

# The Vintage Rabun Quarterly

## The Children Came to Play

### Inside this issue

- More camp photos
- Tourism Quiz



"Pop" Jameson, founder of Camp Dixie for Boys and Girls, near the totem pole at the camp, c. 1940.

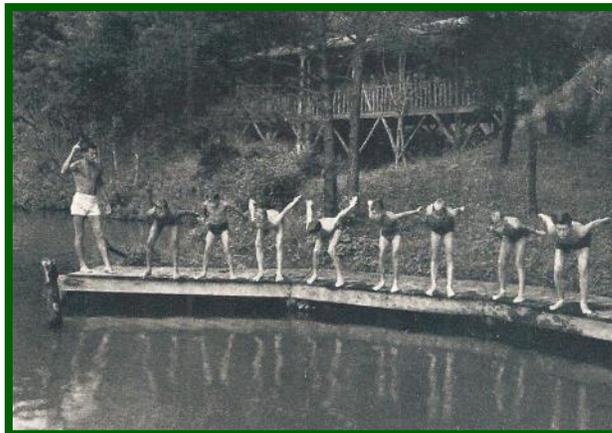
- Please visit our museum and research library on Mondays and Fridays from 10:00 until 2:00 and on Wednesdays from 12:30 until 4:30.
- Group tours by appointment

Beginning in 1898 when the Athens Y Camp for boys was established in Tallulah Falls, Rabun County became home to dozens of children's summer camps. Parents could send their youngsters to enjoy rustic living and outdoor activities in the cool mountain air for part or all of the summer season.

A.A. "Pop" Jameson, with his background in building the Boy Scouts of America, came south in 1914 and found what he believed to be the perfect location for a summer camp. He organized Camp Dixie for Boys and later a similar camp for girls, which would become two of the county's largest summer institutions. By 1935, *The Clayton Tribune* reported that a special train was to run between Atlanta and Clayton because the staff and campers were too numerous to be handled on the regular train. Two hundred and fifty children from 18 states were enrolled that summer in the two Dixie camps. The staff numbered more than 150.

C.W. Smith moved his family from Florida to Clayton in 1915 and began Laurel Falls Camp for girls in 1920. His famous daughter, the writer Lillian Smith, would eventually operate the camp herself. As she put it "... suddenly Rabun County was swarming with children."

Dozens of other children's camps opened including Red Barron's camp for boys in Mountain City, Chattooga for girls, Cherokee for boys, the Boy

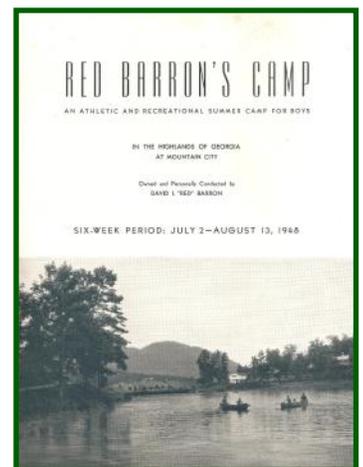


Scouts in Chechero, and a Baptist camp just outside Clayton. Said "Lillian Smith, "The children were everywhere: singing, hiking, camping, picnicking, looking for birds, swimming and galloping down roads on horses..."

As the children were changed by their mountain adventures, so Rabun County changed too. The mostly urban affluent camp attendees sometimes shocked isolated, conservative locals. After World War I, it was reported that the newfangled style of "bloomers" rather than dresses with black stockings caused an uproar and letters poured in to camp directors expressing outrage. But the camps brought badly needed money and jobs. In 1935, Pop Jameson estimated he spent \$20,000 per year with local businesses, a huge amount during the Great Depression. Locals held jobs as cooks, drivers, cleaners and maintenance

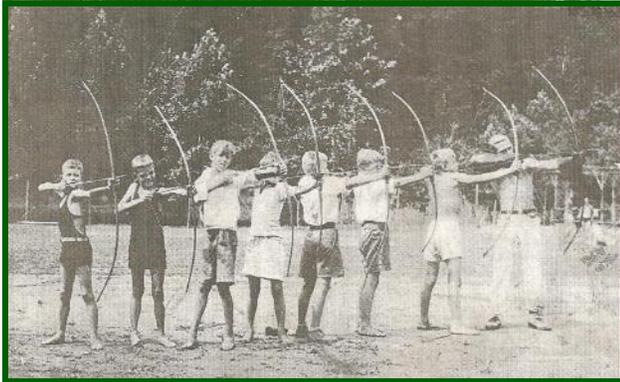
men, further aiding an economy strapped by hard economic times.

The blossoming of summer camps for children in Rabun County can be viewed as part of the larger blossoming of the tourist industry in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After all, the parents visited too, dropping off and picking up their campers. They no doubt enjoyed the adult pleasures of summer in Rabun County, like beauty, coolness, great food, peace and quiet. As camp director Lillian Smith pointed out, all these adult pleasures are well and good, but "the children came to play." They still come today.



# More Summer Camp Photos

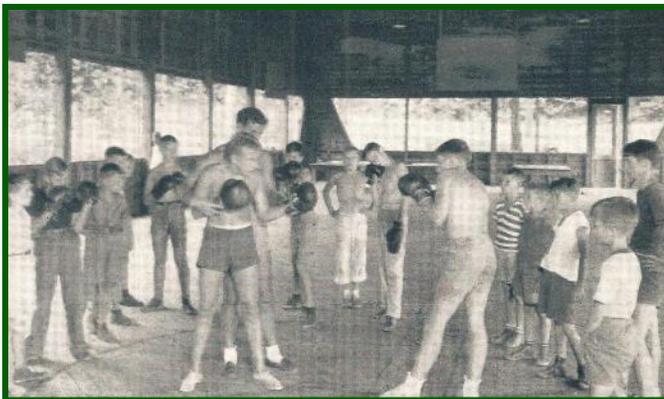
Girls had limited access to Athens Y-Camp for Boys until a new girls camp was created called Camp Chattooga in 1932 adjacent to the original boys camp. This photo was made at the boys camp in the 1920s.



The Athens Y-Camp still operates on 365 acres just north of Tallulah Falls. This photo is of an archery class from the 1930s.

A way from the flea-bitten, sin-filled, God-forsaken cities of man, into the valley of the Paradise of Youth, where God and a good time are friends.

—Former sign at the Athens “Y” Camp for Boys



Boxing instruction at Red Barron's Camp for Boys in Mountain City, 1950s. The camp specialized in all types of sports activities.

Woodworking class at Camp Cherokee for Boys on Lake Burton in 1936.



# Tourism Quiz



The Beale House

1. This family-owned hotel featured Rabun County's first concrete swimming pool.
2. This famous hotel and dining room was originally called Oaklawn in its current location
3. This hotel in Clayton featured a miniature golf course on its front lawn during the 1930s.
4. This Clayton hotel was built before 1910 and originally operated as the Dozier Hotel.



The Bleckley House

5. These summer camps for children were established by a former Boy Scouts of America founder
6. In 1897, this town's mayor advertised it as a safe place to escape the malaria of southern coasts in summer.
7. This family operated a hotel and a summer camp for girls just east of Clayton.

8. This boarding house near the Little Tennessee River had its own stop on the Tallulah Falls Railroad.
9. This business owner claimed that, in 1954, her dining room fed 4,197 persons one Sunday in August.
10. This hotel on Main Street in Clayton catered to traveling salesmen and was one of the few to remain open year-round.
11. This Tallulah Falls hotel was built by R.H. Moss of Athens in 1882 on the edge of Tallulah Gorge, a stone's throw from the train depot.
12. This town was the highest elevation point on the Tallulah Falls Railroad. The Blue Heights Hotel and the New Rabun Hotel were within walking distance of the depot.
13. This hotel featuring ornate Victorian architecture was one of the few to escape the 1921 fire that almost completely wiped out the town of Tallulah Falls.
14. This 3-story hotel on North Main Street was built by a lawyer and state legislator. It burned in 1936 and was never rebuilt.
15. Before the Tallulah Falls Railroad arrived in 1905 bringing the birth of tourism, historian Dr. Andrew Ritchie called it a "ramshackle town."
16. In 1848, this log house with cracks in the roof and windows with no glass was the only accommodation for travelers to the remote beauty spot of gorge and waterfalls at Tallulah.
17. This restaurant chain was Rabun's first tourist stop in the 1950s when travelling northward on Highway 441.

18. This summer camp for boys was operated by a former football star who was later charged with murdering his wife.
19. This hotel on Clayton's Main Street has burned at least twice, the last time in 1946.



The New Rabun Hotel

- A. Carrie Edwards Dillard
- B. Beale House
- C. Camp Dixie
- D. Tallulah Falls
- E. Hamby Hotel
- F. Clayton
- G. Stuckey's
- H. Bleckley House
- I. York House
- J. C.W. Smith
- K. Mountain City
- L. Cliff House
- M. Blue Ridge Hotel
- N. Red Barron's
- O. Glenbrook Hotel
- P. Bynum House
- Q. Dillard House
- R. Hotel Green
- S. Clayton Hotel/Old Clayton Inn

6-D	0-3-O	
5-C	12-K	19-S
4-R	11-L	18-N
3-H	10-M	17-G
2-Q	9-A	16-B
1-P	8-I	15-F
Answers:	7-J	14-E

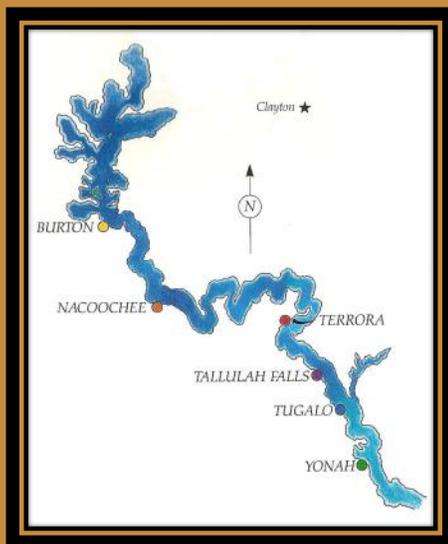
Rabun County Historical Society  
81 North Church Street  
P.O. Box 921  
Clayton, GA 30525

Phone: 706-782-5292  
E-mail: [rabunhsy@windstream.net](mailto:rabunhsy@windstream.net)



*Please visit our museum and see our exciting new slide show on the "big screen."*

We're on the web!  
[www.rabunhistory.org](http://www.rabunhistory.org)



**Damming  
the  
Tallulah:  
1911  
to  
1926**