

## **Camp Luey Our Conference's First Modern Camp**

Rev. Benjamin Finkle Bungard (1882-1975) of the Allegheny Conference of the United Brethren Church was a true visionary when it came to camping and youth ministry. In the 1920's, when summer youth institutes in all denominations were patterned after adult Bible conferences, B.F. Bungard led the Altoona First UB Church in the organizing, equipping and staffing of the type of church camp that would not become the norm until after World War II.

In 1996, Altoona First UB (renamed Trinity UM following the 1968 denominational union) merged into its daughter congregation Altoona Second Avenue – and one would be hard-pressed to find any documentation that the camp ever existed. The last formal reference to the ministry appears to be the following lines in the 1951 Centennial Celebration booklet for First UB.

Dr. B.F Bungard served the church from 1922 to 1931. It was during this time that a Camp was purchased and maintained for the entire church. Many are the reminiscent tales that are still told of the fine fellowship and the bond of unity that the camp brought.

The camp was a project of the congregation, and the first and only reference to the camp appearing in the minutes of the Allegheny Conference is the following statement from 1925.<sup>1</sup>

Camp Luey. Altoona First Church has a camp for recreation and Bible study located some thirteen miles from Huntingdon, at the foot of Stone Mountain. There are two buildings. The one is 32 by 46 feet, and the other is of such size as to have sleeping accommodations for seventy-five persons. Mornings are given to Bible study and hiking, while the rest of the time is given to sports, such as boating, swimming, tennis, fishing, etc. The camp had been name "LUEY" and has a value of \$4600... B.F. Bungard is the pastor.

Fortunately, the camp drew the attention of the local newspapers, and we have the following account from 1926 that sheds some light on the operation of the facility.<sup>2</sup>

### **Spending Ten Days at Stone Creek and Having Fine Time Program**

Camp Luey, First United Brethren church. Stone Creek, Huntingdon County, July 14. (Special to the Altoona Tribune)

Boys of the First United Brethren church who had been camping here for ten days broke camp-on July 5 and were immediately followed by a bevy of girls. The camp is in one of the most picturesque spots in the foot hills of Stone mountain. It is the only private church camp belonging to an Altoona congregation and its owners are proud of it as an advance step in modern church equipment.

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<sup>1</sup> Journal of the Allegheny Conference of the United Brethren Church, 1925, page 71.

<sup>2</sup> *Altoona Tribune*, 7/15/1926, page 4.

Both youth and older people have opportunity to use the camp. The roster shows the following names Margaret Sidler, Dorothy Sink, Bertha Bush, Viola Cook, Ruth Evans, Sarah Guyer, Charlotte Guyer, Betty Sitterle, Dorothy Keirn, Charlotte Wagner, Hazel Morrison, Geraldine Keirn, Eloise Strawser, Marjorie Hudson, Bernice Keller, Pearl Fleck, Mrs. Wilbur Bayle, Marjorie Bayle, Mrs. M. L. Butler, Mrs. Lee Heverly, Monica Stoehr, Mrs. John Ardell, Gaynell Ardell, Mrs. J.L. Tobin, Florence Wagner, Barbara Jean Bungard, Mrs. B.F. Bungard, Mrs. Mabel MacElwee, Mrs. H.L. Miller, C.B. Shay and the Rev. B.F. Bungard.

More than 100 visitors were recorded on Sunday. The day came to a fitting climax when the Rev. Ernest Doloway<sup>3</sup> delivered an inspiring sermon to a large audience at 7:30. On Thursday evening there will be an old fashioned outdoor meeting. The Rev. B.F. Bungard, the pastor, will preach the sermon. Music will be in charge of Tom Filer<sup>4</sup> and the male quartette. Everybody welcome.

A newspaper account for the following year indicates the size of the camp enrollment and other details.<sup>5</sup>

The First United Brethren church camp opened Monday with thirty-three boys enrolled and fifty anticipated within a few days. The camp is located near Huntingdon. Rev. B.F. Bungard, pastor, is in charge, with C.B. Shay<sup>6</sup> assisting. Frank Good<sup>7</sup> is cook. The sports to be enjoyed are quoit pitching, hiking, fishing, shooting mark, swimming, volleyball, and groundhog hunting. The boys are congenial. Any person wishing to come down for Sunday dinner will drop the pastor a card at Huntingdon RD No. 2. A chicken dinner will be served on July 4 for a small sum. Those wishing to attend please notify those in charge.

In 1928, an extended article gave considerable more information about the background and location of the camp – as well as details about the physical facility and the daily routine.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ernest S. Doloway was serving the Methodist's Juniata Gap charge 1925-26 as a local preacher. He came to the area after being affiliated with a Baptist church in Endicott NY.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas A. Filer (1897-1993) was a 1916 graduate of the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children. Known locally as a blind artist and musician he worked as a self-employed piano tuner. He later (1929) married Miss June E. Walker (1898-1979) of Philipsburg. The couple remained active members at First UB all their lives – Thomas as a Sunday School teacher, a member of the choir for 65 years, and the congregation's official soloist and June as a leader in the Ladies Aid Society. In 1936 he was credentialed by the Allegheny Conference as a singing evangelist.

<sup>5</sup> *Altoona Mirror* 6/29/1927, page 9.

<sup>6</sup> Clinton Bradley Shay (1860-1931) was an active lay member at First UB. He was retired after many years as a machinist in the Juniata shops of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Heyer Good (1886-1966) was born in Altoona and over the years was involved in several enterprises – a hardware store in Petersburg, a Maytag store in Huntingdon, and a grocery store in Williamsburg. A 1976 address by Sara Kocher LaPorte on "Growing Up in Petersburg" recalls Frank Good as "a short, heavy-set guy, and he lined up all the Memorial Day parades."

<sup>8</sup> *Altoona Mirror*, 6/28/1928, page 40.

### UNITED BRETHREN CAMP WILL OPEN

Boys of Church will Occupy Recreation Grounds  
for Period of Ten Days Beginning on Monday

The First United Brethren Church of this city will open its summer camp located at the feet of Stone mountain in Huntingdon county for the summer on Monday when a group of forty boys will enter the camp for a period of ten days.

Rev. B.F. Bungard, pastor of the church, will be in charge of the camp. He will be assisted by C.B. Shay in the general supervision while Amos "Perky" Davis<sup>9</sup>, former Senior High school athlete, will be in charge of the camp sports. Frank Good, chef for the past encampments, will again serve this year.

"Camp Louie" as it is known is delightfully located on the Tom E. Hearn<sup>10</sup> farm along Stone creek at the foot of the mountains about thirteen miles from Huntingdon. The present season will be the sixth for the camp and it has proved extremely popular in past years.

This year will be no exception in its popularity. For the ten days following the boys' camp, the girls of the church will occupy the grounds under the direction of Mrs. W.E. Keirn.<sup>11</sup> Miss Gaynell Ardell<sup>12</sup> will supervise the sports of the girls. When the girls' term of occupation is ended, the camp will be turned over to various organizations of the church and reservations have already been made for use of the camp up to and including Labor Day.

"Camp Louie" was named in honor of Mrs. Louise Hearn<sup>13</sup>, wife of Thomas E.

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<sup>9</sup> Amos "Perky" Davis (1908-1999) was a star halfback and captain for the Altoona High School football team. He graduated in 1928 and played football for Gettysburg Academy [a preparatory school and "feeder" institution for Gettysburg College that closed during the Depression] before transferring to and playing for the University of Virginia at Charlottesville. From 1966 to 1975 he served as the Blair County District Attorney.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Enyeart Hearn (1871-1942) was a member of Altoona First UB church, even though he lived northeast of Huntingdon. He was a sawyer, thresherman and farmer. Rev. Bungard returned to the area from his appointment in Somerset to conduct his funeral.

<sup>11</sup> Mrs. William E. Keirn (1881-1954), maiden name Mabel G. Orr, was an active member at First UB. Her husband William (1878-1959) was a carpenter for the Pennsylvania Railroad and the superintendent of the Junior Department at First UB. She is the mother of the previously mentioned Dorothy and Geraldine Keirn.

<sup>12</sup> Miss Gaynell V. Ardell (1889-1966) was issued a preaching license in 1926 by the Altoona First quarterly conference and in 1927 by the Allegheny Conference. She was ordained in 1929. While most of her ministry was spent in religious education and young people's work, she served under appointment as the ordained preacher for brief periods at three different appointments. She was very effective in her work. One report (*Tyrone Daily Herald*, 2/17/1931, page 2) states that in a single year she was credited with 176 sermons/addresses, 94 sermonettes, 225 conferences, 65 Sunday School visitations (at 25 of which she taught the lesson), 28 Christian Endeavor services, 57 day schools, 10 VBS programs (6 of which she conducted), 26 leadership conferences, 53 children's meetings, and assisting in 6 revivals. Obviously those figures must include considerable overlap – but she was truly a dedicated worker. She is the namesake of at least one child – Mrs. Gaynell Ardell (nee Bennett) Zimmerman (1923-2005), the mother of retired Rev. Peggy J. Bonsell of the Susquehanna Conference UMC.

<sup>13</sup> Mrs. Hearn (1872-1937) appears to have an interesting back story. While she is referred to as "Louise" in this article and in her newspaper obituary (*Huntingdon Daily News*, 9/20/1937, page 6), her gravestone names her "Louisa" – and her common nickname (phonetically loo-eee) appears in print as both "Luey" and "Louie". Furthermore, she maintained her membership at Mount Zion

Hearn, who donated the ground on which the camp is located. Mrs. Hearn has always been known by the nickname of “Louie” and when the matter of naming the camp was discussed by the church authorities, they decided no better name could be found for the establishment.

For the past four years the camp has been equipped with comfortable buildings, and it contains every facility for an extremely enjoyable and healthful outing. The boys and girls of the church are permitted to take a friend with them to the camp, even though the friend is not affiliated with the church.

As usual, the camp will serve a chicken dinner on the Fourth of July to all visitors. Last year the dinner was served to more than eighty persons, and already this year there are a number of reservations. A small charge is made for the dinner, and everyone wishing to visit the camp and enjoy the dinner should notify Rev. Bungard either at his home prior to his departure for camp or at the camp which may be reached by mail addressed to Huntingdon RD No. 2.

Those newspaper articles are the only known primary source material about the camp. B.F. Bungard served Altoona First UB from the fall of 1922 until the fall of 1931. He began operating the camp in 1923, during his first full summer at the appointment, and continued it at least through 1928. While there appear to be no more newspaper articles about the site as a church camp, a December 1930 item<sup>14</sup> refers to the location as the “Thomas Hearn Hunting Camp” and names Rev. Bungard as the president of the membership.<sup>15</sup>

In conclusion, it should be noted that Rev. Bungard passed his vision on to his son William S. Bungard (1914-2004) who was licensed by the Allegheny Conference in 1933 and graduated from the denomination’s Otterbein College in 1937. William entered the ministry of the YMCA. In Piqua OH, he organized that state’s first high school group for black teens. In Attleboro MA, where he labored from 1948 to 1979, he led a YMCA program from the verge of bankruptcy to one of the best in the state.<sup>16</sup>

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Lutheran Church, 6 miles NE of Huntingdon, where she and her husband were married and in whose cemetery they are buried – but she obviously had close ties with Altoona First UB church Altoona where her husband was a member, and Rev. Bungard returned to the area from his appointment in Johnstown to conduct her funeral.

<sup>14</sup> *Altoona Mirror*, 12/5/1930, page 67.

<sup>15</sup> The ownership of the property during its camp years is uncertain. The 1951 Centennial Celebration booklet stated that the camp “was purchased and maintained for the entire church” and the 1926 *Altoona Tribune* article stated it was camp “belonging to an Altoona congregation and its owners are proud of it.” But the 1928 article states the camp is located “on the Tom E. Hearn farm” and that he “donated the ground on which the camp is located.” Exactly who owned the property, the reason the camp ceased operating, and details regarding the transition from a church camp to a hunting camp (with pastor apparently heavily involved!) remain a mystery. The present partnership members of the T.E. Hearn Hunting Camp, which has expanded to become one of the largest privately owned single contiguous tracts in Huntingdon County, appear to be mostly from the Somerset area – where Bungard served 1938-49 and where he is buried. It seems that Hearn himself was never directly involved in the hunting camp.

<sup>16</sup> A complete obituary appears on the Legacy.com website for June 18, 2004.

It should also be noted that Rev. Bungard's daughter Barbara Jean, mentioned in the 1926 newspaper article, continued her father's vision for service within the church. She married United Brethren pastor Allen W. Reed (1921-1971) who served in the Western Pennsylvania Conference of the EUB/UM Church.

Now almost 100 years old, at least one of the buildings of Camp Luey is still standing in good repair and in regular use. The property is on Stone Creek Ridge Road – a paved road that follows the eastern ridge of the valley of Standing Stone Creek north from Huntingdon until it crosses the creek and intersects PA 26 just south of the Wesley Chapel UMC of the Manor Hill charge. The approximate address is 7301 Stone Creek Ridge Road.

The sign at the entrance reads “T.E. Hearn Hunting Camp, established 1928” – which suggests that 1928 was indeed the final year for the property as a church camp and the date of its transition to a private facility.

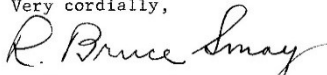


The dormitory at Camp Luey, able to accommodate 75 campers.  
picture taken August 2021

Final note: The editor wishes to thank the following persons who have contributed to this article, and without whose assistance the information here presented could not have been assembled: Lonnie Smith and the Huntingdon County Historical Society; Stephen Jackson, great-grandson of the brother of Thomas Hearn; Robert Hearn, grandson of Thomas Hearn.

## Epilogue. Camp Luey in Perspective

The following 1966 letter from the Central Pennsylvania Conference (Methodist) shows just how far ahead of the curve Camp Luey really was. The pattern in the Evangelical and United Brethren conferences was basically identical.

Central Pennsylvania Conference Board of Education The Methodist Church		
LYCOMING COLLEGE	WILLIAMSPORT, PENNSYLVANIA	AREA CODE 1-717 326-2471
<b>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:</b> FRANK W. AKE, PRESIDENT EDWIN E. WAY, VICE-PRESIDENT WILLIAM M. BROWN, SECRETARY KENNETH E. HIMES, TREASURER JOHN F. STAMM R. BRUCE SMAY D. FREDERICK WERTZ	<b>MALCOLM V. MUSSINA, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY</b>	<b>PROGRAM DIRECTORS:</b> NORMAN L. MARDEN GENERAL CHURCH SCHOOL WORK BRUCE D. FISHER YOUTH WORK VICTOR K. MEREDITH, JR. ADULT WORK CAMPS AND CONFERENCES MRS. WILLIAM K. FULTON, JR. CHILDREN'S WORK
<p>Do you remember years ago when you attended an Epworth League Institute at Pine, or Eagles Mere, or Newton Hamilton? What wonderful experiences they were and how valuable they were in molding our outlook on life and for many these weeks away in the hills greatly influenced our life's vocation.</p> <p>For fifty-five years, beginning in 1911, the Central Pennsylvania Conference of The Methodist Church has made such opportunities available to youth, children, and adults. Thousands have attended these summer activities. This program of Christian education out-of-doors has grown from one week a summer in the earliest years to twenty-eight weeks this past summer.</p> <p>With this growth in activities has grown a need for additional facilities. Additional facilities have likewise resulted in the need for additional financial support.</p> <p>The enclosed printed materials tell something of the nature of our appeal and needs. You may want to seriously consider your opportunity to assist in this work for today's and tomorrow's campers.</p> <p>A gift of twenty-five dollars will provide a week's experience at camp next summer for a needy child. The income from a five hundred dollar gift will insure such an experience for years to come. Again you may find the enclosed folder, "What Shall I Do," suggestive.</p> <p>We would be pleased to hear from you.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Very cordially,              R. Bruce Smay, Chairman            Committee on Camps and Conferences</p> <p>pals</p>		

The letter appeals to those Methodists with memories of "Epworth League Institutes" – and not what would qualify as modern church camps. These institutes were originally held on campmeeting grounds and modeled after the Chautauqua Institutes for adults. When the Pine campmeeting site in Wayne township, along

the West Branch of the Susquehanna River near McElhatten, Clinton County, was destroyed by the flood of 1889, the institute moved to the resort facilities at Eagles Mere. The tabernacle, hotel and private cottages at Newton Hamilton took shape in the 1910's. The conference began erecting lodges and cabins specifically for young people in the 1920's, and the grounds were dedicated by Bishop McDowell as the "Methodist Training Camp" in 1926.

The Central Pennsylvania Conference of the Evangelical Church also founded a Bible Conference site at Pine Station in Clinton County in 1894 and eventually moved to the higher ground at Central Oak Heights in 1909. The young people's work consisted of Christian Endeavor "conventions" until "camps" for boys and girls as young as 14 were added in the 1940's. But the promotional material made it clear that "there are formal courses required of each camper" and "the church camp offers an intensive experience in Christian Education."

The Pennsylvania Conference of the United Brethren Church began holding annual "conventions" for young people as early as 1891 at various campmeeting sites. In 1935 "Camp Penn" was founded as a "Leadership Training School" on the campus of Lebanon Valley College. It wasn't until 1946 that Camp Penn moved to its present rural site at Old Forge and became what is now considered a true camp. Yes, Camp Luey was definitely ahead of the curve.



This building on a lot adjacent to the present T.E. Hearn Hunting Camp may have been used as a dining/meeting facility at Camp Luey. Known as the Slacks schoolhouse, it was erected in 1915 to replace an earlier structure that had been destroyed by fire and is now a private camp.

**Photo Appendix.**



**namesakes of the T.E. Hearn Hunting Camp and the United Brethren Camp Luey**  
Thomas E. Hearn (1871-1942)      Louisa J. Kenyon Hearn (1872-1937)  
photo believed to have been taken on their wedding day in 1891

**visionary of Camp Luey**  
Rev. Benjamin Finkle Bungard (1882-1975)

United Brethren pastor  
two terms (1915-16 and 1919-20) in the  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

