

Address by Judge Long on the renaming of Monitor Rock to Schurman Rock.

Let me tell you the simple story about the building of a great rock. This hunk of granite is located on 35th Avenue S. W. in West Seattle on a hilltop in Camp Long. It did not just happen; nor did Nature place it there. It was built by the hands of men from a design created in the mind and vision of a great man.

It is a peculiar looking thing some 25 feet high, 15 feet across and fantastically irregular in shape. Probably there is nothing like it anywhere else in the world.

For sixteen years, thousands of kids and adults have climbed, crawled and slithered up and down it, over it, around it, and even through it – there obtaining basic training for safety and skill in a fuller enjoyment of our incomparable mountain wonderland.

It was named "Monitor Rock" by its designer, who conceived the structure as fitting the dictionary definition of the word "monitor", viz., "that which warns, reminds, advises, or instructs."

The creator of "Monitor Rock" was Clark Schurman, who died in 1955, and it now seems manifestly appropriate that this monument to his life of service be dedicated forever to his memory as "Schurman Rock."

Here is the story of the rock:

It started with a telephone call from Archie Phelps to me in the year 1937. Archie was a member of the Seattle Park Board, acting as liaison representative of the City in the construction of the West Seattle Golf Course by the Works Progress Administration of the U. S. Government.

He said, "Bill, there is a 65 acre corner of the golf course tract that they are not going to use for golf. They've started to cut down the trees and plant it to flowers and grass. I have stopped them because I think it would make a wonderful camp site for the Boy Scouts of West Seattle. I wish you would come over and take a look at it and see what you think about it."

I went home, put on my old hiking clothes, and cruised the tract with Archie. We fought our way through brush, nettles, briars and fallen trees. Where the parade ground now is located, the place was a swampy bog. The whole tract was truly a jungle. But it struck me as having great possibilities for a camp site not merely for the Scout of West Seattle, but for the kids of the entire city.

We called in the camping chairmen of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Campfire, and together we cruised the jungle. They likewise were impressed with its possibilities for an all city camp. Ben Evans of the Park Department also was enthused.

And so it was that a committee of some 17 representatives of all the youth groups were formed, and together we started planning for the camp project.

At this point Clark Schurman came into the picture. He was famous for having developed a wilderness camp for his own Troop 65. He was also recognized as an outstanding expert in camping and mountaineering. And so it was that the Park Department and the committee selected him to draw the plans for the project.

He and Ben Evans searched the nation for ideas concerning what other communities had developed. The results of that research were pooled with the experience and ideas of local leadership, and out of all this Clark Schurman produced the initial plan which was approved by all of us.

But plans are just not self-executing without at least a little money. And none of us had that kind of money. Those were the depression years and money was not exactly easy to come by. So there had to be a lot of persuading, maneuvering, finagling, scrounging, snaffling and even a little benevolent larceny to translate those plans into reality.

Here are some of the things that happened:

The Park Department, through the bull-dog persistence of Archie Phelps, induced the City Council to consider putting up some money. Mrs. F. F. Powell, then a council member, beguiled the council into making a small appropriation. The Federal Government W. P. A. administration was induced to furnish man power to match the city money. And so the project started.

As the work proceeded, there was more and more snaffling of materials.

Here are some examples:

The Seattle School Board was dismantling an old school building. Some of that lumber, in some manner not entirely clear to me, found its way into some of the camp buildings.

There was also some lumber and material from a C.C.C. camp quietly transported to the camp.

The City was repaving East Madison Street and the old stone paving blocks in some manner became part of the head house.

While the project was under way, Archie Phelps was elected to the King County board of Commissioners and built a sawmill for the county. I have good reason to believe that some King County lumber is incorporated in the buildings of this camp.

Even the Superior Court got in on the act. A nursery was in receivership. The bankrupt estate had a lot of ornamental trees of doubtful value on the market. The receiver, with approval of the creditors and the benevolent connivance of Judge Hugh Todd, abandoned the trees, and in due course they became a living part of Camp Long.

And so it was that by devious means this camp was built.

But now to this "Monitor" rock.

Clark Schurman had a vision of building a structure that would incorporate every important mountaineering rock problem that the climber would encounter in actual climbing. He read many technical books on the subject and combined that research with his own practical experience and spent one full winter making a clay model of the dream structure. Then he specified the material to be furnished and supervised the details of placing every piece of the conglomerate finished structure.

The W.P.A. foreman and workers thought they were dealing with a madman, but they built it according to his orders and Clark Schurman's dream of "Monitor Rock" became reality.

In addition to the problems of financing and construction of the camp there were some crucial questions of philosophy and policy to be settled.

For example, some contended that the camp should be used for baseball, tennis, football and other playfield activities. But Schurman held tough against all activities outside of camping and climbing. The committee unanimously sustained him.

In one meeting he said concerning this decision: "If this breaks someone's heart because he can't start a ball game, it still is common sense not to bench a crack volunteer leader for a sand-lot game that could be played anywhere, any time – the Park Department runs at least 50 ball games a week and likes them – here we specialize."

And so, because Schurman did hold tough, this camp has been dedicated for 20 years to the goal of better camping and better climbing. Let us forever stand steadfast for that goal!

Another battle was fought over the question of whether camp participation should be limited to group activity under designated supervision or thrown open to any and all kids who chose to ramble all over the place.

Again, Schurman held tough. And so it was decided, and still remains the policy, that all participation must be under the guidance and direction of responsible adult leadership. Let us forever stand steadfast to that ideal!

Now getting back to this rock: Mt. Rainier was always an ever-present element of inspirational challenge in Schurman's life. It was no mere coincidence that he set this rock upon a hilltop with an unobstructed view of the "Mountain."

He told me one time that he wanted the rock to be the first step toward the summit of Mt. Rainier, and that when a youngster had mastered the problems of the rock he

could stand upon its crest and view his ultimate mountain-climbing goal – the top of Mt. Rainier.

Above all things he wanted for all kids happy camping and happy climbing and this to him always meant safe camping and safe climbing. This dream of his for happiness for children was distilled and incorporated in this rock and in this camp.

His dream, for twenty years, has been coming true. Over 200,000 youngsters have camped or climbed here. And because of his dream, unnumbered thousands more will share the spiritual lift of the Psalmist in the Bible when he said, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help."

So it does seem fitting that this rock, which was conceived in the heart and soul of Clark Schurman, shall henceforth bear his name.

(Above is the address of Seattle's Juvenile Court Judge William G. Long on the occasion of the renaming of the rock delivered over Station KIRO September 7, 1957. Mailed to Bryce Schurman (Clark's younger brother) by kindness of Beloit (1909) classmate Walter W. Smith.)

Wm. G. Long