

My First Trip Campin

My Dad and my older brother, Harry, had been camping at the Blackstone River in the Rocky Mountains with the Boy Scouts. They talked about their adventures and I always wished I could go. Now was the time, I was finally going on a camping trip with my family including Uncle Bob, Aunt Rose and their children.

After driving through Rocky Mountain House, we ventured on the long drive to Nordegg, the last place for gas, on gravel roads. We headed for the Forestry Trunk road which still isn't paved.

The dust seeped through the open car windows and coated everything. We were following my Uncle Bob and Aunt Rose's truck and camper and because we were so close behind we couldn't even see the scenery. The dust was in our nostrils, we even tasted the dirt.

About two hours later, the air cleared and the sound of the tires quieted as we turned onto a dirt road into the bush. The trees were so close that I heard the branches rubbing on the side of our Studebaker car. Once we arrived, I helped put up our big green canvas tent and Mom asked me to gather kindling for the fire. Harry and I soon found enough wood to start a campfire so we could make hot dogs for lunch.

After lunch, my sister Julie, Harry and our cousins went exploring. There was a sense of calmness and timelessness. I heard the sound of Wapiabi Creek as the fresh clear water tumbled over and around the tiny colourful rounded rocks that were worn over millions of years.

The smell of supper cooking lured us back to the campground. It seemed the food tasted better when eaten outside in the fresh air. We enjoyed our time sitting around the campfire in our winter jackets. In the mountains, it cooled off when the sun sent down.

We were told quite abruptly that we had to go to bed. I was tired from the day and was just drifting off when I hear laughter and smelled something cooking on the campfire. I opened the zipper of the tent and saw my parents and my uncle and aunt enjoying the trout they had caught today. I was a little miffed that I missed out on the delicious fish, but I guessed there wasn't enough to share.

It was cold in the morning. The sleeping bag was warm and snugly and I didn't want to get up. I dressed quickly and walked off for a walk by the creek. The campsite area was familiar to me by this time. I heard a strange noise in the bush, so I ran back to tell Mom and Dad. They heard it too. Dad said it was a cow moose calling for a mate. Even though I didn't see the moose, I was excited just to hear her. I knew she was there and wondered where the bull moose might be.

There was dampness in the air. The sky was overcast with looming black clouds. This was not good news for me. I was ready for another day of fun and exploring.

"We have to pack up camp," Dad said.

"Why?" I asked.

"Because we won't be able to get out of here if it rains," Dad said.

"How do you know it's going to rain? Couldn't we just wait and see?" I was whining by this time.

"No, the rain would wash the road out, and we can't take any chances, You need to pack up," Dad said.

I moaned and groaned, talking to myself under my breath.

"It's nice here, I don't want to leave," I complained.

At Fish Lake, the new campground, up on the gravel road closer to Nordegg, there were campers, trailers and tents. Sounds of campers chopping wood, noisy cars and other children were invading my space. I wanted to keep the memory of the creek, the leaves rustling in the breeze, the crack and smell of the campfire and the anticipation of hearing another moose call or even seeing a moose in my head. I started to complain again about having to leave Wapiapi Creek. Uncle Bob had a movie camera and decided to capture his niece's tantrum. When I was visiting Aunt Rose years later she showed the movie of me sulking and complaining about our new campsite filled with people.