

In 1943, World War II was in full swing and rumors were flying about whether or not there would be camp. Many things were being rationed...sugar, butter, meat, gasoline, and shoes, were just a few of the items which would affect camp. Also, many of the young men were being drafted so it was difficult to get men counselors. The Camp Yearbook gives an overview of how camp was progressing at that time.

"There will be camp." "There won't be camp," The old staff" will be back." "It won't be back."

Thus, came the cry from hundreds of throats in various sections of West Virginia, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania as the month of June approached. On the lips of every child of a Koppers employee was the question "Will there be a camp?" What with the shortages, rationing, and economics it seemed almost impossible to even hope for such a thing, but at last the verdict was handed down. Yes, once again the benefits and opportunities of Camp Thomas E. Lightfoot and Camp Wyndal (Colored Camp) would be extended to all company children between the ages of eight and one half and fourteen. Posters appeared in suitable spots at the most opportune time and homes were in a perfect furor of registering, securing doctor's certificates, and packing. Then came the eventful day! What did it matter if one must arise long before the crack of dawn, board a bus, and bounce along for hours and hours? At least it was happy being accompanied by merry songs, yells, and conversation. Before hundreds of eyes the pleasant hills and dales of West Virginia rolled into view, then a joyous whoop arose as the bridge and the sign pointing the way to "dear old Camp T.E.L." came in sight.

What next? "Oh a new gate! More grass (and it's greener, too!) Swings! A seesaw! Let me out of here." What a lovely, lovely feeling of coming home after a long, long journey. The buses rolled to a stop in front of the gleaming white dining hall and, like bees from a hive, the children swarmed from the open doors pushing, laughing, shouting 'hellos', but, yet strangely silent. What in the world is that outrageous noise? Frogs so early in June? No, it's the counselors singing that old familiar strain:

We welcome you to Lightfoot Camp. We're mighty glad you're here.

"There's Swarts - and Bonnie - and Sturdy- and Margie - Jane Kirby, Dot Burgess, Carl Mack and some of those cute J.C.'s. Who are all those new ones, I wonder?" These were just a smattering of the remarks to be heard around the campus. What is the first thing on the program? "Let's eat! It's bound to be good; we have the same cooks." Into the huge dining hall they were led and given a substantial meal. Next came the business of being assigned to a cabin and finding a place to sleep. Then "Taps" mingled with thoughts of tomorrow running through tired heads, one by one they journeyed to Dreamland.

Randy McCoy who was an eight and one half year-old camper that year recalls this as a most wonderful, thrilling, terrifying and wholly unforgettable experience. Here's how he remembers it.

"Total, utter panic! Maybe even impending death!

"That's the way I felt when I stepped off the Greyhound bus at Camp Thomas E. Lightfoot.

"Mom was over a hundred miles away, my best buddy was sick from the bus ride, and our suitcases were being thrown into a heap on the grass! Would I ever be able to find my suitcase again?