

Fix-ups sought for Lewisville birthday

By JAY BOOKMAN
The Columbian

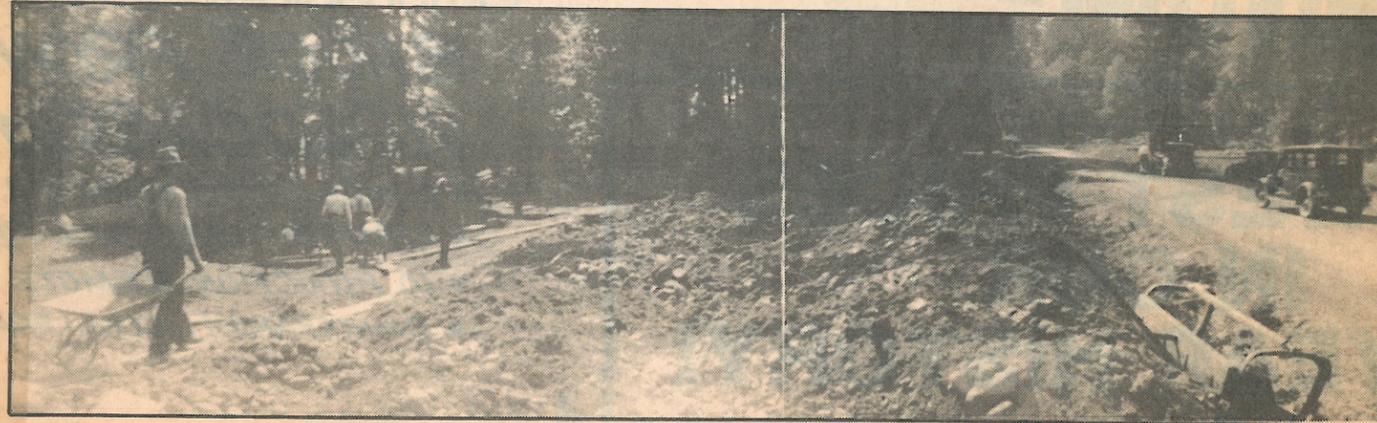


Photo courtesy Roberta Kearney

Much of the work involved in building Lewisville Park was done by hand because labor was cheap and readily available.

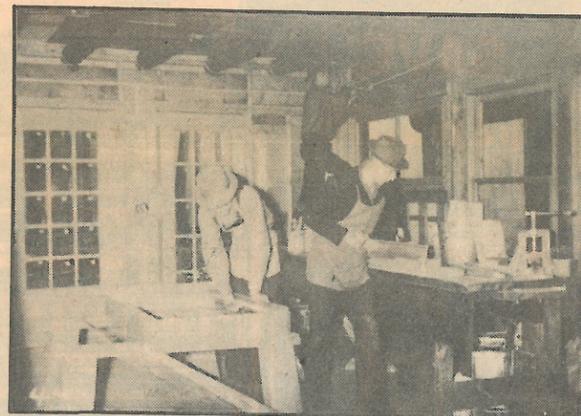


Photo courtesy Melvin Egbert

Workers complete the interior of the caretaker's house at Lewisville Park.



JERRY COUGHLIN/The Columbian

Central Shelter is example of the Rustic School of Architecture.



JERRY COUGHLAN/The Columbian

Cecil Governor, a building repairman with the county parks department, points out wood rot.

The grand old lady will hit 50 next spring, and to mark her birthday some friends want to present her with a face lift.

Lewisville Park, created by county commissioners in 1936 when they bought about 220 acres along the East Fork of the Lewis River north of Battle Ground, is the county's oldest and perhaps most-beloved park. Studded with old-growth firs and bisected by a pristine, mountain-fed stream, she boasts a simple elegance and charm that make her unique among her more youthful colleagues. Age has given her character.

But age has had other, less-beneficial effects as well. The park's Central Shelter, for instance, was built during the 1930s by men employed in the Works Progress Administration, a federal Depression-era employment program. It and other park structures dating from that period are considered prime examples of the Rustic School of architecture, an exclusively American building style that also includes Timberline Lodge in the Mount Hood National Forest.

Because of that heritage, the park has been nominated to the National Register of Historical Places. But preservation of park structures, especially the Central Shelter, is becoming a problem.

"If nothing is done to rebuild the shelter in the next couple of years," said George Simpson, county parks director, "we'll have to look at closing it down or barring the public from using it. It's gotten that bad. You can see the wood rot in some places, and when you knock on some of the logs they sound hollow."

Simpson has asked county commissioners to allocate as much as \$45,000 in next year's budget to help rebuild the shelter as part of the park's 50th birthday celebration. He has also requested \$49,500 for an admittedly less romantic cause, the rebuilding of a restroom. If those requests are approved, Simpson plans to ask the community to match the county's birthday present by raising additional money to rebuild the park's water system and another decrepit

restroom.

But with the county facing a very tight budget for 1986, approval of the parks department request is far from assured.

Vern Veysey, a former parks director and now a county commissioner, says he doesn't know whether he and his two colleagues will be able to finance the reconstruction project. But he does express an appreciation for the park and support for the birthday celebration.

"Celebrating the birthday of Lewisville is like going back and showing what can be done with limited resources in a critical time," Veysey said. "It's important that we remember what people-power can do."

Preservation of the shelter and other park buildings, however, is only part of what's being planned for next year's summerlong birthday party.

For example, a time capsule buried at the park in 1938 may be opened.

And Simpson and his staff hope to provide exhibitions of how the shelter and other park buildings were constructed. Trees would be felled with cross-cut saws and then dragged to the building site by teams of horses. There, the logs would be peeled by hand in preparation for actual construction.

In addition, parks personnel are trying to organize volunteer efforts to cut trails, repair birdhouses, plant rose bushes, rebuild horseshoe pits and perform other sprucing-up duties.

Judy Noall of the county parks staff, who has helped plan the park's birthday celebration, has also been researching its history. She has uncovered old photos of the park's early days and has tracked down two local people who helped build the park. Noall still wants to talk to any other members of the WPA or National Youth Administration who took part in its construction. She would also like to talk to anyone who remembers the park's early days.

"We used to go picnicking at the park when I was a little girl," Noall said. "It was a special park then to me and it's still a special park. And I'm afraid that if we don't get the needed work done next year, it may never get done."

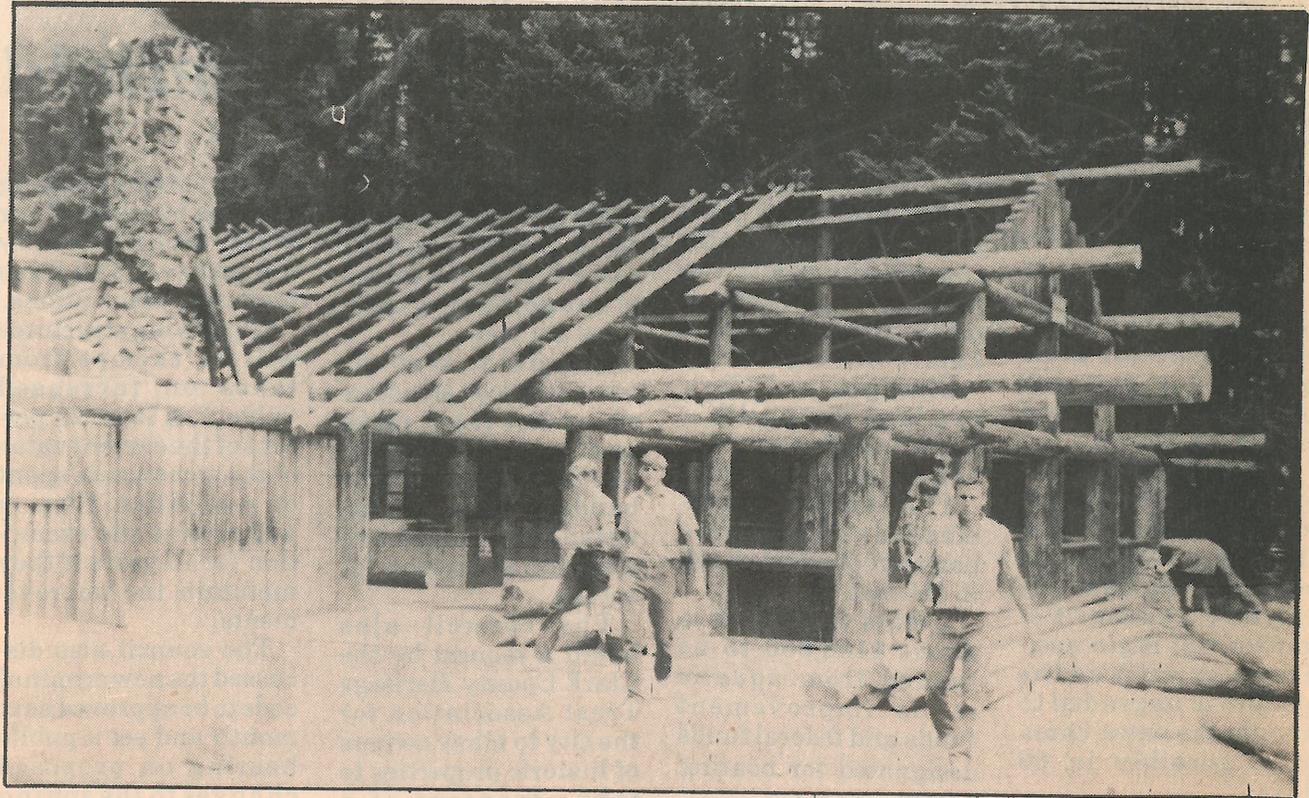
LOCAL FEATURES



Photo courtesy Roberta Kearney and Sarah King

Members of the Works Progress Administration crew that helped build Lewisville Park during the Depression pose alongside the huge sign marking the park's entrance.

Reflector 7-15-87



RECONSTRUCTION OF CENTRAL SHELTER in Lewisville Park, Battle Ground, is underway. Work to rebuild 51-year-old facility should be done in three weeks.

Lewisville Park shelter repair underway

Contractor Ernest Traffie of LaCenter has begun work for Clark County on repairs to the Central Shelter building at Lewisville Park near Battle Ground.

During the first week of the 30-day project, Traffie and his 5-member crew, which includes Don Tapio, have replaced six support posts, seven structural timbers, and nine intermediate timbers, and will also replace 8-10

rafters. All were found to have dry rot.

Some of the logs used to replace aging timbers were donated.

Former Battle Ground mayor Everett Eaton and a crew from the Clark County jail peeled logs before they were put in place in the refurbished structure.

Still to come is the 1X6 inch spaced sheathing for roofing, to be covered by cedar shakes. Lose rocks on the fireplace

will be replaced and the chimney on the barbecue pit will be rebuilt.

Traffie said he had built log houses in the past and gained some experience with the "lincoln-log" structure used in the Central Shelter. New timbers were reduced in size and shape with chain saws and draw knives to fit together with other beams.

The Shelter was built 51 years ago. Plans for

the improvements were made during the 50th anniversary celebration last year.

Funding for the \$30,000 project was obtained from the county Parks Department budgets for 1986 and 1987.

Many pieces were hand-fit together, stated Traffie. A crane was used to remove and place beams initially, followed by a boom attached to a tractor.