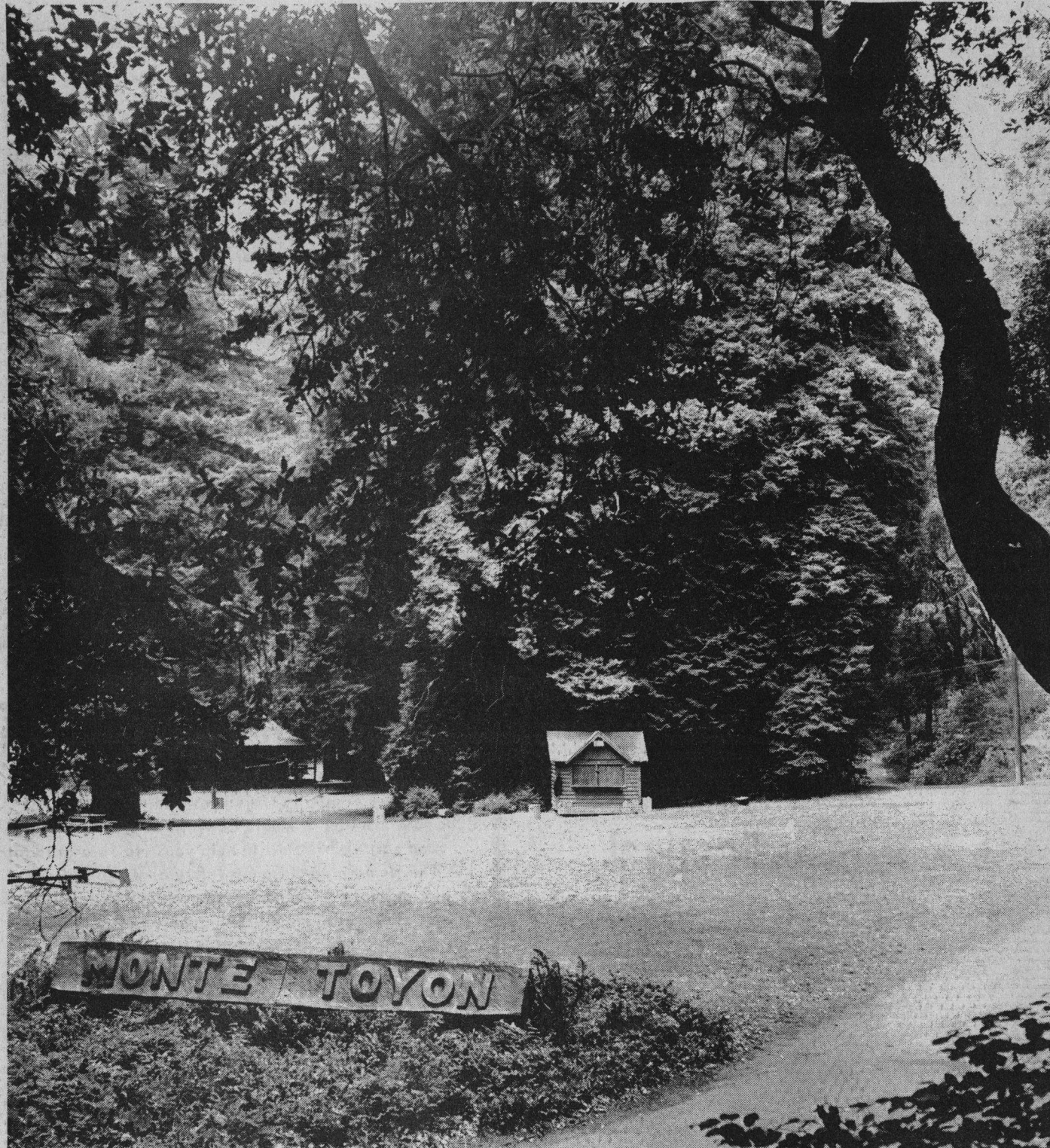


Camps

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# Nestled among the Aptos redwoods is Methodist camping mecca Monte Toyon



Thirty-five years ago a dreamer and naturalist named Charles Wesley Burns was walking the mountains above the tiny hamlet of Aptos when he came upon a virtual wonderland of redwoods.

So impressed was he by his discovery that he used his influence as Bishop of the Methodist church to persuade the Methodist Summer Conference association to purchase 30 acres of this land, later to be called Monte Toyon.

In November of 1963 the Association gave the property and facilities to the California-Nevada Conference of the Methodist church. Responsibility for the management of the 100-acre camping and conference site is now in the hands of the Board of Education of the Conference, which has delegated the actual operation of the camp to the Division of Camps and Conference.

About every two years a new structure is built to create facilities for Christian conferences and camps. The campground is a source of rich memories of wonderful experiences in friendship and is a monument to the high commitment of hundreds of persons now living within California and Nevada, who lend their money and labor towards making Monte Toyon and the other camps the deep and rich heritages of service "to Christian education."

(There are also Methodist camps at Mount Shasta, Lake Tahoe, in Napa Valley, near Yosemite National Park and in Kings Canyon, 40 miles east of Porterville.)

The poet-laureate Edwin Markam, who roamed these very same acres wrote:

"Let us be reverent a little as we stand here in the hush of these leafy sanctuaries -- be reverent a little; if reverence in this age is possible. These great trees have seen hundreds of our human generations rise and give off their pettiness. They seem indeed, to be forms of immortality standing here among the transition shapes of time ..."

One of the highlights of this year's summer camp was the appearance of The Methodist Actors Serving the Church, a drama workshop that presented "Eyes Upon The Cross," a Don Mueller production.

More than 50 members of the Wesley Foundation Pioneer Alumni Group gathered at the new Helgasson Hall. It was something like old home week for most, as many of them were among the original group who organized the foundation at Stanford University more than 20 years ago.

Greetings were sent by John Cranston and his wife, who were visiting Thailand. John was the first student president of the group. Among those attending were Roger Pryor, Marion Walker and his wife Dorothea and son Russell and wife; Harry and Mary

Banks; Gerry and Marjory Brown; Richard and Ruth Cross; Carol Kellogg and daughter, and two real pioneers -- James Nute and Jean Balcomb. Jean and Ruth Cross read the many greetings sent by absent members, including one from Dr. Harold Wyndham of Sydney Australia, who wrote:

"Greetings to the clan gathered at Monte Toyon today. I guess that for you, as for me, these associations 'on the farm' and in the beautiful redwoods made all the difference to our time at Stanford."

The Board of Education's new executive secretary, Al Hoffman, and his wife, were on hand for the reunion, along with the directors of Monte Toyon.

They were: Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Hull and Roy Badgeley.

Engineer Walter Bayha exhibited maps and models of the enlarged Monte Toyon, describing the need for a comfortable all-year-around retreat. To achieve this a fellowship center with kitchen and dining room will be needed.

One of the "dreams" of pioneers Richard and Dessie Silverthorn soon to be a reality is a chapel. The group voted to assume the responsibility of constructing a small chapel atop the mountain, affording worshippers a view of the forest and bay.

In recognition of the couple's dedication to Monte Toyon the association voted to call it the Silverthorn Chapel. The idea of a chapel was first discussed two years ago during a reunion of the alumni. It will serve as a worship area for the retreat groups and as a focal point for Wesley Foundation Alumni meetings. It will have a seating capacity for 50 people, plus a meeting and dining hall and kitchen.

Accommodations at Monte Toyon include Farr Lodge, which can handle groups of 30 or smaller; Berger Cottage, which can handle groups of 8 or smaller; Berger Lodge, which can take care of 70 people; Farr Cottage, accommodating 20 people; Morris Lodge, accommodating 44 people, and Miller Lodge, handling 34 people.

Recreational activities include hiking, swimming, basketball, and various indoor and outdoor group games. There is a library and dining hall, as well as an outdoor amphitheater and outdoor worship areas.

California and Nevada Methodists can be justifiably proud of Monte Toyon -- Mount of the Flaming Bush -- and the other camps they have developed. By purchasing and developing these camps the church has played a lasting part in the conservation of our natural resources, preserving over 1,000 acres of primitive beauty for a significant use.

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# Central County News

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