

# MAIL CALL

SKYLAND'S INK-AND-PAPER ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

## Exploring Skyland's History

Today, Google is testing a fleet of self-driving cars. Ehang created a drone airplane powerful enough to carry humans. SpaceX is working on rockets that will eventually transport regular citizens to Mars. Looking back 100 years ago to the origins of Skyland Camp for Girls, our ancestors were celebrating their own advances in transportation: the rail system.

The first trains in the U.S. opened to the public in the early 1830s, catalyzing the Industrial Revolution and bringing profound social, economic, and political change to the country. The rail system would support continued westward colonization and capitalist development, easily transporting goods and raw materials across the country in the name of big business. Trains didn't arrive to Western North Carolina until after the Civil War when the railroad entered its golden age. The Western North Carolina Railroad reached Clyde in 1883.

Just a few years earlier, in 1875, author Christian Reid (pen name of Mrs. Frances Christine Fisher Tiernan) published a popular travel novel titled "Land of the Sky, Adventures in Mountain Byways." Her book could have been seen as part of the conservation movement - one that many would say was in rivalry with the industrial revolution - urging Americans to protect the wildlife, wild lands and natural resources of the country. Tiernan's vivid descriptions of the scenery and sights compelled readers to visit these wonders for themselves. The book popularized the term "Land of the Sky" as a moniker for this previously underappreciated area. One might wonder if the same book is also the namesake for our own beloved Skyland.

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## Register your camper today!

### Mother-Daughter Weekend

June 9 - 11, 2017

### Traditional and Starter Sessions

June 24 - July 29, 2017

[www.SkylandCamp.com](http://www.SkylandCamp.com)



## Director's Corner

There is an added air of excitement this year as we connect with Skylanders current and past. Skyland is making history as we mark our 100<sup>th</sup> year in operation. That's no small feat for any business, let alone a family-owned business that was founded by a woman in the early 1900s.

The theme of this issue of Mail Call is curiosity. Curiosity is in Skyland's mission as one of the qualities that we work to develop in campers. It is an impetus for human development. It motivates us to learn and develop skills, to explore and to question. Curiosity is what we teach our campers to tap into when they are met with things that are new to them, people who are different from them, and conflicts or experiences that challenge them.

Curiosity is also part of why Skyland is here today, for if Granny Harris never entertained the wonder that brought her to the Land of the Sky, or if many of our own parents hadn't imagined what benefits might come from a summer camp experience, who knows what Skyland Hill would look like today.



As we embark on this historic year, we hope that your own curiosity will guide you back to Skyland Hill to share in the celebration. Whether it's attending the Centennial Celebration in August or introducing your own daughter, niece, or family friend to the Skyland experience, we hope to see you "on a hill not far from Clyde" this summer.

- Sherry Brown, Director

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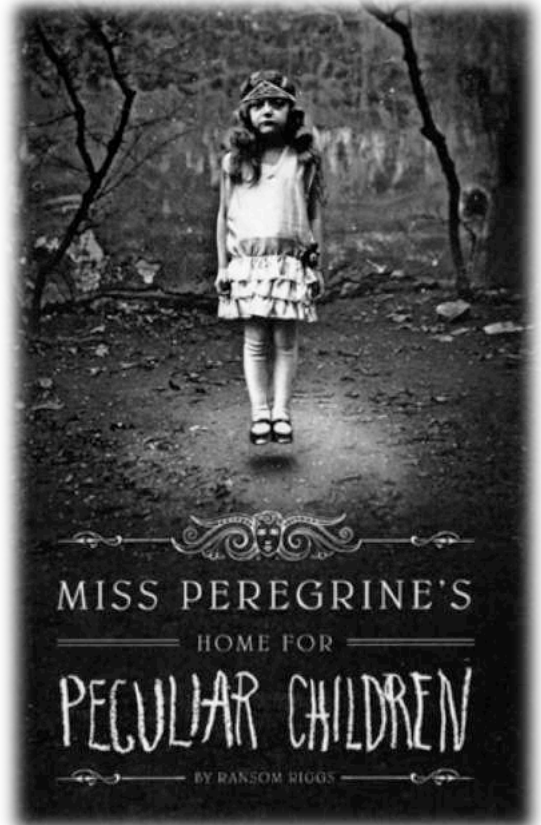
## What We're Reading: Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children

Usually, this section of Mail Call showcases a piece of non-fiction related to youth or girls' development. It's typically packed with research and data and is unquestionably grown-up in nature. This time, we're taking a different angle, because we at Skyland Camp for Girls fully believe in the importance of some good old fiction reading to keep our minds flexible and inventive.

*Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* tells the story of sixteen-year-old Jacob who, while on a mission to explore his family history, discovers a secret home for children with supernatural abilities. The scenes throughout the book twist the imagination through dimensions and realities sure to keep you on your toes.

Our favorite thing about this book is the way it was conceived. The author, Ransom Riggs, is an antique photo collector with an affinity for photos that are curious and strange. It is these pictures that inspired the story for *Miss Peregrine*, with each child and their supernatural abilities conceived by a photo from his collection. We love the intricate imagination behind this story.

Now with two sequels and a movie rendition by Tim Burton, the trilogy is quickly gaining popularity. We recommend this sci-fi fantasy for young teens, adults, and anyone in between.





## Time in Nature Stimulates Curiosity



A special pathway to the simple days of summer recently showed up on Skyland Hill, and we call it Tranquility Trail. The trail was built in the spring with a goal of providing more spaces and activities at camp for serenity, exploration, and connection with nature. This summer, the trail was host to scavenger hunts in games, material gathering in recycled arts, early morning runs and midday strolls. Continued development of the trail will include educational signage and recycled sculptures created by Skyland campers themselves.

The trail begins in front of the Big House, just off the road to the staff parking lot, and hugs the bends and dips of Skyland Hill until it ends in the lower pasture. The location provides access to several different ecosystems that are more serene and beautiful than anyone imagined: spacious stands of trees, thick canopies that hold in the cool air from the creek, and breathtaking vistas. At one point, the trail crosses by the bridge to the old pool, inviting hikers to experience a blast from the past.



The trail was built with sustainability in mind: to minimize repercussions on the surrounding environment, reduce erosion, and require little annual maintenance and upkeep. We are forever grateful for the generous donation from a Skyland alumna that made Tranquility Trail possible.

We are also grateful to the Skyland counselor, Sarahanne Smith, who spent an entire semester planning and researching for the trail. At the time, Sarahanne was a senior in the Environmental Studies department at UNC-Asheville and she extended her tenure with Skyland through an internship. The internship was an exciting and inspiring opportunity to engage the diverse talents of a Skylander and to support her professional development in a more dynamic capacity.



Facilitating experiences in nature is one of the ways that we inspire curiosity on Skyland Hill, and already Tranquility Trail has opened doors for campers to get lost in the wonders of nature. The simple days of summer and the moments that we spend exploring are some of our favorites. These photos showcase some of those moments in 2016.



## Exploring Skyland's History *(continued)*

The railroad line and the budding popularity of the region opened this isolated area to newfound commerce and tourism. Those who had traditionally labored for subsistence and barter could, with industry and ingenuity, become entrepreneurs. A man by the name of Lorenzo "L.P." Hipps was one of many who took advantage of this opportunity, buying over 700 acres of land in Haywood County.

Clyde's population was rising, farmers were exporting goods, and for a time the town was considered the largest cattle shipping center in the entire Southeast. Hotels began to pop up in the area in response to the increasing demand by tourists, and in 1894 when Hipps purchased 36 acres of land in Clyde just a short distance from the train depot, he quickly began constructing a hotel of his own.

That very hotel is still in use today, only now we call it the Big House and its inhabitants are the 6-10 year old Skyland campers who lull themselves to sleep to the sound of crickets each night on its wrap-around (now screened-in) sleeping porch.

Pieces of history like these remind us of how our individual stories are often part of something much bigger. That's a theme that alumna Patty Johnson discovered time and time again while researching and compiling a history of Skyland that will be released at the Centennial Celebration in 2017.

"I've always been intrigued by the stories of Skyland's origins" Johnson explains. "An oral history has been passed down through the generations and I wanted to make sure that our history would be shared with future generations."

Some parts of the history, like the story shared at the beginning of the article, trace the path that led to Skyland's existence. They help us better understand who Granny Harris was, what her life was like, and how she found her way to Clyde. As the history continues to develop, it will tell of the people and traditions that helped shape Skyland into what it is today, chronicling stories and adaptations that have made Skyland one of the oldest summer camps in the Southeastern US.



*Guests pose outside of the Skyland Big House, then a newly built hotel, on July 22, 1901. While renovations have changed the building over the years, it still maintains its original character and many of the same architectural details.*



Johnson also uncovered some lesser-known facts and clarified pieces of our history that had been lost or muddled over the years. Here are some of our favorite snippets from the research, with more to come in the final product:

- Popular belief is that Granny Harris, Skyland's founder, purchased the Big House with money from her husband's job as an executive on the railroad, though it turns out that's unlikely. Rather, we believe that much of the money came from Granny Harris herself, whose parents left her a substantial inheritance upon their deaths. Granny's father, Lewis Walton Courtney, had been a postmaster in Northumberland County, Virginia and also owned a canning factory, a gristmill, several houses, and over 100 acres of land in various parcels.
- While it's well known that the nearby Lake Junaluska is a longtime home to the Methodist church, it turns out that Skyland was part of a similar missionary movement of the Baptist church. While the Big House did operate for some years as a hotel, it was also used as a boarding house for the Haywood Institute, part of a network of schools in the region operated by the Baptist church. During the summers when students returned home to work on their family farms, the boarding house was used for meetings, conferences, and accommodating Baptist travelers and other tourists.
- The story about how Granny Harris purchased the hotel off of the auction block still appears to be true, though she didn't do so until a few years after founding the camp. Granny rented the property for several summers, a common practice for new camps even today, until it was available for purchase on July 13, 1920. We even found the original auction deed!

While Skyland's story is just one piece of several more widespread movements in history, it certainly has had a profound influence on many generations of girls and women. As we imagine and celebrate the ways in which the next technological advances will revolutionize our world, it can be hard to truly grasp the magnitude of those advances. It makes us wonder if any of the people in this story - France Tiernan, L.P. Higgs, Granny Harris or others - truly understood how their actions would influence history for decades to come.

Be sure to mark your calendars for Skyland's Centennial Celebration, August 4-6, 2017. We'll explore and commemorate Skyland's history, eat ice cream and chocolate sauce, sing camp songs to the tune of the piano, cheer for our dear Tallyhos and Trossachs, and reunite with friends from our own camp days. Registration for the celebration will be open in early 2017.

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Subdivided into Ideal Residential Lots  
Located on That Beautiful Hill Overlooking  
**CLYDE, N. C.**  
PROPERTY OF W. H. WOODALL

Only a few steps from Clyde's Business Section. An abundant supply of excellent water from springs and wells. Accessible to electric lights and phone connections. This is really desirable property, must be seen to be appreciated.  
The 30-room structure would make an ideal summer hotel, school or sanitarium, is high and dry and perfectly healthy.  
The opportunity of a life time to get a real bargain, as this property has been placed in our hands with instructions to sell regardless of value, at

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11:00 A. M. — EASY TERMS—\$300 WORTH OF SOUVENIRS FREE!  
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ESTABLISHED 1909  
We Sell Lots and Lots of Lots, and Farms, My!My!" MAURY R. MOORE, Manager.

## Give Skyland Campers a Spot on Your Year-End Donations List

Every year there are girls who are unable to attend Skyland Camp for Girls because of lack of finances. This means they'll miss out on the opportunities and benefits that Skyland offers to build their self-confidence, form meaningful and lasting friendships, and explore new activities.

That's why we're so inspired when we receive a gift from a generous donor that allows us to say "yes" to one more young girl who needs the Skyland Camp for Girls Campership Fund. What is a "campership"? A campership is a scholarship funded by your generous donations that supports a camper's attendance at Skyland, making it possible for more girls to realize their potential each summer. The fund not only opens doors for those in need, it also strengthens our community by making Skyland more accessible to campers of diverse backgrounds.

There aren't many places in the world like Skyland: a small summer camp focused solely on opening up possibilities for young girls. With a campership, more girls will have that chance to connect with nature, work as a team, and tap into abilities that they didn't realize they had. Campers will also learn to look outward, building empathy and appreciation for those around them. As one mother put it, the Skyland Camp experience provides "the singular most important extracurricular activity" for her daughter.

*As one mother put it, the Skyland Camp experience provides "the singular most important extracurricular experience" for her daughter.*

That's why your campership donations are so important - they can change the life of another young girl by providing her with the gift of the Skyland experience, setting her up for future success. Another girl who can say, like this Skyland camper:



*"Because of Skyland, I know how to be a leader. I know how to be a better friend. I know how to be more accepting. I know what adulthood means and holds for me. But not only do I know these things, I practice them. All the gratitude in my heart goes to Skyland and, now, I am ready for whatever life throws at me."*

In our centennial year, your donation to the Skyland Camp for Girls Campership Fund is even more special, offering a way to pay forward your own camp experience and to invest in the futures of more girls who will grow into successful women. Help make that experience a reality for one more deserving girl. Please give.

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Skyland's campership fund is administered through the American Camp Association, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, meaning **your donation is tax deductible**. To learn more about making your gift and to donate now, visit [SkylandCamp.com/donate](http://SkylandCamp.com/donate) or make a check payable to the American Camp Association with "Skyland Camp for Girls Campership Program" written on the bottom left corner and mail it to:

American Camp Association  
Scholarship Program  
5000 State Road 67 North  
Martinsville, IN 46151

To apply for a campership, visit our application page to learn more about eligibility: [SkylandCamp.com/campership](http://SkylandCamp.com/campership)



## Alumnae Updates

**Marietta "Potts" Clark ('61-'16)** passed away on November 24, 2016, after a brief illness. Potts' lifelong dedication to Skyland's campers and horses had a profound influence on many. She shared her knowledge and love of horses with decades of budding equestrians and always kept friends on their toes with her humor and playful pranks.



Skyland will celebrate her life during a memorial service at the Centennial Celebration in August 2017.

**Anne Mullen Kutchmire ('61-'64)** is an RN and BSN and has been working in labor and delivery since 1980. Once during a delivery, she and her patient, **Sylvia Deal Campbell**, realized that they went to Skyland together. Sylvia, now a physician and general surgeon, ended up moving to the same block in South Tampa and the two are lifelong friends. Anne is a graduate of the beautiful University of Tampa. She has five grandchildren (one a Skyland alumna) and has been married to her husband, Jack, for 47+ years.

**Anna Hugli Knowles ('72-'84)**, her husband, Rob, and their family are proud to announce the arrival of their two precious grandchildren. **Finley Robert Knowles** was born April 26, 2015.



*Finley Robert Knowles*

**Winfred Layla Welch** was born April 6, 2015. Even at the ripe age of only 20 months, Winnie is already practicing Trossach cheers for her 2022 Skyland debut.



*Winifred Layla Welch*

**Ellen Senterfitt Decker ('67)** resides in Orlando, FL. She has four grown sons and three grandchildren.

**Colleen Sheffield Greene ('00-'01)** married Daniel Greene on October 25, 2014. The newlyweds bought their first house together on June 25, 2015.

**Grace Gardner ('00-'04)** moved to New York City, NY in 2013. This past February she started a new job as a marketing manager with Blue Fountain Media and moved to the Williamsburg neighborhood in Brooklyn.

**Raegan Padgett ('00-'12)** graduated from Redford University on May 7, 2016 with a Bachelor of Science in athletic training. She has now moved just down the road to Blacksburg, VA to Virginia Tech where she is working on her next degree: a master's in education.

**Audrey Weiss ('07-'15)** is currently a student at West Virginia University. While she entered college with intentions to major in biomedical engineering, she recently changed her major to psychology after some reflection about her experience and work at Skyland. She is excited to pursue studies that align so closely with her passions.



Alumnna **Meagan Riegle Jenks ('93-'96)** and daughter, Isla June, at Mother-Daughter Weekend.

### Please help us update our archives!

Your experiences and memories from your Skyland days help to paint a more accurate and complete picture of our history and provide vital information that helps us reconnect with missing alumnae. If you've not yet completed the alumnae record update, please do so!

Find the update at [SkylandCamp.com/alumnae](http://SkylandCamp.com/alumnae).

SINCE 1917

# SKYLAND CAMP FOR GIRLS

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www.skylandcamp.com - mailbox@skylandcamp.com

*Skyland Camp for Girls inspires girls to be curious, creative, confident and connected to each other, and to the world.*

## Skyland's Centennial Celebration

August 4-6  
2017



SAVE  
the  
DATE