feet. They'll give you your coffee and fill up your plate, and do it so quick that you don't have to wait."

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In the report of this first summer conference the question was asked, "How about the solid meat of the undertaking—the lectures, the spiritual atmosphere? Did the program go off as scheduled, did the folk attend, listen and derive benefit enough to make them better fitted to face the problems before the young people? In this respect, too, we feel the Conference could not be considered anything other than a success. The lectures by Hadley and Pennington each day were fascinating, and all agreed that they came to a close all too soon, with lots of ground left untouched or but skimmed over. The other speakers, with but four exceptions throughout the entire Conference, were all present and delivered the goods. Although there was some slight re-arrangement of the programs, it was followed substantially as printed." (The program appears in the Appendix.)

Mrs. Edith Walton Moor, now of Newberg, Oregon, has told about her experience at the first Twin Rocks Conference. She lived in the ~~Hehalem~~ Center (not far from Newberg) where there was a rural Friends Church. She read about the proposed gathering on the coast in "A Friendly Endeavor" and heard about it from other C.E. Society members in her church. She and her sister, Myrtle Walton Post, decided to go. They planned their food, tent and bedding which they took with them. They boarded the ^{"Red"} ~~Oregon~~ Electric train from Newberg to Oswego, Oregon, where they caught the ^{South} ~~train~~ from Portland to Tillamook, getting off at Ocean Lake Park, about a mile and a half south of Rockaway. They cooked in their tent on a ^{or} canned heat unit, needing only one pan. Edith says they took along Shredded Wheat because it was light weight. She had never eaten it before. They could afford only one meal in the dining tent, a breakfast. She remembers sitting in automobiles in the large tent during classes and for other meetings. Lewis I. Hadley brought an enormous chart to illustrate his lectures on prophecy. Edith had never had teaching on the subject before so was deeply impressed by both chart and messages. She was blessed by evangelistic messages of Lurana Terrell.

Laura Cammack Traschel of Rosedale told about her experiences in an interview in 1980. "I was at the first Conference here at Twin Rocks when I was a child. I had come over in the Model T Ford with Chester Hadley and his family because Elizabeth and I were very close friends. It rained most of the time and we were in tent frames. Even the dining room was in a tent frame. The big tent was without light so at night the cars were driven up close and the lights from their headlights shown into the tent. Lewis I. Hadley, father of Chester Hadley, gave lectures and messages on prophecy. I can still remember the big chart that he stretched across the backside of the tent behind the pulpit. Levi T. Pennington was quite the life of the party. Bell Badley was always putting up little posters and things that brought

X (He had registered as a conscientious objector so was at this time at Camp Lewis. Before he was sent overseas, the war ended, but he was in France serving in reconstruction work under the America Friends Service Committee for a year.)

X (He had registered as a conscientious objector so was at Camp Lewis. Before he was sent overseas, the war ended. He then served under the American Friends Service Committee in reconstruction work in France,) along with 24 other volunteers from Oregon Yearly Meeting.)

brought chuckles... I remember Dorris and Carol Tamplin courting, walking on the beach between meetings, getting away alone. Later they became wonderful missionaries in South America. Later our whole family came over in the truck from Rosedale. I think that first journey was very historic...my father and mother had never seen the coast so it was a big family expedition for us... Homer L. Cox, author of "It's Real" was an evangelist. On Saturday night I went forward and was filled with the Holy Spirit. I had been under conviction for many months and that night I yielded in utter surrender and received my call to China. This was a very great crisis in my life...it gave me such direction in life that I never waivered from that goal of preparing myself to go out as a missionary. God gave me 43 years in the Orient, serving Him with my husband."

X A business meeting was held during the Conference, presided over by Chester Hadley. There was no doubt about the desire of attenders that the Conference should perpetuate itself,. The motion "that this Conference be recognized as the first of a series of regular annual Conferences" was carried unanimously. The Superintendent was instructed to appoint a committee of five, with himself as chairman, as a Committee on Arrangements for the next conference. Some resolutions were passed and greetings extended. A telegram from Emil Swanson, ^{President} at Camp Lewis was appreciated and a reply sent. ^(Parker) Hazel Keeler, secretary, could not attend because of the death of her mother so a letter of regret and sympathy was sent to her. The number of Friends who contributed to the success of the gathering were thanked, especially the speakers. Mrs. Lewis I. Hadley was presented with a serviceable chafing dish as a token of appreciation for her hours of caring work. The report concludes with an expression of thanks for the "work of Chester Hadley, which (if we manage to smuggle it past the censor) is reproduced herewith: "A task that taxes the committee's knowledge of dictionary adjectives is the framing of an adequate resolution of thanks for the faithful, untiring, effective, cheerful, efficient, prompt and versatile management of Superintendent Chester A. Hadley. The choice of the grounds, its location close to the ocean, the thoughtful arrangements, the variety of subjects presented in the Conference lectures embracing almost every conceivable mental and spiritual need of the young Friends, his ability to dovetail lectures at a moment's notice through some temporary dislocation of the printed program, and his constant advocacy of the Quiet Hour and other spiritual aids, have combined to make this Conference truly successful in the highest and best sense, while his untiring physical energy in rain or shine has put others to shame, and his entire personality we believe, through the blessing of God, has been at the service of the Conference throughout not only the actual time of sessions, but long before hand and we suspicion for some days to follow. May God bless him richly as he returns to his pastoral labors, and reward his congregation for sharing him with us for so long."

1926
And so the planners successfully brought off their pioneering effort. In retrospect it seems apparent that the faith, enthusiasm and dedication of the leaders was a natural outgrowth of their experience and training in the Christian Endeavor Societies of Oregon Yearly Meeting. Twin Rocks Conference was a project of the C.E. Union, not of the Yearly Meeting. It was not reported in the minutes till 1926, and then briefly in the C.E. Union report. (Christian Endeavor, founded by Dr. Francis E. Clark in 1881, was an international evangelical organization that had a strong and beneficial influence in the Protestant Church of the United States, including evangelical Friends. Its growth was phenomenal. No other society can compare with it in rapid growth. It came as a lifeline to a floundering Church and helped assure its perpetuation. One reason for its growth and influence was the "Pledge" required of members, committing them to serving Christ and the Church. This proved to be a tie of unity and produced a bond of fellowship in the common purpose.)

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* The first C.E.
Church youth were organized into C.E. Societies, with a Junior C.E. for elementary school age. Many members remained in the Society till their late 20s. Usually there was an adult sponsor who served as advisor and helper, though sometimes the pastor acted as advisor. There was a common organizational format with officers and committee chairmen. Members were expected to take turns leading the Sunday evening meetings. Lessons were designed to teach Biblical principles for daily Christian living, nurturing the spiritual lives of the members. The topics and helpful suggestions were provided by "The Christian Endeavor World," the national monthly. Missionary lessons came once a month, informing members of Christian work around the world and in the United States. Emphasis was placed on the responsibility of followers of Christ to witness to their faith wherever they were. Loyalty to the Church was part of the pledge, attending services and supporting the activities. In 1895 Rev. J. C. Templeton, State Superintendent of Junior C.E. spoke at Oregon Yearly Meeting. "He made very clear to us that the Sabbath School and the Christian Endeavor were not the same. The first is training for work; the second is where the boys and girls do the active work. We expect the future ministers, teachers and business men to come from the ranks of our youth..." And so it has proved in Oregon Yearly Meeting.

The first Christian Endeavor Society was formed in Newberg, Oregon, in 1891 with 120 members. In two years there were 12 societies with 400 members. In 1927 Walter P. Lee, president, told the Yearly Meeting, "Since the organization of the Christian Endeavor... God has continuously showered His richest blessing upon its work. Whatever may have been the condition of the other departments of the church

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The first Christian Endeavor Society was organized in Newberg, Oregon in 1891 with 120 members. This was two years before Oregon Yearly Meeting was established, indicating that the national organization was so strong, it was chosen by early Friends in the Willamette Valley as their program for young people. By the time of the first sessions of Oregon Yearly Meeting, held in Newberg, Oregon, in 1893, there were also Friends in Salem, Portland, S.W. Washington and other areas in between. During those first sessions, the Christian Endeavor report was lengthy, presented by six speakers: Thomas C. Brown, Rebbie Hinchman, Nelson Morrison, J. J. Jessup, Abbie L. Miles, Edgar H. Ballard. Membership and responsibilities were emphasized. The mutual duties of the Yearly Meeting and local churches to the societies and that of the young people to the Church were pointed out. By this time the report of "Endeavor Work" shows an active membership of 400 in twelve societies, with sixteen associate members and \$168.64 spent on special work. Incidentally, there is a commemorative window in Newberg Friends Church to the C. E. Union, 1893.

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The Yearly Meeting minutes show the growth of the C. E. Union through the years. By 1927 Walter P. Lee, president, told the Yearly Meeting, "Since the organization of the Christian Endeavor...God has continuously showered His richest blessing upon its work. Whatever may have been the condition of the other departments of the church from year to year, the history of Christian Endeavor has been that of continuous...growth...in the full sense of the word—growth in numbers and growth in spiritual life." The first Conference in 1918 was a major factor in this growth, as it helped meet the need of the young people for unity and fellowship. The vision of Chester Hadley became a reality at Twin Rocks. The leaders had confidence in their ability to carry out the vision from the training and experience of Christian Endeavor. $\frac{1}{2}$ The vision proved to be prophetic. The growing, enlarging programs of Christian camping throughout Oregon Yearly Meeting have brought the blessing of the Gospel of Christ to hundreds of young people.