



silver lake  
mennonite camp

# **Beginnings...**

**with focus on the dining hall  
then and now**

**A presentation to a Silver Lake 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary event  
May 2011**

# Beginnings...

- 1946 – first Ontario-wide youth retreat, Port Rowan planned by Ontario Youth Organization (OYO)

- 1957 – start of twice a year OYO retreats, with summer retreat at Chesley



1959 – first boys' camp at Chesley; 1960 – first week of girls' camp

**...initiated by Ontario Mennonite Youth**

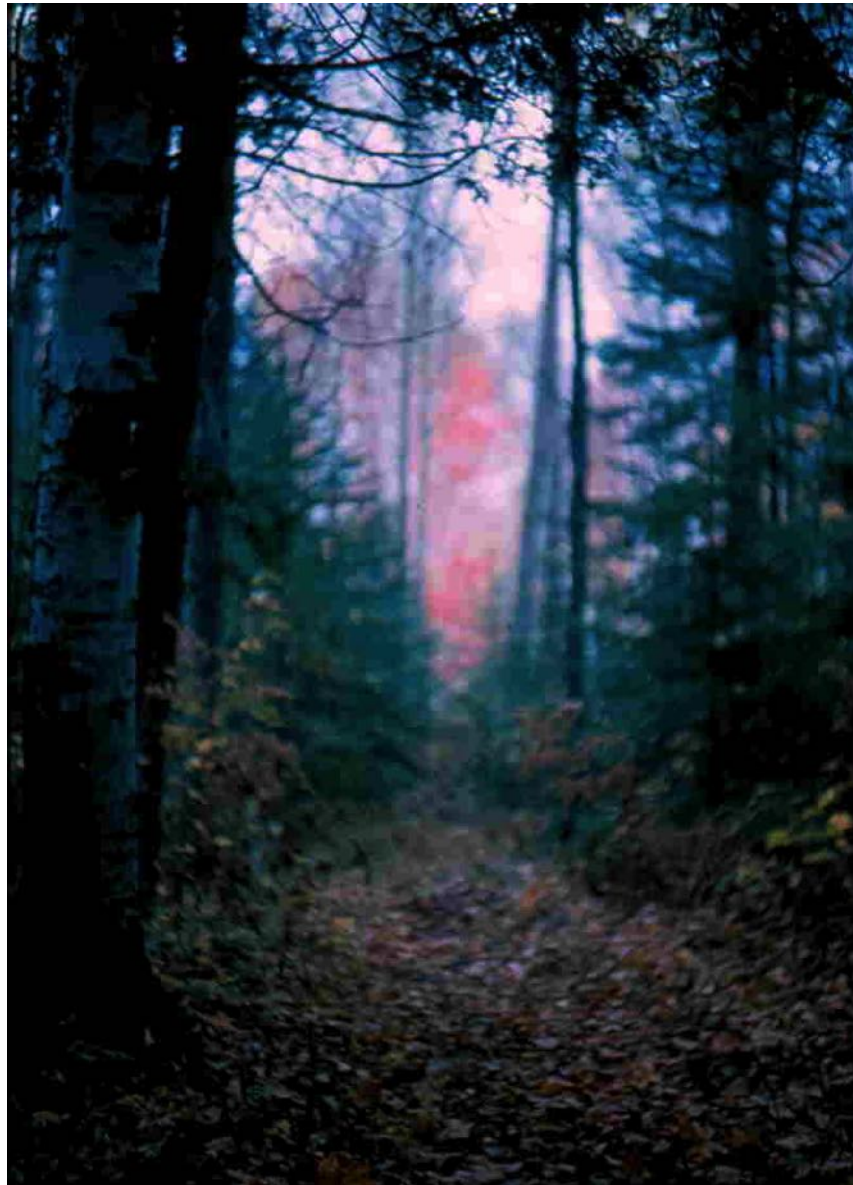


**1960 – OYO inspection of the Silver Lake site**





**1960 – OYO members making plans**



**Early captivating glimpse of future path to the lake**





**Construction of first dining hall  
Summer 1961 – first summer of camping at Silver Lake**





## **Original dining hall**

**Legend:** If you want a safe place, go to the dining hall because the glass is bullet proof. – Chris Steingart, Tim Isaak

- **May 20** – fire
- **May 25** – board decided to rebuild same structure
- **June 1** – lumber arrived
- **June 8** – 25 volunteers start work on kitchen
- **June 15** – kitchen closed
- **June 21** – stove and propane installed
- **June 22** – windows & doors installed
- **June 29** – campers arrive

# 1968 fire

## Dining hall and kitchen



**Summer 1968 – campers ate in kitchen**



# Spring 1969 – rebuilding the dining hall

**April 12** – start  
of construction

**June 29** –  
dedication



**Hoisting first rafter**



**Construction clean up –  
part of a camp director's  
job description 😊**





**The compression ring that holds everything together was welded by John Rogalsky in his back yard. The neighbours thought he must be building a fall-out shelter. – Cathy Paetkau**



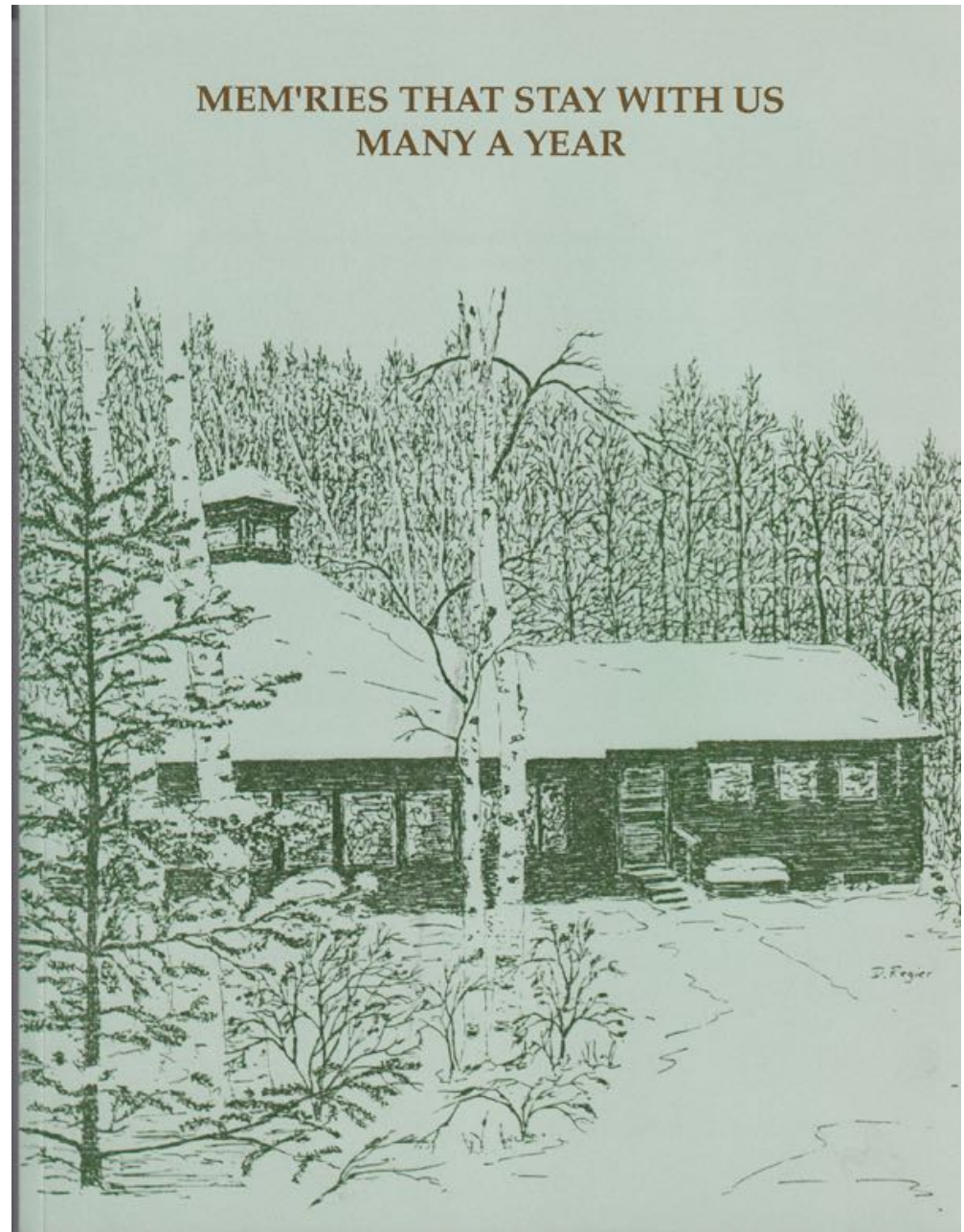
**Dining hall 1969 – 2011**



# The iconic centre of camp

From cover of 25<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary book

(started in 1986 and  
finished in 1992 – before  
the age of everything  
instant internet 😊)



# 2011 fire

## Dining hall

- **Feb 7** – fire damage to dining hall, vestibule & kitchen
- **April ?** – board voted to pursue restoration route
- **Goal** – have dining hall ready for summer camp!







**Floor damage**

**Story – If a child wants to know which way home, stand under the bell tower and look for the name of your town. If the name is low down it is very close; if the name is high up, it is further away. A comfort to children to know the way home. – Karl Dick**



**Charred ceiling – directional sign still hanging**





**Week 1**



**Week 1**





**Week 1**

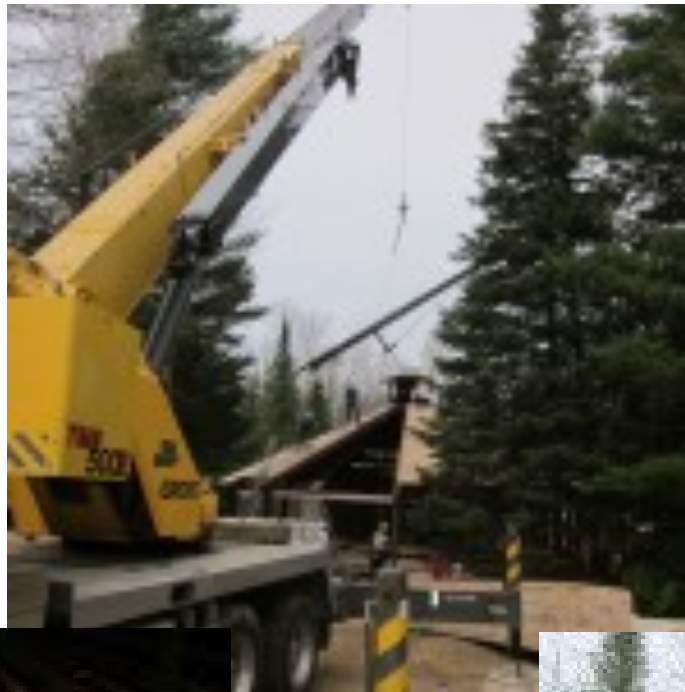




**Week 2**



**Week 2**



**Week 3**



# **Presentation**

by Ron Rempel

## **Thanks to**

Karl Dick for photos from 60s & 70s

Dave Erb for 2011 photos



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