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## Chapter 10: Twin Rocks Conference 1926

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Twin Rocks Conference  
1926

The minutes of Oregon Yearly Meeting, held in Newberg, Oregon, in June, 1926, mentioned the Conference for the first time, indicating that it had been a project of the Christian Endeavor Union. Walter P. Lee, president, made the following statement in his annual report, "We, as the young people, have felt that the summer conferences are necessary to our growth and spiritual welfare. As each year comes we look with greater enthusiasm to the Conference at Twin Rocks. God has marvelously blessed us in the past, so we look to Him in faith for blessing in the coming Conference. The results...cannot be tabulated, for only eternity will reveal the decisions made for Christ at the altar and in the classes which helped establish the young people in the doctrines of the church and which aid them in defining the things which they believe. We seek to make all feel welcome, from the youngest to the oldest, and hope through this part of our program to be better able to aid the church more in spreading the gospel of Christ." So the Conference became a familiar part of the life of the Yearly Meeting as reports appeared in subsequent minutes.

Looking toward the 1926 Conference, the planners again collected testimonials from attenders, leaders and pastors as to the value of the Conference experience. These were printed in "The Friendly Endeavor." In November Edgar P. Sims wrote in a Thanksgiving article, "...may we not consider the opportunities of the annual Conference a special manifestation of His divine favor to us?..." Carroll Heston of Star, Idaho, wrote, "...gatherings such as the Twin Rocks Conference have a special mission. It is primarily a conference of Friends young people, though members of other denominations are always welcome. They need a time of getting together as the work of Oregon Yearly Meeting covers three states...the splendid highways now make possible the attendance of many more because of the lowered expenses of traveling by auto...three outstanding benefits are the spiritual, social and recreational..." Elizabeth Ward wrote, "the Conference is one of the great assets of the Yearly Meeting. The young people of today are the church of tomorrow, the success of which is dependent upon the depth of spiritual life, being rooted and grounded in Christ as the Son of God, faith in the whole Bible and the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit..." Cecile McKibben and Lois Jones of Star, Idaho, Virgil Lull, Edith Riggs and Mary Turner of Highland, Clarice Morford of Piedmont, Myrtle Walton of Chehalem Center, Forrest Cammack of Rosedale and Esthel Gulley of Springbrook all sent written testimonials of the great blessing they had received from their experiences at Conference, and said, "the good work must go on and on."

Suggestions were given for preparation. "What can I do this early? You can pray that the right program be arranged, for money to continue to improve the grounds, for all to plan to attend whom God wants to be there. You can give toward the 'vision' investment in the future and you can boost so there will be new faces in 1926."

In April the Springbrook C.E. Society invited all young Friends of Oregon Yearly Meeting to hold their next rally and banquet boosting the Twin Rocks Conference at Springbrook. Walter Lee, president, answered..."we accept with the greatest delight and tingling anticipation the gracious invitation to be guests of the Springbrook C.E. Society at our annual banquet...Saturday, April 10, 1926." He urged a larger attendance than the previous two years in Highland and First Friends. It was a resounding success with over 300 present from all surrounding Quarterly meetings, representatives from Idaho and a group from Tacoma. Highland C.E. turned out twenty-seven strong and reported, "if the real Conference equals the enthusiasm shown there, it will be the best Conference in twenty-five years, as is predicted. Chester Hadley enjoyed the stuffed prune salad so much, that he ate all of those around him, while Walter Lee was so busy announcing that he scarcely had time to eat at all." Newberg Quarter furnished the banquet. Attenders each brought a dime to help defray expenses."

The tentative program was announced in the June issue and young Friends urged to attend. "Soul and body will feel better at the end if you come and enter into it wholeheartedly...there is plenty of room for camping if you cannot board with the club. Wouldn't it be better to come and camp here and get a spiritual feast as well as a physical rest, than to go elsewhere where the fellowship of God's people is lacking? Have your stunt ready for stunt night. Have a Conference song written and learned. Bring top bedding, knife, fork, spoon and plate and any other conveniences you may desire. Pray that God's hand of blessing may be upon the Conference in a manifest way and upon every individual present. Leave all your troubles at home. You won't need them at Conference. They will wait until you get home. Bring all the smiles you have, for they will help you get acquainted and make you happier all the time. Everybody COME and have a REAL vacation."

For the first time the chaperones, Frederick and Marietta Cope, wrote an article for the August issue discussing dress and conduct at Conference. "...the spiritual and recreational benefits to be derived from the Conference will depend largely upon the manner in which we conduct ourselves while there...we must carefully conduct ourselves consistent with our profession. To fail in this will spoil the occasion both for others and for ourselves...those who wish to go into the surf or lake, are <sup>be</sup> requested to wear bathing suits which are as little exposing as may be possible to be had; and to throw coats or blankets around themselves while going to and from the water. All persons are requested to change bathing suits and hiking suits, and to put on regulation clothing as soon as they return to the Conference grounds. Young people are requested not to go hiking at any time nor to the beach after night, except by permission...not because of lack of confidence but in the interest of safety and good order. It is preferable that no dogs, particularly large ones, should be brought to the Conference; but, in case any be

brought, their owners are requested to tie them up outside their tents and to prevent them from annoying other persons."

There were about 300 attenders who responded to the promotion and said at the end that the prophecy of being the greatest and best was wonderfully fulfilled. Quoted in the September issue was the reason, "...What was the secret of it all? God working in answer to prayer gave us this 1926 Conference. Thank God so many people were praying for months...a group of older people met every day during the Conference for prayer. The sunrise prayer meeting on the beach carried the burden of the sessions. God answers prayer!"

George Deshler of Denair, California, was the evangelist, speaking each evening in the tabernacle tent. His ministry was especially blessed and about forty seekers found their spiritual needs met at the altar. There was an incident relating to the evangelist that has been added to the Twin Rocks <sup>1926</sup> stories. One morning he came into the dining tent and announced in his quiet voice, "My car ran into the lake!" The <sup>Room</sup> was swiftly emptied of men and boys as though a cyclone had swept through. As Mr. Deshler was driving toward the camp from Rockaway, something caused him to swerve and his car turned over in the water between the highway and the tracks. He managed ~~to~~ to get out and walk to the grounds. Chester Hadley and others worked to get the car out, using block and tackle along with man power. Those present in the dining tent will always remember that sudden exodus and the following banter and recounting of this event.

Some C.E. Societies camped on the grounds doing their own cooking. Highland, Springbrook and Rosedale are listed. At the dining hall the old saw gong sounded the time of meals. There was always a rush to the tables with their "floppy" seats attached. Calvin Choate refused to risk his life on one without an added support of a nail keg. Many lively choruses were rendered by the groups along with yells and challenges. The cooks, Grace Hadley, Emma Fogg and Dora Wright, pleased the hungry throng with their pies, biscuits, hot cakes, baked beans, salads, chocolate covered graham crackers and on Friday evening, a special cake honoring the second anniversary of Emel and Alberta Swanson whose marriage was a direct result of Conference. There were 1,493 meals served, besides the weiners, buns and doughnuts on the beach Saturday evening. This meal gave the cooks some respite from their time-consuming work that night, giving them time to get ready for the Sunday dinner which was often prepared around a baked salmon entre and was the largest attended meal of the week. Cost for the week was still \$10.00. There were helpers in the kitchen and dining room who worked for their board.

For the first time there was a general get-together on Tuesday evening. The carloads from Idaho and Tacoma had arrived so most attenders were there. There was an opening prayer, announcements of the program, remarks by the evangelist and then various stunts and songs. So much enthusiasm was generated that the report concludes, "...we had a glad feeling in our hearts that we were actually at the 1926 Conference." Suggestions for recreational activities included early morning fishing, deep-sea fishing, baseball

on the beach, volley ball, launch trips to Bay Ocean, hikes, surf bathing, lake swimming and boating, huckleberrying and horseback riding.

On Wednesday afternoon the song contest proved an exciting occasion. Piedmont had challenged the other Societies to present a better song than theirs for 1925. Each song was based on the Conference theme "Thou Shalt Catch Men." First place was awarded to Sunnyside for the song "Launch Out" by Mrs. Bell G. Badley. Both words and music were original. The words interwove the themes for the past three years—"Launch Out" "Let Down Your Nets" and this year "Thou Shalt Catch Men." The tune was catchy. This winner for 1926 was accepted as the Conference song in the years to come and was sung in meetings, at the dining tables and during recreational hours.

The subjects of the morning classes indicate the interests and concern of the day. The program announced that each delegate was expected to attend. Missions, Friends position on the Ordinances, Bible studies of the Sermon on the Mount and Hebrews, the Second Coming, and My Daily Problems were offered. An Inspirational address was given by Edward Mott in the large tent following classes. His theme for the year was "that I may know Him." Bess Owens Runyon conducted the Chorus Class each morning and presented a sacred concert on Sunday afternoon. Many local people along the coast attended this special program, swelling the number of people on the grounds during the week.

The stunt night on the beach was a highlight of fun and fellowship. Tacoma presented a "Ford Symphony", Newberg Quarter gave sketches from Bible stories, Portland Quarter ~~showed the~~ reviewed the history of the Conference, Salem Quarter went "a-fishing for to catch a Conference stunt", using a medley of songs from past Conferences, Greenleaf Quarter showed how they came to Conference in their cars, with troubles along the way. It was reported, "the Rocks must have blinked their eyes as they saw the beach covered with people Saturday evening..."

Sunday was a full and inspiring day, with morning worship and evening service messages by George Deshler. The afternoon sacred concert was "a message of salvation proclaimed in song." There were chorus humbers, mixed quartette, duets and solos. Bess Owen Runyon sang. Ida J. Lee gave a brief devotional talk. The program was a blessing to the large audience. After the concert I. Gurney Lee presented his concern that money should be raised to help get the grounds in better shape by next year. Within a few minutes over \$500 was raised.

A business meeting was held during the week with C.E. Societies of the Yearly Meeting represented. Greetings were received from Carroll and Doris Tamplin in Central America, strong supporters of the Conference through the years but now far away in the Lord's work. Greetings were sent to Elizabeth Ward and Lois Cope, both unable to attend. It was decided to continue the missionary program, raising money for the mission work of

Oregon Yearly Meeting. A committee was working on a Constitutional Revision.

Walter Lee, president, expressed his thanks after Conference saying, "surely God has filled our sups to overflowing...He has done more than we could even ask or think. In the face of adverse circumstances the Conference this year was in many ways the best we have ever had. The fruit ripened so early that it looked as though the Conference was doomed to be small, but there were about 300 in attendance in spite of the handicap." He thanked the leaders of classes and services, Chester Hadley and Worth Coulson, managers, Wilfred Pearson, registrar, Miller and Hazel Porter and Father and Mother Cope, chaperones, and special thanks to Mr. Hintz of Chehalem Center for his gift of several sacks of potatoes.

So the enthusiasm mounted from year to year as the value of the Conference became increasingly evident. As the Highland group traveled home, they said they wished they were coming to Twin Rocks rather than going home. Those who experienced the blessings of the Conference looked forward to the next year. The Executive Committee of the C.E. Union continued to plan the Conferences, carried along by the vision which did not change.