



HISTORY OF CAMP KIRBY

1923 - 2023



Left Picture – Carrie Kirby (Standing Right) with her sister, Emma Knight, in Lincoln, NE (October 16, 1927)

Right Picture – Mayor Wyman Kirby of Sedro-Woolley Measuring Giant Fir for Skagit Mill in Lyman, WA

**Helen Van Lohuizen &
The Camp Kirby Historical Committee**

Spring 2023

Wyman Moore Kirby was born in Hawkesbury, Ontario, Canada on November 20, 1864. Wyman Kirby was the 3rd of eight children born in Ontario, Canada to John Mead (a lumberman) and Caroline Matilda (Wyman) Kirby. Caroline Charlotte “Carrie” Howell was born in Cavan Township, Ontario, Canada on August 24, 1867. Carrie Howell was the 4th of nine children born to Samuel James and Anna (Everett) Howell – six children were born in Ontario, Canada and three children were born in Nebraska after the family immigrated to the U.S. in 1870. Wyman Kirby moved to the U.S. between 1884-1886 and went to Michigan where he was a stable boss and later a blacksmith, and he became a naturalized citizen. In the spring 1890, Wyman came to Sedro, WA and worked as a railroad contractor. He visited Carrie Howell in Omaha, NE as his mother and her mother were schoolmates. The couple married in Omaha, Nebraska at the home of Carrie’s parents on October 16, 1890.

After their marriage, the Kirby’s moved to Sedro, WA (previously known as Bug, WA). Wyman Kirby and his friend F. M. Curtiss were employed in the timber business. They received a contract ‘taking out ties’ for the Seattle, Lakeshore and Eastern Railroad, and owned two mills. In 1898, after a spirited debate where neither Sedro or Woolley wanted to give up their town names, the towns merged to form Sedro-Woolley. After spending seven months in Alaska, Wyman M. Kirby and J. H. Hightower invested in the William J. Thompson Livery Stable in Sedro-Woolley in 1903, built the Skagit Mill at Lyman, WA in 1906 where Mr. Kirby was President, and were owners of the Hightower Lumber Company in 1910. Mr. Wyman Kirby was also the President of the Lyman State Bank (chartered 1912). In June 1913, Wyman Kirby of Birdsvew (he reopened an old mill there) was recommended to the State Game Warden to be appointed as one of three Skagit County Game Commissioners after the County Commission was established the same year. Mr. Kirby was the Game Commissioner of Sedro-Woolley from 1913 until at least April 1927, per many articles in the Anacortes American newspaper. Mr. Kirby served on the Sedro-Woolley City Council as the Second Ward Councilman in 1921 and 1922, and he was the Mayor of Sedro-Woolley for six years: 1923-1925, 1926-1930 (Sedro-Woolley records – Mayor Kirby lost his re-election in 1931). Wyman Kirby was also a Mason and a member of the Skagit County Shrine Club.

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In 1870, a group of Masons would regularly meet in New York City. Discussion often turned to forming a new fraternity for Masons - focused on Masonic principals of becoming better men, husbands, fathers & citizens, but with the added elements of fun & fellowship.

It was suggested that the theme of the new fraternity for men be Arabian. Members of the group drafted the ritual, designed the emblem and costumes, and declared that Shrine members wear on their heads the red fez with black tassel. Derived from the city of Fez, Morocco, the fez was chosen to complement the new organization’s pomp and pageantry, theme, ceremonies, and events. Each fez is personalized for the wearer. Information on the fez includes the Shrine chapter the individual belongs to and any positions he holds, and memberships in any clubs or units. The fez is worn at all official Shrine events.

The official name of the new Shrine fraternity in 1871 was the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. All Shriners are also Masons (Master Masons).

Local Shrine chapters did charity work and helped the sick & victims of disaster. In the early half of the 1900s, polio affected thousands of people, especially children. Help was needed to treat the effects of polio and other conditions affecting the bones, joints & muscles. In 1919, it was proposed that a hospital be established to provide pediatric orthopedic medical care at no cost to children, and regardless of the families’ ability to pay or their insurance coverage. The first Shriner hospital opened in Shreveport, Louisiana in 1922.

In 2022, the Shriner healthcare system in the United States, Canada and Mexico consists of twenty-two hospitals (including Spokane, WA and Portland, OR), clinics, and outpatient centers for children. Shriner Children's specialties have expanded to include burn care; spinal cord disorders and injuries; cleft lip and palate; digestive and skin disorders; club feet; facial, head, skeletal, hand, finger, and foot deformities; sports injury care and rehabilitation. St. Jude's helps children with cancer; the Shriner hospitals help children with physical issues.

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The Kirby's lived in Sedro-Woolley at 410 Talcott Street, and Carrie Kirby established the first kindergarten after Sedro and Woolley merged in 1898. In 1910, after 20 years of marriage and no children of their own, the couple adopted a one-year-old girl whom they named Carol Kirby (born in Anacortes, WA on July 4, 1909 and named Evelyn Verrall at birth). After becoming a mother, Carrie Kirby was a Camp Fire Girls leader in Sedro-Woolley from 1912 until her death in 1930. The Camp Fire Girls Hall (still standing but repurposed) was an addition built on the back of their two-story house on Talcott Street. When Carrie Kirby started local Camp Fire groups, they would meet at the Hall.

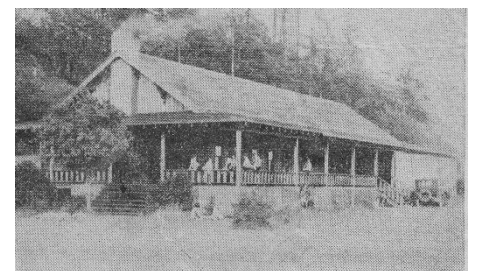
In the summer of 1921, a group of Bellingham Camp Fire Girls spent a week at Camp Sealath for Camp Fire Girls on Vashon Island (WA) where they had a wonderful time.

In June 1922, a Hamilton Camp Fire group spent a week at Camp Sealath. Another Camp Fire Girls group with older girls spent a weekend at the Wyman Kirby summer camp (Kirby home) on Big Lake. Carrie Kirby also invited a Sedro-Woolley Camp Fire group to camp for a weekend on Samish Island. The need was there for a permanent Camp Fire Girls camp.

Carrie Kirby organized the Campfire Girls Guardians (leaders) of Skagit County on March 1, 1923 (office - 201 E. Fulton, Mt. Vernon - 1926), and the Skagit Shriners & Campfire leaders had meetings to discuss opening a camp. The 47-acre property on Samish Island, where Wyman and Carrie Kirby spent summer vacations, was owned by West Coast Dairy (Wyman & Carrie Kirby's property?). The Skagit County Shrine Club (financed by Wyman Kirby) purchased the Samish Island property for \$3,700 - with a down-payment of \$1,200 and a mortgage for \$2,500 secured on June 4, 1923 from West Coast Dairy (Skagit County Auditor's file #343134) for the purpose of establishing a summer resident camp for Camp Fire Girls. Mr. Kirby, as Mayor of Sedro-Woolley & the President of the Skagit County Shrine Club 1923-1925+, presented the camp (Camp Samish) to the Skagit Campfire Girls.

Camp Samish opened in June 1923 with 18 girls from Anacortes taking a boat to Samish Island and camping for 10 days. The Campfire Girls slept in tents, hauled water & cooked over the fire during their stay. The campers used pit-toilet outhouses. They returned to Anacortes by automobile. Forty-four Campfire Girls attended the three weeks of camp that summer. Mrs. Rachel Hill, a leader who attended with her daughter, Theresa, made the food runs to Bellingham in her Model-T. All 44 girls were present at the 40th Reunion of Camp Kirby (August 1963).

On Friday, May 16 & Saturday, May 17, 1924 a two-story cedar Lodge (30 ft x 90 ft) with shake roof was built by 200 carpenters representing the Skagit Valley District Carpenters. Campfire Girls and leaders (guardians) served the carpenters two meals a day. Half of the lumber for the Lodge was donated by Anacortes sawmills; half of the lumber was donated by other Skagit mills, perhaps Mr. Kirby's mills. Mr. Kirby donated the windows & doors. All other materials & labor were donated, and all furnishings were donated.



Two-Story Lodge Built in 1924

The Lodge cost \$3,000 and had a meeting room (with 8 ft fireplace) for activities, a kitchen (lean-to with cook stove) & dining room. The counselors slept in an upstairs loft. The Lodge had a veranda on 3 sides where girls slept if the weather was bad. Water was hauled by bucket & wheel-barrowed down the hill from a spring ½ mile away (no running water or electricity).

In the 1920's to help finance the local Skagit-Whatcom organizations, the Campfire Girls leased the hunting rights on the sandy spit at Camp Samish to employees of Standard Oil (Mt. Vernon, WA). The Campfire Girls Guardians (leaders) of Whatcom County organized in March 1926 and the Bellingham office of Campfire opened the same year (1926).

When the Great Depression arrived, the Standard Oil employees could no longer afford the hunting lease for the Brant geese, and Bruce and Viola Cameron, benefactors of Camp Samish, picked it up. Bruce Cameron was also a member of the Skagit County Shrine Club.

In 1932, Camp Samish was renamed Camp Carrie Kirby in honor of Mrs. Kirby, a long-time Campfire Girls leader and tireless community volunteer with Campfire, the Red Cross, the Skagit County Anti-Tuberculosis League, and the Sedro-Woolley Women's Club, who died in Sedro-Woolley on November 25, 1930 after suffering a stroke at the age of 63. Wyman Kirby helped dedicate Camp Kirby on July 22, 1932 - 90 people attended the event.

By 1935, Campfire was struggling during the Depression, and Bruce Cameron himself could no longer afford the hunting lease. To spread the financial responsibility, Bruce Cameron founded the Brant Club with a handful of hunters. Mr. Cameron and most (if not all) of the other hunters also belonged to the Skagit County Shrine Club.

The members of the Brant Club hunted Brant geese (hunting dates ranged from Oct. thru Jan.) from the sandy spit which juts out into Padilla Bay. Camp Kirby was one of several sites where the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife observed the gray-breasted and Pacific black Brant geese. The sandy spit was often used as a hunting spot during the time local Indians were the sole inhabitants of Samish Island and the Puget Sound. Flocks of black Brant geese used the shallow waters around the spit and in Samish Bay as a resting and grueling location. The geese rested on their return trip to Canada after wintering in Mexico. Due to climate change, the geese now winter (Nov. thru May) in NW Washington.

Wyman Kirby, a Skagit County Shrine Club member, died in Sedro-Woolley of pneumonia on October 7, 1937 at the age of 73 after a several years of ill health. Carrie and Wyman Kirby are buried in the Union Cemetery in Sedro-Woolley, WA.

In 1940, the Brant Club members floated a 12 ft by 20 ft construction shack owned by one of the members onto the sandy spit for use as a hunting lodge, and named it 'Herman's Hut'. The Brant Club also constructed duck blinds and set out duck decoys on the spit. The property continued to function as a Camp Fire Girls camp during the summer.

By 1941, four permanent small wooden cabins were built at Camp Kirby – Barnacle, Seagull, Fir Tree & Crow's Nest which housed eight girls each. Plus, five tent houses which had wooden platforms as foundations housed five girls each – approx. 57 girls each week.

The Depression ended when WWII fueled the need for manufacturing everything from uniforms to planes to ships which created more prosperity in the USA. As a result, the Skagit County Shrine Club and the Brant Club had money to put back into Camp Kirby.

LEGAL DOCUMENTS:

Statutory Warranty Deed – Carol (Kirby) & John W. Dobson [West Coast Dairy] gave the Skagit County Shrine Club a Deed to the Camp Kirby property after they paid off the \$2,500 mortgage – June 14, 1941 (Skagit County Auditor's file #343134).

Declaration of Trust – Between the Skagit County Shrine Club and the Whatcom-Skagit Campfire Association & the “Gun Club” (Brant Club) – August 18, 1941 - (Skagit County Auditor’s file #343151).

Lease – Between the Skagit County Shrine Club and the Whatcom-Skagit Campfire Association (99 Year Lease for \$1.00 per year with Option for another 99 Years) – October 31, 1949 (Skagit County Auditor’s file #441378).

Assignment of Lease – Between the Whatcom-Skagit Campfire Association and the Samish Council of Camp Fire Girls – (Transfer of the Skagit County Shrine Club Lease from the Whatcom-Skagit Campfire Association to the Samish Council of Camp Fire Girls) - October 22, 1968 (Skagit County Auditor’s file #719588).

Deed – Between the Skagit County Shrine Club Holding Corporation and the Samish Council of Camp Fire Girls - October 22, 1968 (Skagit County Auditor’s file #719589).

STATUTORY WARRANTY DEED (Shorter version of a complete legal Deed):

On June 14, 1941, the mortgage contract of \$2,500 - which was owed to Carol (Kirby) and John W. Dobson, husband and wife (West Coast Dairy) - was paid off by the Skagit County Shrine Club (Skagit County Auditor’s file #343134). [Note – The land cost \$3,700 (approx. equal to \$61,039 in 2022) with \$1,200 down-payment plus a \$2,500 mortgage.]

[Carol Kirby married John W. Dobson in Sedro-Woolley on October 15, 1932, but they lived in Renton, WA in 1941. John Dobson was a Brant Club and possibly a Shrine Club member.]

In return, Carol (Kirby) and John Dobson of West Coast Dairy “conveys and warrants to Skagit County Shrine Club, a corporation, the following property ... all of Lot Three (3) of Section Twenty-eight (28), Township 36, North Range 2, E. W. M. [East of the Willamette Meridian]” -- Camp Kirby -- (Skagit County Auditor’s file #343134).

DECLARATION OF TRUST:

On August 18, 1941, a Declaration of Trust (Skagit County Auditor’s file #343151) was drawn up by the Skagit County Shrine Club and the following present Skagit County Gun Club members: “G. W. Fowler, John M. Seaman, Al Olson, Jonnie Mason, Harold Crane, Jerry Brisbin, Russell K. Behrns, M. T. MacAvelia, Bruce Cameron, R. V. Welts, C. E. Conn, and W. J. Gilbert, Alex W. Stevens (all of Mount Vernon, WA), Robert Cole of Seattle, WA, and John Dobson of Renton, WA.”

The Skagit County Shrine Club gave the Whatcom-Skagit Camp Fire Association the right to use Camp Kirby during the summer for the Camp Fire Girls, and the ‘Gun Club’ (Brant Club) the right to use Camp Kirby for the Brant hunting season. “...The Skagit County Gun Club (Brant Club) shall have the right of use for their lives or the life or lives of the survivor of them ... the exclusive hunting rights and hunting privileges with exclusive access to said real property during all hunting seasons, subject only to the reserved right and all reasonable use of said premises for Girls Camp Fire activities...”

“ ...The Gun Club shall have the right to erect a hunting lodge and any other temporary and permanent structures to be used in connection with said hunting rights on or adjacent to the ‘sand spit’, with the right of ingress and egress on said real property at any time for the necessary construction or repair of any of their buildings or equipment thereon, as long as said use does not interfere with the activities of said Camp Fire organization; and the right is reserved to the Skagit County Shrine Club to visit, picnic and being upon said property for any proper use and not in conflict in any way with the use of the within named beneficiaries (Camp Fire and Brant Club).”

The Camp Kirby property consisted of “All of Lot Three (3), of Section Twenty-eight (28), Township Thirty-six (36) North, Range Two (2), East of the Willamette Meridian, Also, Tide Lands of Second Class in front of Lot Three (3), except platted [all tidelands on the northwest side of the sandy spit], all in Section Twenty-eight (28), Township thirty-six (36) North, Range Two (2), East of Willamette Meridian, and Tracts 1 and 11 of Padilla Bay Oyster Tracts.” [Padilla Bay Oyster Tract 1 is at the west end of the sandy spit on the southeast side and Tract 11 is in the middle of the sandy spit on the southeast side.]

Since the “consideration paid by the above-named beneficiaries (Camp Fire and the Brant Club) for this conveyance is the sum of Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000.00)” it is believed the Brant Club paid most, if not all, of this amount to the Skagit Shriners.

In return, the Brant Club was given life-time hunting rights for all Brant hunting seasons from Oct. - Jan. by the Whatcom-Skagit Camp Fire Assoc. (per Camp Kirby/Camp Fire lore).

Per the terms of the Declaration of Trust, the Skagit County Shrine Club “shall not be required to pay any costs of upkeep or any improvements upon said real property, nor to maintain insurance upon any buildings located thereon, nor to pay or secure the payment of any liens, encumbrances, taxes, assessments or other charges against said property. That the Whatcom-Skagit Camp Fire association shall pay all liens, incumbrances, taxes, assessments, or other charges against said real property”

“The Whatcom-Skagit Camp Fire Association shall have the perpetual right, and it is an expressed term and provision of this trust, that it shall be allowed to continue in full, free and undisturbed possession of the whole of said trust estate without any rental or accounting therefore to said Trustee except as herein specified”

LEASE:

On October 31, 1949, Camp Kirby was Leased by the Skagit County Shrine Club to the Whatcom-Skagit Campfire Association (Skagit County Auditor’s file #441378):

“Whereas, the Skagit County Shrine Club acquired the properties known as Camp Carrie Kirby for the purpose of making it available to Campfire girls of Whatcom and Skagit counties and elsewhere for a camping site and for use in furthering the purposes for which Campfire exists ...”

“Whereas, it is the desire of the Skagit County Shrine Club that a long term and satisfactory arrangement be provided for the use of said properties by Campfire and for no other use inconsistent therewith ...” [The Lease restricted the use of Camp Kirby to Campfire Girls, their leaders, assistant leaders, and Campfire council & district members – only occasionally were parents and other groups allowed on the property.]

“Whereas, the Skagit County Shrine Club desires to take an active part in the sponsorship and support of Campfire at Camp Kirby and wishes to re-affirm its traditional stand as a supporter of the worthy purposes of Campfire in maintaining and developing Camp Kirby...”

“Lessor (Skagit County Shrine Club) does hereby lease and demise that certain property described as follows, to-wit: All of Lot Three (3) of Section Twenty-eight (28), Township Thirty-six (36) North, Range Two (2) East of the Willamette Meridian. Tidelands of Second Class in front of Lot Three (3), except platted, all in Section Twenty-eight (28), Township Thirty-six (36) North, Range Two (2) East of the Willamette Meridian, and Tracts One (1) and Eleven (11) of Padilla Oyster Tracts.”

“All said land being situated in Skagit County, Washington, for the term of ninety-nine (99) years for the rental or sum of one Dollar (\$1.00)” per year.

The “Lessor (Skagit County Shrine Club) agrees to support Campfire and its purpose at Camp Kirby, and to assist in the orderly and appropriate development of the properties in the manner best suited to the needs of Campfire to the extent and in the manner from time to time authorized by its membership. It shall be the purpose of the Lessor (Skagit County Shrine Club) to continue the Lessee (Campfire) as an object of its charity in this area.

“The Lessee (Campfire) during this term herein provided agrees to use the property described for the sole and exclusive benefit of Campfire and its purposes. Provided, however, the Lessor or Lessee may authorize use of the premises on stated occasions for meeting, camp, picnics and the like so long as the uses permitted are not repugnant to the purposes of Campfire and not injurious to the premises or improvements situated thereon.”

“This lease shall be subject to the existence of hunting rights on the premises and the reasonable right of ingress and egress for said purpose; said hunting rights are at the time of the execution of this Lease held by the Gun Club (Brant Club).”

“The Lessor (Skagit County Shrine Club) shall be allowed to make reasonable use of the properties in a manner not inconvenient to Campfire nor repugnant to its purposes at such times as the property is not being used for Campfire convocations, but no use shall be made of the property which shall preclude or make inconvenient the use of the property for the primary purpose of Campfire.”

“It is understood that the purpose of this Lease is to establish and maintain a permanent and happy relationship for the sponsorship of Campfire by the Skagit County Shrine Club, retaining such incidental privileges to the Skagit County Shrine Club ... some of the privileges of the property might be enjoyed by the Club at times not inconvenient to Campfire. ... It is understood by the parties hereto that the hunting rights held and enjoyed by the Gun Club shall not be impaired by this Lease, and when the period of such rights shall terminate, said hunting rights shall never thereafter be granted or conveyed out of the control of the Lessor (Skagit County Shrine Club).”

“It is understood than in event Lessee (Campfire) shall cease to exist as an active unit of Campfire for the purpose of which it now exists, then and in that event, the term of this Lease shall immediately cease and determine and no further rights will thereafter exist in favor of Lessee (Campfire) However, in event the activities of Campfire is taken over by the district council or other representative in Western Washington so that the purpose of Campfire for benefit of Whatcom and Skagit Counties would continue to exist under sponsorship of the parent organization, then and in that event, these premises may continue in force and effect for the term hereof subject to all other provisions of this Lease.”

“It is further agreed that [the Lease of] these premises shall succeed and replace all rights, title and arrangements heretofore convened to that certain Declaration of Trust dated the 18th day of August, 1941”

“It is the intention of Lessor (Skagit County Shrine Club) that the afore mentioned Camp Kirby be a permanent camping site for Campfire Girls of Whatcom and Skagit counties so long as they are in existence and desire to use said camp site for the purposes herein mentioned. Upon the expiration of this lease lessee (Camp Fire) shall have the option to renew the same for a further 99 years....”

The Lease was signed by six officers of the Skagit County Shrine Club, including Bruce Cameron who was the President of the Skagit County Shrine Club in 1949, and also a member of the Brant Club. In the early years, the Shriners and Camp Fire were on good terms, and they invited each other to dinners, dances, and picnics.

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The oldest remaining wooden cabin is Barnacle. The other small cabins are Fir Tree, Seagull, Crow's Nest, Jupiter, and Evening Star which were all built after Barnacle.

Fir Side was built near the Health House for the dishwashers and buglers (at times the same person). Fir Side was a closed-in Adirondack style cabin. It had no glass in the windows just shutters that opened out (tilted up). Fir Side was control-burned in 1998/1999.

Originally one room cabins, a lean-to was added to Barnacle, Fir Tree, Seagull, and Crow's Nest to give the counselors some privacy. Barnacle is now used for storage of outdoor games and plastic/wood items. The other structures remain as cabins. A separate room was added to Evening Star and Jupiter (updated) to give the counselors a little privacy.

The Shriners brought electricity to Kirby in 1946/1947 and dug water wells in the woods.

On November 1, 1951, the Skagit County Shrine Club gifted to Skagit County (via Deed) twenty feet of Camp Kirby that bordered Samish Point Road to allow for the widening of the county road (Skagit County Auditor's file #468148).

The double cabins for campers are Big and Little Dipper, White Cap and Honeysuckle, Blue Heron and Driftwood - for up to 24 girls. The double cabins were built in the spring of 1953. For a bit of privacy, two counselors share a space in the middle of the double cabins.

Health House for the camp nurse was also built in the 1950's on the west side of camp.

The Samish Farms Water Association (Samish Island) piped water to Kirby in 1953/1954.

The original two-story wooden Lodge in the middle of camp burned down on Saturday, March 19, 1955. The fire was reported on Saturday around 9:00 pm. A Campfire group had stayed overnight on Friday, but had left earlier on the 19th. On Sunday, Vi Jewell came to see the ruins; the only things left standing were the chimneys of the fireplace & kitchen stove.



*One-Story Main Lodge
in Late 1950's*

A single-story lodge (120 ft x 40 ft) with a polished concrete floor and a long-covered porch was quickly built by Campfire volunteers from Whatcom & Skagit Counties and volunteers from the Burlington/Edison Kiwanis Club. Monetary donations came from the community to help replace the burned structure.

The new Main Lodge was ready on July 5, 1955 for the opening of the camping season. The new building was valued at \$35,000 and included a recreation area & fireplace with raised hearth, dining room, dishwashing room, camp craft room, post office (later a camp store), and director's office. The kitchen, pantry, and small washroom were in the addition to the building. A new septic tank & septic field were added to the plans.

The Goat, a building behind the Lodge, was built in 1963 to store garbage cans.

The cooks for the camp lived in a separate cabin, Halcyon, to the east of the Main Lodge. The cook's cabin and an old wishing well in the wooded grove next to the Main Lodge were later demolished to make way for a new restroom and shower facility on the east side of camp, Casa de P  p  . The cooking staff now sleep in other cabins for the program staff.

On January 31, 1957 the Camp Fire organizations in Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan & the Oak Harbor area of Island County combined to form 'Samish Council' (Skagit office disbanded).

In the 1950's to mid-1970's, as Camp Fire Girls moved through the levels of Camp Fire, the girls in the Blue Bird and Camp Fire clubs in the four counties would often stay together as they advanced through their High School Horizon clubs. When the girls graduated, they would retire their Horizon Club name. A shield with their retired Horizon name would be hung above the front windows in the Main Lodge at Camp Kirby.

In 1957, the caretaker at Camp Kirby was Bill Taylor. Bill had been a volunteer at Kirby for years (he was on the Kiwanis team which helped rebuild the Main Lodge in 1955).

When Bill learned of the need for a caretaker during the summer and the need for someone to supervise work parties, he volunteered. Bill and his wife, Patricia, and their two sons, Jim and Paul Taylor, moved from their residence in Edison and lived in HiTor on the hill until the Caretaker's House was built at the entrance to Camp. Bill coordinated the construction of new buildings from 1957 to 1968. After the summer of 1968, the family moved from Edison to Sedro-Woolley.

The Caretakers House had two bedrooms and a bath, a living room with wood stove, a kitchen and dining area. It also had a utility porch with washer and dryer. The house was not insulated with modern materials (the original insulation between the tongue-and-groove boards was cardboard to keep out the wind, and over time, turned into cardboard dust). The windows in the house were single-pane as the building was lived in only during the summer camping season. The other structures in Camp were also not insulated and had single-pane windows as they were in use only during the summer. New double-paned windows were added to the Caretakers House in later years, but the large windows in the dining room and kitchen are still single-pane windows. An additional room was added to the west end at a later date and that room was insulated (evidence of the addition is steps that go down from the double-thick doorway to a concrete patio under the house). This insulated room was often used as a master bedroom by later caretakers so couples could stay in the house year-round. A porch with a sliding door to the living room was also added to the west end.

In the late 1950's, TaYiTo (Dakota/Sioux Indian name – 'Counselor') was built on the spit to provide a sleeping area for the program staff. An older cabin nearby, Sandpiper, housed camp cooks or camp staff. Pooh's Corner on the east side of camp, was built to house the arts & crafts activities.

The CIT (Counselors in Training) program was also started in the late 1950's to train perspective counselors in the traditions of Camp Kirby and to teach them how to be cabin counselors. HiTor ('High Mountain') was used for the Counselor's in Training (CIT) and provided their sleeping & program space after Bill Taylor's family moved to their new house.

Camp Fire Girls celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1960 with the "She Cares ... Do You?" program. In March 1961, in celebration of Camp Fire's "Birthday Week," Camp Fire Girls in the Samish Council planted 10,00 trees, cleaned up unsightly areas, scrubbed monuments, and cleared town entrances of litter.



*Totem Pole and
Health House*

The 27-foot totem story pole at Camp Kirby was erected in 1960 in honor of the 50th Anniversary of Camp Fire Girls. The National Camp Fire Council proposed the idea of the totem pole when Marvel Smith was the director of the Samish Council of Camp Fire Girls. The local Council felt that it was an undoable task, and the idea was rejected. But, camp caretaker, Bill Taylor spoke up and said "Let me work on it." He was very interested in the story that a totem would tell of the Indian heritage on Samish Island & it would be a permanent art piece at Kirby.

Carol Batdorf, the Samish Council director who succeeded Marvel Smith, was given the Totem Legend by the Upper Skagit Tribe in the late 1950's, and she researched & designed the totem pole. The project was coordinated by Bill Taylor. The totem pole was carved by Bill Westenhaver of Witco, Mount Vernon over six weeks from a giant Alaska-Cedar log, donated by Jack Mitchell (W.A. Mitchell) of Anacortes.

Bill Westenhaver used an adz, chisels, power saws, and a flame-throwing device to burn the wood to give it an aged appearance. The wings and beaks were bolted into place. Coast Lee & Eastes, Inc., Sicksteel Motor Co., and the Skagit Valley Telephone Company donated equipment, labor, and materials to move and set up the carved totem. The totem pole weighs four tons and is embedded in an eight-ton concrete block.

The totem pole depicts the story of Skagit (a Haida chieftain's son) and Lowista (the daughter of the Samish chieftain) who are said to be the founders of the Skagit tribe.

The top figure on the totem represents the raven, symbol of one of the most powerful of the Northern Indian clans. Skagit, the son of a Haida Chief, is seen nestled between the wings of the raven. Skagit is shown with a canoe paddle in his hands, as he and his Haida braves had ventured south in a raiding party from the Queen Charlotte Islands to prey on the more peaceful natives of the Puget Sound area. The peaceful Samish Indians, gathering clams on the point in front of their [summer] long house (where the present Main Lodge now stands) sighted the war canoe as it rounded lighthouse point. The Samish, being forewarned, retreated to the top of the hill above the spit, leaving only a few braves to meet their foes. Once the Haida's landed, these Indians fled to the top of the hill, followed closely by the Haida who were ambushed by the Samish. Below Skagit on the totem is the symbol of a killer whale which depicts the fierce battle that ensued between the Haida raiders and the Samish tribe. The Haida's were all killed except for Skagit, who crawled into the bushes to die. The death's head in the killer whale symbolizes those slain in battle.

The next morning, Lowista, a Samish Island princess, went out to pick blackberries and found the badly wounded Haida. The figure below the killer whale on the totem is an owl, a popular Samish [Indian] symbol. In between the wings of the owl is the head of Lowista. She took pity on him and nursed him back to health. The two young people fell in love, and were determined to live together as man and wife. Unfortunately, the Samish Indians would have killed Skagit if they had found him, so he and Lowista decided to run away together. They stole one of her father's canoes in the dark of night, and paddled across the bay and up the Skagit River. There they settled and lived out their days in peace. Their descendants in the Upper Skagit are said to be today's Skagit Tribe, and they are represented by the [five] heads [of their children] beneath the head of Lowista on the totem.

During the 1960's, Camp Kirby was at its height of popularity. Rapid growth, due to "baby boomers" and growing affluence in the population, led to the building of two more lodges and most of the modern cabins.

The first modern toilet facility for the Camp Fire Girls was built in the 1960's on the east side of camp and replaced the pit toilet outhouses. It featured flush toilets with tanks above and chain flush. The sinks and a bank of four showers on the outside had cold water only when first installed, and it was referred to as the 'Suzie.'

A second modern toilet facility or 'Suzie Too' which replaced the pit toilets was also built in the 1960's on the west end of Camp with communal shower room (cold water only at first), and flush toilets with tanks above and chain flush. Sinks (cold water only at first) were installed on the outside porch for the Camp Fire Girls at that end of Camp.

During this period, Camp Kirby was operating as a resident camp for Camp Fire Girls for three to eight weeks every summer and filling the camp to capacity (150 girls a week). Over a thousand Camp Fire Girls from the four counties of Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan, and the Oak Harbor area of Island County came to Camp Kirby each summer in the later years.

Before the camping season began, camp counselors worked for a week to clean the camp buildings and to set up the programs for the summer. After the camping season was over, the counselors worked for a week to put everything away for the winter as the camp was not used the rest of the year. Camp Kirby was only open for the designated weeks during the summer months. The camp caretakers also left Camp Kirby after the camping season.

The Woodpecker A-Frame was built next to the Health House for the Camp Director in the 1960's by volunteers, including Bill Taylor and Fred Vochatzer.

Camp Kirby adopted traditions that were established at Camp Sealath by Miss Ruth A. Brown, the director at Camp Sealath from its beginning in 1920 through 1926. Campers and counselors at Camp Kirby in the 1960's awoke to the - "I Can't Get Em Up" - bugle call of the bugler (Camp Kirby buglers until the mid-1970's included Sally Wilson, "Little R" Arlene Webber, Judy Townsend, and Janice Smith). Cabins were tidied up in the mornings before the camp director or the nurse made the rounds of the cabins for Cabin Inspection.

The bugle call - "There's a Soldier in His Bed" - called campers and counselors in the morning and evening to the ceremony of the raising and lowering of the camp flag. During the flag ceremony, campers on KP (Kitchen Patrol) duty set the tables and brought the food to the tables in preparation for meals. The bugler called everyone to the Main Lodge with - "Soupy, Soupy, Soupy". A table Grace was sung before the meals began.

After the "Announcements, Announcements" song and Announcements by the Camp Director, camp songs were sung by everyone while counselors, sitting at each end of the long tables, scrapped the dishes to be sent to the dishwasher.

After everyone left the dining area, campers on KP Duty took the food back to the kitchen, the dishes to the dishwasher, and swept the Main Lodge floor.

A rest hour was observed after lunch where campers and counselors would retire to their cots or bunks to nap, read a book, or write letters home after an active morning.

A bugle call in the afternoon - "Mother May I Go Out to Swim" - called the campers to activities such as swimming in the bay, doing archery, canoeing in one of the three red war canoes ('Tchewa' - later named 'Hearts Desire', 'I Ha Ha' and 'I Ha Ke Ya' - meanings in 'Resources'), or working on arts & crafts. Cabin groups gathered in the Main Lodge for sing-a-longs & folk dancing. In spring 1925, two tennis courts were built in front of the Main Lodge with concrete donations from the Superior Portland Cement Co. (Concrete, WA.)

Gypsy Week was held each summer with special activities.

At night, "Taps" - was played by the bugler as campers and counselors lay in their beds.

Camp Kirby also established their own Camp traditions. Each week, counselors wearing all white shorts or pants and all white shirts with their camp ties, welcomed girls to camp on Sunday afternoons. Navy-blue bloomers and navy-blue, light blue, or white middie blouses (modeled after U.S. sailors' uniform shirts) eventually evolved into blue shorts or blue pants and all white shirts (Blues & Whites) that everyone changed into for dinner before the bugler (later a ships bell) announced the evening meal.

Counselors wore camp ties and the young women were known as "Miss". Counselors in Training (CIT's) learned how to become cabin counselors and made their own Magic Rings with camp songs, table graces, and poems.

Campers picked up seaweed to clear the beach for swimming and earned a felt ROSE patch (Royal Order of Seaweed Exterminators), or went swimming and dipped in over their heads in the cold water of Puget Sound (Polar Bear) patch.

Girls at Camp Kirby would learn camp crafts and cook over the campfire while sleeping overnight in the woods at campsites with shelters – Sepaca, Maku Ala, Trail’s End (Mi Kahana Ke), and Sleepy Hollow. The girls made bed-rolls for camping (sleeping bags rolled lengthwise in waterproof tarps, tied at the long ends, and thrown over the head and shoulder). The girls earned camp-craft patches and wooden beads for the activities. If campers could flip pancakes in a skillet without the use of a spatula, they would earn an I.O.A.P.F. patch and sing the I.O.A.P.F. song (International Order of Associated Pancake Flippers).

In the 1960s, young campers would hike to the little store on Wharf Street and buy ten cents of penny candy. Or they would hike to Snow White’s Cabin in the woods. Campers could also buy Camp Kirby items or writing supplies at the Camp Store in the Main Lodge.

Each week Camp Fire Girls would attend ceremonial gatherings in their Indian Ceremonial gowns at the ‘Council Fire Ring’ among the trees, and be awarded felt patches and wooden beads that they earned to sew on their gowns. Ceremonial gowns became optional in 1946.

Until 1966, Bluebirds attended a ‘Fairy Ring’; located around camp or on the spit to receive their own beads and patches. In 1966, a Bluebird ‘Fairy Ring’ was built in the woods by the 1966 CIT graduates which had a fairy house & toadstool sit-upons for the counselors.

Camp Fire Girls are able to earn beads while completing projects on the “Camp Fire Trails,” as well as other awards. Previously, once the participant earned ten of one type of bead, they were awarded a larger one of the same type to represent the ten smaller ones. By 2006, there was one bead for each Camp Fire Trail. Today, Camp Fire members wear vests in different colors for each CF level. The ceremonial attire is decorated with honor beads (10 colors), emblems/patches that are earned, and other items the member chooses.

On Sunday evenings, campers and counselors would gather in the ‘Chapel’ on the hill overlooking the Sound for songs, poems, and fellowship.

In the evening, campers gathered at the campfire to roast marshmallows for s’mores or put banana boats in the hot coals (marshmallow and chocolate pieces placed in a cut-out wedge in a fresh banana with peel, the piece of peel replaced, the banana boat wrapped in tinfoil, and eaten with a spoon when melted), and sing camp songs. Dream Boats were constructed on bark or driftwood and launched with a lit candle off the beach at night.

On Friday nights, counselors would gather to serenade each cabin after campers were in bed. Campers would gather their belongings and leave Camp Kirby on Saturday mornings.

* * * * *

ASSIGNMENT OF LEASE:

On October 22, 1968, an Assignment of Lease was drawn up for the name change of the Campfire organization (Skagit County Auditor’s file #719588). “In consideration of One Dollar (\$1.00) ... Whatcom-Skagit Campfire Association, as lessee, hereby assigns all of its right, title and interest in a lease dated October 31, 1949, between Skagit County Shrine Club, Inc., as lessor, and Whatcom-Skagit Campfire Association as lessee to Samish Council of Camp Fire Girls ... “

“The assignee hereby assumes and agrees to fulfill the conditions of said lease which covers the following described property: All of Lot Three (3) of Section Twenty-eight (28), Township thirty-six (36) North of Range Two (2) East of Willamette Meridian, Also Tide-lands of Second Class in front of Lot Three (3), except platted, all in Section Twenty-eight (28), Township thirty-six (36) North, Range Two (2) East of W. M. and Tracts 1 and 11 of Padilla Bay Oyster Tracts.”

[Both sides came to an agreement that Camp Fire should be given a Deed to Camp Kirby to allow non-Camp Fire girls to attend camp, and renters could use it in the off-season.]

DEED:

On October 22, 1968, a Deed was also drawn up by the Skagit County Shrine Club Holding Corporation (Skagit County Auditor's file #719589):

"Whereas the Skagit County Shrine Club Holding Corporation, formerly the Skagit County Shrine Club, a Washington organization, hereinafter called the Grantor (Skagit County Shrine Club Holding Corporation), purchased the hereafter described property on contract dated June 4, 1923, from the West Coast Dairy, which contract was fulfilled by a Warranty Deed to said Grantor (Skagit County Shrine Club) dated June 14, 1946 [actually June 14, 1941], recorded under Auditor's File No. 343134, records of Skagit County, and"

"Whereas, it has been agreed between said grantor (Skagit County Shrine Club Holding Corporation) and the Samish Council of Camp Fire Girls, Inc., hereafter called the Grantee, that the said property was acquired by said Grantor (Skagit County Shrine Club) to provide a campsite for the Camp Fire Girls to be operated by said Grantee (Samish Council of Camp Fire Girls), and"

"Whereas, said Camp, known as "Camp Kirby," has of recent years been occupied and used by said Grantee (Samish Council of Camp Fire Girls), as a campsite for Camp Fire Girls under a lease from the said Grantor (Skagit County Shrine Club), as a lessor, and the Whatcom-Skagit Camp Fire Association, a Washington corporation, as lessee, dated October 31, 1949, which lease has been assigned by said lessee to the Samish Council of Camp Fire Girls, Inc., and Whereas, both parties hereto desire to cancel the lease and substitute the present instrument in order to more fully carry out the intent of the parties,"

"Now therefore the Grantor (Skagit County Shrine Club Holding Corporation), in consideration of the cancellation of the above-mentioned lease and the release by the Grantee (Samish Council of Camp Fire Girls) of duties and obligations of the Grantor (Skagit County Shrine Club) provided for in said lease, hereby conveys and quit claims to said grantee (Samish Council of Camp Fire Girls) the following described property located in Skagit County, Washington, commonly known as 'Camp Kirby: Government Lot 3 of Section 28, Township Thirty-six North, Range 2 East of the Willamette Meridian Except a 20-foot strip of land conveyed to Skagit County by deed recorded under Auditor's file No. 468168 (to widen Samish Point Road) and Except roads. Together with tide lands of the second class as conveyed by the State of Washington, in front of the meander line of said Lot 3 [all tidelands on the northwest side of the sandy spit] Also, Tracts 1 and 11, of Map of Padilla Bay Oyster Tracts...' as a campsite for Camp Fire Girls, to be conducted and operated as such by said grantee (Samish Council of Camp Fire Girls) as a part of its organized camping program, to have and to hold so long as used for such a campsite, and in the event that said property is no longer used as such a campsite, then the title to the above-described property shall immediately and without the need for reconveyance or other action automatically revert as follows: an undivided one-half (1/2) interest to the Skagit County Shrine Club Holding Corporation, a Washington corporation, provided that at that time the Skagit County Shrine Club is an active, recognized unit of Nile Temple of the Shrine, and in case it is not such a unit, then to the Shriners Hospitals for Crippled Children for the benefit of the Spokane and Portland Units, and in the event that a Shriners Burn Institute shall exist in the State of Washington, it shall benefit equally with the other two units; the other undivided one-half (1/2) interest shall remain vested in the Grantee (Samish Council of Camp Fire Girls) herein in Fee Simple absolute [freedom to dispose of as they wish] without restrictions."



*Nile Shrine Potentate
Transferring Deed to
Camp Kirby to Camp Fire -
May 27, 1969*

“The said grantee (Samish Council of Camp Fire Girls) shall have the right to remove from the property prior to such reversion buildings and personal property erected and owned by it.”

* * * * *

Canvas tents on wooden platforms on the west end of the sandy spit were used as sleeping spaces for the middle school girls during the 1960's.

Bluebird Lodge on the east side of camp was built in 1966/1967 by a volunteer team which included, Frederick “Fred” Vochatzer, and a plaque honoring him is on the front wall of the Bluebird Lodge.

The Samish Council christened the building, Jewell Lodge, in honor of Vi Jewell, who was a long-time camp director in the 1950's and 1960's. The lodge was used originally as a program area for the Bluebirds, but was later used for the CIT program and the Arts program. Camp Kirby also holds school environmental education programs in the Bluebird Lodge.



*Bluebird Lodge
On East Side of Camp Kirby*

In later years, a volleyball court was added in front of the Bluebird Lodge.

The canvas tents on platforms (1966) were replaced in 1969 by five teepees, which became the sleeping area for 20 to 24 girls in the middle school (MauMi) unit.



*Teepees and Herman's Hut
on the Spit*

After the summer camping season, the teepees were removed from the spit and stored for the winter under the Bluebird Lodge with the camp watercraft, waterfront equipment, and swimming ropes that mark the swimming area off the spit. In 1969, the Samish Council studied design plans for a fresh-water concrete swimming pool at Camp, but it was never built.



In February 1972, the Blue Heron cabin was nearly engulfed in a mud slide and was a total loss. However, the other half of the double cabin, Driftwood, survived. Camp Fire Samish asked the community for help to rebuild both sides of the double cabin. With community donations, the Driftwood and Blue Heron cabins were ready in time for the summer camping season.

Seven tree houses with ladders and bunk beds were built in 1972, with the help of Bud Kolman of Concrete, to house the high school (Tanika – Swinomish Indian name for ‘Island People’ or WaKuMi by Whatcom leaders) unit. The treehouses could sleep up to 24 girls.



Tree Houses on the Hill

The Wakumi Alumni group also started in 1972. It was founded by Susie Tiplin, who in 1914, established the first Camp Fire Girls club in Whatcom County (Blaine, WA). The group of 7th and 8th grade girls were sponsored by the Blaine Congregational Church. In 1917, the first Camp Fire club in Bellingham was established under the sponsorship of the Christian Church.

The Wakumi Alumni meetings were for “executives, leaders, assistants, and sponsors” who wanted to help support Camp Kirby. For almost 50 years, the Alumni group of mostly former Camp Fire leaders and their daughters, hosted Rummage and Bake Sales to raise funds for camperships and to purchase items needed at Camp Kirby.

Improvements have also occurred in the Kirby woods. Following the destruction of a shelter by a mature cedar tree in a windstorm, the Camp Fire board of directors voted to selectively log the forest. By doing this, they hoped to minimize the number of older trees that were blown over, roots and all, and to open the woods up for more use.

The logging was done by Iron Mountain Logging Company with attention paid to preserving program areas like the campsites, Chapel, Fairy Ring, and the Council Fire Ring.

In 1975, Camp Fire Girls changed at the national level, and boys were welcomed in clubs, day camps, resident camps, and other activities within the new Camp Fire, Inc. organization.

Traditions and songs changed in 1978 after the first boys (grades 1 thru 6) joined the girls camping at Camp Kirby, although boys tended not to join the Camp Fire organization.

The 'Suzie' on the east side of Camp Kirby was assigned to the girls & female counselors. The 'Suzie' on the west side was renamed 'Wazzu', and assigned to boys & male counselors.

At Camp Kirby, Indian symbolism, ceremonial gowns, and Blues & Whites for dinner died away, but with the addition of boys, other traditions were established. Vests worn by the boys and girls for ceremonial occasions were decorated with patches and wooden beads. New camp songs and table graces were added while older songs were sung less often. A basketball hoop was added to the old tennis courts in front of the Main Lodge.

Young men and women who became counselors adopted a "camp name" for their time at camp. In the Main Lodge at Camp Kirby, it became a tradition to paint shields with the camp names of the counselors at camp that summer and hang them on the center beam of the Main Lodge ceiling.

Candy sales helped raise funds for Camp Kirby, and for boys and girls in Camp Fire clubs to attend Camporees at Camp in the spring and fall. [Candy sales began in 1950 and replaced donut sales. Donuts would go stale and the new Mint Patties for \$1 with Camp Fire pictures on the box were an instant hit. Other candies added - Aplets & Cotlets (1960's thru 1970's), Almond Roca (1971), Walnut Chews (1977), Almond Carmel Clusters, and P-Nuttles.]

But by the late 1970's and 1980's, Camp Kirby was suffering from a decreased youth population, a tighter economy, and the impact of Title IX legislation. The prevailing belief was that Camp Fire and Camp Kirby were for girls – and with Title IX legislation many activities opened up which decreased girls' and boys' participation in Camp Fire. In 1983 to combat this belief, Camp Fire, Inc. changed its name to Camp Fire Boys & Girls, before becoming Camp Fire USA in 2001 to raise awareness that Camp Fire serves all children.

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STATUTORY WARRANTY DEEDS FOR TIDELANDS:

On November 30, 1981, the Samish Council of Camp Fire sold Tideland Tracts in Padilla Bay - 1, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 - on the southeast side of the sandy spit to the Department of Ecology, State of Washington (Skagit County Auditor's files #8112040049 & #8112040050). Of these nine tracts, only the sale of Tideland Tracts 16 & 17 to Camp Fire on April 23, 1964 is recorded with the County (Skagit County Auditor's file #653864).

However, the sales agreement in 1981 allowed for the "continued use and enjoyment" of the tidelands "for all of its traditional and historic activities and programs" at Camp Kirby. Other Tideland Tract owners sold as well and the WA Department of Ecology now owns Tracts 1 – 18 which are all the tracts on the southeast side of the spit.

All the tidelands on the northwest side of the spit are still owned by the Samish Council of Camp Fire USA, per Skagit County land records.

It is not known if members of the Skagit County Shrine Club were contacted about the pending sale of Tracts 1 & 11 before the tracts were sold to the WA Department of Ecology in 1981. It does not look like the Skagit Shriners were legally notified, since Tracts 1 & 11 were listed in the description of the Camp Kirby property in the 2003 Shriner lawsuit.

Tract 1 is at the west end of the sandy spit on the southeast side, and Tract 11 is in the middle of the spit on the southeast side. Perhaps the Brant Club, which was protected under legal documents from the Skagit County Shrine Club, erected temporary duck blinds on Tracts 1 & 11 during the winter hunting season.

The Skagit County Shrine Club currently meets the first Friday of each month, year-round, at a building on March's Point Road (Anacortes, WA) which is an office and/or meeting place for the employees of the oil refineries.

However, the waters of Puget Sound have risen eight inches since the 1950's, and the tides have eroded the long, crescent-shaped sandy spit with its shallow waters on either side. The water has deepened on both sides of the point and the Brant geese subsequently found new shallow bays to frequent. The Brant Club at Herman's Hut turned more into a socializing club, rather than a hunting club, when most of the geese moved to new locations.

* * * * *

In the winter of 1990/1991, after the planned logging was carried out, the woods were devastated by a strong windstorm/tornado which skipped about on the west end of Samish Island and destroyed almost 20 acres of trees at Camp Kirby.

The falling trees destroyed the Council Fire Ring, Fairy Ring (1966), and the Trail's End camp-site (Mi Kahana Ke). The Council Fire Ring was rebuilt in a new location. A new Fairy Ring was added for the Bluebirds (renovated Sleeping Hollow campsite) so they could receive their own patches and beads. A new campsite, Akeezu, replaced the Trail's End campsite which was too buried by trees to be reused. Chapel was refurbished with new benches as part of an Eagle Scout project. The devastated area in the woods bordering Samish Point Road and across from the Caretakers House, was salvaged logged. An archery range was placed in the opened area near the entrance to Camp. The new Fairy Ring (1996) was destroyed by a falling tree around 2010 and has not been rebuilt.

On Friday, January 28, 1994, there was a fire in Bellingham in the Mason Building (120 East Holly) which was set by two teenagers, 17 and 14 years old, who were on drugs and had been drinking that night. After an evening of thefts, car prowls, and other burglaries the two boys burglarized the Mason Building before setting a couch on fire in a Youth Services office. The Northwest Youth Services offices on the second floor were lost as were the Northern Sales' Army Surplus store and the Aladdin Antique Mall & Espresso Bar on the ground floor.

The 17-year-old teenager, who was a ward of the state and a recipient of Youth Services, received a sentence of 27 months in adult prison. He was released from Clallam Bay Prison in July 1995. The court decreed he had to pay \$876,699 in restitution for the damages. The 14-year-old was sentenced to 2 years of juvenile prison.

At the time, the Samish Council Camp Fire office was located down the hall from the Youth Services offices. The first Camp Fire office was in the Montague & McHugh Building on West Magnolia. Many business documents stored in the basement and in the Camp Fire office (230 Mason Building) were lost, per Samish Council executive director, Katherine Stewart (Skagit Valley Herald – January 23, 2005). The loss was not due to the blaze, but to water damage from the firefighting efforts to prevent the fire from spreading.

In 1994, metal roofs were added to the seven treehouses at Camp Kirby.

However, by the summer of 1994, Camp Kirby was only operating with a camping season of three weeks per summer, and with only 75 kids per week (½ the operating capacity of Camp) due to years of a tight economy and the impact of Title IX legislation.

But, in 1995, executive director, Wendy Reavill, and others in the Samish Council understood that an increasing youth population in the Whatcom, Skagit, Island and San Juan County areas, and an upswing in the economy were creating a new and strong market for summer resident camp programs. Renewed energy was put back into Camp Kirby.

In 1995, metal roofs were installed on the old cabins of Barnacle, Seagull, Fir Tree, and Crow's Nest. The inside walls of all the cabins were painted.

New wood bunk beds with ladders were built in 1995 by the Mount Vernon Rotary Club, and the 100 bunks replaced the old bunkbeds and metal cots in the cabins.

New vinyl covered mattresses were also purchased for the new bunks to provide more comfort for the sleeping bags brought from home by the campers.



New Bunk Beds and Mattresses



*Casa de Pépé and
New Septic System
(Shuta in Background
on Left)*

In 1996, a complex new septic system (actually a water treatment plant) was installed on the east end of camp. The housing for the control panel with bulletin board was built as an Eagle Scout project.

In 1997, a new facility on the east end of Camp with separate restrooms for boys and girls was built with all indoor plumbing, flush toilets, sinks and showers – Casa de Pépé. The new building replaced the old Suzie. Part of the old Suzie became the Outback building which stores camping equipment.

In mid-January 1997, a landslide and falling tree crushed Shuta (originally known as Pooh's Corner), the arts & crafts building on the east side of camp and damaged it beyond repair. Also lost in the collapse of Shuta (Klamath Indian name – 'To Create/Achieve by Working') were most of the arts & crafts supplies.

After a Skagit Valley Herald newspaper article asked for community help (January 22, 1997), Shuta was rebuilt in 1998 - just in front of the slab foundation of the old building. The new Shuta was re-stocked with arts & crafts materials from the community donations.

Day Camp at Camp Kirby started in the summer of 1997. Day camp director, Diana Wisen with the help of many volunteers, offered Day Camp for one week at the end of June thru 2015 (before resident camp), from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, Monday thru Friday. Campers brought their own lunch Monday thru Thursday, unless a counselor planned a lunch cook-out. Campers and staff slept overnight on Thursday; dinner & s'mores were provided by Kirby as was breakfast & lunch on Friday. Parents arrived at 1:00 pm Friday for a closing program with skits and award presentations. Day Camp offered activities, arts & crafts in the Main Lodge, games, singing, and exploring the beach & woods for approximately 100 campers.

In 1998, Harry Williams and the Marine Reserve group laid new water lines throughout camp. Over the years as long-time volunteers, the Marine Reserves graded the gravel road, removed trees, and repaired & improved many of the buildings around camp.

Camp Kirby also celebrated its 75th Anniversary in 1998, and a large group of Alumni gathered for this historical event at Camp.

In 1999, the Main Lodge was re-roofed and HiTor was shored up. Health House was also rebuilt in 1999 on its slab foundation with a new kitchen, restroom with shower, insulated walls, and double-paned windows so it could be rented to non-profit groups in the off-season.

In 2000, the double cabin of Big and Little Dipper was renovated. Cabins throughout Camp Kirby were repainted on the outside with the same color scheme.

In 2001, a new roof was installed on HiTor, and the Woodpecker A-Frame was re-roofed.

TaYiTo was rebuilt on its slab foundation in 2002. During the remodel, the large stone fireplace and hearth in TaYiTo was removed. Two new restrooms with showers were built adjacent to two new sleeping rooms, and a complete kitchen was added to the building. The building was insulated and double-paned windows were installed so it also could be rented to non-profit groups in the off-season.

However, during strong wind storms and very high King Tides, the Health House, TaYiTo and the old Sandpiper cabin are prone to flooding as the earthen dikes around the camp have eroded in height over the years.

Herman's Hut on the west end of the spit was originally used as a double cabin, but was remodeled in 2002 with a new kitchen, bathroom and great room. The building was insulated and new double-paned windows were installed. Herman's Hut became the meeting place for the middle school campers sleeping on the spit in the teepees or canvas tents during the summer. It is rented to non-profit groups in the off season. Herman's Hut is still used as a meeting spot for the Brant Club during the Brant hunting season when Camp Kirby is closed to campers and renters.

A 40-foot climbing wall was added near the archery range in 2003.

Camperees are held for Camp Fire groups at Camp Kirby in the spring and fall. Camp Kirby is rented to non-profit groups during the spring and fall that promote Camp Fire values for youth. Camp Kirby is closed during the winter months due to the winter weather.

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SHRINERS SUE CAMP FIRE USA:

On November 29, 2003, the Nile Temple of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine in Mountlake Terrace, WA, sued Camp Fire USA and Camp Fire Samish with a 'Complaint to Quiet Title'. Per the lawsuit, the Nile Temple in Mountlake Terrace, acting as the Skagit County Shrine Club, acquired title to the Camp Kirby property in 1940 (actually June 14, 1941 per Skagit County Auditor's File #343134).

The Shriners alleged that a "1976 agreement between the Camp Fire organization and the group identified in the lawsuit as 'The Gun Club' violates the terms of the deed that allegedly restrict the youth organization to organized camping activities" ("Shriners sue Camp Fire USA over land use" – The Skagit Valley Herald article – January 23, 2005). In the lawsuit, the Masonic order "asked for the [entire] deed to revert back to the Nile Shrine in Mountlake Terrace".

However, the "Gun Club" privileges at Camp Kirby date back to the Declaration of Trust agreement between the Skagit County Shrine Club, and the Whatcom-Skagit Camp Fire & "The Gun Club" (Brant Club) on August 18, 1941 (per Skagit County Auditor's File #343151). The 1976 agreement did not alter the legal agreements that had existed since the 1940's.

* * * * *

In 2004, new steps and porches on the seven treehouses replaced the treehouse ladders.

The plumbing was repaired in the Bluebird Lodge, the Wazzu, and HiTor in 2005. The roof on the Outback was fixed and the east wall of the Main Lodge was repaired.

In 2005/2006, the Caretaker's house was re-painted inside; new carpets, hot water tank, and appliances installed; and the utility porch and bathrooms were renovated and updated.

The Caretakers carport/workshop was repaired in 2006 & a new donated metal gate added.

The bathroom in HiTor was renovated in 2006, and the roof on the Outback was replaced.

In 2008/2009, an improved restroom with shower was added to the Bluebird Lodge and the inside walls were insulated. The Caretaker's house was re-roofed, and a new sliding door and larger porch were added on the west end of the building.

New roll-up doors were installed over the counters in the Main Lodge kitchen & Dish Pit.

The septic system at TaYiTo was renovated.

* * * * *

SHRINERS SUE CAMP FIRE USA – COURT RULING:

On October 16, 2009, Skagit County Superior Court Judge Susan Cook, ruled “The Defendant, Camp Fire USA Samish Council is hereby granted Summary Judgement dismissing Plaintiff's Amended Complaint in its entirety”.

But the Judge still referred back to the 1968 Deed in the ‘Summary Judgement’ (Superior Court Cause No. 03-2-01927-8). The information contained in the 1968 Deed is still binding on both parties.

Judge Cook noted in the Summary Judgement of the lawsuit that:

- “Camp Fire USA Samish Council holds title to the property commonly known as Camp Kirby pursuant to a Deed dated October 22, 1968.”
- “Camp Fire USA Samish Council holds title to the property subject to the Deed provision that it was conveyed:” and Judge Cook added the conditional information from the 1968 Deed to the end of the statement (see 1968 Deed to Camp Kirby).
- “Camp Kirby continues to be used as a campsite for Camp Fire members conducted and operated as such by Camp Fire USA Samish Council as part of its organized camping program.”

Superior Court officially dismissed the lawsuit on November 1, 2010 as “there has been no action of record on this case during the twelve months just past.”

The national Camp Fire office changed the name Camp Fire USA to simply Camp Fire in 2012.

* * * * *

Since 2017, executive director, Erin Walker, and camp director, Kathryn Deshaies and facilities manager, Aaron Deshaies, have overseen many projects at Camp Kirby:

Three new canvas wall tents, each on a wooden platform with moveable bunkbeds and mattresses, replaced the teepees on the spit for the MauMi unit in 2017. Thirty new mattresses, twelve new bunk beds to sleep 24, and additional housing at HiTor were also added in 2017. Repairs to the plumbing around Camp were undertaken the same year.

Rotting treehouse steps & porches were replaced, and one new treehouse was built (2017).

The Main Lodge was repaired and repainted on the outside.

A metal storage container was added east of the Main Lodge to use as the Camp Store. The items in the old Camp Store in the Main Lodge needed to be stored in plastic containers to prevent mice and moisture damage during the winter, and the metal storage container proved to be a better solution.

Other projects included installing new curtains in cabins nearly camp wide, replacing damaged drywall in TaYiTo, and installing new covers for all water turn-off locations.

A new basketball backboard & two new recreation equipment sheds were also purchased.

In the Main Lodge, a kitchen appliance suppression system, six-burner commercial stove (2019), commercial hood, double commercial convection oven, and a commercial two-door freezer (2019) were installed in the kitchen.

The Main Lodge Office was expanded, and the Main Lodge fireplace had a chimney replacement. A refrigerated salad bar (2019), and new tables and benches were added in the Main Lodge dining room.

New picnic tables and fire rings were added around camp, and new benches were installed at the Chapel on the hill. Two new canoes were purchased in 2019.

The Goat was completely rebuilt after a tree fell on it.

A second indoor restroom facility with separate restrooms for boys and girls with flush toilets, sinks and showers was built in 2020 to replace the old Wazzu on the west end of camp between the old cabins of Fir Tree and Crow's Nest, and the plumbing was updated.

Septic work was completed in the main septic system and at HiTor, and a new septic system was installed at Herman's Hut.



*New Wazzu Between the Cabins
of Fir Tree and Crow's Nest*

The Bluebird Lodge received new laminate flooring, and a new kitchenette is waiting to be installed. A new workspace was added in the storage room under the Bluebird Lodge.

A floating swim dock was donated and used during the summer (2022), six new canoes and canoe paddles, 80 new life jackets, a 12' aluminum boat, and an outboard motor for the chase boat were purchased. In the archery range, three new targets were added, and new archery equipment, a new archery shed are waiting to be purchased. A new gator utility vehicle for Camp Kirby was delivered when the purchase order was fulfilled.

In 2022, the Main Lodge in the center of camp supports twenty-three sleeping cabins and treehouses, two lodges, three canvas tents (spit), and two restroom & shower facilities for 150 to 200 campers. There is usually a wait list for the day camp & overnight camping sessions.

* * * * *

By the end of the 1920s, as the country moved into the Great Depression, Camp Fire Girls had become part of the lives of thousands of girls and women in the Pacific NW. In the 1920's, over 60+ camps were opened throughout the U.S. By 1933, there were 1,500,000 Bluebirds, Camp Fire Girls and guardians (Camp Fire leaders) in 36 states.

Resident camps for Camp Fire Girls were an important part of summer. "A Handbook of Summer Camps" by Porter Sargent (1924) listed 117 Camp Fire camps in 33 states.

By 1966, the American Camping Association's "Directory of Accredited Camps" listed more than 100 camps for Camp Fire Girls in 29 different states.

So important were Bluebirds and Camp Fire Girls, that Washington public schools allowed members to wear their Camp Fire uniforms to school for after-school Camp Fire meetings. Newspapers in the 1950s/1960s had many articles on the activities and ceremonies of the local Camp Fire groups. In 1968, there were 3,700 Camp Fire members in the Samish Council with 700+ Camp Fire adults as leaders, assistant leaders, council & district staff.

The Camp Fire organization in 1968 was divided into Bluebirds (2nd & 3rd grades - 1913), Camp Fire girls (4th thru 6th grades - 1910), Junior High girls (7th & 8th grades - 1962), and Horizon Club girls (9th thru 12th grades - 1941).

In 1983, a club for boys and girls in kindergarten was created - Sparks. In 1989, two age groups combined, and kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade groups were called Starflight. In 2005, a Little Stars program was added for preschool boys & girls aged 3 thru 5 (Camp Fire T-shirt or red sash). In 2022, the Starflight groups are for boys' & girls' kindergarten thru 2nd grade (red vest). Adventure groups (1973) are for 3rd thru 5th grades (blue vest). Grades 6th thru 8th became Discovery groups (1971) and design their own uniform with white shirt & navy or khaki pants. The Horizon club units remain for boys & girls in 9th thru 12th grades (1941).

But the children of the post war baby boom were growing up and the school age population declined. At the same time more women were working for wages outside the home and the women were unavailable to serve as Bluebird and Camp Fire leaders.

Social and demographic changes as the 20th Century evolved meant that many camps closed over time. Some of the Camp Fire camps became church or family camps, or the properties were used for other purposes as the number of Camp Fire members dwindled.

Of the 60+ Camp Fire camps operating in the 1920's, only nine Camp Fire camps still exist that will celebrate 100 Years of camping.

Of these nine camps, four camps are in the Northwest – Camp Sealath with 350 acres on Vashon Island, WA (1920), Camp Swayolakan with 300 acres on Lake Coeur d'Alene, Idaho (1922), Camp Kirby with 47 acres of sandy spit and woods on Samish Island, WA (1923), and Camp Namanu with 160 acres on the bank of the Sandy River, Oregon (1924).

The other five Camp Fire camps in the U.S. that were established in the 1910's and 1920's that will celebrate 100 Years are: Camp Hantesa adjacent to Ledges State Park in Boone, Iowa (1919), Camp Wathana on 250 acres of woods with two lakes near Holly, Michigan (1922), Camp Tannadoonah on 45 acres overlooking Birch Lake in Vandalia, Michigan (1923), Camp Tanadoona with 100 acres on the shore of Lake Minnewashtain in Minnesota (1924), and Camp Toccoa on 176 acres in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains near Toccoa, Georgia (1927).

Today, the 2022 American Camp Association (ACA) Directory lists 33 Camp Fire camps for boys and girls (on August 9, 2022 the Directory listed 29 Camp Fire camps).

Of these 33 camps, 14 camps offer only day camp sessions, 8 camps offer overnight camping only, and 11 camps offer both day camp and overnight camping sessions (including Camp Swayolakan and Camp Kirby). Not all Camp Fire camps listed in the American Camp Directory have ACA accreditation, but Camp Kirby is ACA accredited.

In 2022, the website of the Camp Fire National Office lists 82 Camp Fire camps in 22 states. Of these 82 camps, 50 camps offer only day camp sessions, 17 camps offer overnight camping only, and 15 camps offer both day camp & overnight camping sessions (including Camp Swayolakan and Camp Kirby).

But camping still provides the opportunity for boys & girls to sleep, cook and hike outdoors; swim; sail; canoe; kayak; learn archery; scale climbing walls; do arts & crafts; experience games and camp activities; sing with friends; and enjoy nights around a campfire. Some camps also offer horseback riding, gardening, rope courses, culinary cooking, astronomy, rowing, rock climbing, rafting, paddle boarding, fishing instruction, and trips out of camp (backpacking, sailing, and canoeing).

Camp Sealth is on the hillside above the saltwater shore of Vashon Island, WA and welcomes boys & girls from throughout the region. Campers arrive by boat from Seattle at the Camp Sealth wharf, and at the end of each session, travel back to Seattle by boat.

As adjacent land became available around the camp, the Seattle Camp Fire council was able to purchase it through community fundraising. On Vashon Island, this has created a wilderness area around the main Camp Sealth site and the camp now has 350 acres (50 acres of the cumulative total of 400 acres were sold to pay expenses). Camp Sealth celebrated 100 years of camping in 2020.

Camp Sealth does not offer a Day Camp program (however, Camp Vashon is a Day Camp that meets separately at Camp Sealth). A short 3-day camping session at Camp Sealth costs \$550 and a 6-day camping session (Sunday through Friday) starts at \$825. Beginning horseback riding for 6-days starts at \$1,095. It costs up to \$1,870 for the 2-week (6 days per week) advanced riding sessions. The CIT/RSIT programs for the would-be camp counselors & riding staff run for 3 weeks (6 days per week) and cost \$1,050 (2022).

Camp Sweyolakan ("Sway-O-Lakan") on the shore of Lake Coeur d'Alene in Idaho also welcomes boys and girls from throughout the region. Camp Sweyolakan is protected by being on Lake Coeur d'Alene (Mica Bay) and reached only by boat.

As more land became available for purchase next door, the camp grew to 300 acres through the efforts of community fundraising. It celebrated 100 years of camping in 2022.

Day camps at Camp Sweyolakan for 5 days (Sunday through Thursday) start at \$235 a session. A 2-day mini-camping session costs \$250 and 6 days of resident camping (Sunday through Friday) cost \$495. A Jr. CIT program for 3-weeks (6 days per week) costs \$870. A Sr. CIT program runs for 5-weeks (6 days per week) and costs \$925 (2022).

Camp Kirby on Samish Island, WA is on 47 acres of sandy spit, saltwater shoreline, beach meadows and woods, and celebrates 100 years of camping in 2023. Camp Kirby provides day camp and summer resident camp programs for boys & girls and welcomes campers from Whatcom, Skagit, Island, & San Juan Counties. The Camp has a rustic summer program centered on children and activities that are appropriate for grades 1-12.

Day camp at Camp Kirby costs \$225 for a Monday thru Thursday session (offered during most resident camp sessions) which runs from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. A half week session of 4 days of resident camping costs \$325 and 7 days of camping (Sunday through Saturday) costs \$595. The CIT I program for 3 weeks (7 days per week) costs \$995. The CIT II program runs for 3 weeks (7 days per week) and costs \$450 (2022).

Camp Namanu ("Nuh-MAH-NOO") on the bank of the Sandy River in Oregon is on 160 acres and celebrates 100 years in 2024. The Camp welcomes boys and girls from throughout the region.

Camp Namanu does not offer a Day Camp program. A half session of 3 days of resident camping starts at \$390 and a 6-day camping session (Sunday through Friday) costs up to \$785. The CIT I program is over 3 weeks (6 days per week) and costs \$1,050. A CIT II program is offered over 4-weeks (6 days per week) and costs \$1,200 (2022).

Of these four old camps, Camp Kirby is most in danger of disappearing due to its small size in acreage, the involvement of the Skagit County Shrine Club in Camp Kirby, and the low-lying sandy spit and beach meadows.

Skagit County will no longer approve the raising of the earthen dikes around the spit to keep out the saltwater (it might have been possible in the 1960's or 1970's). Over time, the rising waters of Puget Sound will flood Camp Kirby more and more frequently.

Skagit County wants the spit to evolve naturally, regardless if buildings will need to be rebuilt due to flooding. Unfortunately, it will be expensive to rebuild TaYiTo, Sandpiper, Health House and the Wood-pecker A-Frame on 3-foot stilts, and stay within the same footprint (per Skagit County restrictions).

Luckily, the older cabins – Crow's Nest, Fir Tree and Seagull – are already up on stilts. The Main Lodge, Bluebird Lodge, the two restroom/shower facilities, Shuta, Evening Star, Jupiter, the double-cabins, and Herman's Hut are on higher ground and usually do not flood.

However, the uninsulated Main Lodge is also showing signs of deterioration since it was built in 1955, and parts of the lodge may need to be completely rebuilt. Camp Kirby will need to initiate Building Campaigns to make needed upgrades to buildings and the Main Lodge.

The other three Camp Fire camps in the NW that will reach 100 Years, have property that was bought by the local Camp Fire councils and paid for through community fundraising efforts, rather than through the purchase and involvement of the local Shrine Club.

Over the years as land became available for purchase next door, the other three camps increased in size. The additional acreage gave the camps more room for hiking and camping. Plus, the camps could sell the extra land when money was needed to replace or build new camp structures, or to settle lawsuits.

The camps on Vashon Island, Lake Coeur d'Alene, and on the Sandy River were also built on higher ground than Kirby so there are few problems with flooding.

However, Camp Kirby should be used and enjoyed until the rising waters of Puget Sound take back the sandy spit and beach meadows, which hopefully will be far in the future. Camp Kirby can still provide a fun, memorable, and exciting camping experience for boys and girls for years to come.



*Camp Kirby on Samish Island -
Beach Meadows, Saltwater Shoreline
and Sandy Spit
with Woods up on the Hill*

But all four of these NW camps (Camp Sealath, Camp Swayolakan, Camp Kirby, and Camp Namanu) started with women such as Carrie Kirby and Susie Tiplin who were among the many women who helped bring Camp Fire to the Pacific Northwest.

The boys, girls, and adults who spend a summer today at Camp Kirby will always cherish their memories of campfires and hikes, camp activities and new friends, and days spent learning, adventuring, and having fun.

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