

1942

Chapter 13: Twin Rocks Conference 1929

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Recommended Citation

Cole, Frank, "Chapter 13: Twin Rocks Conference 1929" (1942). *History of Twin Rocks Conference*. 9.
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Twin~~ing~~ Rocks Conference

1929

A note of praise in the March issue of "The Friendly Endeavor" indicates the spiritual base from which leaders and attenders carried on the Conference program. "The Lord has blessed our Christian Endeavor Union in this great project in a special way. We have been enabled to build our plant thus far without any debt. Isn't that blessed? Let us keep praying that we may advance in the Lord's plan and use the property we have to the glory of God..." Plans went forward for the sixth annual banquet in Newberg in ~~the~~ April, promoted at the Quarterly Meeting C.E. Rallies during the year. Walter Lee wrote a stirring piece for the paper, "Now if you will listen, I think you can hear the sound of the dinner bell. Oh, joy! It sounds like the banquet bell...COME, COME ALL...There will be people there you haven't seen since Conference time and lots of songs and fun..." He asked for 25¢ apiece to help cover expenses and thus spare the treasury.

The reports were glowing, "given a spring evening with a sprinkle or two, a new church dining Room, a dollar and half's worth of pep, three hundred participants, a good song leader, a ditto speaker, some first-class waitresses, with a few major and minor items added, and the young people of Oregon Yearly Meeting will produce a rally and banquet that cannot be excelled this side of a Republican Convention held for Hoover...Aletha Allen read the program for the coming Conference and its theme 'Eternal Values! She revealed the secret that the Arthur Chilson family from Africa would be there. This brought forth a burst of pleased surprise...Walter Lee gave an inspiring and gripping address on 'Speak to the Children of Israel that they Go Forward.' He encouraged us to go forward not only in preparation for Conference but in all that it stands for." Newly printed Conference stationery was sold at the banquet and used to promote the coming Conference.

Enthusiastic promotion continued after the banquet. "The Conference Ship has been anchored for several months, but she will be ready to start sailing on April 29th. She will reach Twin Rocks by July 30th and will remain there until August 4th...she will not be full unless you are there! Vacant chairs won't be any fun. The pilot wants a full representation to start on the journey to Conference." In June someone wrote, "Evidences of the reappearance of the Conference Germ have been discovered. Its bite is more deadly

than ever before. The first symptoms showed when everyone came to the Banquet. That gave an idea of how widespread the epidemic is. Symptoms have shown when people set their vacation time for July 30-August 4. Everyone affected has an irresistible desire to go to Twin Rocks. Nothing else appeals to their appetites. The best prescription Dr. Conference can give is to BE AT TWIN ROCKS JULY 30_AUGUST 4. The remedy is guaranteed to work."

The response was the appearance of many dust-covered cars loaded with baggage, crowded with laughing people which rolled onto the Conference grounds July 29th. There was the usual scramble for camping places and straw for the ticks. Someone suggested a contest next year to determine the champion bed-tick filler. "Mrs. Runyon likes them fat and some like them lean, and some like them turned when nine days old!" By Tuesday night canvas roofs were seen all over the grounds—"brown tents, white tents, big tents, wee tents—all kinds of tents sheltered expectant hearts, praying hearts, hungry hearts, hearts awaiting God's blessing to fall on the camp." Some stayed in cottages in Twin Rocks.

Worth Coulson received tributes for his good job of providing accommodations for all. "We were glad to be greeted by his smiling face as we drove in. He seemed to remember everything and, because of his faithfulness, the camp was in good condition to work and play. He is worth his weight in gold many times over...everyone loves him and appreciates his services."

The dining room was enhanced by new curtains at the windows. "How homey it looked with all those curtains and bouquets of sweep peas on the tables." Grace Hadley had added these touches. The food was good and adequate, "the gong sounded forth the invitation...such appetites as Conference people have! How good everything tasted—buns, beans, salads, cake, apple pie, baked salmon and foodles of other good things." Chester Hadley had made all the arrangements for food service, but unfortunately was suffering from an illness and had to give up and go into Portland for treatment. As Grace Hadley needed to go with him, Bessie Gardner stepped into her place. Mrs. Pearson and Bertha Heacock of Sunnyside ably assisted and gave us "eats which reached the right spot. Nine rahs for the cooks. They're all right!." The waitresses, helpers and dishwashers performed with such alacrity that the report says, "the charming part was the service—waitresses on hand to do anything for the hungry Conference eaters. How quickly and easily they moved

about, kind to everyone and watchful of the needs. They helped make the dining room a pleasant place to be!"

Frederick and Marietta Cope served again as chaperones. They had placed a note in "The Friendly Endeavor" reminding attenders that a well ordered gathering must have appropriate rules of conduct, that Conference should be a time of spiritual uplift and physical recreation, that it should not be a time for lowering standards of Christian dignity and modesty. They suggested ^{again} that coats, shawls or blankets be ^{worn} around bathing suits. Attenders should not leave the grounds without permission and should be in not later than ten o'clock. It was preferable that dogs not be brought but tied up if necessary to have them there. Sickness, accident or any other need should be reported promptly. The Conference report reflected the love of young people for the Copes and appreciation for their kindly, loving ministry.

The Children's Meetings had a new place to gather—under the platform of the tabernacle. It was comfortable when straw was put over the ground and benches put in. Rosa Allen from Boise led the children. Lulufern Hudson was unable to come. Helen Cammack presented the subject "How to Study the Bible" to the Intermediates, the first time this age had its own class.

Reports of the classes show that attenders were offered a varied and enriching opportunity for spiritual growth. Carrie Wood was called home ^{early} because of the illness and death of her father but had presented the value of mission work before she left. Bervas Carey's class "Christ in the Program of Eternity" left his listeners feeling that eternal values are real. Edgar Simms showed prophecy in the light of present-day events. Edward Mott, using a chart, showed "The True Development of Life" coming through spiritual understanding made up of "brain development as well as heart enlightenment." Gurney Lee brought the "Challenge to Life" by showing the paramount necessity of being just as true a Christian in the secular world as in the pulpit or mission field.

The Conference was delighted and blessed with the presence of the Chilson family. Arthur, Edna and daughters, Esther and Rachel, added much to the week. Edna Chilson brought the messages for the morning inspirational hour. Arthur Chilson's evening messages made

the services seem to be "brooded over by the Holy Spirit. He was so present that every heart recognized Him. Jesus and the Holy Spirit were so magnified by these messengers that men saw God through them... ~~much~~ ^{much} personal work was done which was owned of the Lord... On Friday the altar was filled about three times... Sunday evening people did not want to go home. Testimonies were given from full hearts and everyone rejoiced."

Bess Owens Runyon led the chorus class each morning and presented a sacred concert Sunday afternoon to 350 people. They sang "Onward Christian Soldiers," "A Perfect Salvation," "Behold, the Master Passeth By," "Lo, He Comes," and "The Trumpet Shall Sound." Mrs. Chilson sang, "I Have Made My Choice Forever," Miller Porter sang, "Jesus Paid It All," and the Piedmont Girls' Quartet sang, "Come Unto Me, Ye Weary." Mrs. Chilson closed the service with an invitation to accept Jesus while He calls. One young man responded, coming after the benediction was pronounced. Six days later this same man, Arthur Ridgeway, was drowned in the river near Nerberg, Oregon. His last Sabbath was spent at Twin Rocks.

Jasper Ballou was the recreational director and there was interesting activity each afternoon. It had been announced that ~~this year the songs on the theme of~~ ^{this year the songs on the theme of} the Conference would be written by someone ~~who~~ asked to do it or who volunteered. There would be no contest on ~~it~~ ^{the theme songs}. The songs for the contest should be loyalty or pep songs. Wednesday afternoon a large assembly heard loyalty songs from Piedmont, Sunnyside and Newberg C.E. Societies. Esther and Rachel Chilson sang African ^{songs} in tribal dialects. Mrs. Deane, missionary to West Africa, sang a song about the Conference theme—"eternal values". While the judges were deliberating, "Four Horsemen" appeared with a stunt. They said they had memorized the longest poem in the world and proceeded to repeat the same line over and over until Gervas Carey passed the hat to stop them. They were ^a picture of a horse's head on their trousers. These entertainers were Walter Cook, Jasper Ballou, Milo Ross and Walter Lee. Piedmont came in first place with a song expressing the feelings of attenders for Twin Rocks.

Thursday afternoon found the majority taking the launch ride on Garibaldi Bay. Two boats were loaded to the brim. The bar was so rough that deep sea fishing was impossible. The launchers returned in time to take a dip in the surf or lake before dinner. There

was a beach party Saturday afternoon. Young Friends ran, jumped, played ball and put the shot. "For a field we had hard sand, for bleachers we had great logs, for umpires we had Four Horsemen. The winning teams had their names inscribed on a permanent plaque...medals were given to girls and boys receiving most points in all events. While some played volley-ball, others gathered around Mrs. Chilson who told stories of Africa.

When the evening beach fire was roaring, a call issued forth that the hot dogs were ready. Following the feed, there was campfire entertainment. Hyman pyramids, directed by Paul Brown, were exciting. The Chilson girls sang African lullabies, Emel Swanson gave his annual broadcast, and there was a mock trial, presided over by Gervas Carey as prosecuting attorney. The children told some of the things they had learned about the Bible. The evening closed with Mr. Chilson leading a ll in repeating the Shepherd Psalm and offering prayer. There was a thunder storm at night. Nine boys had gone to sleep by the beach fire but had to take up their beds and walk back to camp for shelter. The waitresses and others had to cover their clothes to protect them from leaky tents.

A new program was presented at the business meeting Saturday morning. A chart, setting certain goals, was given all societies as the work for the coming year. The "Friends with Christ" chart centered on three things--better meetings, tithing, and missionary interest. Each society was given a book of instructions. Laura Cammack, vice-president of the C.E. Union, directed the program. Suggestions were given for obtaining helps, including the Northwest C.E. Supply House, the national periodical "The Christian Endeavor World" and the Quarterly Meeting Superintendents or Executive Committee chairmen of the S.E. Union of the Yearly Meeting. It was reported at the business meeting that the German Baptists had used the Conference grounds for one week for a gathering. This is the first report of outside groups using Friends facilities.

Wildred Pearson served as registrar and reported 200 registered. Many others attended through the week. Sunday had the largest attendance at meetings and meals. Four were present from Idaho which had its own Conference later in August. There were some visitors. Mary Farmer from Ohio came with the Copes. Dorothy and Katherine Gustavson from Everett, Washington, were welcomed. Mr. and Mrs. Earl Deane, missionaries from

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West Africa attended. Miller and Hazel Porter had been in New York for two years and were joyfully welcomed back. Many church people from along the coast attended meetings and classes. They came from Tillamook, Garibaldi, Bay City and Rockaway. Some churches dismissed their prayer meeting to worship at the grounds. Ministers from Tillamook Methodist, Garibaldi Methodist, and Rockaway Christian churches were present at various times. Flowers from people along the coast were sent in to decorate the dining room tables and the tabernacle. A letter from Ohio Yearly Meeting young Friends was received telling of their first Conference to be held later in August. Money was raised to send Walter Lee to this Conference as a fraternal delegate.

On Monday morning moving out was in the air. "About 4 a.m. one could hear the "put-put" of Paul Cammack's motorcycle as he drove Salemward." The camp was alive with stake-pullers, tick-emptyers, packers, men taking down tents. "People said their last goodbyes, hating to leave, as the grounds seemed fragrant with God's presence. Had we not seen Him work in wondrous power?" An editorial in the September issue of the paper comments on the Conference of 1929. "Into the history of our lives a great Conference has gone, but into the fabric of our character has the fragrance of its influence gone, the aroma to last for many days to come. The absence of cliques was most gratifying, for everyone made friends with everyone else. The willingness to help one another have a good time magnified the happiness of the camp. The fragrance of consistent holy living which came from the lives of the Chilson family permeated the very being of all. We shall not soon forget that message to our hearts..." If the Conference founders had not caught the vision of a vacation for Christian young people at the coast, all these blessings would not have been available for them. The vision did not change.