

## Camp Puntchesakut

### Camp Legend

To a former and past camp participant of Camp Puntchesakut, the place now definitely has a grand Camp Site look about it presently.

My name is Charon Spinks (nee Munroe) and I believe my younger sister Delia Albert (nee Munroe) were to have been one of the first campers hailing in from Lytton.

At about the same year, our family was going through a very rough time. However, our mother the late Hilda Austin/Munroe and the one person we knew with whom she confided and asked for help was the late Bishop Dean. Our very kind and gracious Bishop Dean, my sister and I still do not know how he did this, he got us to attend Camp Puntchesakut for two years right after school was out. 1957 -1958.

My sister and I had absolutely no idea where we going. All we knew from what our mother was telling us was we were going to meet with 'lots' of other girls and we were going to learn a whole bunch of things from them and special teachers! Not only did we not know where we going, we asked our driver...'where is Quesnel?'

At that time (and year) when we arrived, after what seemed like a ten hour drive, we were greeted by other girls and very friendly staff. We saw about four buildings...tops! We were taken to our sleeping area, not too much different from our sleeping area at St. George's School residential school. We did not mind a bit.

It was the steady hum for the place that made us feel relaxed and ready to seek and find out what place we had been dropped off. At dinnertime at the Mess hall, we were to have met the rest of the staff, camp counsellors, cooks and anyone else who were there to help us learn new things and have a very good and sacred time.

One of the first things were taken aback to hear was, a camp counsellor play her violin. From here on in, all of we campers begged for our violin player to play for us at the end of each day.

Each day we did learn new things. We did craft work after going finding our own material(s) from our group walks almost on a daily basis. We were divided into groups or teams and each team was responsible for sharing with the group what they learned during the day. The reporting was called 'What did you log for the day'.

Once one group was very ambushes and skillful. They stapled their log report right onto a 'real' log.

Each day was something to look forward to and including 'what will the cook make today?'

One outstanding facility, but wasn't a building at all 'yet' was our place of worship.

Our place of worship was in a tiny little clearing with actual logs for the pews. Our sweaters and/or coats certainly came in handy.

One item that has forever been emblazoned in my mind, thoughts and spirituality.

Our place of worship was set in this clearing and surrounded by beautiful big, green trees.

Where the alter should have been. Someone had the gift of stringing a wooden cross and using an invisible fishing string from one tree to the opposite and securing this tiny but beautiful cross in mid air.

On any nice sunny mornings (of which were many ). Our 'alter' did definitely take on a very sacred and beautiful picture to witness.

This memory is a staff and a healing place in my life and have found myself going back to that memory for comfort whenst I need it most.

Looking at the Ariel view of Camp Puchesakut now. One can not only see and appreciate the tremendous work done in and around the camp. I cannot help but feel the healing power in and around the now 'new' grounds. Albeit, the sacredness of the lake has and always will be there for now and generations to come.

I can still hear and many a time, feel the joyous camaraderie among all campers, staff and caregivers of Camp Puchesakut of years gone by.

I feel sure that the same joy, peace and worship is also still there for any and all campers to witness and take part in in grace.

Camp Puchesakut has played a very important part in mine and my sister's growing years and will forever keep sharing some of what we learned and has helped us keep an open mind and heart to anyone who may need encouragement or who may need to give one's self some quiet time, to re-energize one's self and learn to see things through gracious eyes.

Forever on the Healing Journey

Charon Spinks (nee Munroe)

Nlakapamux Elder from the Lytton First Nations